Issue 07, August 2018

DERBYSHIRE • LEICESTERSHIRE • LINCOLNSHIRE

# East Midlands History and Heritage

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE • NOTTINGHAMSHIRE • RUTLAND

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"WANTS YOU"

ALFRED LEETE

**PLUS** Nottingham's great gunpowder explosion of September 1818 • The National Leather Collection and much more

# Welcome

Welcome back to East Midlands History and Heritage. As we noted in the last issue, the month of November 1918 is embedded with great local and national meaning.

This is a reminder that we'd like to help mark the end of the Great War by co-ordinating and publishing a series of stories from across the region looking at the consequences, during and after, that the War had on local communities.

The stories, based on your research, will be published in our January 2019 edition. There are also some tips on writing for the magazine at the back of this issue.

We very much look forward to hearing from you. If we can help in any way contact us on **emhist@virginmedia.com**

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

**Katie Bridger, Dr Helen Drew, Hannah Nicholson**
**Assistant editors**

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## Find us on Facebook

We now have a **group on Facebook** to help extend our network of academic institutions, students (undergrad and postgrad), local history groups, and the wider community, who are united by an interest in the history and heritage of the East Midlands area.

To post and comment, just join our group which you'll find by logging on to **www.facebook.com** and searching for East Midlands History and Heritage.

**We're also on twitter** @EastMidlandsHH

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## So write for us

Let us have details of your news and events.

We'll take your stories about your community's history to a larger regional audience. We'd also welcome articles about our region's broader past. Articles are normally between 1500-2000 words long. Keep a look out, too, for matching images that will help illustrate your work (the higher the number of pixels, the larger we can make the image).

Contact us via our website at **www.eastmidlandshistory.org.uk** or email **emhist@virginmedia.com**

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NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY

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## Voices from the archives:

# The *Ladies* of Ogston Hall

BY DR ALI FLINT

"Maria is quite well she w'd unite with us in best love was she able to express her sentiments."

These words from February 1839 form the postscript of letter written by a Victorian mother to her son. A letter recounts the untold story of Little Maria Turbutt, labelled an imbecile from birth, through the letters of three generations of siblings of the Turbutt family from the nineteenth century.

OGSTON HALL

While England's first and probably most famous mental institution, the Bethlehem Hospital or 'Bedlam', was established in the 13th century, generally provision and support for the mentally ill and the sick came from a network of hospitals attached to religious establishments; it centred on feeding, clothing, housing, visiting, and burial, not forgetting prayers to help them on their journey through purgatory. However, those with physical disabilities, commonly the deaf, the blind, and the crippled, generally lived out their lives within the community. The 18th century saw the rise of the small or private madhouse, catering more for the wealthier classes, whereas larger establishments might house both pauper and private patients, with the residents being rigorously segregated in keeping with the rules of social order. The landscape changed gradually with the coming of a greater understanding of mental illness, and with it came the period of public asylum building. The 1850s saw purpose-built structures that on the exterior resembled a large country house but, on the inside, housed a rather different group of people. Before the building in 1849 of the Derbyshire County Asylum, Mickleover (for which admission records can be found in the Derbyshire Records Office), and later the Derby Borough Asylum that opened in 1888, residents of Derbyshire who were labelled mentally deficient were either taken to the Nottingham Borough Asylum, or occasionally admitted to the Staffordshire County Asylum or Green Hill House, Derby. Before this, provision for the sick and/or mentally ill had been the Ashover Poorhouse. When this closed in 1838, the Chesterfield Workhouse provided care for those considered to be lunatics in Derbyshire, as from 1839 did the Workhouse on Osmaston Road, Derby.



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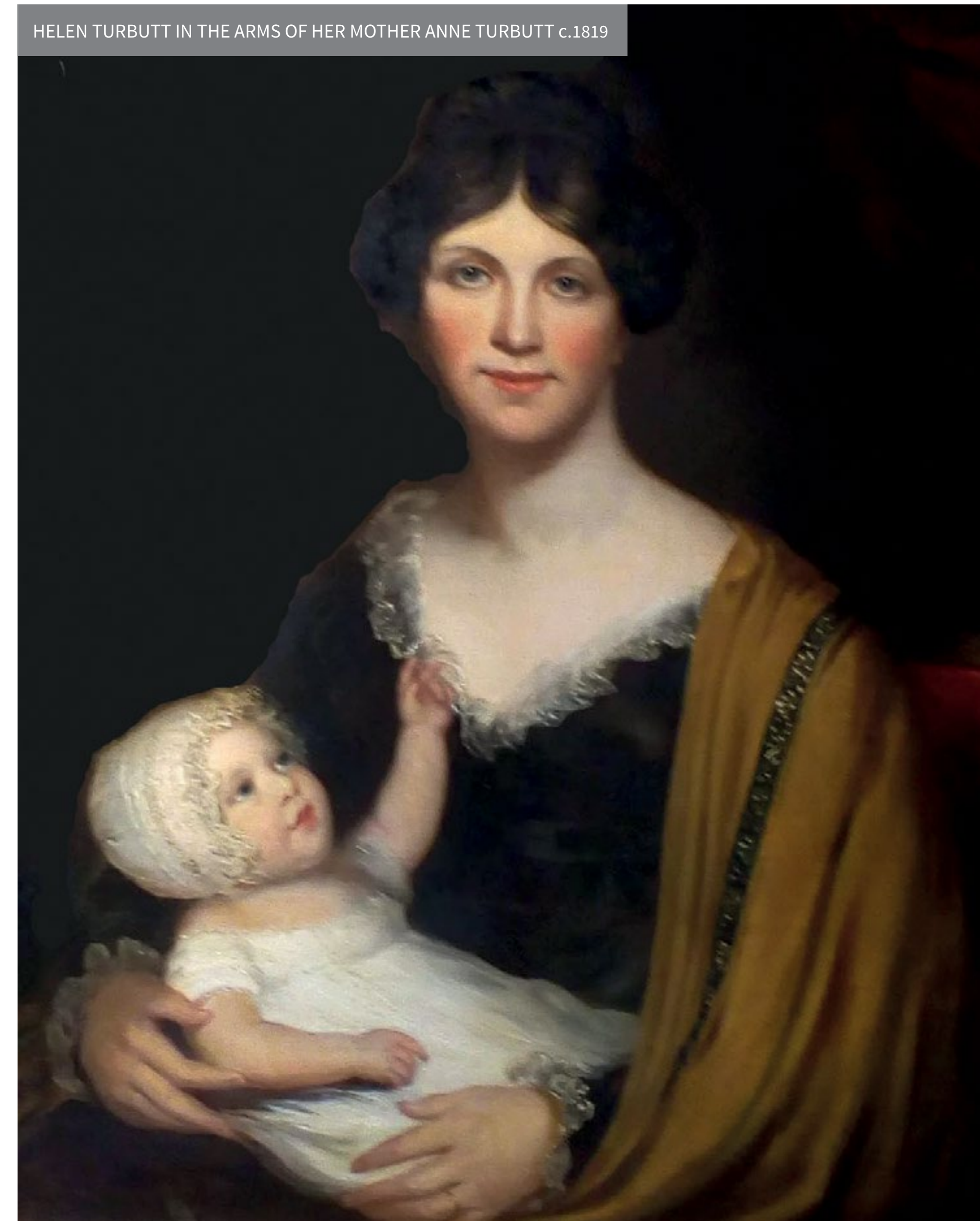
HELEN TURBUTT IN THE ARMS OF HER MOTHER ANNE TURBUTT c.1819

*The Turbutt family were Derbyshire landed gentry; proprietors of an estate of 2,000 to 3,000 acres situated in the Parish of Ashover, generating revenue of some £4,000 p.a.*

Prior to *The Report of the Metropolitan Commissioners in Lunacy* in 1844, Little Maria Turbutt would have been labelled as one of the less able, at a time when little or no distinction was made between lunacy and imbecility. By 1845 the *Lunatics Act* supported the idea that there was a distinction between insane and idiot, or imbecile, although medical diagnosis continued to be lax. According to Melling and Forsythe, the later 1850s saw idiocy described as a complete lack of intellectual faculties often from birth, whilst imbecility equated to having a low capacity to reason. Although institutions for the insane and those with little mental ability had been steadily on the increase from the mid-19th century, Little Maria, considered to be an imbecile, remained living with her family. It is suggested that some Victorian institutions had a policy whereby private patients were admitted only if they were thought a threat, or the family was unable to cope, and as such, the institution could be considered less a place of care for the incarcerated and rather more a place to protect the outsider. Although adult admissions to lunatic asylums were often occasioned by domestic violence or botched suicide attempts, idiot child admissions seem largely to have been the choice of the parents or guardians. Census returns indicate that domestic staff frequently fulfilled the role of the carer or attendant of the disabled minor or mentally deficient adult (Wright, 1998). This might suggest that the decision to keep Maria at home was more one of convention than of maternal or familial concern.

However, the lived experience that was recounted in the family letters challenges the traditional historical image of incarceration, ill treatment and abandonment. This Victorian family did not hide Little Maria away for fear of social stigma; indeed, hers was a story of familial inclusion. Little Maria figures just once in Gladwyn Turbutt's *History of the Ogston Estate*. Maria was the fourth child of Anne Gladwin of Stubbing Court, Wingerworth, and William Turbutt, JP and Barrister-at-Law, of Ogston Hall. The Turbutt family were Derbyshire landed gentry; proprietors of an estate of 2,000 to 3,000 acres situated in the Parish of Ashover, generating revenue of some £4,000 p.a. This afforded the ladies Turbutt a life style of comfort and leisure, although they were neither so wealthy as to be in the same ranks as the Cavendish family, with over 60,000 acres, nor were they among the more notable Derbyshire families, such as the Curzons of Kedleston Hall.

It was not until November 1832 that Little Maria (1821-1877), aged eleven years, first appeared in the epistolary network of the Turbutt family; it was in a letter that her sister, Lucy Turbutt (1817-1838), sent while staying at Cheltenham in the Crescent with her Mama and Papa, to her other two sisters, Anne (1816-1835), and Helen (1819-1839), away at Miss Fellowes School for Young Ladies in the heart of Knightsbridge. Lucy wrote that *"Mamma wishes you and Helen [ask] Miss Fellowes leave to go and see Maria soon and to see how her little [sic] accomplishments*





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LUCY (LEFT) AND MARIA (RIGHT) TURBUTT

*are going on and if she is improved in her alphabet."* Maria was slow with her letters. She was, in likelihood, similar to Charles Dickens's disabled and feeble-minded character Smike in Nicholas Nickleby: labelled by his wealthy father as an imbecile that has been *"of weak and imperfect intellect"* from birth. The content and conversational style of the letters of the four siblings, Anne, Lucy, Helen and their brother Gladwin (1823–1872), suggests that they were written with the intention to be read aloud. The letter writers ensured Maria was included; although Maria did not write letters herself, she was kissed and always remembered in the family's paper and ink. When Gladwin gifted his *"love to Mamma and Lucy,"* he sent *"a kiss to Little Maria"* and his sister Helen was to *"accept the same."* For the Turbutt family the sending of kisses was the private representation of Victorian society's expectations and romantic idealisation of familial affection: to be there, yet not there. The kisses were the letter writers' means of expressing the lived and shared emotional ties of familial kinship. For each family has, as Arlie Hochschild claimed for any society or culture, its own dictionary and emotional bible. The written kiss for the Turbutt correspondents was the representation of sentiments through the symbols of language.

Maria, like her elder sisters, Anne, Lucy and Helen, suffered all the usual childhood illnesses, but the family, although not Maria, were also plagued by more serious bouts of ill-heath. In August 1838 Helen related to Gladwin that *"poor little thing she [Maria] has what no one else has with the measles, a good appetite."* One month later Gladwin commented in a similar vein on Little Maria: *"do not let Maria indulge in her excellent appetite."* Three weeks before Christmas of the same year Helen, writing from a rented house in the coastal resort of Hastings, informed Gladwin that Little Maria had now *"recovered all the roses in her cheeks."* Anne, the eldest, died in July 1835 from acute spasms and asthma that *"her Physician exclaiming, a great Release. Too weak a frame to live. Had we effected her Recovery from this Illness it would have led to a miserable condition of existence, her disorder might fix in her Brains."* Anne was buried in Cheltenham. Lucy, the second sister, passed away on 9th October 1838; and in April 1839, Helen died, never recovering her spirits from a *"violent bowel complaint."* Little Maria was more fortunate. She survived well into middle age, and as such, outlived all her siblings, for Gladwin, the only boy in the family, predeceased Maria by five years.

By October 1840 the family, that is Little Maria and her mother, were once again home in Derbyshire, where Maria was now *"quite well but grows very [fat]."* The next generation of sibling's letters recount that Maria had problems with her legs and walked with difficulty, often needing support. Letters add further details to Maria's constitution and mental ability. Her mother wrote: *"Maria is quite well she w'd unite with us in best love was she able to express her sentiments."* In the 1861 census return for Ogston Hall, Maria was noted as being dumb from birth. Ten years on, the 1871 census afforded the optional categories of deaf and dumb, blind, imbecile or idiot and lunatic; in a ten-year period governmental parlance had defined Maria as dumb from birth and later as an imbecile, illustrating that Little Maria was not quite as other fifty-year olds. Yet to the family, Little Maria of the rosy cheeks remained small, of bright complexion and probably a little on the chubby side.

That Anne Turbutt did not condemn her disabled daughter to a life within an institution suggests that the bonds of motherhood were too great, preferring to give Maria a life in a supportive household. The family recounted that Little Maria was learning her letters, albeit rather slowly, under the care of a governess. Her young nephew Richard fashioned her with toys more suited to an eight-year-old, but possibly pleasing to an adult with limited mental abilities. At school in Brighton, Willie Turbutt wrote to his Mama, *"I am very glad that Aunt Maria is pleased with the toys Richard sent her."* At this juncture (June 1863), Willie was 10 years old, Richard was just shy of 8 years of age, and their Aunt Maria was now aged 42 years. This thoughtful gift from the next generation of the Turbutt family is both revealing to the nature of Little Maria's mental disability and to the family's compassionate and inclusive familial relationship to their disabled, yet very much cared for, aunt. Little Maria was accepted as a valued member of the Turbutt family; indeed she remained so across three generations of Turbutt letter writers.

Maria's parents had engaged positively with the education of their other three girls, Anne, Lucy and Helen, by way of the relatively new idea of a boarding school with Miss Fellowes establishment for eighteen young ladies, where they *"are treated with parental kindness, and the greatest attention is paid to their morals and improvement."* It is not unreasonable to suggest that Anne and William Turbutt were also proactive in providing appropriate care for Little Maria. And, as such, it is interesting to speculate that with attitudes to institutional confinement changing significantly, had Maria been born 20 years later, if she also would have been institutionalised; for, institutionalisation was not always seen as a case of 'hiding away' but instead of providing a beneficial, peaceful environment. Two decades after the Turbutt family's care and supervision of Maria, Edouard Seguin published his pioneering methodology in the treatment of cognitive impairments: that in a caring environment through education and sensorial experience a child may develop in mind, sensitivity and sensibility.

**Dr Ali Flint**
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*Images with kind permission from Gladwyn Turbutt (2018). Letters by kind permission of Derbyshire Archives.*

**Further Reading**: Pamela Dale & Joseph Melling, *Mental Illness and Learning Disability Since 1850: Finding a place for mental disorder in the United Kingdom* (Oxon, 2006). Alison Claire Flint, *To the Ladies of Ogston Hall: the Epistolary Cultures of Nineteenth-Century Gentry Women of Derbyshire* (The University of Derby: Unpublished PhD Thesis, 2017). Arlie Russell Hochschild, *'The sociology of emotion as a way of seeing'*, in Gillian Bendelow, Simon J Williams (eds.), *Emotions in Social Life Critical Themes and Contemporary Issues* (London, 1997), pp. 3-16 Sarah Rutherford, *The Landscapes of Public Lunatic Asylums in England, 1808-1914 Volume 1 (of 3)* (De Montfort University, Leicester, 2003). Edouard Seguin, *Traitement Moral, Hygiène, et Education des Idiots* (The Moral Treatment, Hygiene, and Education of Idiots and Other Backward Children) published 1846. Gladwyn Turbutt, *A History of Ogston* (Ogston Estates, 1975). David Wright, 'Family Strategies and the Institutional Confinement of "Idiot" Children in Victorian England' in *Journal of Family History* Vol. 23 (1998), pp. 190-208.





# The National Leather Collection

BY MATTHEW MCCORMACK

Northamptonshire has a strong connection with the history of leather. Historically, it has been the centre of England's leather and shoe trades, a consequence of various factors including its proximity to the London market, and the abundance of pasture and materials required for tanning such as acorns. During the industrial revolution, Northampton became synonymous with boot and shoe manufacturing, and high-end footwear is still made in and around Northampton to this day.

It is therefore fitting that Northampton is the home of the National Leather Collection. Last autumn, it opened its new museum in the centre of the town. This museum seeks to tell the world history of leather from early man to the present. Some of the earliest artefacts in the collection include a Neolithic bowl, a Theban loincloth and a piece of Tollund Man, an Iron Age man from Scandinavia whose body was unwittingly mummified in a peat bog.

MINIATURE GLOBE IN RED LEATHER CASE
(COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL LEATHER COLLECTION)

As well as housing 5000 leather artefacts, the collection also holds 3000 books about leather and its history.

The presence of human remains in the collection reminds us that leather is skin. It is a living material, which in most cases is rendered useful through the process of tanning to stop it putrescing. Like skin, leather has many useful properties including flexibility, toughness and water resistance. Before the manufacture of plastics, any material article that required these characteristics would typically be made from it. The sheer variety of objects in the collection is testament to the utility and adaptability of this material. There are the objects that you might expect, such as bags, belts and shoes (for which one should also visit the national shoe collection in the town's museum). But there are also examples of wallpaper, vellum documents, car seats, saddlery, protective clothing, boxing gloves, fire hoses and leather bound books, to name but a few. Larger items include an eighteenth-century sedan chair and a boat.

The acquisition began in the 1940s. The National Leathergoods and Saddlery Manufacturers resolved to create a collection to highlight the many uses of leather through the ages, and to showcase the value of the industry to their contemporaries. The collection was assembled by John Waterer and Claude Spiers. Waterer was a well-known leather designer and a leading authority on the history of leather, on which he published widely. The first item acquired was a black jack, a type of leather drinking vessel on which Waterer became a particular specialist. The inventory book that lists all the items that were acquired by Waterer and Spiers, including their notes, can be consulted at the museum.

Since then, the collection has had a peripatetic existence. In the 1970s and 80s, the Museum of Leathercraft was based on Bridge Street, but when that closed the collection moved to Delapre Abbey and then to Abington Park Museum. After being hidden from public view for decades, it finally reopened in a new home above Northampton's Grosvenor shopping centre. As well as housing 5000 leather artefacts, the collection also holds 3000 books about leather and its history. It is therefore a key site for the study of leather and the refurbishment of the venue includes plans for a study centre. Anyone who is interested in the history and heritage of the region should therefore pay a visit, in order to find out about a unique material that has been so central to the story of Northampton, and indeed of mankind in general.

**Further reading**: Matthew McCormack, 'Boots, material culture and Georgian masculinities', *Social History* 42:4 (2017). John Waterer, *Leather in Life, Art and Industry* (London, 1946).

**Matthew McCormack**
**University of Northampton**

# Derby pubs and breweries during the Great War

BY JANE WHITAKER

Just before Christmas 1917, rifleman John Ward wrote a letter home to his local paper, the *Derby Daily Telegraph*. Serving in Egypt, he asked the citizens of Derby to raise a glass of his favourite beer, Offilers Nut Brown Ale, in a Christmas toast to the allied forces serving overseas.

Beer was a controversial issue throughout the First World War. On the one hand, beer was a popular recreational drug for the average Tommy on the front line. It was also a major part of social life in the heavily industrial large towns like Derby. Yet there was rising concern among the Government and leaders of the forces, nationally and locally, that over-consumption of beer would lead to an increase in drunkenness, absenteeism and poor work practices amongst munitions workers. Lloyd George famously declared in 1915:

Wagon and Horses, Ashbourne Road, Derby, whose landlord, Councillor Edward Morley, was prosecuted in 1917 for brewing excess quanities of beer.

(IMAGE © JULIAN TUBBS)

To discourage drinking among the soldiers billeted locally, the Derby branch of the British Women's Temperance Association opened a temperance café, The Golden Bell, on Newdigate Street, opposite the Normanton Barracks on the edge of the town.

*"We are fighting Germany, Austria and Drink, and, as far as I can see, the greatest of these deadly foes is Drink."* There were also concerns that brewing would consume valuable grain resources that could be better used in making bread to feed workers and their families. Indeed, during the course of the war the acreage under hops was reduced by more than half. Most scandalous of all, women often had spare income gained from working in roles vacated by the men who had gone to war and, free from what was considered the steadying influence of their husbands, fathers and sons, were often spending it in the large number of public houses in the town.

Derby's extremely active Temperance Society could boast of several councillors, medical men and even the editor of the *Derby Daily Telegraph* among it's trustees and vice presidents, and so was assured of its views being heard on the licensing committee and through the local newspaper. The Society and its followers called for licensing restrictions to be applied to the town, often through letters purporting to come from individuals such as *"Milly the Barmaid"* calling, for example, for pubs to close by 10pm. Several letters were published in the early weeks of the war supporting Lord Kitchener's call to refrain from buying soldiers a drink. The Society also lobbied the Government to stop the rum rations to soldiers and called for severe restrictions to brewing to enable the limited amount of imported sugar and grain to be used in the production of food.

To discourage drinking among the soldiers billeted locally, the Derby branch of the British Women's Temperance Association opened a temperance café, The Golden Bell, on Newdigate Street, opposite the Normanton Barracks on the edge of the town. Soldiers were served with cups of tea or other non-alcoholic beverages in a pleasant homely environment. They were provided with newspapers, magazines and writing materials to encourage them to devote their spare time to acceptable activities.

The Defence of the Realm (Amendment No3) Act was passed in May 1915. It allowed for restrictions to licensing hours, beer strength and the quantities that brewers were permitted to produce. It also prohibited 'treating', that is the purchasing of drink for another person, because drinking in rounds was widely believed to encourage general drunkeness. Thus, a man might be prosecuted (and this did happen) for buying a drink for his wife. These adjustments were regularly reviewed throughout the war. The average strength of beer decreased from around 6% to about 2.5% by the end of the war. Before 1914, there was the potential for pubs to open from 5am to midnight. In Derby opening times were drastically curtailed to two and a half hours at lunch time and three in the evening. Pubs were allowed to stay open a little longer providing they only sold soft drinks. The police were assiduous in their duties in visiting all public houses found to be open after 10pm to inspect the glasses of anyone present. The landlord of the Castle Fields Inn on Siddals Road first fell foul of the regulations in February 1916 after being caught serving alcohol at 10:25pm. Landlord Arthur White was fined £5 plus costs. Suspicions were aroused again in October 1917, so a police constable was detailed to keep an eye on the pub out of hours to spot anyone entering or leaving. On spying two women knocking on the window one afternoon after closing time, closely followed by two men, the police raided the pub and discovered two glasses of whisky and three empty glasses smelling of spirits. White was again asked to explain himself to the licensing authority. He swore that the spirits had been poured earlier for himself and his wife but remained untouched; the other glasses, he said, had contained soft drinks. The landlord and his wife had just found out that their son serving in the Sherwood Foresters had been killed by a sniper while on active service in France. The drinks, White claimed to the constable, were intended to give them support while shopping for mourning clothes. His story was proved false when one of the customers admitted that they had been drinking after hours. This time, White was fined £10 or 41 days imprisonment, and the customer £2 or 14 days imprisonment. The other customers were given the benefit of the doubt and dismissed. The liquor licence was revoked by the licensing authority and, despite an appeal by the brewery, the pub was closed. Derby Temperance Society was delighted. Its monthly newsletter, *Temperance Bells* reported *"In a few short years this ideal tenant has made a sorry mess of the whole business – or rather the business has made a sorry mess of him? … Drink demoralises!"*

BEER WITHOUT ALCOHOL.

Are you a Munition Worker?

Whether you are or not you want a good honest drink with all the grip, body, and flavour of the best Bitter Beer.

ASK FOR

SPA

HOP BITTERS.

Perfect Beer Brewed from English Hops. All the tonic and refreshing properties of Beer Without Alcohol.

ASK FOR IT at all Refreshment Bars, & REFUSE SUBSTITUTES.

Sole Manufacturers:-

Burrows & Sturgess, LTD.

DERBY.

ADVERT FOR SPA HOP BITTERS, DERBY DAILY TELEGRAPH, 1916-18 (COURTESY OF DERBY LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARY)

Drinkers were concerned that *"Lloyd George's beer"* would be tasteless. Breweries were not allowed to call their beer *"Government Ale"*. However, Bass Brewery found a way to draw attention to the fact that it was Government restrictions, and not the brewery, that was responsible for the weaker beer. It redesigned its Pale Ale bottled beer label, calling it *"War Ale"*, and adding a rider that it was *"controlled strength"*. Local soft drink manufacturers Burrows and Sturgess marketed "Hop Bitters", a soft drink purporting to have the taste of beer and Lord and Denbigh bottled "Kent Ale", an additive sold to the public to improve the hop flavour of the beer and make it appear stronger than it was. It is not known whether they were effective in improving the taste.

A surprising alternative to commercially brewed beer was home-brewing. The Inland Revenue Act of 1880 allowed anyone to brew their own beer for personal use on payment of a licence costing a whopping 6/- annually. This beer was strictly not for resale, with a large fine of £100 and confiscation of brewing utensils imposed for breaking the law. This was intended to regulate the home-brew pubs. This regulation remained in place until the 1960s.

However, the Finance Bill of November 1914 created a loophole by stating that an ale with an original gravity below 1016, or 2% abv, should not be classed as beer, providing it was brewed on non-licensed premises and not for resale. In other words, if it was brewed at home for personal use. This allowed for home-brew kits to be advertised and marketed as a cheap and easy way to get your beer. *Harwood's Derby Almanac* of 1917 advertises a hop and malt extract made by Colemans of Norfolk (not the mustard manufacturers!) sold solely for the purpose of brewing beer at home. Judging by the lack of information about either the company or the product, it did not prove popular. There appear to have been no adverts in either the Derby newspapers, or any other regional papers, which would suggest it was not a roaring success.

The Government also set limits on the quantity of beer to be brewed at any one time. The landlord of the Wagon and Horses, Ashbourne Road, Derby, Councillor Edward Morley, received an unwelcome visit from an excise officer in March 1917. Morley's written records showed that he had not brewed for several weeks. However, the officer discovered a fresh bag of spent grain and the copper still warm. On investigating further, the officer found 200 gallons of beer hidden behind crates of soft drinks. Caught red-handed, Morley said he was too busy with his public duties and blamed the excess beer on his brewer, Joe, *"who was rather deaf, sometimes very deaf and had misunderstood my instructions."* Joe, however, was fit enough to be conscripted into the army, despite his supposed severe deafness. Morley was fined £50 for failing to keep records and brewing above his allowance. It would appear that his misdemeanour did not affect his role of councillor, as he served until 1925.

Caught red-handed, Morley said he was too busy with his public duties and blamed the excess beer on his brewer, Joe, *"who was rather deaf, sometimes very deaf and had misunderstood my instructions."* Joe, however, was fit enough to be conscripted into the army, despite his supposed severe deafness.

It is well known that the army requisitioned horses under War Impressment Orders, Section 15 of the Army Act. Breweries were not exempt. Offilers, the brewers, records in the minute book that the initial collection of 25 horses was taken on 5th August 1914, the day after the declaration of war. It had obviously been expecting the loss, as it had already had their horses valued by a vet for compensation purposes. The army not only relieved the brewery of their horses, but also of the best harnesses and drays. Offilers was compensated £1,251 on this first occasion. The War Office returned regularly throughout the course of the war, leaving the brewery short of delivery wagons. Another Derby brewery, Stretton's, replaced its requisitioned horses with a steam lorry, only for that to be taken soon after. By the end of 1915, Offilers apologised to its customers for the slowness of its delivery service, as it had to resort to using fish barrows, greengrocer's carts and furniture vans.

Breweries like Offilers took their duties as responsible employers seriously throughout the war. Soon after 1914 the brewery was losing men to the army, and monetary and coal allowances were granted to its dependents for the duration of the war. As the number of male employees decreased due to conscription, women were employed to take their place, firstly in the bottling department and later as female clerks, including the owner's daughter, Miss Offiler, at a salary of £5 per month.

The brewery also contributed regularly to local fundraising events for the war effort. Donations were made to the Mayor's fund to solders' and sailors' charities, to the setting up of a Home Guard at Shardlow and for Belgian refugees. Spare housing at its Cavendish Bridge brewery was given over to Belgian refugees for the first six months of the war rent free, with a coal allowance included. The houses were then offered for use as an army hospital for recuperating soldiers.

NOTICE.

NATIONAL EMERGENCY.

IMPRESSMENT ORDER UNDER THE ARMY ACT.

MOST OF OUR HORSES AND VEHICLES HAVE BEEN REQUISITIONED FOR THE USE OF THE DERBYSHIRE REGIMENTS.

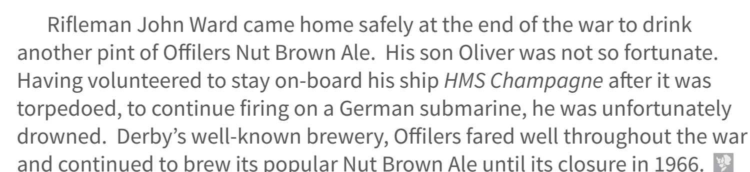
We are happy to be in a position to help our country's cause, and do all we can to forward mobilisation.
We hope to be able to execute all orders with as little delay as possible, and ask for the indulgence of our customers.

OFFILERS' BREWERY, LIMITED,
DERBY AND CAVENDISH BRIDGE.

Derby Telephones, 653 and 654. Cavendish Bridge ditto, No. 8 Shardlow. Telegrams: "Offilers, Derby." "Offiler's, Shardlow."

DERBY DAILY TELEGRAPH 8TH AUGUST 1914 (COURTESY DERBY LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARY )

The anti-drink campaign throughout the war proved very successful. In 1914 the average number of weekly convictions for drunkenness in England and Wales was 3,388. By the end of 1918 this had fallen to 449 cases. As the Derby Temperance Society noted with some satisfaction, this amounted to an 85% reduction in convictions for drunkenness during the war years. In part, this was due to the rapid rise in the cost of alcohol as punitive taxes rose rapidly. Pre-war tax on a pint of beer was a mere ¼d, eventually rising to 3½d by the end of the war. As restrictions were lifted after the war, convictions for drunkenness once again increased. As the Society lamented, from 4,165 convictions between August and September 1918, it rose to 11,487 in the same months for 1919. This it blamed on the lifting of the brewing restrictions, although it is worth noting that was still approximately 60% below per-war levels. In 1913, Britons had consumed some 35 million barrels of beer a year. In 1916, after increased regulation, this had fallen to 30 million barrels. By 1918, it had fallen again to 16 million. Although it rose significantly again in the early 1920s to reach some 25 million barrels per year, consumption never again approached its pre-war levels. As one survey of working-class life was later to note: *"Where once frequent drunkenness was half admired as a sign of virility, it is now regarded as, on the whole, rather squalid and ridiculous."*



Rifleman John Ward came home safely at the end of the war to drink another pint of Offilers Nut Brown Ale. His son Oliver was not so fortunate. Having volunteered to stay on-board his ship *HMS Champagne* after it was torpedoed, to continue firing on a German submarine, he was unfortunately drowned. Derby's well-known brewery, Offilers fared well throughout the war and continued to brew its popular Nut Brown Ale until its closure in 1966.

**Jane Whitaker**
**Derby Local Studies & Family History Library**

**References**: Arthur Marwick, *The Deluge: British Society and the First World War* (London, 1965). H. Llewellyn Smith *(ed.), New Survey of London Life and Labour*(London, 1935).

## About us

A group of Derby volunteers has been granted £7400 from the National Lottery to research the so far untold stories of the local pubs and breweries in the Derby area. The stories they uncover will be published in a free booklet supported by the Derby Branch of CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale), Derby Drinker, the Armistice Edition, available from pubs, libraries, Tourist Information Centres in the Derby area from November.





# NOTTINGHAM'S GREAT GUNPOWDER EXPLOSION OF SEPTEMBER 1818

BY PETER HAMMOND

An Account of that most Dreadful and Melancholy

CATASTROPHE

THE

BLOWING UP

Of the NOTTINGHAM CANAL COMPANY'S WAREHOUSES, by

21 BARRELS OF GUNPOWDER,

Each containing 1 Cwt.

Which happened about Three o'Clock on Monday, September 28th. 1818.

BROADSHEET 29 SEPT 1818

It is exactly two-hundred years ago this year since Nottingham was rocked by a huge explosion, akin to a *'tremendous clap of thunder'*, on the north side of the Nottingham canal. The canal was a bustling main artery linking the town to the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire coalfields; its banks littered with *'coals, timber, corn, iron, slate, stone, plaster'* and wharfs *'with their contiguous warehouses.'* We have detailed accounts of the tragic events of that day from local newspapers and contemporary broadsheets. Fortunately, the original coroner's inquest also survives (Nottinghamshire Archives, CA 749). Local publisher James Orange also compiled a useful summary within his *History of Nottingham* (1840). He thus sets the scene:

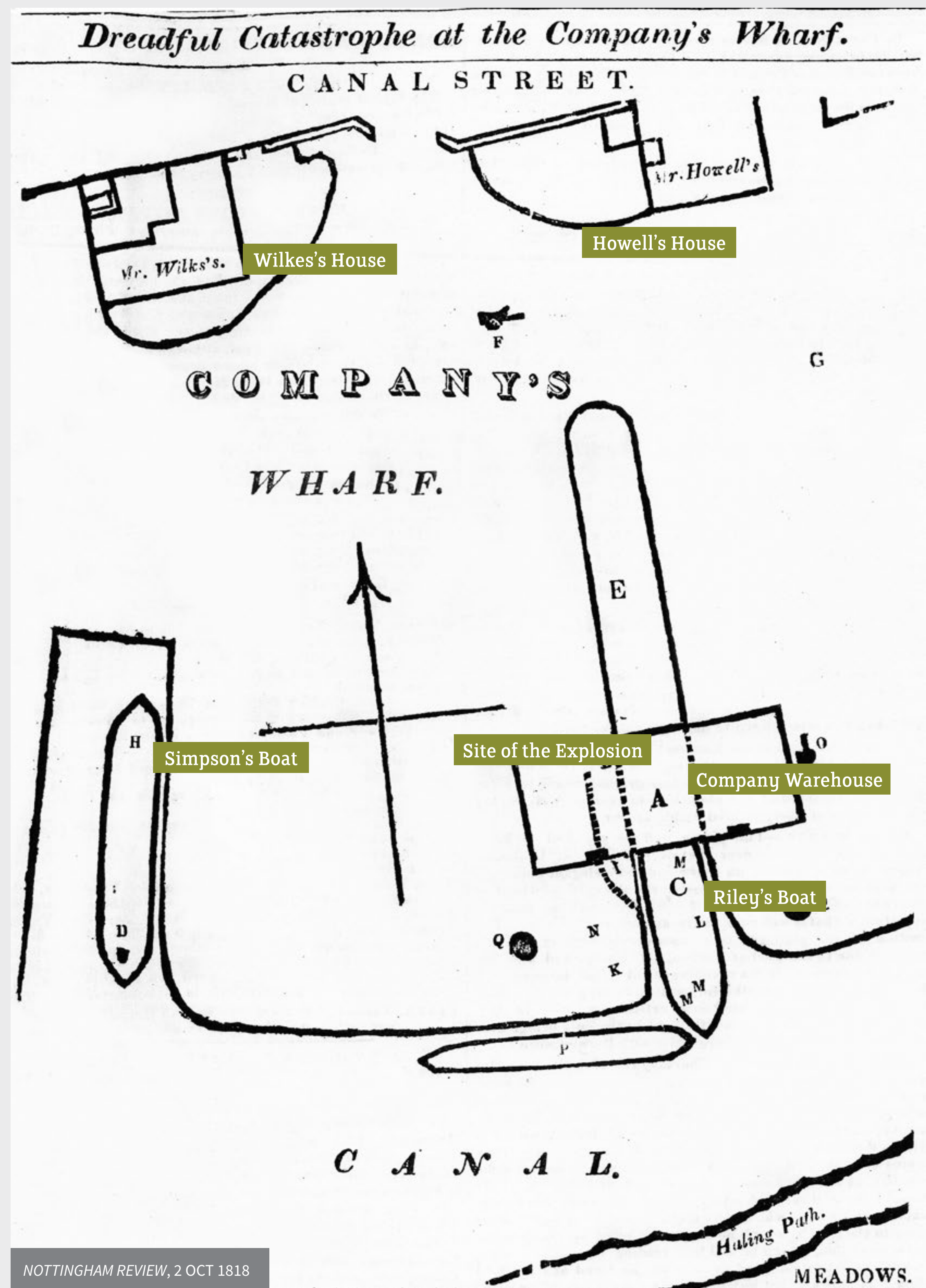
"A calamity of the most dreadful description occurred at the warehouse of the Nottingham Canal Company on Monday September 28th, 1818, about three o'clock in the afternoon, by the accidental explosion of a large quantity of gunpowder, contained in twenty-one barrels, each weighing about 100lbs."

So how did this happen? The powder had just been delivered by boat from Gainsborough, along with quantities of flagstones, cotton, wool, molasses, and soap. Hezekiah Riley, the boat captain, and two of his men, Joseph Musson and Benjamin Wheatley, were rolling the powder in barrels when some was accidentally spilled – the barrels not being particularly well-sealed. Giving evidence the following day, another boatman, Richard Allcock, stated that Musson took a piece of red hot coke from Simpson's boat and carried it between two sticks. It seems likely he simply wanted to ignite a small amount to see what happened. According to another boatman, Joseph Champion, Musson then announced, *"Lads, I'm going to have a flush,"* (i.e. 'flash'). The next thing they knew was the tremendous explosion – so powerful that it was heard at places such as Bingham and Castle Donnington, each at least ten miles or more away.

*"Every house in the town was shaken as if by an earthquake, and the inhabitants were thrown into the utmost consternation and dismay. The company's warehouse, a very spacious building, which at the time contained about four thousand quarters of corn, besides cheese, groceries, paper & c., was completely lifted into the air and scattered in heaps of ruins, not one stone being left standing upon another."*

The explosion was followed by an *"immense volume of smoke"* and dust. As it cleared, a scene of utter devastation presented itself. The dense smoke rolled up Grey Friar's Gate and Lister Gate to the Market Place, about half a mile away, and across St Nicholas's churchyard, *"proceeded by an almost suffocating, sulphurous smell."* Many windows were broken, and casements blown out in the Market Place itself. The shock was so powerful that it smashed bottles within the shop of a surgeon James Butlin in Bridlesmith Gate in the town's centre. Other houses had their curtains torn to ribbons and houses near the canal also had doors torn away, the resulting boarded up doors and windows presenting a very strange spectacle.

Within the vicinity of the canal itself the devastation was *"truly distressing."* The *"Roofs of nearly all of the Warehouses on the Canal [were] dreadfully shattered"*, most of the buildings in the immediate neighbourhood were largely demolished, *"every pane of glass broken"*, windows forced out of their frames, while the yard and wharfs were strewn with the wrecks of buildings and merchandise *"with every appearance of an Earthquake."* The *Nottingham Review* even went to the trouble and expense to produce an engraving of the wharf where the explosion took place, identifying where the fatalities and injuries occurred. The nearby houses, occupied by Mr Wilkes and Mr Howell, were extensively damaged. Fortunately, Wilkes, the canal company's agent, was out at the time but his wife *"was thrown with great violence from a table to the other side of the house, and the furniture sustained considerable damage."* Howell's young son, as we shall see, was less fortunate.




*NOTTINGHAM REVIEW*, 2 OCT 1818

No less than ten people lost their lives due to the explosion: eight men and two boys, most of whose bodies were so dreadfully mangled that they presented a *"horrid spectacle."* One had his head blown off entirely. Others were found with their limbs severed from their bodies or with the tops of their skulls ripped away, the remainder being much torn and much disfigured. The body parts of Joseph Musson, in particular, were spread out far and wide, leaving a *"'hideous track of blood and brains, pieces of skull and flesh, upon the grass, where his mangled remains had passed along."* Indeed, many of the victims could only be identified by the remains of the clothes they had been wearing.

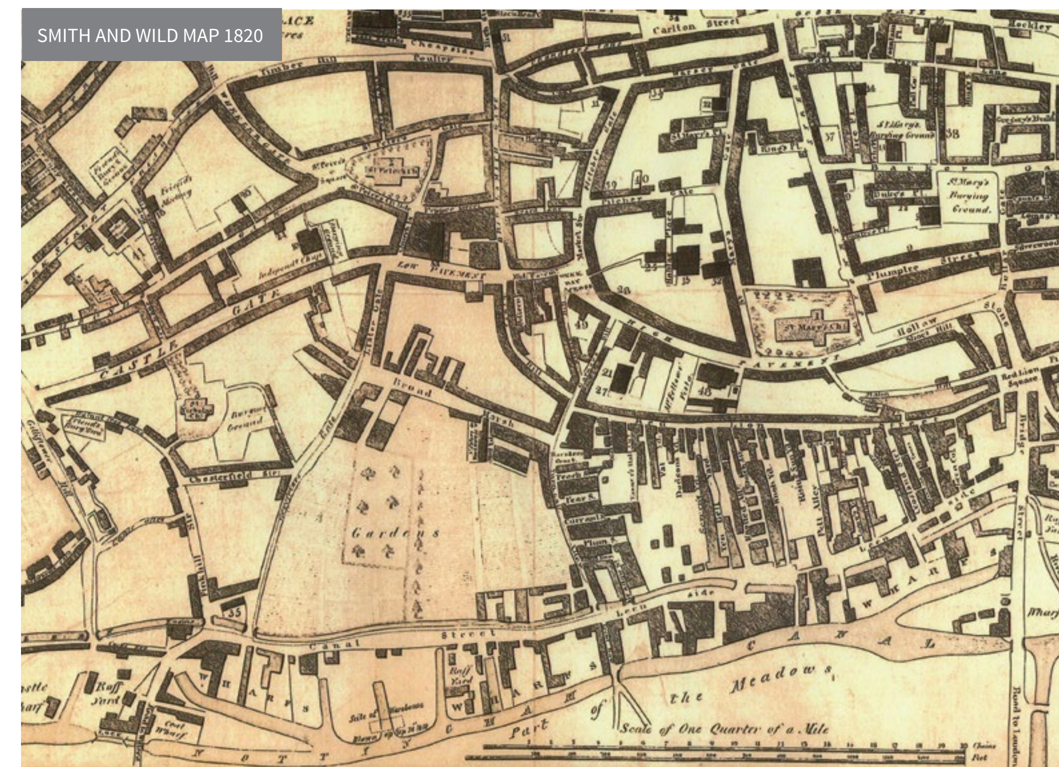
The inquest was held at the nearby Navigation Inn, on what is now Wilford Street, before both borough coroners Henry Enfield and Jonathan Dunn. The remains of eight of the victims were viewed there by the jury and the bodies of two others, , William Stevenson and John Howell, were inspected at the Nottingham Infirmary, where they had died shortly afterwards of their severe injuries.

The majority of the witnesses at the inquest were boatmen, most of them employees of the Nottingham Boat Company. Each provided evidence of the circumstances and events of the day, and from their statements we can exact further details on the victims. William Bish, of Burton Joyce, confirmed the identity of one of the victims as his own nephew. Another witness, John Pyatt of Nottingham, coal dealer and master wharfinger of Canal Street, had employed two of the victims, while Hezekiah Riley also gave a statement confirming the nature of the cargo. He only survived the explosion because at the exact moment it happened he was walking towards the nearby counting house.

Many of the dead were labourers of various ages from Nottingham and its surrounding district. William Parker, just 15, had arrived at the yard a few minutes prior to the explosion to find work. Parker was the son of a poor labourer, who lived in Carlton on the outskirts of the town. William Norman, 58, a widower, and John Searle, 26, single, both lived in in shared lodgings at the Barracks, Broad Lane Paddock (now High Cross Street). George Hayes, 25, of Trowell, and labourer to the company, was married with one child, while Job Barnes, 36, was married with five children. He worked in the company's warehouse. Thomas Baker, 42, a local maltster for Richard Hooton, was similarly married with five children. He was crushed by falling masonry, as was the horse he was holding. The others were boatman Joseph Musson, 32, who caused the explosion, and Benjamin Wheatly, 28, both of whom worked for the boat's captain, Hezekiah Riley. William Stevenson, 23, was a boatman from Leicester. The final victim was poor John Howell, a ten-year-old boy who had simply been fishing on the bank opposite when the explosion occurred. Most of the dead were buried in various local churches the day following the inquest. The verger at Gedling where two of the bodies were taken even added in the burial register that the interred were *"blown up at Nottingham."* Two were buried in the Baptist Chapel ground at Ilkeston.

The verdict reached by both coroners and their jury at the inquest was that the ten victims *"did accidentally, casually, and by misfortune, to wit by the explosion of a quantity of gunpowder come to their several and respective deaths."*

Apart from the ten people killed many others were injured or had lucky escapes. John Pyatt, who was shouting out orders at the time, escaped completely unhurt. Meanwhile Samuel Hall, a stonemason of Bridge Street, would have been killed but just happened to be stooping down at the exact moment of the explosion and thereby missed its full impact, though he was still injured to the extent that his life was *"despaired of."* He actually died seven years later.



SMITH AND WILD MAP 1820

## No less than ten people lost their lives due to the explosion: eight men and two boys, most of whose bodies were so dreadfully mangled that they presented a *"horrid spectacle."*

Meanwhile, a subscription was opened for *"the relief of the families of the unfortunate sufferers."* Among the subscribers was the Whig M.P., Lord Rancliffe, of Bunny Hall, who contributed five guineas. The disaster proved extremely detrimental to many traders who had goods in the warehouse, and the loss sustained by the Canal Company was said to be in the region of £30,000 – though very little of this was ever recovered. The calamity was, of course, remembered by the inhabitants of Nottingham for years to come, and when Messrs. Smith and Wild published their detailed map of Nottingham in 1820 they even marked upon it the *"Scite of the Warehouse blown up Sep 28th 1818."*

By matching old and modern maps it is evident that the current 'Fellows Morton Clayton' wharf now occupies the same site, and it is very pleasing to report that on 28th September this year, the Nottingham Civic Society are to erect a plaque directly opposite to commemorate the bi-centenary of this disastrous event.

**Peter Hammond**
**Nottinghamshire Family History Society**

*Documents reproduced with permission from Nottinghamshire Archives*



NOTTINGHAM'S GREAT GUNPOWDER EXPLOSION OF SEPTEMBER 1818

# To volunteer or not: explaining Leicestershire's recruitment crisis, 1914-1915

BY DR TOM THORPE

During the first half of the Great War, there appeared to be a major recruitment crisis in Leicestershire; fewer men were volunteering for military service relative to other parts of the UK. By 30 March 1915, only 2.6% of Leicester's male population were wearing khaki, a comparatively low figure compared with similar towns and cities across the East Midlands. In nearby Derby, 5.2% of men had enlisted and in neighbouring Nottingham, 18.5% of men. The low level of enlistment was not only restricted to Leicester but the county as a whole. In June 1915 it was reported that 60,000 men of military age were still "not with the colours", or roughly three-quarters of its male population aged 18-40 years. The recruiting and municipal authorities regarded this as a civic embarrassment. This article examines the reasons for the low level of recruitment in Leicestershire before the introduction of conscription in March 1916.

Historian Adrian Gregory believes that Leicestershire's poor showing can be explained by the *"widespread failure of local leadership"* of the county recruiting committee. He points to the poor attendance record of members of the committee and highlights that it met 25 times, but 13 members failed to attend a single meeting and 22 members had only attended one.

Others have taken a different perspective on the low level of recruitment, suggesting that Leicester men chose not to volunteer as a collective political act rejecting the war. The evidence for this is found in a 2015 study of the South Highfields area of Leicester during the Great War. This traced all 128 local men eligible for military service and found that only 19 men enlisted voluntarily in 1914 and 1915. In 1916, three of the remaining men became conscientious objectors and the remaining 106 were conscripted. It concluded that the reason so many men waited to be pressed into service was because of their *"resistance"* to the war, rooted in the city's deep-seated anti-establishment traditions of socialism, trade unionism and non-conformist religion. In Edwardian Britain, Leicester supposedly was the *"Mecca of non-conformity and the home of cranks"*. There had been a chorus of opposition to Britain's declaration of war from local church, and labour and trade union leaders. But did this radical tradition create a political consciousness that persuaded men not to enlist?

**References**: Adrian Gregory, *The Last Great War* (Cambridge, 2008). Aubrey Moore, *A Son of the Rectory: From Leicestershire to the Somme* (Gloucester, 1982). Matthew Richardson, *Leicester in the Great War* (Barnsley, 2014). *How Saxby Street Got its Name, World War One and the People of South Highfields* (Highfields Neighbours, 2015).

<< KITCHENER POSTER 1914 PUBLIC DOMAIN (COURTESY WIKIMEDIA COMMONS)

Certainly, the South Highfields study suggests that local adherence to socialism and attendance at non-conformist churches probably dissuaded some men from enlisting but the study also pointed to Leicester's booming economy as another reason why so many did not volunteer. Leicester in 1914 was a relatively wealthy town built on a thriving footwear and hosiery manufacturing sector. On the outbreak of war, companies in the city were given huge government contracts to clothe the expanding army. This new work virtually banished unemployment and pushed up pay. For example, wages in the hosiery trade during October 1914 were 14% higher than in September. Men working at home could earn considerably more than serving in the army; privates earned 7 shillings a week while a warehouseman could earn as much as 40 shillings. Few men would turn down the opportunity of work. Life for those in pre-war times, especially from working-class backgrounds, could be tough. Being out of work could mean destitution and the workhouse and even men in regular unionised employment could find themselves jobless very quickly.

*Though many men in the city did not enlist in the forces, this should not necessarily be taken as evidence of rejecting the war.*

Though many men in the city did not enlist in the forces, this should not necessarily be taken as evidence of rejecting the war. Many considered working on the home front to support the war effort as important as serving in uniform. Leicester clergyman, Rev. J.T. Coward, of St John's Church, Albion Road, told his congregation in November 1914 that *"all…eligible men ought not to be termed cowards for not forthwith joining the forces, seeing that the excessive stress of local employment called for prompt and strenuous aid to help in adequately equipping both Navy and Army…hence their labours were essentially serviceable to those engaged in fighting our country's battles abroad."*

While recruitment may have been comparatively poor in Leicester, and also in many parts of the county, in practice patterns were disparate. By late August 1914, 6% of the male population in the village of Clipston had volunteered, yet,

by January 1915, it was reported in nearby Market Harborough that 42.7% of the 1,470 men of military age were in uniform. It is impossible to calculate the exact number of men who enlisted for military service in the county before the introduction of conscription, but it is known that the Leicestershire Regiment raised eight battalions by Christmas 1915; suggesting that at least eight thousand Leicestershire men joined the colours.

The autobiography of Aubrey Moore gives an insight into life in rural Leicestershire, which may help to explain the higher enlistment in rural areas and small towns as compared with urban Leicester. He grew up in the 650 strong community of Appleby Magna, the son of the village rector. His rather romantic portrait of pre-war rural Leicestershire illustrates three factors which were absent from metropolitan Leicester that may have influenced a greater proportion of the non-urban population to enlist. Firstly, Moore describes poverty as a regular feature of rural life. Nearby Wigston, he noted, had become a *"temporary haven for down and outs…[the r]ents were cheap, about 1 shilling a week [but]…some of the houses were in a terrible condition."* In many parts of Britain poverty was a driver for enlistment for many working-class men. Secondly, Moore describes a rural community that was socially conservative, where paternalism and deference dominated class relations. For example, local women curtsied to his mother because his father was a clergyman. Such deference was much more dominant in rural areas than in Leicester and was perhaps influential in persuading some men to follow the example of their employer and community leaders in enlisting in the forces. Finally, Moore described Appleby Magna as close knit and *"where everybody knew everybody's business."* Failure to comply with the majority view could result in social ostracism or worse. It appears that some people who did not want to enlist left their local community because of such social pressure. George Weston, a wheelwright from the village of Blackfordby on the Staffordshire/Leicestershire border, joined the army in 1914 and wrote to his parents that he was surprised that Bill Dawson, a local resident in his village, had *"gone to Birmingham"* to *"avoid going in the army"*.

These men, whether from rural or urban Leicestershire, had their own complex range of personal reasons for joining up. Some cited the defence of Britain as their motivation. Weston joined up because he believed that anybody *"in the possession of a spark of patriotism would have leapt at striking a blow against…our country's enemies"*. Running parallel with this were societal notions of masculinity that linked military service with ideals of manhood and adventure. Driver Cross, of the Leicester Howitzer Brigade, wrote a poem about men who were deemed not medically fit for service. He lamented that this class of individual could not *"prove himself a man, But no, the doctor's verdict, puts him underneath a ban."* Peer pressure amongst friends and mates was another factor. Jack Horner recalled that he was with his friends *"when one of us, I don't recall who, suggested that we go and join the army. No sooner said than done!"* Finally, while the war boosted key industries in Leicester, other sectors were severely disrupted. The Leicester branch of the National Society of Operative House and Ship Painters stated in early 1915 that half its men were unemployed and this caused *"much distress"*.

Some historians have suggested that many men were pressured into joining up as a result of coercive government tactics. In Leicestershire, as with other places in Britain during 1914/15, there were reports of women giving out white feathers as a symbol of cowardice to men in civilian dress. Alice Hannah, a former Leicester resident, recalled that *"there used to be recruiting officers on different corners…asking the men to join up, and as it went on they tried to force"* men to enlist. These bullying tactics worked in some cases. Charles Monk recalled many years after the war that he had joined up because of the *"propaganda"*.

There is no doubt that these tactics could be oppressive and probably pressured many, like Monk, to join, but to assume that men who enlisted in 1914/15 were largely the victims of patriotic propaganda and social pressure is to present a patronising image of the British working man as one who lacked agency, intellect or will power. The UK population in 1914 had near universal literacy and access to a mass-circulation media, public libraries and other information sources, such as trade union newsletters. As a result, people had daily contact with a wider world of politics, economics, culture and society, making them more able than any previous generation to evaluate their own position and that of Britain in the wider universe. The low level of recruitment in Leicester in the first eighteen months of the war demonstrates that many men were quite able to resist attempts by the government, army and local authorities to persuade them to enlist.

By March 1916, comparatively few Leicestershire men had chosen to volunteer and enlist in the forces compared with other areas of the UK, although patterns, as we have seen, were far from uniform. Some had ethical and political reservations about the war, but the majority of the urban population was employed in its thriving clothing and boot industries with relatively secure employment and rising wages. It was observed in Leicester that the slogan *"business as usual"* was more potent than *"your country needs you."* The introduction of conscription in the same month ended voluntary enlistment and the recruitment crisis in Leicestershire.

> *"when one of us, I don't recall who, suggested that we go and join the army. No sooner said than done!"*

MEN OF LEICESTERSHIRE
AVENGE THE
LUSITANIA
HOW TO DO IT!
For every Man, Woman and Child lost 10 Men should join.
JOIN THE 10TH BATTALION
LEICESTERSHIRE REGIMENT
21, HUMBERSTONE GATE.
14 DAYS LEAVE AT HOME ON JOINING
PAY AND ALLOWANCES 3/- PER DAY WHILST ON LEAVE.

RECRUITING POSTER 1915, PUBLIC DOMAIN (COURTESY IWM NON COMMERCIAL LICENCE)

**Dr Tom Thorpe**
**Western Front Association**

## Acknowledgements

This article has been supported by Heritage Lottery Funding through the Century of Stories project of Leicestershire County Council 2014–2018. I would also like to thank Mathew Richardson for access to oral interviews he conducted of Great War veterans and Patricia Perkins of the Market Harborough Historical Society for information on local sources.





# Wollaton Hall

Wollaton Hall is a spectacular Elizabethan mansion and a Grade One Listed building, set in five hundred acres of remarkable gardens and parkland. Herds of red and fallow deer roam freely throughout the site, which includes wetlands, grasslands, woodlands and avenues of mature trees. Wollaton Hall houses Nottingham's Natural History Museum; on display are some of the best items from the three quarters of a million specimens in geology, botany and zoology.

We are always happy to hear from people willing to give some of their free time to us. Volunteer opportunities in the house include assisting staff at the hall with day-to-day tasks, children's storytelling, helping with public and family friendly events and object handling.

We also have a number of outdoor roles including supporting our gardeners with the upkeep of the formal gardens and helping our grounds team with tasks around the sites - whatever your interest we are sure to have a role to suit you!

To find out more contact the Museum Volunteer Coordinator, Karen Lushey on 0115 8763100/ **Volunteer.Programme@nottinghamcity.gov.uk**

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UO N University of Northampton

BY JAMES WRIGHT FSA

# The newly built *personality* of Ralph Lord Cromwell

*This article is based on research for a collaborative doctoral award between the University of Nottingham and the National Trust entitled 'Tattershall Castle: Building a History' which is funded by the Arts & Humanities Research Council.*

Tattershall Castle stands in southern Lincolnshire between Boston, 12 miles to the south-east, and Lincoln, 21 miles to the north-west. Today, it is in a remote location. However, during the mediaeval period it would have been intimately linked to the wider world through the port of Boston, via the rivers Witham and Bain. The castle is dominated by a 33.5m tall, brick, great tower constructed in the middle years of the fifteenth century for Ralph Lord Cromwell. It looms over three moated enclosures which once contained multiple gatehouses, stables, lodging ranges, chapel, kitchens, a great hall and arcaded curtain walls studded with towers.

Ralph Cromwell was born around the year 1393 into a Midlands family that was primarily based at its manor house at Lambley in Nottinghamshire. The family had done well in the third quarter of the fourteenth century, when it received a boost in its social position via marriage with the Bernacks of Lincolnshire. This eventually brought Tattershall into its ownership. Cromwell's uncle used his influence at court to place the young Ralph into the household of Thomas, Duke of Clarence by 1401. This began a meteoric political rise due, in large part, to the re-ignition of the French wars by Clarence's own brother – Henry V.

Cromwell saw active campaigning from 1412 and was present on the field of Agincourt three years later. This young man proved himself to be such a sound administrator during the conquest of Normandy that he was given the captaincies of several captured towns. He demonstrated his worth to such an extent that the king employed him as one of the chief diplomats at the treaty of Troyes in 1420. The year before, Cromwell inherited the old thirteenth century castle at Tattershall. Just two years later, he was appointed to the royal council.

His star was certainly rising, but it was the death of Henry V in August 1422 that placed Cromwell at the heart of government. As a royal councillor he was one of the men tasked with ruling the kingdoms of England and France during the minority of the nine-month-old Henry VI. Cromwell eventually reached his political apex in 1433 when he was appointed Lord Treasurer of England, a position that he held for 11 years – significantly longer than any other Lancastrian treasurer.

This was the moment that Cromwell chose to begin construction work at Tattershall Castle and, around five years later, Wingfield Manor in Derbyshire. Many trusted soldiers from the French wars were later granted positions of authority, such as Cromwell's contemporaries John Fastolf at Caister (Norfolk), Roger Fiennes at Herstmonceux (Sussex), and his brother James

FIGURE 1: NEWEL STAIRCASE

FIGURE 2: GREAT TOWER

Fiennes at Knole (Kent). Royal patronage enabled these men the finances to express their new-found status and power through innovative architecture.

Work at Tattershall continued from roughly 1434 until 1451 on a site that has always been dominated by the great tower. It features a stack of four large central chambers, placed between a basement and roof parapet, which are embraced by four corner turrets containing closets and a newel stair (figure 1).
The fireplaces contained in the four main chambers have been described by architectural historian L. A. Shuffrey as *"the high-water mark of Gothic fireplace design and ornamentation."* However, beyond the fireplaces, the castle contains many other prime examples of innovation:

- The newel stair contains an elaborate countersunk handrail engineered so that the part which the hand clasps stands proud of the wall by 32mm ensuring that users do not catch their elbows on the masonry;
- At the top of the stairs is a double-height arcaded parapet surrounding a space open to the sky which is completely unique in English mediaeval architecture;
- The machicolations (floor openings) crowning the tower (figure 2 and 4) are purely decorative and acted as a symbol of lordly status rather than of genuine military intent - projectiles launched from them would fall either into the moat or onto Cromwell's own great hall roof!
- The very early use of deliberately overfired bricks to create diaperwork patterns on the external walls picking out geometrical designs, a heraldic shield and the initials M, and interlocking-Vs which probably indicated devotion to Mary the Virgin of Virgins;
- The internal lobbies, window embrasures and corridors contain some of the earliest and most elaborate brick vaulting in the country.

The use of brick as a building material had never been attempted on this scale before in

> Tattershall helped to rekindle interest in the form and established an architectural fashion for brick towers which affected design for over a century to come.

secular English architecture, although there was a tradition of brick construction stretching back into the late thirteenth century in eastern counties. Two fourteenth-century Lincolnshire buildings - the gatehouse at Thornton Abbey and St Mary's Guildhall at Boston – may have offered inspiration to Tattershall as they both share some structural similarities with the castle. However, the use of brick to build something quite as impressive as the great tower was probably inspired by continental models.

Castle building in brick stretched back centuries in the Baltic states, Germany and the Low Countries. It is significant that the name of Cromwell's master brick-maker was recorded as Baldwin Docheman (i.e. Dutchman) – a word which described anyone of Germanic origin in late mediaeval England. The implication is that Baldwin was a man employed specifically because of his previous experience of brick buildings in northern Europe. Additionally, Cromwell had himself travelled extensively in France, where the tradition of great towers, with stacked central chambers flanked by corner turrets, had been revived by the Valois monarchy at Vincennes in the mid-fourteenth century. It is likely that patron and master builders worked closely together on the design of Tattershall which took influence from a number of sources.

The great tower had been a feature of castles in England since the eleventh century but had seen a relative decline in use during the later thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Tattershall helped to rekindle interest in the form and established an architectural fashion for brick towers which affected design for over a century to come. Within Cromwell's lifetime, the local Lincolnshire gentry began to build towers at Fishtoft, Boston and Spalding. As the century lengthened great churchmen and magnates built in a similar style at sites such as Esher Palace in Surrey (c. 1462-72), Buckden Towers in Cambridgeshire (c. 1480-94) and Kirby Muxloe Castle in Leicestershire (c. 1480-84).

Cromwell served on the royal council with high-ranking men such as Humphry, Duke of Gloucester, and Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester. Gloucester and Beaufort were implacable

**Until the mid-fourteenth century, the Cromwell family had been relatively obscure members of the East Midlands gentry.**

political rivals and Cromwell gravitated towards the orbit of the latter. He probably did so as he required a patron of his own on a council largely dominated by members of the royal family. Cromwell himself was never a member of the upper echelons of aristocracy and this is where the fractures in his political confidence may be discerned.

Elements of Cromwell's architecture betray tensions relating to anxieties around social position. In particular, the repeated use of the treasurer's purse in his buildings - on the fireplaces at Tattershall (figure 3), above the inner gate at Wingfield and even on the chancel at the parish church at Lambley – comes across as somewhat forced. This was at a time when most treasurers only held the position for one or two years, and mere months in many cases. The job came with associated accusations of scandal and several officials were executed. The position was not secure, yet Cromwell took such great pride in it that he staked his name to it via permanent architectural carvings. The treasurer's purse is often combined with Cromwell's own motto: '*Nay je droit*' ('Have I not the right?'). We might ask of whom he was asking the question, and why? Was the Lord Treasurer over-reaching himself politically to the point where the cracks began to show? His later life was certainly mired in litigation which occasionally spilled over into drawn swords during the break-down of law and order in the lead up to the Wars of the Roses.

FIGURE 3: FIREPLACE

FIGURE 4: TOWER DETAIL, TATTERSHALL_CASTLE, ALAN MURRAY-RUST (COURTESY WIKIMEDIA COMMONS)

Other repeated signals in Cromwell's buildings include the use of crenellations (battlements). They are, of course, to be found on the summit of the great tower (figure 2). However, he also saw fit to incorporate miniature versions on the cornice of the castle fireplaces (figure 3), on the principal rafters, within window tracery, and even on the pulpit pedestal at the adjacent collegiate church at Tattershall. Cromwell seemed determined to use this marker of status to emphasise his new-found position in a visually recurring manner to drive home his point.

Until the mid-fourteenth century, the Cromwell family had been relatively obscure members of the East Midlands gentry. Despite this, there is a strong obsession with history and lineage in the architecture of Tattershall. The very form of the great tower was a revival of an ancient power statement. Within it there are many carvings which emphasise the pedigree of the patron's family. This is particularly notable in the recurrent use of heraldry on the fireplaces and ceiling bosses which points towards the (somewhat distant) connections of the treasurer to ancient and powerful families such as the Albinis, Tateshales, and Greys. Interspersed are other markers of Cromwell's perception of himself which include motifs on the fight between good and evil (St Michael and the dragon), Christian piety (a meek rabbit eating a Gromwell weed – the latter a knowing play on words) or heroic family legends (Hugh Neville battling a lion on crusade).

More subtle was the design of the windows on the third floor of the great tower. This level contained a suite of rooms probably intended for use by Cromwell's wife, Margaret Deincourt. Although the windows are framed by contemporary style four-centred arches, the tracery within looks back a century to the Decorated period of Gothic architecture. Aspects of this anachronistic style have been noted in royal works at the time and Cromwell also utilised it in the porch and bay window at Wingfield Manor. It may be that this was a nod towards a court style, but it could equally have been another signal that Cromwell was pointing towards the powerful history of his wife's family.

Much of Ralph Cromwell's architecture points towards social engineering. Although it must be stressed that many of the technical innovations at Tattershall might be ascribed to the skills of master builders, the messages of status which they contain can only be linked back to the patron. Cromwell was a man who clearly enjoyed great social mobility during the mid-fifteenth century and he was keen to demonstrate his new-found position through advanced architecture. However, caught, as he was between his gentry ancestry and his newly elevated position - immediately subordinate to the most powerful members of the royal family – a tension is present in Cromwell's architecture which can still be read in the twenty-first century.

**James Wright FSA**
**University of Nottingham**





# The roads of Wakerley

BY MARK DOBSON

It is said that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. Yet many things conspire to challenge that assertion.

In the early middle ages it was thought that the devil could only travel in a straight line. A track with a kink in it could confuse him, hence many church paths run diagonally across a churchyard before making a turn into the church. Later, G. K. Chesterton came up with an alternative explanation: *"The rolling English drunkard made the rolling English road."* However, a more prosaic reason for a winding road may be due to the whim of a local landowner. W. G. Hoskins noted, in his introduction to *The Making of the English Landscape*, that a lane near his Victorian suburban house *"has a right-angled bend in it, quite inexplicable as there are no physical obstacles to make it bend like that, so I assume that it was contrived to run around some Saxon estate that already existed"*. He argued that the English landscape was a form of historical palimpsest, evolving through time, layer upon layer, as each generation wrote its own history on it, overwriting in parts the remnants of earlier stories. He also thought this was best observed via boots on the ground.

Figure 1 is a detail from a map of Northamptonshire, drawn after a survey by Thomas Eyre (also Eayre) of Kettering, engraved and published by William Faden in 1779. The map appears to show the road between Barrowden and Wakerley making a sharp right turn shortly after crossing the River Welland, followed by another turn to the left before reaching Wakerley well to the west of the village centre. Today the road proceeds straight on after the bridge, entering Wakerley opposite the former village public house, the Exeter Arms. In the field to the west after the now dismantled railway, the depressions in the ground and the reedbeds indicate the site of the ancient village fishponds, while to the east are the substantial earthworks of a great house of the 17th century, the building of which *"must have involved the diversion of at least one road, such as that leading to the medieval bridge, which until the 19th century was reached by a circuitous route, as seen on Eayre"s map"*. A map prepared for the Burghley estate (figure 2) shows both roads in existence in 1772. (Since Eyre's map is dated later it may be suggested that the former straight road was actually only removed between 1772 and 1779, but he died in 1757 and so his survey must have been carried out before that year, and no further check made as to its current accuracy upon publication in 1779.)

FIGURE 1: THOMAS EYRE'S MAP OF NORTHAMPTONSHIRE 1799 PUBLIC DOMAIN (COURTESY NATIONAL ARCHIVES)

Has any evidence survived on the ground to reveal where this road ran? Well, probably yes. In the field on the right after the bridge there is a mound, or bank, about five feet high, which runs parallel to and between the river and the course of the railway (figure 3). It bends slightly to the right for about two hundred yards, continuing in a westward direction before turning sharply to the left and disappearing under the railway embankment. The bank emerges in the field on the opposite side as a slight hump and joins Wakerley's main street opposite the Old Rectory. Such a raised road is called a causeway, particularly when it rises above wet or marshy land.

A first encounter with this feature might indicate that it is an early example of a levée – an earthwork raised up beside a river to prevent flooding – but Eyre's map suggests otherwise. A small brook rises just to the south of the village which would have fed the fishponds: it now mostly flows underground until reappearing briefly, flowing northwards in the field between the railway and the causeway. It then enters a culvert

beneath the causeway and re-emerges a few feet from the river (figure 4). The existence of this culvert pre-empts any suggestion of a levée: rising floodwaters would merely flow back through it!

In the early seventeenth century, the manor of Wakerley was owned by Sir Edward Griffin of Dingley, a village a few miles east of Market Harborough, Leicestershire. In 1618 he sold the manor to Sir Richard Cecil, grandson of William Cecil, the 1st Lord Burghley, Queen Elizabeth's secretary of state and chief advisor. Sir Richard was then living in Collyweston, some six miles east of Wakerley, in the manor house previously owned and occupied by Margaret Beaufort, the mother of Henry VII. Whether Richard had a completely new house built in Wakerley or took over an existing one is a question that cannot easily be answered as no record survives of its construction, although excavation of the site would be likely to provide a clue. However, it is clear both from written sources and the remains on the ground that it was a fairly substantial building. An inventory of Richard's goods made after his death in 1633 mentions 30 rooms, including *"The hall, the great chamber, the lord"s chamber … the wainscot chamber, the gallery and study, the yellow bedechamber [sic ]… my lady's chamber … the parlour …and … the green bedechamber."* There are also substantial remains of terraced gardens to the east of the house. Sir Richard predeceased his brother William, the 2nd Earl of Exeter, but as the latter had no direct heir Richard's son David inherited the Burghley estates and titles. He removed to Burghley House and Wakerley Manor was let to various tenants until sometime towards the end of the seventeenth century when the manor house was demolished, with some of the stones re-used in local housebuilding. In 1749 the Wakerley open fields were enclosed, and one of the later consequences of this enclosure was that a new road was built between the bridge and the village, which now runs straight, as previously noted, from the bridge over the river to the main street in front of the former Exeter Arms. This can be clearly seen in the aerial photograph (figure 5). In the field on the left of the picture a shallow hump running approximately parallel to the present road may be the line of the earlier road, replaced by the circuitous route mentioned above.

Eyre's 1779 map appears to ignore a church in Wakerley, which should be located just above the second "e" in the village name; a smudge there

Whether Richard had a completely new house built in Wakerley or took over an existing one is a question that cannot easily be answered as no record survives of its construction, although excavation of the site would be likely to provide a clue.

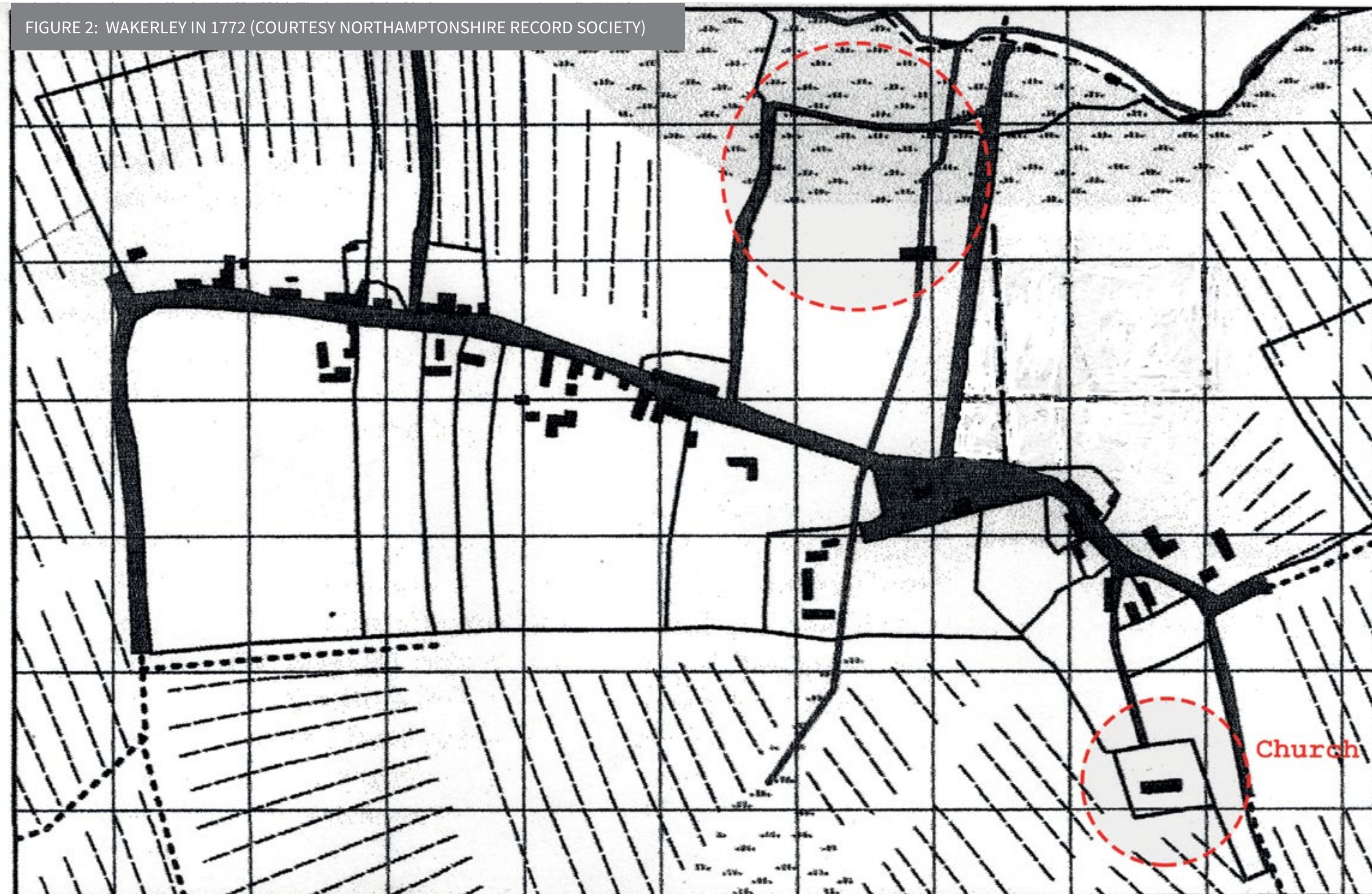


FIGURE 2: WAKERLEY IN 1772 (COURTESY NORTHAMPTONSHIRE RECORD SOCIETY)

suggests that the map maker may have intended to record a building here, but the village name got in the way. However, he does seem to have been selective in recording churches anyway: one is shown correctly in Barrowden but none in Harringworth or Duddington, and in Tixover there is only another smudge where it should be. Be that as it may, there is a church in Wakerley, and there is a lane leading up to it from the village; this can be clearly seen on an estate map of 1772 (figure 2). What is also clear from this map is that this was the only way to the church; it was only in the eighteenth century that the churchyard was extended eastwards to the Fineshade Road. The lane runs south from the main street, opposite Poplar Farmhouse, behind Keeper's Cottage and straight up to the church's north door (figure 6), with a well-metalled surface of cobblestones for much of its length; a section of this has been exposed in the churchyard. Sadly, some 50 yards of the road's surface was removed in the 1950s when a gas pipeline was laid; the stones were never replaced and no-one knows what happened to them. In the nineteenth century a gas lamp was erected a few yards from the main street. This can still be seen, Wakerley's one and only street lamp, though it cannot have provided much more illumination than to indicate the start of the track. Strangely, none of this lane is a public right-of-way, or even a permissive footpath, despite it having been in constant use for many hundreds of years! The Jurassic Way, a national long-distance footpath, skirts the north and western boundaries of the churchyard with an entrance through the stone wall from the west, and this does offer a legitimate route from the village up the side of the former Exeter Arms. Wakerley church, dedicated to St John the Baptist, has been declared redundant and is now cared for by the Churches Conservation Trust. A Grade 1 listed building, it is well worth visiting and will be the subject of a further article.

none of this lane is a public right-of-way, or even a permissive footpath

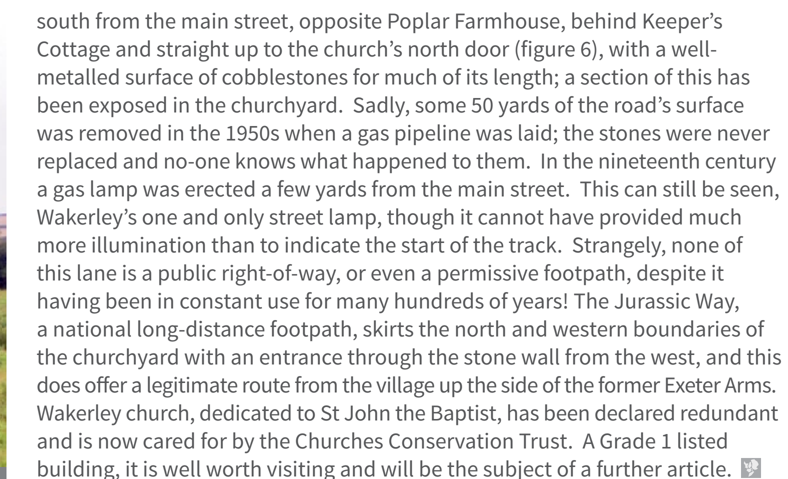

FIGURE 3: THE CAUSEWAY OR BANK SEEN FROM WAKERLEY BRIDGE; THE RAILWAY EMBANKMENT IS BENEATH THE TREES IN THE BACKGROUND

FIGURE 4: THE ENTRANCE TO THE CULVERT UNDER THE CAUSEWAY

FIGURE 5: AERIAL VIEW OF WAKERLEY MANORIAL EARTHWORKS (CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY COLLECTION OF AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY © COPYRIGHT RESERVED)

**Mark Dobson**
**Barrowden and Wakerley Parish Magazine**

**References**: G. K. Chesterton, *The Rolling English Road* (1913). Glen Foard, David Hall, Tracey Partida, *Rockingham Forest: an atlas of the medieval and early modern landscape* (Northamptonshire Record Society, 2009). W. G. Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape* (London, 1955). Andrew Thrush and John P Ferris (eds) *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1604-1629* (Cambridge University Press, 2010). Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, *An Inventory of Archaeological Sites in Northamptonshire, Volume 1, Northeast Northamptonshire* (HMSO, 1975).

FIGURE 6: WAKERLEY CHURCH, SHOWING THE STONE TRACK LEADING TO THE NORTH DOOR

# STAND FIRM

BY RUTH IMESON

## Civil Defences in Newark During World War II

During the summer of 1940 the Royal Air Force overpowered the might of the Luftwaffe in the Battle of Britain. This was swiftly followed by the postponement of Hitler's planned invasion of Britain, codenamed Operation Sea Lion, in September. In June 1941 Germany invaded the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, the country remained on high invasion alert, as it was to for several years to come. The danger of invasion still seemed very real, and preparations continued to be made by English authorities, both military and civilian, as far inland as Nottinghamshire.

> *"You should give all the help you can to our troops; Do not tell the enemy anything. Do not give him anything. Do not help him in any way."*

Amongst the four million items at Nottinghamshire Archives are two sets of documents which relate to the invasion threat. The first is part of the Nottinghamshire County Council collection, which contains minutes, reports and official instructions. The second appears to have been collected by a member of Newark's Home Guard. It contains a number of maps which specify the locations of defences in and around the town of Newark. The defences include such obstacles as road blocks, observation posts, Lewis gun positions, bomb posts, trenches, headquarters and stores.

In the event of an invasion the population was expected to observe the *"STAND FIRM"* order and the civil authorities were instructed to prioritise the maintenance of military communications above all else. Such instructions provided were designed both to maintain society and to disrupt the German attack. Other useful advice included: *"You should give all the help you can to our troops; Do not tell the enemy anything. Do not give him anything. Do not help him in any way."*

Invasion Committees were established in towns and country districts across England in 1941. Their role was to take charge if the Germans came and mobilise such useful things as cars and megaphones in the event of an emergency. Direct military involvement in the work of the Committee remained muted. As the official guidance made clear, military representatives had *"no executive power whatsoever. Their function will be purely consultation, exploration and planning, and the education of the public by preparing them for the sort of emergency which might arise."* Emergency power, therefore, remained vested in the civic authorities in terms of civil, domestic matters.

Yet it was also acknowledged that these were extraordinary times. *"In the past the Army has always thought in terms of fighting abroad. The threat of invasion necessitates for the first time the planning of military operations in the United Kingdom. In order to fight successfully in the United Kingdom, the Army needs the fullest support from the Civil Authorities and the public."*

Thus, the Committee was charged primarily with making plans *"to meet contingencies"* in circumstances ranging from *"large scale bombing before invasion"* to *"the enemy [being] in temporary occupation of the neighbourhood"*. Its own resources were essentially limited. A July audit revealed it had at its disposal 175 picks, 191 shovels, 4 tar boilers and 220 yards of rope.

The Committee was chaired by Colonel Hugh Tallents, DSO, a local solicitor and Newark's Town Clerk. Other members included chief officers from the police, the Home Guard, the National Fire Service, the ARP, the military section commander and other senior officers and members of Newark Council: the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, the Director of Works Services and the County Divisional Surveyor. Tallents had also a dual role as the Food Executive Officer for the Borough. Again, in a statement reinforcing civilian oversight, it was specified that no military member, army or home guard personnel, could chair the Committee.

FIGURE 1: LOCATION OF HOME GUARD UNITS NEWARK (COURTESY OF NOTTIGNHAMSHIRE ARCHIVES)

There were also national concerns about the marked lack of women on such committees. As the County Controller noted: *"the matter of female representation is a recent Ministerial direction"*. Tallents, therefore, was instructed to invite Mrs Florence Parlby, the wife of a local councillor and editor of the *Newark Advertiser*, to join the Committee. He showed some reluctance to do this.

Invasion discussions centred the maintenance of food and water supplies, the evacuation of the population, sites for trench shelters, medical services, fire services, transport, burial of the dead, and petrol storage. A draft scheme was published on 3rd April 1942. Not everything was straight forward. For example, the County Air Raid Precautions Officer commented that plans to remove casualties to towns outside Newark would be unfeasible as *"the Invasion Committee could only act when the town is isolated and if it is not isolated the usual channels of Medical assistance would be open"*.

S A Vanns was a teenager in No 2 Section, 18 Platoon D Company, Newark Home Guard, 11th Notts Battalion. From August 1940, the Home Guard became increasingly regularised and discipled, and equipment slowly improved. Nonetheless, worries persisted that as the immediate invasion crisis passed morale and dissolution would set in. Warning were issued at the beginning of 1941 stating that *"the Home Guard should not attempt to hibernate. The risk of invasion is still real."* All men were issued with 30 rounds of ammunition, along with an order not to load rifles *"without an order"*. Vann's first duties were to man the road block in Winthrope Village and Devon Bridge on Farndon Road.

Figure 1 details the defences to be mounted in the immediate vicinity of Newark Castle. The Newark Home Guard had a total strength of 78 men, armed with rifles and a Lewis machine gun. Ten riflemen were to be situated within the castle grounds, giving them an unimpeded firing position over the River Trent. Road blocks were

> *"the Home Guard should not attempt to hibernate. The risk of invasion is still real."*

to be situated at each end of the bridge, with a total of 20 riflemen attending. More men were to be stationed in buildings further along the North Road and around the railway station. The map also details the proposed defences at the Lincoln Road railway bridge, to the east, comprising 30 men and a Lewis gun.

A larger number of maps also exist for the surroundings villages, which at a cursory glance could be mistaken for defences solely for those locations. However, replotting these positions on a modern map shows clearly that the various road and wire blocks were designed to prevent the enemy from reaching the town of Newark. In figure two the red markers are for road blocks with the purple markers indicating wire blocks. The road blocks were anti-vehicle whilst the wire blocks were designed to stop infantry.

How Newark would have actually fared faced with a full-blown German assault, one can only imagine. This was not the first time that Newark Castle held a defensive position, being strategically important during the sieges which occurred in 1218 and during the English Civil War. On those occasions, the result was determined by negation, quick retreat or protracted engagement. This would unlikely have been the results in 1940 or 1941.

**Ruth Imeson**
**Nottinghamshire Archives (Inspire)**

FIGURE 2

BY EDWARD HAMMOND

# The Napoleonic Wars at home

Coinciding with the bi-centenary of the Battle of Waterloo, there has been increasing interest in the connection between the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815) and domestic life in Britain. Whilst recent works such as Jenny Uglow's *In These Times: Living in Britain Through Napoleon's War 1793-1815* (2014) provide a valuable insight into the relationship between domestic life and foreign conflict, it is clear that there needs to be a closer association between what was happening on the continent and its wider social, economic and political effects, particularly in Britain, and especially in the East Midlands, where towns such as Nottingham gained a reputation for radicalism and violent protest. This article seeks to examine the extent of the war's impact on the livelihoods of people living in Nottinghamshire at the time and how it contributed to the economic and political motives of protest movements before and after 1815. It also intends to provide fascinating examples of reactions to the war from some of the more influential members of the British aristocracy.

The number of men who volunteered to help defend the country against a French invasion was unprecedented. By 1804, numbers reached a record high of 480,000, meaning that nearly one-in-five able bodied men were in uniform, a response which the Prime Minister Henry Addington deemed an *"insurrection of loyalty"*. Less than a decade later, as the conflict raged on and the government continued to impose extortionate levels of war taxation, there would be quite a different form of insurrection.

During the 1790s, there were numerous groups in Nottingham sympathetic to the causes of the French Revolution. By the end of 1792, the town's radical undercurrent had given rise to a popular democratic organisation which advocated parliamentary reform and male suffrage. From this point onwards, as Blackner argues, the people of Nottingham were split into *"two hostile parties, under the appellations of democrats and aristocrats."* Throughout the decade, clashes between Loyalists and alleged Republicans became commonplace. However, by the time of the Napoleonic Wars, allegations of disloyalty in the country were not so apparent, as the volunteer statistics indicate. Indeed, Wheeler and Broadley noted:

> *"If some dissentient voices were heard in 1797-8 when the aftermath of the Revolution still lingered in the land, there was increased enthusiasm in the patriotism of 1801, and burning ardour coupled with absolute unanimity in that of 1803-5."*

As the war dragged on into 1806 and 1807, the greater problem for the government was not one of suppressing radical protest, but of retaining national interest and enthusiasm for the war. Enthusiasm had perhaps already reached its height in Nottingham in 1805, when the news of the victory at Trafalgar was met with widespread celebration, including a general thanksgiving, the delivering of three volleys by the infantry in the market-place, and a Yeomanry dinner at the Flying Horse Inn. In 1806, Napoleon's 'Continental Blockade' sought to strangle the British economy by restricting trade with its European allies. John Beckett has suggested that in Nottingham, interest in the war declined as a result of the depressed state of the hosiery trade, brought about as a result of Napoleon's blockade.

In 1811, the Luddites, outraged by the threat of losing their livelihoods as framework knitters, and being left destitute due to the tide of rapid industrialisation and astronomical food prices, began to wreak havoc across Nottinghamshire villages with sporadic machine-breaking. The government, aware of the need for greater, cheaper production, disapproving of violence, and terrified of the spread of French revolutionary principles, tried to stamp out trouble with policing measures and severe repressive legislation. In 1812, the introduction of the Frame Breaking Act made the destruction of stocking frames a capital offence. During the legislation debate, Lord Byron, an outspoken critic of the war, passionately came to the defence of the Luddites in his maiden speech in the House of Lords:

> *"I have seen them meagre with famine, sullen with despair … Will you erect a gibbet in every field and hang men up like scarecrows? … Are these the remedies for a starving and desperate populace? … The framers of such a bill must be content to inherit the honours of that Athenian lawgiver whose edicts were said to be written, not in ink, but in blood."*

## Lord Byron, an outspoken critic of the war, passionately came to the defence of the Luddites

LORD BYRON (PUBLIC DOMAIN WIKIMEDIA COMMONS)

The Luddite movement is often seen as having purely economic motives. However, as impacts of Napoleon's blockade demonstrate, the plight of Nottingham's framework knitters was also connected to the ongoing war in Europe.

Given the timing of the Luddite movement, and the scale of the response by the government to quell the unrest, it is likely that the protests were partly motivated by political concerns, with Byron referring to the Luddites as the *"Lutherans of politics"*. Indeed, the Tory *Nottingham Gazette* saw Jacobinism as the root of frame-breaking in the town, making Luddism a revolutionary protest. Amidst the panic which erupted in 1816, Henry Enfield, the town clerk, reported to the Home Secretary suspicious meetings in public houses, including *"talk of revolution"*.

One of the policing measures that was brought in to counter Luddism was also unique to Nottingham. In 1812, *"Watching and Warding"* was introduced. All able-bodied men were liable to be called upon, at any time, to go out on duty at night in order to guard the streets and be vigilant for any suspicious activity, with a particular eye towards spotting Luddites. Constables would quite literally watch and ward. One such man was Thomas Carver who, ironically, was also a framework knitter.

Between November and December 1816, Watching and Warding was reintroduced in response to a new wave of Luddism, during which time Carver served as night constable on 13 occasions. Regardless of whether or not the Luddites possessed revolutionary tendencies, there is little doubt that their most ardent defender, Lord Byron, expressed views which would have been considered to be treasonous. On February 18th 1814, during the events which led to Napoleon's first abdication as Emperor, he wrote in his journal:

> *"Napoleon!–this week will decide his fate. All seems against him; but I believe and hope he will win–at least, beat back the Invaders. What right have we to prescribe sovereigns to France?"*

Besides Byron's support for Emperor Napoleon, the opposition to the war and the actions of the Luddites, there are other local instances of dissent. Sir Robert Heron, born in Newark, was the Whig MP for Great Grimsby between 1812-1818 and for Peterborough between 1819-1847. He lived at Stubton Hall on the border of Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire. Writing on June 17, 1815 (the day before the Battle of Waterloo), he voiced his concerns about the state of affairs in Europe and displayed a lack of confidence in the British government's approach to dealing with the turmoil in France, albeit in a slightly more reserved manner than Byron:

> *"Abstractedly, indeed, we have no right to interfere in France … On the most mature consideration, I voted against the war. I incline to think it will be short and successful, but I believe it to be impolitick, if not unjust. I conceive the project of seating Louis XVIII upon the throne, to be a most dangerous precedent likely to be followed by any future conspiracy of Kings … In my opinion, peace might have been preserved."*

Sir Robert did concede, however, that *"in the particular circumstances of the case, we ought to make an effort to save ourselves from the ruin which the secure re-establishment of Napoleon may, and I fear must, bring upon us."* Nevertheless, the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo, and the resolution of the conflict in Europe, did little to alleviate Britain's already ruinous financial problems, and the plight of the labouring classes. Frank Peel cogently argues:

> *"Doubtless there was some gain to the aristocratic class who had combatted so fiercely against the Corsican Parvenu, but to the working population the result was loss, and loss only."*

At the end of the Napoleonic Wars, Britain was still feeling the effects of continued war taxation and the depletion of its resources. According to the *Nottingham Date-Book*, the passing of the first of the Corn Laws in 1815 served only to *"keep up the price of corn at an unnatural rate"*, so further exacerbating the hardships of the people of Nottingham. After 1815, the frequency of organised protests and demonstrations, alongside calls for fairer working conditions and parliamentary reform, increased. These protests can be partly explained by the hardships suffered by some of the poorest in society, many of which were as a result of government policies such as the Corn Laws, or direct consequences of the Napoleonic Wars in the form of market forces which were generated by their aftershocks.

In 1817, a group of men from the Derbyshire village of Pentrich intended to make their way to London, via Nottingham, to overthrow the government as part of a nationwide uprising. The principal leader of the rebellion, Jeremiah Brandreth, was subsequently executed, along with two others, on 7th November 1817 after it had been suppressed by the government.

## About the paper

This paper is based on a lecture delivered in January 2018 to the Friends of Nottinghamshire Archives, a version of which was printed in the *Friends of Nottinghamshire Archives (FONA)* newsletter, 18 (2018), pp. 4-5, available for download at **https://fona.org.uk**

RIGHT: WATCHING AND WARDING 1812 (COURTESY NOTTINGHAM-SHIRE ARCHIVES)

BELOW: JEREMIAH BRANDRETH SATIRICAL PRINT BY GEORGE CRUICKSHANK 1817 (PUBLIC DOMAIN WIKIMEDIA COMMONS COURTESY BRITISH MUSEUM)

TOWN OF NOTTINGHAM.

WATCHING AND WARDING.

A LIST of the Names, Ages, Occupations, and Residences of all the Men, usually and at this Time dwelling within the Ward of Alderman Wright Coldham - Called Markett Ward, above the Age of 17 Years, charged and assessed to the Relief of the Poor therein; and when Notice was given them of their Names being contained in this List.

| NAMES. | AGES. | OCCUPATIONS. | RESIDENCES. | WHEN NOTICE GIVEN. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Edward Bardsley | 45 | Hatter & Hosier | Timber Hill | [illegible] |
| James Bardsley | 68. | Gentleman | D° | |
| James Lomax | 50 | Grocer | D° | |
| Robt Frost | 61 | Hosier | D° | |
| William Roe. | 30 | Hatter & Hosier | D° | |
| Robt Sykes | 64 | Draper. | D° | |
| Saml Doubleday | 56 | Draper. | D° | |
| James Wright. | 48. | Cutler | D° | |
| Jonathan Dunn | 41 | Printer. | D° | |
| Ald. John Bates Esq. | | Wholesale Draper | D° | |
| William Smith | 42 | Grocer. | D° | |
| Saml Smith Esq. | 55 | | D° | |
| Thos Wilson | 35 | Draper | D° | |
| Joshua Gear | 40 | Fish Monger. | D° | |
| Willm Huthwaite | 45 | Draper | D° | |
| Chas Edwd Badger | 63. | Gentleman | D° | |
| Peter Preston. | 34 | Draper. | D° | |
| John Parker | 63 | Tailor | Exchange Alley | |
| John Wilson | 39 | Hair Dresser. | D° | |
| Willm Tomkinson | 40 | Cordwainer | D° | |
| Thos Rudkin | 52 | F. W. K. | D° | |
| Willm Turnnard | 28. | Hair Dresser. | D° | |

Brandreth had fallen victim to a government plot, designed to test the loyalty of the population by tempting revolt by planting spies to infiltrate groups of well-known radicals. Two years later, in 1819, the 'Peterloo Massacre' occurred at St Peter's Field in Manchester. The vastly disproportionate parliamentary representation of urban centres in the north of England, combined with chronic levels of post-war economic depression, led to one of the largest demonstrations (60,000 – 80,000 strong) to be witnessed by the government of the day. Indeed, the Peterloo Massacre is so called in an ironic comparison to the Battle of Waterloo, as a force of Yeomanry charged towards the protesters, which included Waterloo veterans, and, in the panic and chaos which ensued, 15 were killed and up to 700 injured. The events in Manchester only led to even greater calls for reform across the country, and political discontent reached its climax in Nottingham in 1831, when the castle was burned down during the Reform Riots.

In the years shortly after the Napoleonic Wars, to quote Lucy Worsley, Britain looked like it was *"at war with itself"*, and the labouring classes certainly did not feel any increase in prosperity after the war's end. In fact, their prospects only deteriorated. The continued cutting of wages without relief, famine and chronic unemployment was a far cry from the financial extravagances of the Prince Regent. Again, Lord Byron can summarise this turbulent episode in our history for us, who, apostrophising the Duke of Wellington, exclaimed *"I should be delighted to learn who, save you and yours, have gained by Waterloo."*

**Edward Hammond**
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**References**: John Beckett (ed.), *A Centenary History of Nottingham* (Manchester, 1997). John Blackner, *The History of Nottingham* (Nottingham, 1815). Frank Peel, *The Risings of the Luddites* (London, 1880). Jenny Uglow, *In These Times: Living in Britain Through Napoleon's War 1793-1815* (London, 2014). H. F. B. Wheeler and A. M. Broadley, *Napoleon and the Invasion of England: The Story of the Great Terror* (London, 1908).





BY DR HELEN DREW AND DR NICK HAYES

# Writing history

So you've dragged yourself away from the car and the hoover, and you're sitting in front of that pristine white screen waiting for words to appear. Hmmm … Where to start? Here are five top tips to help you create an article and write good history.

The first thing is the need to **tell a good story.** The award-winning American author and historian, David McCullough, believes that *"We are and must be storytellers… And communities have stories"*, many good stories, waiting to be told. Storytelling helps engage your reader; it keeps them turning the page through to the end of your piece. Good history is a mix of storytelling and data (evidence). Putting these two together is not always an easy balance to achieve. Facts by themselves aren't history, no matter how many you've collected during your research. A list of dates, names or events is chronicle. History, by contrast, involves narrative, information, context, and explanation. But the key thing is to have a conversation with the reader; to paint a picture for them. Everyone likes to conduct their own research. That's the easy bit. Your job is to present your findings to a new wide and varied audience, in effect telling the story of your research. The writing process is rarely a smooth one, but don't be put off by this. Take the bad with the good. Be prepared to edit – to come back to a piece. Working to a word limit can be challenging, so make each word you write count. Before you start to write jot down a plan, and structure a beginning, a middle and an ending to your article. This will help your piece to flow, but will also assist in achieving reader engagement and capturing interest. Imagine you're in a bookshop, browsing for your next holiday read. You open a book, read the first few sentences, but they fail to grab you. What do you do? You put the book back and continue your search – so imagine the first few lines of your article are your first page, and it's there you need to start engaging.

Having a plan is also very helpful when considering the second tip: **picking out key points**. Too much information crammed into a small space can be overwhelming, and disastrously can cause arguments and important messages to become lost or confused in a mass of narrative and data, so clearly identify which are the important points you wish to make. Information for information's sake is distracting. We've all been there. Sometimes you're glad to have found any information; sometimes there is simply too much. But it's important to recognise that some points and details are much more important than others. Every historian has to go through a process of selection, or books would go on forever. Ask yourself if the particular point you're considering adds to your article; does it help you to reach the conclusion you wish to make, or is it maybe a distraction to the story you are telling? Make your points clearly, and ditch any unnecessary details, confusing facts, or waffle.

Most people will probably not have prior knowledge or a detailed understanding of the subject area you're discussing. Nor will they know the background to the story you're trying to tell. This leads us to the third tip: the need to **provide context**. This magazine covers a wide topical and chronological range and it appeals to the general reader. It's important, therefore, that you ground your story in at least some of the relevant specifics of the period; better still, if you can provide brief outlines of historical explanation (we can help with this). But its not just about providing background knowledge for its own sake, important as that is. Almost all of what we publish are what you might loosely call case studies: detailed research on the specific. To give your story bite you need to tell it against the backdrop of broader events: that is, to show how your own research illustrates or is related to the whole, or at least part of that whole. Doing this means you have a bigger story to tell. History is largely about explaining change or continuity across time: sometimes across centuries, sometimes decades, sometimes only years or months. Setting your own work against the times gives it extra meaning. Don't offer lists of names, dates, random facts and events; focus on the material that corelates to your own research.

Indeed, if you are thinking about why things change or why they stay largely the same, then you're already writing history in your head. Good articles have a **sense of purpose and direction**. They seek to ask questions and provide explanations about why this or that happened, or sometimes why it didn't. To take a common example. It's frequently suggested that both the First

Ellerlie House, Nottingham. Minutes of Special Meeting of Inquiry 16 March 1928 (Nottingham University Manuscripts Dept)

Lady Charles Bentinck, who chairs the meeting, questions the nurses.

Nurse: "I have good food at home but nothing like what I have here regarding variety. It is splendid." The nurse said they did not make complaints. It was the patients. They, the nurses, have put up with everything, their rudeness, and swearing, and having to put them to bed when they come home drunk and sick.

Upon this patient [Mason] asking the matron's permission to go to a football match, she said "Yes but be in by 7.30 pm sharp and when you can put yourself to bed like Issacs you can have 9 o'clock leave." Sister says Matron did say that. Mason comes home the worse for drink and abusive. Issacs comes home but is unable to get himself into bed.

When this patient [Issacs]complained to the doctor of a pain the matron said he cannot have much pain as he can always go out to football matches. The nurses said this was quite right. Issacs goes out practically all day long, whether it is raining, or otherwise. This particular weekend he asked permission to go to the football match. Matron would not grant permission owing to the terrible day, and the fact that he would be sitting throughout the match in the weather. The next morning on Matron going through the ward, Issacs called out "Myself and Orderly" meaning he required the usual tea money allowance. He had been to the match ignoring Matron's "No".

Upon this patient [Mason] arriving at the home at 4.45pm after leaving (my Matinee) he asked the Nurse if he might have a cup of tea. She said, "NO". He said, "will you ask the Matron?" She said, "No, because you could only get an answer that would hurt your feelings." The nurse said in answer to this complaint these were not the exact words, but Mason came home after tea had been cleared away, and simply called out "Tea for myself and Mr .... Orderly" in a very rude way. Nurse would have got him a cup of tea if he had asked in a polite way.

FIGURE 1





## Storytelling helps engage your reader; it keeps them turning the page through to the end of your piece.

and Second Worlds had a major and lasting impact on British society, changing it significantly. Partly this is because we're constantly being told that this is the case, and partly it's because the events were so big that they must surely have had a major impact. There are two good articles in this issue that explore this. Jane Whitaker looks at the impact the Great War had on drinking habits in Derby (and indeed elsewhere) between 1914-18. Tom Thorpe examines volunteering and recruitment patterns in Leicester in the first two years of the war. To take Tom's piece first. We're all probably all familiar with the recruitment poster *"Britons Lord Kitchener Needs You"*: it's iconic and became a part of the national story. We know that floods of men rushed to join the colours. Kitchener called for 100,000 volunteers. By the end of 1914 some 1.2m had answered this rallying cry. But what Tom points out is that in Leicester, particularly, but also in the county and in other local towns and cities, the rush to volunteer was distinctly muted. And he then explains why. The evidence suggests that many placed personal interests and beliefs first, or, put a different way, that the immediate impact of war was in this respect limited and not as its been remembered. Jane's article looks essentially at the impact of restrictive wartime regulation – reduced opening hours, punitive taxation, etc - on drinking habits. It's interesting to note that a vocal Temperance Movement was already a feature of Victorian and Edwardian society, but that the war provided enhanced opportunities to broadcast this message under the guise of national necessity. It's certainly, true, as she shows, that wartime consumption of alcohol fell sharply, as did prosecutions for drunkenness. But, as she points out, when regulations were relaxed after the war, both rose markedly, albeit not to pre-war levels. We particularly liked her accounts of how local people sought to circumvent or ignore the law (what you might loosely call popular resistance). Here's she's telling personal stories to illustrate a broader picture. It works well.

One of best ways of telling a good story is to **use direct quotes**. Again, achieving a good balance can be tricky. What you don't want is to have endless 'scissor and paste' quotations which swamp the narrative, or quotes that run for half a page. What you do want is the shortest extract that illustrates the point you wish to make (this applies to quoting secondary sources too). The direct quoting of archival material can really help bring your story to life. These are, after all, direct voices from the past: so it brings that past nearer. The question then is what to quote? Ali Flint's article is built largely around a collection of intimate family letters, in this case relating to Maria Talbutt, described as being dumb from birth, who in today's parlance would be seen as having severe learning difficulties. Ali has found some wonderful extracts. Maria's mother writes poignantly that: *"Maria is quite well she w'd unite with us in best love was she able to express her sentiments."* Her sister notes tenderly, *"poor little thing she [Maria] has what no one else has with the measles, a good appetite."* Her brother replies: yes, *"do not let Maria indulge in her excellent appetite."* In Peter Hammond's article, how better to illustrate the scale of the destruction caused than to note that one warehouse *"was completely lifted into the air and scattered in heaps of ruins, not one stone being left standing upon another."* We also learn the fate of the man responsible for the great explosion in Nottingham in 1818: his body was spread out far and wide, leaving a *"hideous track of blood and brains, pieces of skull and flesh, upon the grass, where his mangled remains had passed along."* All capture moments in time, but more importantly they add to the story and our understanding.

Ali's quotes allow us to enter into a private world; Peter's, indirectly, tell us something, too, of the nature of sensationalist reporting. It was perhaps only fitting that the perpetrator came to a grizzly end.

Most of what we write comes in the form of a synopsis. We piece together information from the historical evidence and from other histories to offer coherent accounts of certain events. But when we quote directly, what we are looking for are phrases or words that capture the moment or say something striking or particularly representative. Consider the extract of Minutes of Ellerslie House, a home for paralysed ex-servicemen established in 1917 (Figure 1). The home/hospital is paid for by public subscription and through capitation fees from the Ministry of Pensions. But all is not what it seems. You get a very clear sense of this as you read through the transcript. There are so many good quotes in this short extract that implicitly capture the disquiet and torment of these men, and the frustration and muted anger of the staff. Clearly this is not what the subscribers expected when they put their hands in their pockets to fund the home. If you were writing about Ellerslie House some of those highlighted words would surely find their way into your account, for they starkly capture both the human and institutional voice: *"It was the patients. They, the nurses, have put up with everything, their rudeness, and swearing, and having to put them to bed when they come home drunk and sick."* Sometimes writing history is easy!

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### *In short...*

1. *Tell a good story*
2. *Pick out key points*
3. *Provide context*
4. *Have a sense of purpose and direction*
5. *Use direct quotes*

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