

Tamworth

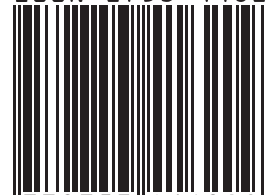
HERITAGE

Magazine

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Preserving the Past, Recording the Present
Safeguarding the Future

Tamworth Heritage Magazine

The magazine is produced four times a year, Winter, Spring, Summer, Autumn, by Tamworth Heritage Magazine for the public with an interest in Tamworth Heritage and history.



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Back Image: Vikings at the Town Hall, Market Street, Tamworth © **JAmelia**

Tamworth Heritage Magazine Editorial Board

The Editorial board assists production of in house articles and checking of submissions.

This board currently comprises:

Jill Gadsby of the **Tamworth Genealogy Group** who has access to all sorts of databases on genealogy, history and newspapers. With a background as a legal secretary her research is thorough and precise.

Diane Wells, of the **Tamworth History Group** who has a lot of experience in local Tamworth history coupled with many years teaching in Tamworth.

Chris Hills BSc FRGS, FRSA, RPS A published author for 45 years on history, culture, travel and related topics. A Fellow of both the Royal Geographical Society and Royal Society of Arts. Also a member of the Royal Photographic Society and runs **Tamworth Digital Archive**.

Anthony Poulton-Smith BA, Assistant Editor and well known speaker on things historical having written numerous books on historical subjects.

Dr Simon Peaple BA, PhD (History) who has held a history teaching post at Princethorpe Collage and the post of Research Fellow at Birmingham University. He has published several history books and is a former Mayor of Tamworth.

Preserving the Past, Recording the Present
Safeguarding the Future

Welcome from the Editor So far So good! Would you like to be part of history?



Well we are still here with the **Second Issue!** A little larger than the first and **hopefully, a new regular column: Doors of Tamworth.** Each issue we will feature a door in Tamworth. Some doors have history. Some are entrances to, often unknown, delights. Some are just quirky. However to continue we still need input from readers. **We have some articles for issues 3 and 4 but not enough to make a magazine. So write to the Editor.**

Our interest: was raised by a video on YouTube. YouTube started in 2005. The video posted in 2022 is of a US TV show first broadcast in 1948 This is not the fantastic or interesting part. The fantastic part is it is a recording of man born in 1846 talking about the 1860s and fighting in the American Civil War, complete with photos of him at the time he is talking about. Photography having been invented in 1835 and became a usable medium by the 1850s The recording was made when he was 101 and probably the last witness of the US Civil War. Watch the video <https://youtu.be/IBMcYCb9NDA>



It is important that we create and preserve oral histories like this for future generations.

What Tamworth Digital Archive would like to do is interview Tamworthians who can talk about their local history, hopefully with family/work photos. What people remember of the shops, factories and streets before they were re-developed in the 1960s So, contact Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk about helping create Tamworth Oral History for the Tamworth Digital Archive

The Tamworth History and Genealogy Groups are interested in local history. That is the history of “ordinary” people rather than the lords of the manor, The social history of the less famous families contain so much history and useful information that is over looked in he history of kings, lords, vicars, MP s etc

Finally we now have an Editorial Board who can help with research. We have access to many resources for research and fact checking. We hope to maintain a high standard for both production and the content. We can also help if you want to write an article but don't know where to start. So email the Editor

Email Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk

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The female Mayors of Tamworth

By Chris Hills
& Jill Gadsby

After an event in late 2022 with the Mayor Moira Greateorex where former Mayor Tina Clements was also present it was suggested that we could get all the living former female Mayors together for a video to discuss the life and times of Tamworth's female Mayors. It was thought by all present that Tamworth's first female Mayor would be sometime in the "swinging" and liberated 1960s. That would be, it transpired, Miss Ticklebank (below) in 1968. It came as a surprise to all that when the records were pursued a bit more that the first female Mayor was some 31 years earlier in 1937, Miss Alice Argyle.



Miss Alice Argyle, Mayor 1936
(Tamworth Digital Archive)

Alice Argyle was more than just Tamworth's first female Mayor! In 1930, a scant two years after Women (over 21) got the vote, Tamworth's first female Councillor! This was not the end of her achievements which we will come to later. However, we shall start at the beginning...

Alice Evelyn Argyle born 29 March 1877 to Edward & Annie Kate Argyle of Hawthorne House, Upper Gungate, Tamworth. Father's occupation was a Solicitor. She was baptised on 18 June 1877 at St Editha's Church, Tamworth.

On the Census for 1881 Alice was living with her parents Edward and Annie, elder brother Edward and younger brother Charles at Gungate, Tamworth. Sadly Charles passed away later that year. By 1891



Miss Ticklebank, Mayor 1969
(Tamworth Digital Archive)

she was still living there with older brother Edward and sisters Gertrude, Edith, brother Harold and the youngest sibling Madeline born that year.

1901 finds Alice aged 24 still at Hawthorne Lodge with her father, now a widower; her mother Annie having passed away in 1899, her elder brother Edward had by then left home but her younger siblings Gertrude, Edith, Harold and Madeline were still living there.

As her two youngest sibling were only 14 and 10 it can be assumed that Alice, as so often the case being the eldest daughter, had to take on the role of woman of the house, taking care of the household and be the mother to the her younger siblings.

In 1907 Ernestine De Hamel listed in the Tamworth Herald the names of subscribers to the Tamworth Branch of the Red Cross Society and Alice's name is on the list. In addition Alice was secretary of the NSPCC in Tamworth in 1909. A post she still held in 1917.

From 1914 through to 1918 Alice became a British Army, British Red Cross Volunteer at the Tamworth Workrooms 4788. Her particular duties were on the sewing and knitting committee. Following the end of WW1 and on the 1921 Census Edward Argyle and Alice are still resident at Hawthorn Lodge. Edward by now is an old man in his 80's and Alice's occupation is given as "Home Duties". Though in 1924 she also found time to be Vice Chair of Governors (alongside William McGregor as Chair) for the Tamworth Girls High School.

Alice Argyle was still a Governor for the School in 1928 coming 2nd in the voting out as duly elected to one of the seats.



Tamworth Board of Governors
(The British Newspaper Archive)

In 1927 Alice Argyle appears on the Tamworth Board of Guardians as her father had been up until his death in 1926 aged 86. The Board seems to have dealt with the workhouse, children's homes and the poor. The Board wound up in March 1930, "*due to changes in local government*", and changes to the Poor Law. This may have prompted Alice, in October that year, to stand as a Candidate for Tamworth Town Council. She was still the Secretary of the NSPCC and was Chair of the Woman's Unionist Association at this time.



Tamworth Board of Governors
(The British Newspaper Archive)

In October 1930 Miss Alice Argyle, having been sponsored by the Townswoman's Guild, became Councillor Argyle!

Miss Argyle was not the first female councillor in the UK, though they were very uncommon. However, she was the first in

Tamworth. This was only just two years after women (over 21) got the vote!

In October 1931 the Tamworth Herald reports that Alice Argyle was presiding over a meeting of the National Union of Women Teachers

In 1936 Alice Argyle became The Mayor, the first Lady to hold that position in Tamworth. Whist not the first female Mayor in the UK, the first female Mayor in the UK was Elizabeth Garrett Anderson in 1908, a female Mayor was still uncommon in the 1830s. .



Sometime after her father's death in 1926 but before the 1939 Register Alice moved from Hawthorne Lodge to 15 Wigginton Road and is shown as living on "Private Means".

After her year in Office as Mayor Miss Argyle continued as a councillor, for another decade through World War 2, becoming Tamworth's first female Alderman in 1946. The title is Alderman regardless of gender. NOTE in recent times the USA, the only other country to have the title, does have Alderwoman according to several US sources. Sadly Alderman Alice Argyle only enjoyed this title for 4 years.

Alice died on 15 August 1950 aged 83 at Tamworth General Hospital having been admitted the week before having had a

seizure at home The Cedars, Wigginton Road.. She had attended Wigginton Church garden party with Mrs. Bond, her sister. Probate of her Will was granted on 9 November 1950 to her brother, Harold Victor Argyle, a solicitor, her sisters Edith Margaret Bond, a widow, and to Michael Victor Argyle, a barrister at law, Alice's nephew. Her estate was valued at £9,626 7s 11d. (Worth about £300,500 in today's money)

The funeral notice mentioned that Alderman Alice Argyle, whilst she was serving as a member of the Town Council

one of Miss Argyle's major concerns was the establishment of new fire station. She was also member of the Tamworth Waterworks and Sewage Disposal Joint Committees. In the two years before the war, Miss Argyle gave her time unceasingly to the

development of the air raid precautions in the borough. She regularly attended London conferences, and it was due to her efforts that when war came the organisation in Tamworth was so well advanced. Miss Argyle was chairman of the Tamworth Hospital Management Committee at the time the hospitals were nationalised, a former chairman of the Governors of Tamworth Girls' High School, a former chairman and a member until her death of the Tamworth Food Control Committee, a former chairman of the Townswoman's Guild, with which she had a long association, and a former chairman of the Tamworth branch of the Women's Conservative Association. She had been a member of the Parochial Church Council of St. Editha's Parish Church since its

formation, and only this year retired from the position of secretary the Altar Fund. She was also a trustee of both Guy's and Rawlett's charities-, and was secretary of the Tamworth branch of the R.S.P.C.A. for twenty years

There are other committees mentioned in this article and other numerous articles in the Tamworth Herald. The only thing Miss Argyle seems not to have done is marry. Though I am at a loss to work out when she could have fitted this in to her very busy and full life. One of the great Heroes of Tamworth alongside the more well known Guy, McGregor, Peel, Marmion etc.

Alice Argyle died 18 years before Tamworth saw the next female Mayor, Miss Ticklebank in 1968. However it was only 11 more years to the next female Mayor Mrs Suzie King in 1979. Since then the gap between female



Mayor Suzie King, 1979
(Tamworth Digital Archive)

Mayors has been consistently less than 10 years and sometimes they follow on for example Mrs Gant followed Mrs Clements in 2012/2013. There have been a total of 16 Female Mayors in Tamworth the role held by 15 ladies as Mrs Maureen Gant served twice 2006 and 2012. At the time of writing April 2023 the Mayor of Tamworth is Mayor Mrs Moira Greateorex.



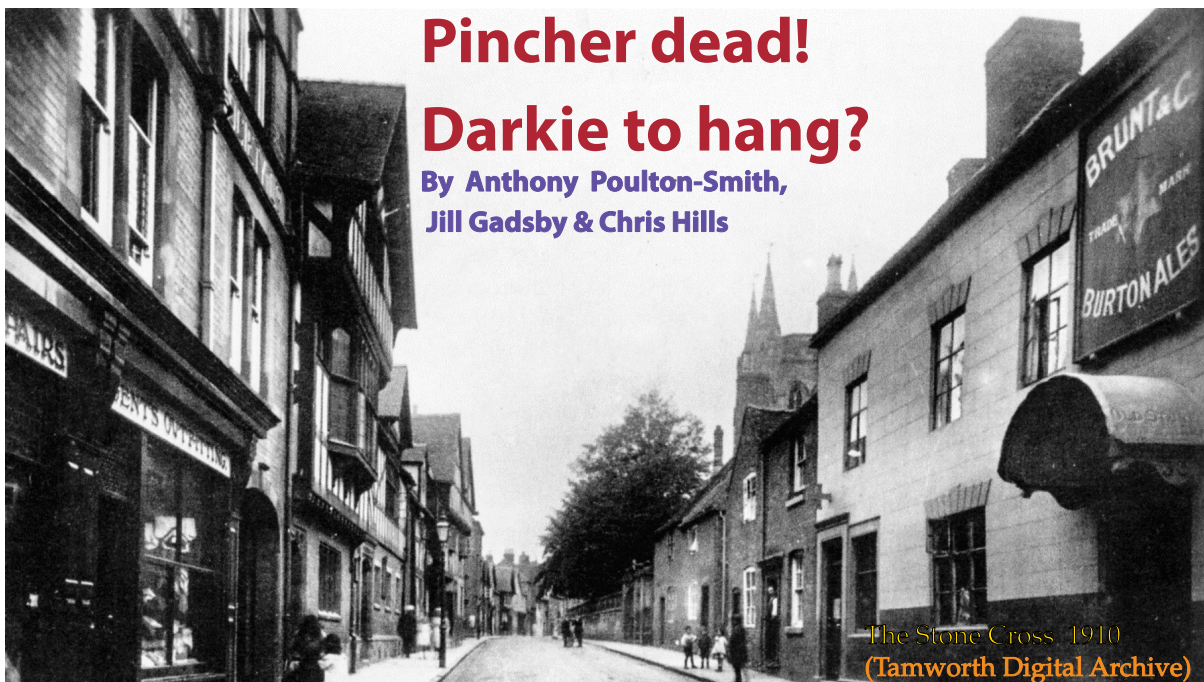
Moira Greateorex, Mayor 2022/23
(Tamworth Borough Council)

Female Mayors of Tamworth

Miss Alice Argyle (1937)
Miss L Ticklebank (1968)
Miss C King (1979)
Mrs N. B. Padfield (1982)
Mrs I. E. Davies (1983)
Mrs M. Lewis (1994)
Mrs Joan M. Jenkins (1993)
Mrs Patricia Dix (1999)
Mrs M. Clarke (2002)
Mrs M. P. Couchman (2003)
Mrs Maureen. Gant (2006)
Mrs Tina Clements (2012)
Mrs Maureen Gant (2015)
Mrs Rosemary Claymore (2020)
Mrs Moira Greateorex (2022)

Is it Lady Mayor or Mayoress?

Due to protocol the answer is not what you expect. A female Mayor is a Mayor. A Mayoress is the female consort of a male Mayor. A Lady Mayoress is the female consort of a Lord Mayor. A male consort to a Mayor is Mayors Consort or Lord Mayors Consort. So do not, under any circumstances, address a female Mayor as a Mayoress or Lady Mayor lest you want to get a sharp rebuke!



Pincher dead! Darkie to hang?

By Anthony Poulton-Smith,
Jill Gadsby & Chris Hills

Tamworthians are in a state of shock as the Tamworth Herald announced the death of Pincher! This was made worse by the news of it being the first murder recorded in the town for 90 years.

Some of you may have realised this is not a contemporary story. Indeed, this story comes from August 1901 when, as already indicated, the town awoke to the shocking news of the first murder in their town since 1810.

We must cast our minds and our imagination back to Friday 30 August 1901 and the Old Stone Cross Inn, Church Street Tamworth, where landlord Joseph Guest had been Landlord for four years. He had always had several labourers and navvies lodging there, it being a favourite establishment with those workers. Four of those lodgers were called to the inquest the following week, in front of the coroner, Dr Joy, with Mr. J. H. Dewes representing Joseph Guest, with evidence produced by Inspector Marson. When details of the evening's events unfolded.

The Landlord, Joseph Guest, spoke of the deceased as a quiet man who had been lodging there for a little over a week on the occasion before his death. Although known as 'Pincher', Guest had no notion as to why he was known as such, his "real" name was apparently George Baker (or Charles Baker according to some). On the night in question Pincher had been drinking at a table with Foster, Milner, and Stevens. Guest was acquainted with Foster and Milner, but



Old Stone Cross 2023

© JMedia

Stevens, known as "Darkie" because of his dark hair and clothing, had only been lodging at the pub for two nights and Guest said did not really know him. Between 9:30pm and closing time that evening he had served three quarts of ale to their table, Milner having paid for one quart and Stevens two. As closing time neared, they ordered a fourth quart which Stevens collected. But Guest, pointing out nobody had paid, retrieved the quart of ale, bottled it up, and corked it.

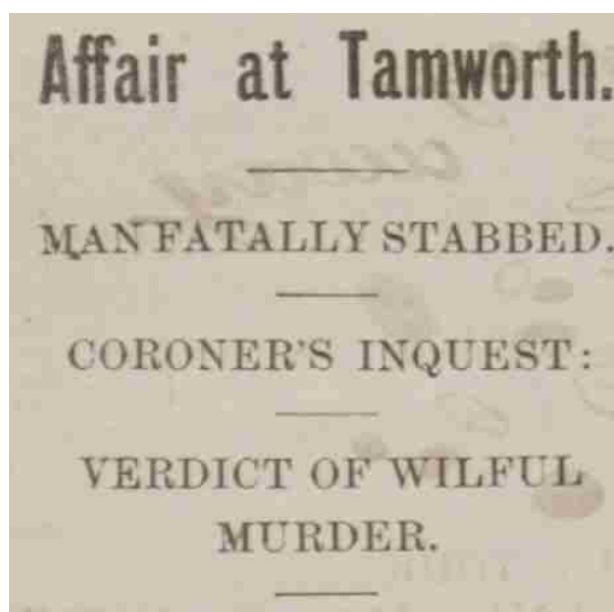
Guest then told how he heard Milner demand Stevens should pay for it. When Stevens replied he had no money, Milner said "I have given you eight penn'orth of coppers," but Stevens denied it. *Note that 8d is worth £2.70 today and a Quart is 2 pints. This in itself might start an argument in 2023!* However in 1901 an argument did ensue with both Milner and "Darkie" Stevens calling the other a liar, their confrontation only made worse when "Pincher" Baker confirmed Milner had, indeed, given Stevens the coins and offered to fight Stevens.

Baker and Stevens did not fight at that point, they were told by Guest to cease arguing or go outside. When Baker said he could fight two with ease and began to remove his coat, Guest stood between the two of them and they backed off. As he returned to the bar, Guest heard a voice, he did not know who, say "Now drop it, and let's hear no more about it." Reaching the bar the landlord called last orders at ten minutes



Old Stone Cross Courtyard

2023 © JAmédia



to eleven. The landlord heard nothing more and assumed the matter had blown over.

Moments after serving the last ale of the evening, Guest told how Foster, who until this point had not been involved in the arguments, had burst into the room and told him to come quickly. Following Foster, Guest listened as Foster told him someone had knocked a man down in the yard. When they arrived, they found George "Pincher" Baker lying flat on his back, his head on the flagstone path leading to the stable. Guest put his hand under the man's head to lift him up and carry him to somewhere he could lay comfortably. On doing so he felt the blood at the

back of the head and said "Good God, you have knocked the back of his skull in I should think." But when Guest tried to rouse him by splashing *Tamworth Herald September 7th 1901*
British Newspaper Archive

water on his face and unbuttoning his shirt, he noticed the blood was not coming from his head but from a wound to his chest. George 'Pincher' Baker had been stabbed.

The landlord instructed Milner to fetch a policeman, and PC Lewis soon arrived on the scene. After being appraised of the events thus far, the constable stepped out and sent a message to Inspector Marson and to Dr Fausset. The doctor had examined Baker, officially pronounced him dead, and told Inspector Marson the cause of death appeared to be a wound to the left side of the chest. While the chest was now bare, the knife had clearly passed through the man's coat, waistcoat, and shirt before penetrating the chest. When the policeman asked the doctor how deep the wound was, he did no more than pass him an ordinary everyday carving knife sitting on the kitchen table. With a blade around a foot long and an inch wide, the blood along approximately half its length, blood which was still wet. The inspector simply said, "I think we've found the weapon."

Marson asked the landlord if he had seen the knife before. He replied he had been using it to

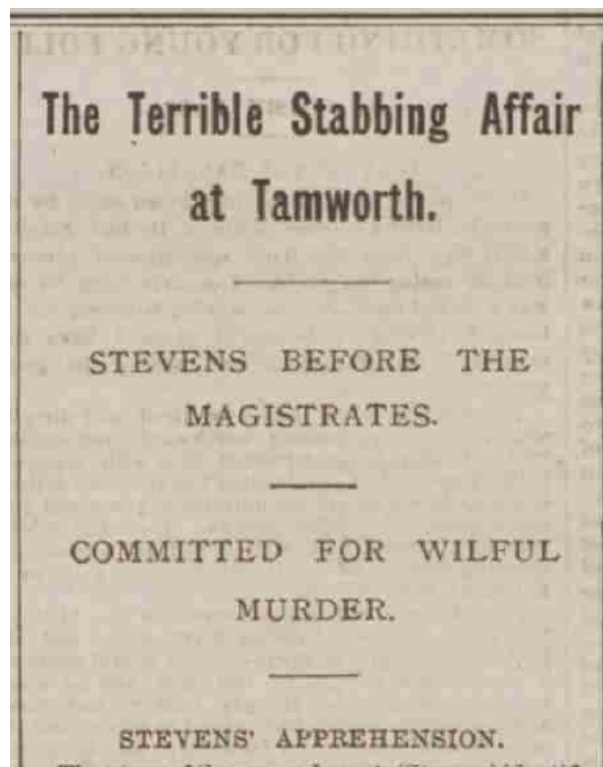
cut up raw meat on that very afternoon. He added the knife had still been in the kitchen at eight o'clock that evening, which was when he had cleaned it and left it on the table. When Marson, having learned about the quarrel an hour so earlier, asked the landlord where the other man, Darkie Stevens, was, he learned Guest had not seen him since he pushed his way past when the landlord was locking up the bar.

The coroner gave good time to explain to the jurors the difference between manslaughter and murder. Indeed, he spent almost as long explaining as the jurors did deliberating. When the jury returned and gave their verdict, the court heard the held that George Baker had been the victim of wilful murder. The coroner echoed the jurors' comments in that he also hoped the man would be brought to justice quickly. John Stevens, was known to most in Tamworth, as 'Darkie', having lodged in The Stone Cross many times over the last two years while working for farmers around the area. You may like to reflect on this comment given the Landlords previous comments.

Stevens was known as Darkie because of his appearance and dress. He was described as a man of about 40 years of age, 5ft. 8in. high, with military bearing, has black hair and moustache, with face small-pox marked ; he was dressed in short dark jacket, dark vest, cord trousers, strong lace-up boots, dark striped shirt, blue and white spotted neckerchief, dark cap. A description of the supposed killer was soon circulated.

Three days later, it is now Monday, a man answering Darkie's description walked into the Swan Hotel in Kilworth, Leicestershire. The Swan was run by Lancelot Holt, a former policeman, his suspicions were immediately alerted when he saw the stranger, and he sent for the local constabulary. The suspect was immediately arrested, and Inspector Marson of Tamworth summoned. Taking the train to Lutterworth, along with a witness named Freeman, who had been lodging at the Old Stone Cross at the time, quickly identified the suspect as John "Darkie" Stevenson.

The party was retained in Kilworth overnight due to a railway breakdown preventing them travelling back to Tamworth that night or indeed the next morning. The three caught the afternoon train, arriving in Tamworth at 15:17. A veil of secrecy had been thrown over the whole arrest, but news leaked out and a large and very

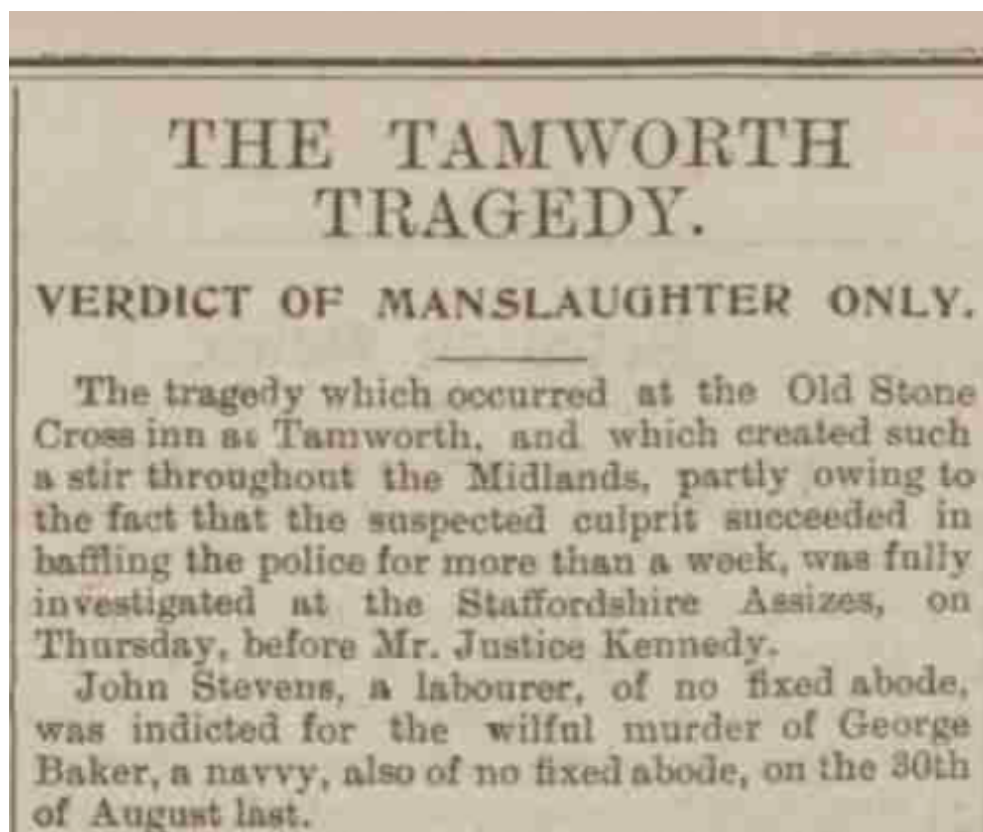


*Tamworth Herald September 14th 1901
British Newspaper Archive*

animated crowd awaited their arrival. The crowd were not permitted access to the station but were clearly very agitated when hanging around outside. Deputy Chief Constable Longton and Superintendent Barrett met the party and took them in an omnibus to the police station, only to be met by another large and boisterous crowd on arrival.

The local paper recorded how the prisoner looked 'ill and pallid' when formally charged that evening. He was reported as responding with "I shall tell the truth" when charged, rather different to his "I have nothing to say at present" when arrested; and "I was protecting myself and took the knife off him in the struggle," on the train. After charging Stevens the police took him back in the omnibus to the railway station and was put on the 5:54pm train to Stafford where he was placed in a cell in Stafford Gaol. He would be held on remand until Wednesday the following week.

Meanwhile, police and officials were still trying to locate the family of George 'Pincher' Baker. Despite several appeals in the press, none came forward until a former colleague suggested he was from Boston in Lincolnshire, and his father was currently working as a ganger for John Aird



Tamworth Herald December 7th 1901
British Newspaper Archive

& Sons, railway contractors in Southampton and Portsmouth. A man did send a telegram to the police to say he would be attending the funeral, but within 48 hours sent a second message to say it was not his son.

On Wednesday 11 September, twelve days after his death, the man's funeral took place. In a weird coincidence, the hearse carrying the coffin passed the top part of Albert Road at the same time as the prisoner, John Stevenson, with a police escort, passed the bottom end of Albert Road on the way to appear before magistrates at Tamworth Town Hall. Brought in on the 9:45

rain from Stafford and again crowds gathered at both the railway station and the town hall, but this time all were quiet. John 'Darkie' Stevens was committed for trial at the next assizes.

Meanwhile the funeral of George Baker proceeded, with his burial covered by the parish as he was without any friends or family being known. Some members of the public attended the funeral, although they were very few. There was, and still is, no certainty as to who Pincher was. Whilst people knew him as George Baker others knew him as Charles Baker which was

inscribed on his coffin. Most in Tamworth knew George/Charles Baker simply as Pincher. Though the authors have yet to determine why he was called that. A few weeks later in December 1901 John Stevens' trial saw him plead Not Guilty to murder at Stafford Assizes. Despite the Coroner's verdict, Stevens was

found guilty of Manslaughter not murder. Mr Justice Kennedy sentenced Stevens to 20 years penal servitude.

Epilogue: In 1917 John Stevens was released on license, running to December 2021, from Dartmoor Prison whence he moved to Darlaston. Two years later in September 1919, now 50 years of age, Stevens surrendered to Police in Walsall for failing to report a change of address. Despite his description at the time of the original crime being "40" he must have been in his early 30s.

However in October at Staffordshire Quarter sessions in October 1919 Stevens plead guilty to stealing a horse, bridle and reins in Wednesbury, later selling them in Birmingham. The Court ordered Stevens to 6 months Hard Labour and to also serve the remainder of his original sentence.

In researching this story the authors have found some gaps and apparent inconsistencies. We will be investigating further. If anyone else does any have any information please let the Editor know.

The Heritage Magazine would like to thank the current Landlady of the Old Stone Cross Amy Gessey for her assistance in retelling the story. It should be noted there has not been a murder at the Old Stone Cross since 1901.



St Editha's under fire.

When St Editha's was targeted by gunfire

By **Chris Hills**

It might surprise many to learn that St Editha's came under direct gunfire. This was not in the middle ages or the War of The Roses, 1455 to 1485, nor the English Civil War 1642 to 1651 but in World War One!

No, there was no land invasion of Tamworth by Germany, no paratroopers dropping in, not even a Zeppelin in sight. So what was this direct, and it has to be said very intentional, gunfire aimed at St Editha's Church? Which invader or enemy would do such a thing?

Actually, initially, no one knew it had happened! In Mitchell's book Tamworth Parish Church published in 1935 he notes that on an inspection in 1921 of the tower for maintenance bullet holes were found in the brass balls atop two of the pinnacles. The holes Mitchell asserts were not there during an inspection in 1910.

Mitchell reports that there was one bullet hole in the upper part of the sphere of the North East panicle and no less than thirty six on sphere of the North West panicle. So at least 37 shots were fired at St Editha's!





These brass balls are 12 inches (33cm) across and are some 40 metres (130 feet) above the ground. The apparent angle was “slightly upwards” these rounds were fired from some distance away all from the North North-West according to Mitchell. That is in the direction of The Peel Hotel/Christopher’s Restaurant. The point is this was over 110 years ago, buildings have changed and the trees grown. So finding the spot will be difficult.

Mitchell also maintains that it was rifle bullets. Whilst machine guns used the same bullets they would not, as that range get that size grouping. It had to be single aimed shots.

In a foot note to his book Mitchell comments that after writing about the bullet holes he was made aware that “the sniper” was a young officer in training who was billeted with the Territorial troops during the war. He goes on to say “His name, sad to relate, now appears upon the stone tablets within the north isle – amongst the fallen.”

For the last few months the WW1 memorial has been covered due to building work and we have been unable to look at it. With more research at the church and military records we should be able to identify the young officer. Someone clearly knew who he was and told Mitchell

My question to you is should we let this lie or do some more research to complete the story and discover who the sniper was? Complete this history and tell his story too?

Email the Editor with your thoughts
Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk

Tamworth Genealogy Group

The astute amongst you will have noticed the name Jill Gadsby appearing on many of the articles as well as on the Editorial Board. Jill is the leading light in the Tamworth Genealogy Group and as a former Legal Secretary is used to searching records and having to be very accurate. Several of us at Tamworth Heritage Magazine rely on her to check names, dates and locations. There are many people with the same name at any one time in the UK.

Tamworth Genealogy Group was formed in mid-2022. The initial members were all part of a previous group that meet in Tamworth but, following a drop in numbers and the pandemic, its Committee decided to discontinue its meetings at the start of 2022.

A small group of members missed having meetings with others to share their interest in family history as well as being able to chat over what they had discovered. Also to brainstorm any problems or brick walls that they had. So it was decided that they would form a new group for this purpose.

The first meetings were held at Tamworth Library but unfortunately, due to the refurbishment of the Library and lack of space at the temporary library it was necessary to find an alternative venue for meetings. Morrison's at Wilnecote kindly assisted with allowing use of their Community Room for which the group is very grateful. The size of the room restricts the numbers who can meet and a larger meeting area is being sort to enable the group to grow. (If you know of a meeting

room we could use for a dozen people email Info@TamworthGenealogy.org.uk)

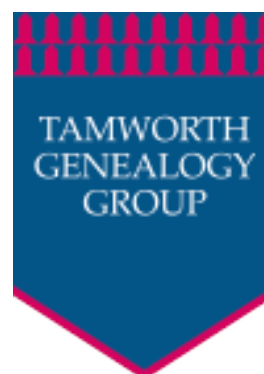
No membership is required. The group would welcome new people who are interested in beginning to research their families but need help to get started, require help to possibly solve a problem or brick-wall or just would like the company of people who share their interest, as well as carrying out a little research.

It must be noted that Tamworth Genealogy Group are not professional genealogists rather they are enthusiastic amateurs. The group do not carry out research on behalf of others but are willing to share their combined knowledge and experience with like minded people in a friendly, welcoming manner.

The Group also have access to some databases and know where to go for other information which can really speed up your progress. The group can also help you avoid common pitfalls when doing genealogy.

For further information please e-mail on Info@TamworthGenealogy.org.uk

<https://www.TamworthGenealogy.org.uk>



MP's Son Survives Fall from Speeding Train

By Anthony Poulton-Smith

1907 – Monday 1st July and the communication cord is pulled on the LNW express from Liverpool at 2pm and stopped at Tamworth. Guard discovered it had been pulled by Mrs Higham, wife of the MP for Sowerby in Yorkshire said her 3.1/2 year-old child had fallen from the train. All trains alerted as far back as Stafford and all stations began a search.

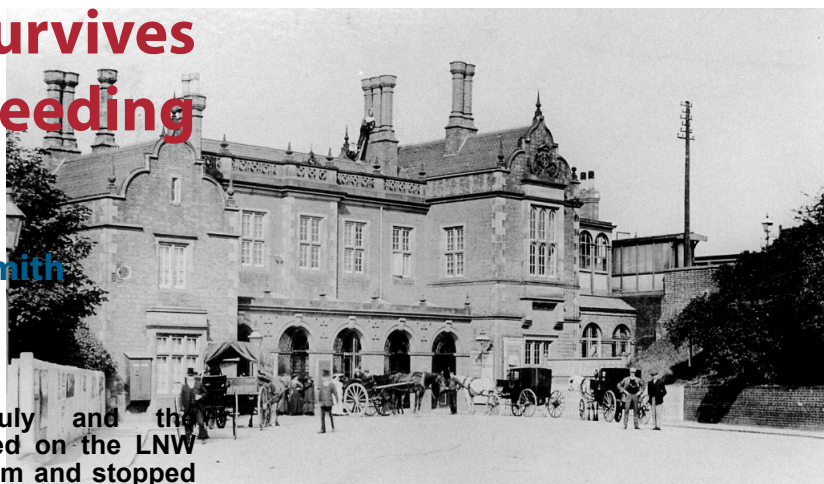
At 4:30pm news came through that the child had been found at Hademore and, badly hurt but alive, was at the cottage of Mrs Smith near Whittington Bridge. Stationmaster Mr Mathews of Tamworth had a down train stopped and accompanied the mother back to Hademore and Whittington, first aid being administered by the district nurse and Dr Homan of Lichfield soon after arriving.

A platelayer ganger had been working when he noticed something moving, it proved to be the child. He carried the child to the cottage after sending a lad to find the nurse whom he had noticed cycling by a few moments earlier. A policeman sent to summon a cab from Lichfield but met the ambulance on the way. How the door came open on a train travelling at 60mph was

never discovered, he was a large boy for 3.1/2 years and it was suspected he had managed to open it himself.

His escape was deemed a miracle, his fall smashing several large stones. He bounced for some 40 yards, coming to rest on the outer edge of the opposite line. He was inches from the line when found and, although conscious, had not attempted to move which was fortunate as the down express had passed not two minutes after he fell here. The driver of the down train had seen the body of the child and felt certain he had hit the mother, as he assumed she would be carrying the infant. He reached Lichfield and alerted the stationmaster who had summoned the ambulance. Father arrived from London Euston later that evening, returning the next day where he made a statement thanking all for their assistance and stating his son was 'progressing nicely'.

The Lichfield Mercury thought the headline "Excitement on the Train Line near Lichfield" appropriate.



GNR Express in 1910
A similar to the train mentioned

Doorway to Tamworth

Where is this doorway in Tamworth? Each issue will feature a door in Tamworth town Centre. Some will be well known, some historic, some quirky and some a little more obscure like this gem. It is in a main shopping street in the town centre. But do you know where?



a media

This season's significant dates and events

collated by Anthony Poulton-Smith

Tamworth FC 1935
(Tamworth Digital Archive)



1 April 1889 - Tamworth now placed in Staffordshire. Warwickshire boundary moved east.

1968 - Councillor Lily Ticklebank became the second woman to serve as Tamworth's Mayor

1840 - Charles Dickens comes to Tamworth, to visit his brother Alfred who worked as a railway worker in Tamworth

29 April 1933 Tamworth FC the first letter was published in the Herald to start the current Tamworth Football Club to compete in "senior circles" of the game. The team photo is above.

2 May 1882 - Baxterley Colliery explosion, 8 men and 1 boy entombed, 23 men died in attempting a rescue.

20 May 796 - Coenwulf became King of Mercia on the death of Ecgfryth

20 May 2018 - Aethelflaed's statue is delivered to Tamworth, the work of artist and sculptor Luke Perry.



22 May 1899 - Tamworth Castle formally opened to the public by the Earl of Dartmouth

23 May 1345 - Great Fire of Tamworth Most of the church and the town centre is destroyed.

22 May 1932 - Tamworth's Great Flood and parts of Bolebridge Street are under 8 feet of water.

24 May 1996 - Sir Robert Peel Hospital opened by Lady Lightbown

26 May 1963 - Twycross Zoo opens, previously the collection had been at Hints

27 May 1811 - Census records population of the town as 2,991 and of the parish 5,994. It is now about 80,000

8 June 1973 Margaret Thatcher opens the new Tamworth Central Library

12 June 918 - death of Aethelflaed

23 June 1959 - The Old Bell Inn called time for the last time.

Click on the picture to left to see videos of the Installation of Aethelflaed also interviews with the sculptor and how it was made in the factory [click here to see them!](#)

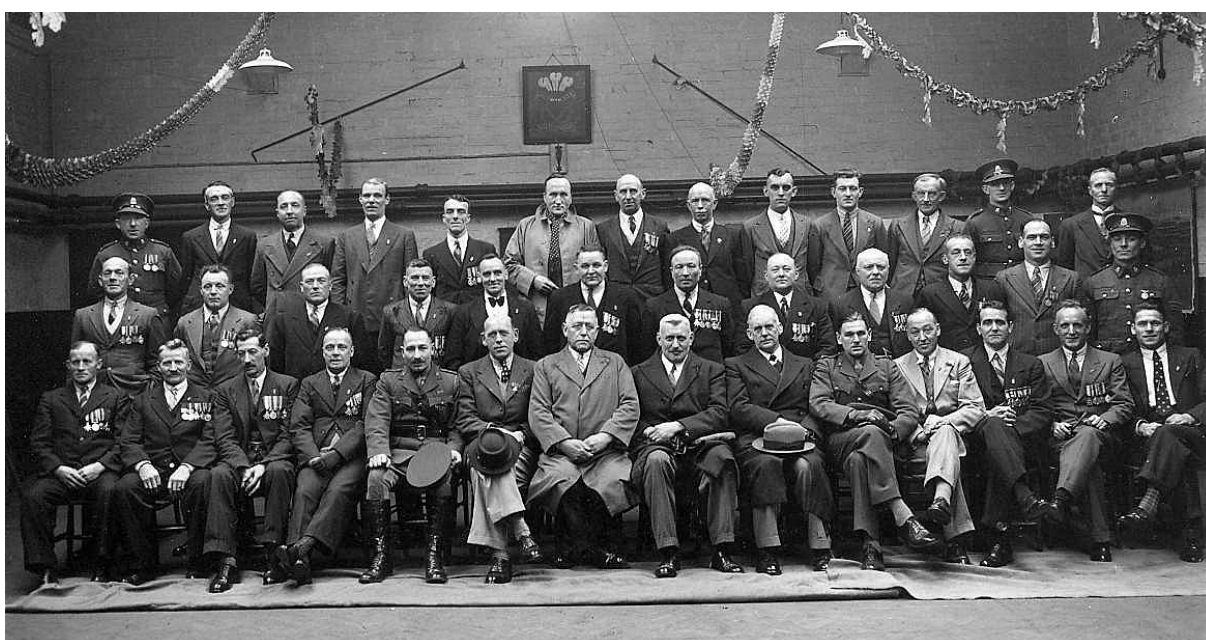


Tamworth Branch

by Chris Hills & Jill Gadsby

Well this was intended to be a full article on the Royal British Legion Tamworth Branch. As we dug into it we discovered it was, as you can imagine being 100 years old, quite a task especially as much of it has been recorded in various places, particularly the Tamworth Herald. Then the Heritage Magazine team gained access to some new resources that opened up a lot of information. The FDDSS

Branch that became the British Legion Branch. So rather than present half an article we are holding this one over to the next edition to try and give a complete history. On that point if anyone has any photos of the Tamworth Legion Branch we can scan that would be great. Please contact the Editor.



Tamworth Around the World: New Hampshire, USA



TAMWORTH HISTORY CENTER

There are a dozen or so Tamworth's around the world. Tamworth, NSW, Australia and New Hampshire, USA are the two more well-known ones to the people of Tamworth UK.

We will cover Tamworth NSW in the next issue. The [Tamworth NH History Centre](#) has been going some 70 years in the USA, well out stripping Tamworth Heritage UK's mere 20 years.

Despite a [population of only 2,812 \(in 2020\)](#) Tamworth New Hampshire has a wonderful History Center as shown below. The town was named in 1766 by the Governor Benning Wentworth in honour of his friend Admiral Shirley, Viscount Tamworth who was one of the [Ferrers family](#). Tamworth NH is a rural town nestled in forests that are larger than Staffordshire!

Alice Posner of the History Center has made their newsletters available to us [Click Here](#) (as they are PDF's you can sign up for them) They do seem to have a lot of activities.

They also have a substantial building (see photo on right) containing a library and museum.



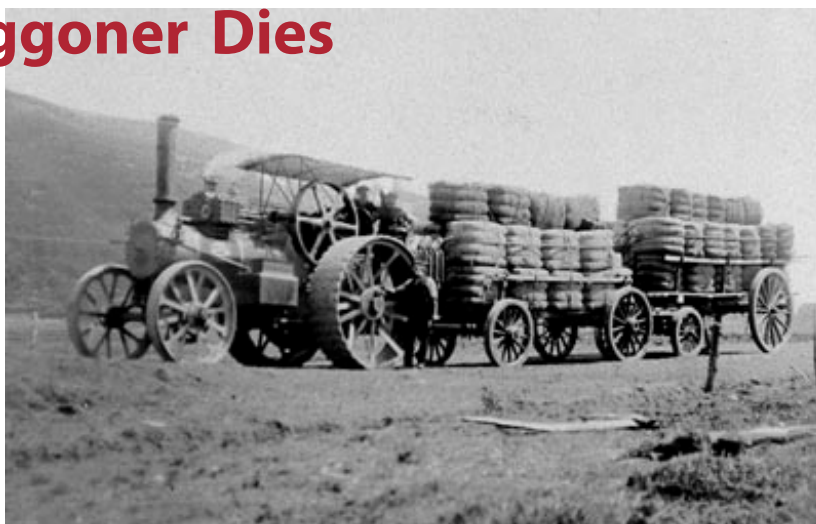
The History Center has a video explaining the history of the group since 1952 "with excursions to earlier times" <https://youtu.be/G84K6Cc5GV0> There are many other interesting videos on the channel.

Judging by their events calendar and their YouTube channel they are very active. So if you are in New Hampshire take a trip to Tamworth before returning to the UK.



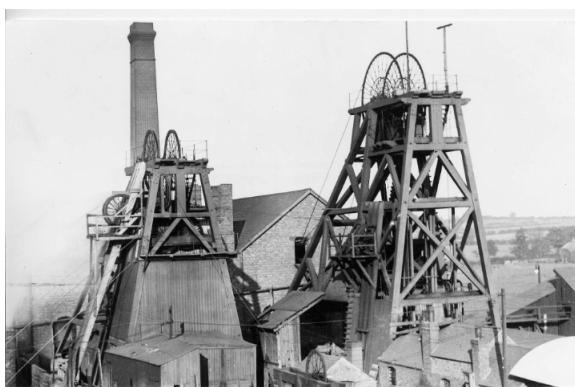
Gungate Waggoner Dies Tragically

By Anthony Poulton-Smith



It is 1901. To be precise, Saturday 26th October 1901 and at about 10:30 for Jesse Joseph Quartermaine of Upper Gungate in Tamworth, it was a fateful day.

A procession of three waggoners pulled by an E Dank and Co traction engine (from Oldbury) was transporting three large colliery wheels for Messrs' Thompson & Co of Tamworth, from Tamworth to Hanley. Colliery wheels are the big wheels atop the towers at the pit head. The cable goes over them to wind the lift with the men and coal up and down the mine shaft. They are large, heavy and expensive.



The steam powered traction engine (a road going railway engine) was the heavy hauler of the 1800s and indeed the first half of the 1900s before giving way to diesel powered trucks after WW2. The convoy of three waggoners pulled by the engine a team of six: From Dank was Alfred Evans who was in charge Walter Bootan (the steerer or), Joseph

Mullett (the driver), Mr Podbury, Mr Barnes, and Benjamin Skidmore.

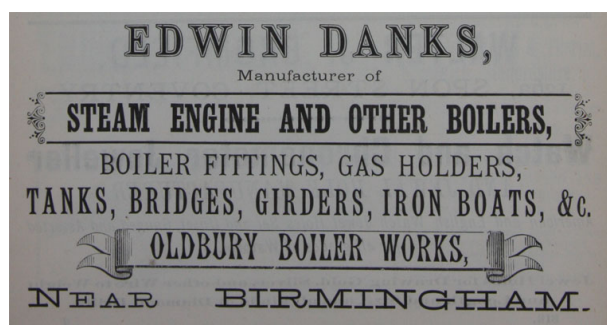
From Thompson's were: Jesse Quartermaine and his brother Harry (aged 37) who were looking after their consignment on route as agreed by both Dank's and Thompson's because "four people were not enough". Mr Barnes said at the inquest *"I think it was necessary for Thompson's men to accompany us, as four men were not sufficient to help an engine and three waggoners along the road. That was arranged between the firms."* Reading the accounts it seems there were six from Dank. So I assume they mean driver and mate on the engine plus 4 walking alongside the three waggoners and checking the way ahead was clear hence the two additional people from Thompson.

Having arrived in Lichfield the previous evening they set out on the Saturday morning arriving at the Constitution Inn at 20 minutes to 10am. The Inn has now gone but the building remains as a house. See *"The Old Pubs of Lichfield"* by John Shaw The roundabout known locally as "Constitution Island" is the junction between the A51 and A515 just North West of Lichfield.

At the Constitution Inn they partook of food. It was stated that the six consumed food and three quarts (6 pints) of ale. It should be noted that at this time beer was not strong and usually a lot safer to drink than water.

Typically this beer would have been between 0.5% and 2.8% alcohol. So a pint drunk with food would have had little alcoholic effect on the men. Though it says the three quarts were consumed by six people rather than eight so I assume this was the meal and drink for the Dank team. No mention made of the Thompson team of Harry and Jesse.

They left at 3 minutes to 10 am. So a 15 minute stop it seems. The accounts say: *"Shortly afterwards they stopped the top the hill to take water for the engine from a pool on the right-hand side."* Looking at the maps, some 500 yards "up-hill", on the A515 there is a pond on the right just after Red Brae farm on the left and just before Park Lane on the



right. This pond is evident on maps from the late 1800s and Google maps today. Whilst not the obvious route today for a car (indeed Google Maps suggests the M6Toll to the M6 for most of it) on foot and with a steam powered traction engine, that needs water, it is a perfectly sensible route. Even Google says so if you set it to "walking" mode. This transport would have been doing 2-4 miles an hour.

After re-filling the water tank they set off again, Jesse walked up one side of the wagons and his brother Harry up the other side.

It appears the four men from Dank's had gone forward at this point one assumes to look for obstruction and warn oncoming traffic such as there was. After a few yards a shout was heard, and the engines stopped. It was then Jesse was found under the last wagon, both legs virtually severed. For some three or four yards a great deal of

blood showed the extent of the incident, the progress marked by a trail of blood, bits of flesh, trouser and bone.

At the Inquest Evans the man in charge of the vehicles for Dank said that: When near the engine he heard a shout, and the driver stopped the engine after it had gone three or four yards. Seeing there was no vehicle coming, the witness [Harry?] went along the wagons and saw the deceased [Jesse] lying underneath the large wagon. He [Evans] called the other men, as he saw that both the deceased's legs were cut off just below the knee. The two men came off the engine and witness put something under deceased's head, and the other men went to Lichfield for assistance. A cyclist and others who were passing also went on to Lichfield to obtain help.

The Newspaper article continues: The witness [Harry?] got some string and tied the legs above the knees to stop the bleeding. That was all that they could do. Brandy was given to the deceased. News reached Lichfield and a police officer arrived. P.C. Thomas Meredith said he received information about 10:50am: *he received information of the accident, and got cab and went to the scene the occurrence. He saw the deceased lying under the last wagon, with his two legs smashed. There was a large quantity of blood on the ground. He could see by the marks in the road that the deceased had been dragged some three yards. Part of his trousers and pieces of flesh and bone were on the ground, or ground in. All the men were sober.*



At the Inquest it was generally thought, though none had observed such, Jesse had fallen while riding the draw-bar. It could only have been the one wagon which went over him. Perhaps he was attempting to climb into that third wagon. At the Inquest Alfred Evans said he *cautioned both the deceased and the other man from Tamworth, [Harry] about the danger sitting on the draw-bar*. It appears that, according to Evans both the Jesse and Harry had been riding on the wagons from Tamworth to Lichfield the day before hence the caution not to do it.

Indeed Mr Podbury said: *The two men were not sent from Tamworth look after the wagons and the couplings. If deceased had seen there was anything the matter with the wagons and the couplings he would call to me. There was no necessity for him to go between the wagons unless I called him for assistance. He was not under my control except when I asked for assistance. My opinion is that he was trying to get on the draw-bar.*

The same as the Evans and Podbury the other four men from Dank, namely: Joseph Mullett (driver), Walter Booton, and Benjamin Skidmore, all of Oldbury, said they saw nothing of the accident till the man was on the ground. Evans also said separately *"We were all in front of the deceased at the time"* So one would assume they were looking ahead for obstructions on the road as this would have been a very large and tall vehicle that may need careful manoeuvring or obstructions clearing.

When the doctor came the deceased was removed to the Nursing Home, at Lichfield. An operation was carried out by Dr Welchman, assisted by Dr Fraser and Dr Rowland. Dr John Smith Fraser said he saw the deceased on Saturday night. His legs were crushed to pieces below the knee, and he was brought in four-wheeler to the Nursing Home. Both legs were amputated at the thigh. The case was pretty nearly hopeless from the first. He died about a quarter of an hour after the operation. The man showed no signs of being under the influence of alcohol all. Shock and

haemorrhage due to the injuries he had sustained were the causes of death

At the Inquest PC Williams said Mr Goodwin, whose coat was spoilt, rendered great and kind service after the accident and Dr Fraser also referred to the great help which PC. Williams gave the hospital at the time of the Operation. The inference is that it was Mr Goodwin's four wheeler that brought Jesse to the Hospital where PC Williams was.

The Coroner having summed up, the jury returned verdict of Accidental death.

Mr Thompson said the firm were extremely thankful for the help rendered by Mr Goodwin. What the firm could do in a small way for the widow and children they would be pleased to do. The funeral of the unfortunate man took place at Tamworth on Wednesday afternoon, in the presence of a large concourse of spectators. The Rev. J. T. W. Claridge officiated. In addition to the immediate relatives and friends of deceased, the obsequies were attended by Mr S. Thompson, of Messrs Thompson & Co.

The Interesting thing in writing this up is trying to reconstruct one incident from two "verbatim" accounts at the inquest coupled with typesetting from 1901.

Sources

"The Old Pubs of Lichfield" by John Shaw
Tamworth Herald 2nd November 1901 Page 5
Lichfield Mercury 1st November 1901 Page 5

Book Review

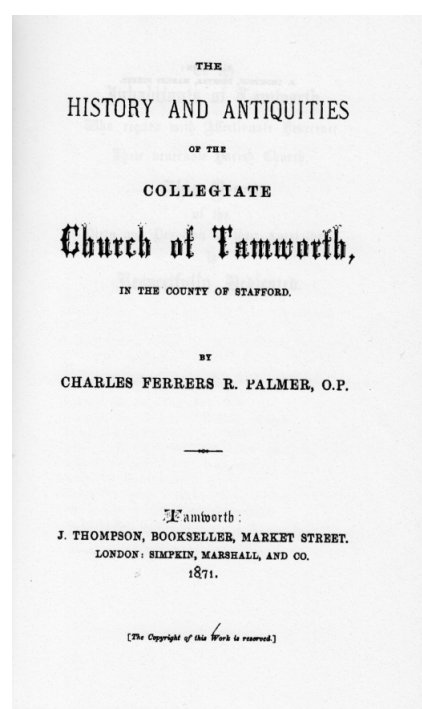
The history and antiquities of the Collegiate Church of Tamworth, in the county of Stafford, Charles Palmer

Published by Hanse books, 2016

ISBN-10: 374119414X

The history and antiquities of the Collegiate Church of Tamworth is the missing book in the history of St Editha's Church. Almost everyone who has an interest in St Editha's church knows about the 1935 Chas. Mitchell book: **Tamworth Parish Church** and the 1845 Charles Palmer: **The history of the town and castle of Tamworth**. However many have noted that the 1845 Palmer book has assumptions, inaccuracies. Also that it seemed to be missing some information. Charles Palmer knew this himself and when in 1871 he wrote this second book on just St Editha's church (no town or castle) he admitted such omissions and inaccuracies in the preface saying *"When larger and brighter prospects of research dawned upon us and the grand archives of the kingdom and private collections of manuscripts were open to us, we betook ourselves to enlarge, to correct, and to mould again. And we succeeded even beyond our highest hopes in throwing new and important lights upon our subject"*. Thus saying, Palmer has written the review for me!

Palmer indicates that for this book they had access to many more registers, documents, manuscripts and archives locally and nationally including those of the British Museum. As Tamworth had many Royal connections, including title to the Church itself, much of the documentation was preserved nationally not locally. However now, over 100 years on, we can put



it in context. This slim volume connects the 1845 Palmer to the 1935 Mitchell and as Mitchell (1873-1947) knew Palmer (1819-1900): this book completes the chain of first-hand knowledge of St Editha's from the mid-1800s though to the mid-1900s where we have people still living and better records. The first half of the book covers the history from 597AD the later parts of the book cover the buildings because it can. There are no records of the early buildings and limited archaeology as the current church walls are standing where you would want to dig. Sadly, although photography had been invented a couple of decades before, the book only has a few drawings in it. The good news is that there are inexpensive (£15-£20) modern reprints of this 1872 book. It is highly recommended because it completes the 1845 book and whilst Mitchell references this book he does not replicate the information in his 1935 book so you need it to fill in the information. So if you have an interest in the history of St Editha's this book is essential.



The History of Freemasonry in Tamworth

by A Lewis

Tamworth has had Freemasons since the 1796! However, you may be wondering how we can do a history of a "Secret Society" to answer that in detail see the article: The Masonic "Secret Society" following this one. In short Freemasonry was secretive several centuries ago but a lot less so since the early 1700s.

Marmion Lodge currently in Lichfield Street is the oldest surviving lodge in Tamworth starting in 1865 However it was not the first Masonic lodge in Tamworth. In "The Natural History of Staffordshire," published by Dr. Robert Plot, in 1686, says "the customs relating to the county, whereof they have one of admitting men into the Society of Freemasons that, in the moorlands of this county, seems to be of greater request than anywhere else" So there were Freemasons in the area, if not Lodges in the mid to late 1600's

It should be noted that a Freemasons once initiated is a Freemason for life, irrespective if he is a member of a lodge or not. Hence

The Temple, Marmion Lodge
Lichfield Street (JAmedia)

why there are noted Freemasons in and around the area from the late 1600s without a formal lodge in Tamworth. Freemasonry signs, grips and tokens permitted them to recognise each other outside a lodge so they knew who they could trust to discuss the mysteries of nature and science.

Several notable people connected to Tamworth were known to be Freemasons in the early to mid-1700s Indeed Lord Weymouth whose family were benefactors of Tamworth was the Grand Master in 1735. In 1735 Lord Dudley established a Lodge in Wolverhampton. In 1791 Staffordshire was made into a Masonic Province meaning there must have been many Lodges in Staffordshire at that time. Freemasonry is organised into provinces approximating counties.

In August 1796 St Bartholomew's Lodge was constituted in Fazeley meeting at the White Lion in Coleshill Street. The lodge, number

547, then moved to the Three Tuns in Sutton Coldfield in 1803. In 1814 it was renumbered to 572 before closing in 1828.

In Tamworth itself the first Lodge was the Lodge of Harmony that was constituted on 5th November 1796. Unlike most Lodges that met in pubs (in a private room) this lodge met at Dudley's Coffee House, at 22 George Street. However records say Thomas Dudley's premises were called *Coffee Pot* between 1793 and 1884 though for a while in the 1860's and again in the 1870s it was the *Old Coffee Pot*. The Lodge of Harmony was numbered 558 but only lasted 13 years until February 1809 when the Lodge closed.

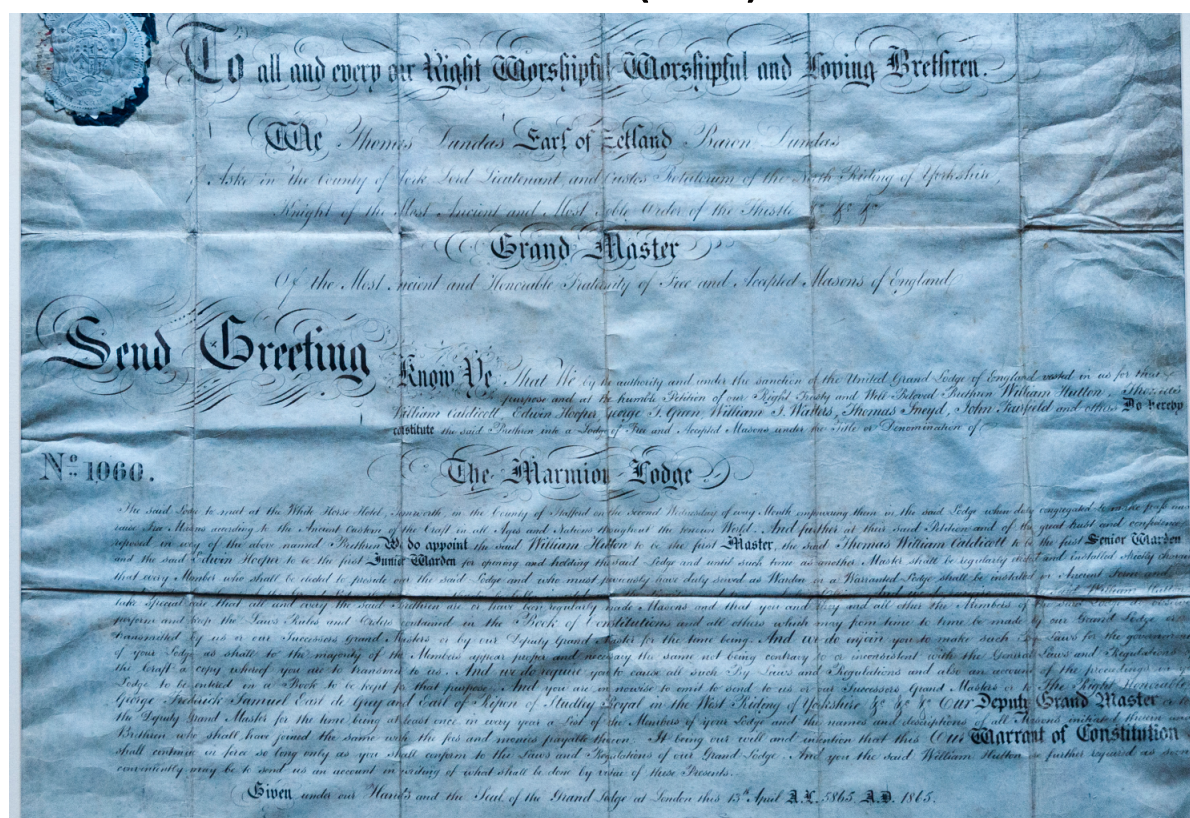
We now move forward to 1865 when seven Tamworth Freemasons (Thomas Coldicott, John Fairfield, George Green, Edwin Hooper, William Hutton, Thomas Sneyd, William Walters) petitioned the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) to form a Lodge in Tamworth.



Location of Lodge/Cafe George St. one of the first 3 on left.
(Tamworth Digital Archive)

The name and indeed the banner of the Lodge were taken from the family name of the Norman Barons who possessed the castle after the Conquest till the late 1300s. The petition was for a Lodge to meet every 2nd Wednesday of the month in the White Horse Hotel. They nominated Bro. William Hutton to be the Master of the Lodge. Bro Thomas W Caldecott to be Senior Warden. Bro Edwin Hooper to be the Junior Warden.

The original 1865 warrant for Marmion Lodge
(IAmedia)





That they were “Brother” on the petition indicates that all these men were already Freemasons, predominantly from Warwickshire Lodges, but Marmion is shown as a daughter of The Lodge of St Matthew in Staffordshire (started in 1847).

The Warrant for Marmion Lodge was issued on the 13th of April signed by the Grand Master, Thomas Dundas, Earl of Zetland. It was countersigned by Deputy Grand

Masters De Grey and Ripon. There followed a preliminary meeting on 27th of May at the White Horse Hotel to organise the consecration (formation and formal opening) of the Lodge

Marmion Lodge 1060 was duly consecrated at 12 noon on Tuesday, 13th of June 1865 in the White Horse Hotel. The Provincial Grand Master of Staffordshire, William Kenwright Harvey with the Deputy Provincial Grand Master, John Burton and Provincial Grand Wardens G Baker and Warden, H Segrave, Installed the new Master of Marmion Lodge

This first lodge meeting was closed about mid-afternoon when the entire Lodge, and the visiting team Provincial went in procession, headed by the band of the Tamworth Corps of the Rifle Volunteers, to Tamworth Town Hall for a banquet. It must have been quite a spectacle. Especially at this time the population of Tamworth was only 3,000 and in broad daylight along Market Street with the military band could hardly have been unnoticed by most of the town. Despite photography becoming more common by this time (having been invented

about 25 years earlier) we have been unable to track down any photos of the event. [So far that is! If you know of any email the Editor]



The White Horse
1950s
(Tamworth Digital
Archive)

By the end of 1868, Marmion Lodge moved from the White Horse Hotel to 14 Church Street Tamworth, holding its first meeting there on 13th January 1869. 14 Church Street is currently "The Wardrobe" clothes shop. The rent was £7, 10s for the use of the rooms inclusive of coal, gas and taxes! Whilst the alterations to the building to make it suitable cost £15!



Also in 1869 The Lodge decided that rather than meet every month they would not meet July to September and indeed these days most Masonic Lodges in England tend to have a break in the summer. Though for Marmion this decision was reversed in 1871 until in 1892 they reinstated the summer break! It should be noted that by 1871 the annual subscription was raised to £1 11s 6d. This was about a week's wages for a skilled craftsman. It comes to £99 in today's money, which is well below the current subs for Marmion Lodge. During the years from 1872 to 1887 the Lodge was closely linked with the St Editha's Church by reason of the fact that two of its prominent members were

Vicars of Tamworth. The Rev. Brooke Lambert became Vicar in 1872 and was initiated in the Lodge in March 1873. At the same meeting the Rev. William MacGregor was elected as a Joining Member, having recently become Curate-in-charge at Hopwas. McGregor became Vicar in 1878 until 1887 when he moved to Bolehall Manor, which is now Bolehall Manor Club.

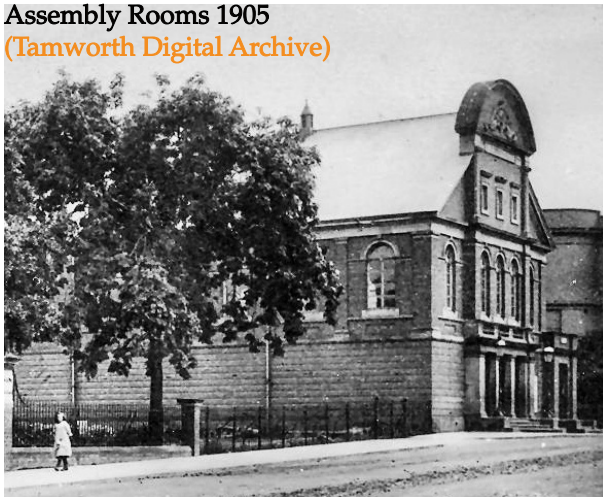
By 1874 the Lodge started to look for new premises or, possibly, their own purpose built lodge rooms. The Lodge looked at many options around this time. In 1879 the Lodge was offered an old Chapel in Bradbury Square but did not think it suitable. (The chapel was demolished in 1900) So the Lodge continued to meet at 14 Church Street until early 1887, when the Lodge moved to rooms in the Municipal Buildings next to the Assembly Rooms, on Corporation Street, on a lease from the Corporation of Tamworth.

14 Church street ([JAmmedia](#))

Municipal Buildings
([Tamworth Digital Archive](#))



Assembly Rooms 1905
(Tamworth Digital Archive)



Provincial Grand Lodge first visited Tamworth on May 20th 1901. The Right Worshipful Provincial Grand Master, Lord Dartmouth, presided and over 240 brethren were present. The meeting was held in the Assembly Rooms and two members of the Marmion Lodge received Provincial honours. Although by this time the population of Tamworth had grown to 15,000 it was still a sizeable part of Tamworth that was involved and would have not been something easily missed.

With the advent of WW1 in 1914 it was noted in the minutes that Bro Lindsay was on active service with the Army Veterinary Corps in France. In WW1 the British Army

still had cavalry and horse drawn artillery. Also Bro Chalmers was called up for the Tamworth Territorial Company. There is a note in the 100th Anniversary history that was not in the 1915; 50th Anniversary history: "The 1914-1918 War created many problems for the Lodge. The minutes during that period make several references to brethren interned in Germany..." It is not clear of this is Tamworth Brethren or Freemasons in general.

On its 50th birthday in 1915 it was noted that during the 50 years the Lodge gained 149 new initiates and 50 who joined from other Lodges. With a current lodge roll of over 60 members 50 posed for its Jubilee picture in the midst of WW1.



Marmion Lodge 1915 (JAmmedia)

The lease of the Lodge rooms at the Municipal Offices expired in September 1920, it was arranged to hire rooms at the Castle Hotel for a period of seven years. The first meeting of the Lodge in these new rooms was held in October 1920 and the minutes record that *"by a strange coincidence the new Master (Bro. Edmund Morgan) was the owner and proprietor of the hotel."*



Castle Hotel 1920s
(Tamworth Digital Archive)



When the agreement to use the Castle Hotel expired in September 1927, the Lodge arranged to hold meetings in the Town Hall. This continued until December 1930.

In the April meeting there were discussions whence Bro. A. E. Colbourne (an Auctioneer and Estate Agent) offered to the Worshipful Master premises at 29, Lichfield Street, Tamworth, subject to an immediate reply being given. Special meeting of the Past Masters was convened and the offer was accepted. On the 13th of June Tamworth Masonic Rooms was Incorporated and the property transferred to the company.



The first lodge meeting in the new premises took place on the 14th January 1931. The connection with St Editha's was again cemented as the Lodge Chaplain was Bro. Rev. E. H. Rogers the Vicar of Tamworth. Many Vicars of Tamworth have been Freemasons.

The 100th Anniversary Lodge History published in 1968 makes virtually no mention of WW2 other than to say due to petrol shortages Lodge activities were dislocated. Also that the stone used to print circulars had been destroyed in an air raid in London and that one brother had had his house destroyed in an air raid (in Kingsbury?). Other than that the history moves on to 1946 to say the Lodge was in good financial shape.

The Lodge itself was not only well off financially but growing in size to the point in October 1947 it was deemed time to create a daughter lodge. Thus 19 Marmion Brethren under W. Bro William Rutherford founded Ethelfleda Lodge Number 6600 and things continued to grow.

In 1958 The Lodge was visited by Bro. G. H. Graham of Tamworth Lodge No. 532 in the Register of the United Grand Lodge of New South Wales, Australia. There are still occasional informal visits between the two lodges.

Lodge business continued for the next decade with various visits of Provincial and other Freemasons to the Lodge. As it approached its centenary the History noted

Marmion Lodge 1986
(JRMedia)



that: *During the past one hundred years the Lodge held 923 Regular Meetings and initiated 125 members.* Many of the names will be familiar to Tamworthians as some families have been here for many generations. See the list of Masters at the end of this article. Though, in the 1970's as the Lodge entered its second century, much started to change.

In 1977 Marmion and Ethelfleda lodges were joined in the Lichfield Street rooms by the lodges St John 1039 and Ashmole 8405 who lost their premises in Lichfield. They changed their names to become "of Lichfield" to keep the connection to Lichfield thereafter. This has caused some banter in the Lodge rooms because whilst Marmion is *Tamworth's* oldest Lodge having been formed in April 1865, St John of *Lichfield* held its first meeting [in Lichfield] in November 1964. So St John it is 4 months older than Marmion but not a "Tamworth" lodge

In 1978 the lodge of Whittington St Giles 8826 also moved to join the other lodges in Lichfield Street. There are now five lodges in the same rooms meeting on different nights.

In the last few decades with stable premises and membership the histories are full of who joined, who was promoted and who went the Grand Lodge Above but little of any note

to a non-Mason. In December 2001 the Subs had risen to £70 and in 2002 money was needed for refurbishing the seating in the lodge rooms. The Lodge seating is in two rows along the long sides of the room. It is cinema (or theatre) seating that is believed to have come from one of Tamworth's several cinemas. In 2014 Subs had increased again to £170 so were some way above the equivalent in 1892 which would have been £99!

There are no traces of Freemasons at 14 Church Street, the Municipal buildings or the Castle Hotel, the author having been in them to look. The original home of the White Horse was demolished in the 1960s. There is a nod to the Freemasons in the Town Hall if you can work it out. On several occasions due to the size of the gathering the Installations of the new master was held at the Assembly Rooms.

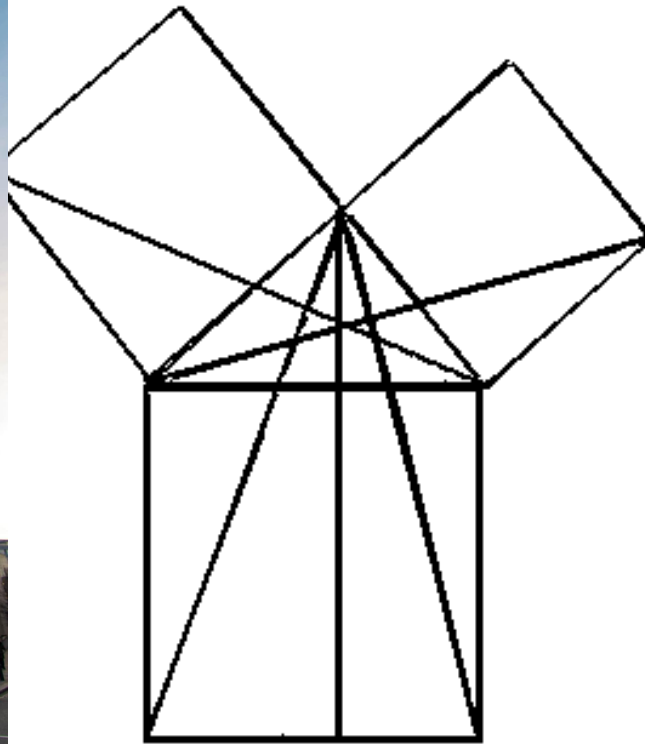
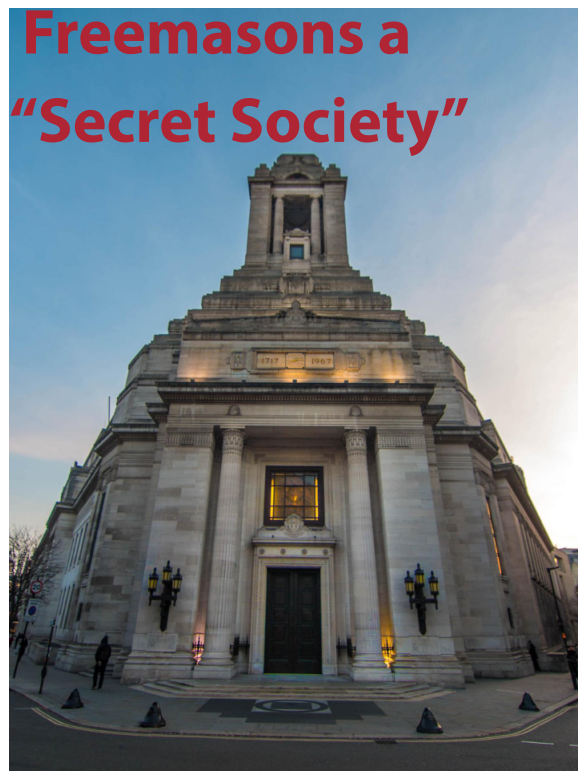
As with most if not all Masonic Lodges they do a lot of unsung charity work. At the end of the last millennium heading to the 2000s in the England and Wales the Freemasons only came second to the National Lottery in the amounts they donated to good (non-masonic) causes. Marmion Lodge, and the other four Lodges in Tamworth, were no exception. If you are interested in Freemasonry see the following article

The Masters of Marmion
Lodge from
Consecration to date.

1865 W. Hutton
1866 T. Coldicott
1867 T.W. Green
1868 E. Hooper
1869 W. Bindley
1870 T. Dumolo
1871 R. Bindley
1872 H. Hare
1873 W. Tempest
1874 T. Cooke Jnr.
1875 T. Cooke Jnr.
1876 G. K. Cooke
1877 W.R. Brunton
1878 B. Lambeth
1879 R. Tolson
1880 C. Lones
1881 H. Olver
1882 J. Hilloy
1883 J. Chatterton
1884 H. J. Fausett
1885 A. Lucy
1886 H. J. Clarson
1887 J. Robotham
1888 T. Buxton
1889 T. Buxton
1890 T. M. Hamer
1891 G. Hoskison
1892 J. Stone
1893 E. S. Stone
1894 J. H. Dewes
1895 E. Coleman
1896 G. Bowen
1897 J. P. Watton
1898 W. MacGregor
1899 I. Horabin
1900 J. Horrocks
1901 G. D. Briggs
1902 B. Gott
1903 T. Heath
1904 C. F. Cast
1905 A. E. Cheattle
1906 J.W. Godderidge
1907 A. E. Richardson
1908 W. Morton
1909 W. A. Sapey
1910 L. Matthews
1911 A. M. Sculthorpe
1912 H. Hicklin
1913 E. E. Colley
1914 R. D. Robinson
1915 Sholto Douglas
1916 D. McColl
1917 R. Heath

1918 W. H. Brown
1919 J. McIlvillie Jones
1920 E. Morgan
1921 H. C. Goostry
1922 O. H. Sharrott
1923 J.W. Grundy
1924 H. Chas. Mitchell
1925 W. J. Webb
1926 L. Mawer
1927 A. Price
1928 W. Rutherford
1929 H. Whitehead
1930 W. Fenn
1931 H. Roberts
1932 W.A. Peel
1933 C. E. Crutchley
1934 H. J. Bray
1935 R. P. Bartle
1936 R. Ashworth
1937 H. E. Fellon
1938 F. Burkitt
1939 E. Hampton
1940 H. C. Green
1941 A. O. Marshall
1942 H. S. Harries
1943 C. A. Bray
1944 R. Thompson
1945 F. Alderson
1946 A. Biddle
1947 J. L. Rowley
1948 H. Stephenson
1949 F. Bills
1950 R. Cresswell
1951 H. W. Chandler
1952 H. R. Clifford
1953 S. Knight
1954 W. F. Weston
1955 W. M. Meree
1956 G. Parker
1957 G. W. Keil
1958 J. P. Morrison
1959 A. Folton
1960 D. L. Hackett
1961 R. Lockhart
1962 F. G. Donnison
1963 G. Wharmby
1964 C. F. Rippon
1965 H. Wallbank
1966 L. H. Brown
1967 G. Parker
1968 D. H. Crutchley
1969 T. V. Cunningham
1970 R. T. Downes
1971 N. Stevenson
1972 W. Finney
1973 R. Scott
1974 R. K. Hemus

1975 K. Hope
1976 J. W. Smith
1977 S. C. Yeomans
1978 G. E. Perkins
1979 J. H. Moore
1980 J. F. Butt
1981 R. S. Downes
1982 P. J. Clempson
1983 J. R. Clarke
1984 G. T. Sutherland
1985 R. S. Scott
1986 K. S. Preston
1987 D. T. Frankham
1988 C. V. P. Clarke
1989 I. F. Potty
1990 P. P. Hope
1991 M. Gill
1992 D. W. Philips
1993 A. W. Horton
1994 N. T. Smith
1995 A. R. Tomson
1996 T. L. Evans
1997 M. G. Anker
1998 R. Morgan
1999 A. Everall
2000 A. R. Tomson
2001 P. A. Edwards
2002 M. J. Whately
2003 D. B. Lamb
2004 I. W. Scmple
2005 D. T. Bowyer
2006 G. A. Lees
2007 P. B. Walker
2008 M. J. Hargreaves
2009 S. R. Yannamani
2010 A. A. Horton
2010 A. A. Horton
2011 P. T. Holloak
2012 J. G. Biggs
2013 D. B. Lamb
2014 D. B. Lamb
2015 P. J. G. Hall
2016 P. Chetwynd
2017 M. J. Hargreaves
2018 P. Hope
2019 D. W. Philips
2020 R. S. Stuart }
2021 R. S. Stuart }
COVID Lockdown
2022 R. S. Stuart }
2023 R. J. S. Kingstone



Tamworth has had Freemasons since the 1790s. However, you may be wondering how we can do a history of a “Secret Society”. Well the Freemasons have in, the last few 100 years, hardly been secret.

Most Masonic rooms have large Masonic Symbols on the outside. And there are web sites <https://www.ugle.org.uk/> along with many lodges having their own. The rituals are hardly secret as anyone can buy the official versions <https://www.lewismasonic.co.uk/emulation-ritual/> though to be fair they are missing the passwords and some key words.

What is, still, secret are “The Handshakes”. Yes, plural! There is more than one, each accompanied by different passwords. Yes, there are also multiple passwords. *Please note: On the internet there are a lot of exposes of the handshakes and passwords but often for American Scottish Right Freemasonry. If you use them in the UK it will be like going to a Rugby Union match and talking Rugby League.*

There are the Great Masonic Secrets. However these are normally taught in schools in the UK at primary and some at secondary levels!!! Think of, what is now, basic geometry, basic physics, basic astronomy. Masonic ritual has a line in the published rituals “*The Earth constantly revolving on its axis in its orbit around the sun*” and this was at a time before Copernicus and Galileo published.

The Freemasons were intelligent free-thinking men who were urged to *study the hidden mysteries of Science and Nature* which ran somewhat counter to the teachings of The Church in Europe. That would be both Catholic and Protestant churches. They were all as bad as each other in that respect in the 1400s through to the late 1800s (or 2020s in parts of the USA).

Hence the need for secrecy, and secret recognition handshakes, so Freemasons could safely discuss the mysteries of Nature and Science without the intrusion of religion or politics. Heresy like this was punishable

by being burnt at the stake, or worse, in medieval times.

Freemasonry is not a religion or religious. The rituals do use some Biblical and Egyptian themes e.g. Solomon's Temple but Freemasons refer to the Supreme Being or the Great Architect of the Universe. This is often shortened to G.A.O.T.U. which leads to the illiterate assuming that Freemasons worship a GOAT or the Devil. Of course, over the centuries, the Churches played this up and painted Freemasons as a devil worshipping cult.

For fun this mason has told the gullible that the house party in the Kubrick film *Eyes Wide Shut* is based on a Masonic meeting.... (And some believe it!)

The actual God or Supreme Being any Freemason believes in is up to that person and no Freemason is ever asked what their actual religion is at any time. There are members of all the world's religions in Freemasonry including Wiccan's Druids and Catholics.

Contrary to popular myth Freemasonry does not ban Catholics (many are Freemasons) it was the Catholic Church that said Freemasonry was incompatible with Christianity. https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19850223_declaration-masonic_articolo_en.html NOTE this is from *The Vatican Apostolic Archive*. Which until 28 October 2019 known as the *Vatican Secret Archive* and had an official web site under that name! It is the central repository in the Vatican City for all of the acts promulgated by the Holy See.

For the History of Marmion Lodge there is a 50 year History, a 100 year History and a 150 Year History all of which are publicly available if you know which library

catalogue to search. On that note the UGLE has a publicly accessible library and museum for all things Masonic including the Histories of Marmion Lodge <https://museumfreemasonry.org.uk/> UGLE also has a PR/Media centre with its own media Library <https://www.ugle.org.uk/about-us/media-centre/media-library> So much for a "Secret Society".

It should be noted that whilst Regular Freemasonry is men only there are two Recognised female only equivalents see <https://www.ugle.org.uk/become-freemason/women-freemasons> Due to the nature of Masonic rituals it would be difficult to make them unisex and keep same words and theatrics.


The Grand Lodge can be hired for film use and functions For example Lily Allen's Music video "22" was filmed in the gents toilets just by the main Temple. <https://youtu.be/tWjNFC-FinU>

However in a final twist of ironic "secrecy" The Grand Lodge in particular the front of the building was used for "Spooks" the fictional TV series about MI5. The Grand Lodge, unlike Thames House, is open to the public (ladies as well as gentlemen) if you want to have a look there are guided tours, a museum, a Library and a shop. So much for a "secret" society!



Time Travel in Tamworth!

By a future you



If you could time travel what year, date, event or place in Tamworth History would you go back to? Not to interfere but to observe, witness and learn from. This idea was promulgated in an article by Alan Crosby in the British Assn. for Local History's magazine Local History News (No.146)

There is a big problem with going back in time and interacting with people and events as it changes all global events from that point. So you may not have existed in the new future from the second you interact with the past. So you can go back and be a fly on the wall to observe but not interact. Where would you go? What would you want to see? What would you want to learn?

Whilst there are many documents and archives in and about Tamworth, the church, the castle the town and its people going back many 100's of years there are a lot of gaps. As any Secretary will tell you, the minutes are the output, which is not always what happened in the meeting. Likewise many of the ancient documents we have are written after the event by "the winners" as is history in general. History as viewed by the losers is rarely written down nor does it survive at least not until the last 100 years or so.

The problem now is so much propaganda and false information is out there. However, this was always the case but far fewer people could read [it] in those days. So you got Chinese whispers.

So write to the Editor and let us all know where, in Tamworth, you would like to go back to as a witness and why. The more letters the better!

Why does your Editor want this? Several reasons: Firstly we may already have the answers. For example the mythical swimming pool under the co-op in Church Street. There are many stories about where it was circulating in the town. However it is reasonably well documented and we can do an article on it. Secondly, then there will be other questions about events and places that a letter to the Editor may spur someone with an interest or information to do some research to write an article for the magazine. This will increase our knowledge of Tamworth.

Thirdly it means we have articles for the magazine [that the Editor has not had to write himself] apart from the letters on this subject email to editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk) with **where ,when you would go back to and of course: why.**

Letters to the Editor

My plea for *Letters To The Editor* worked and there are actual letters from readers!

Dear Editor,

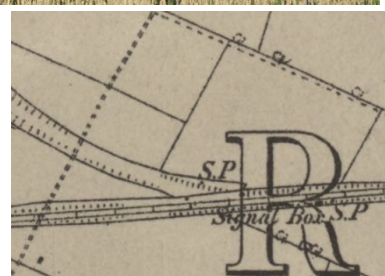
I write regarding the article "**60 years of Tamworth Railway Station**" in the [Winter 2023 edition](#) of the **Tamworth Heritage Magazine** and the reference to the second curve on page 7 which linked the high level from a cutting at a point some 200 yards to the east of Ashby Road bridge to the low level at Bolehall. To Tamworth residents it was always referred to as the New Line even a hundred years after its construction.

Until the early 1960s it was possible to walk along the whole of the track bed but this came to an abrupt end with the blowing up of the viaduct over the Anker for safety reasons in 1962. So, the Livock station wasn't the only Victorian railway building reduced to ruins in the early 1960s! Subsequently, large parts of the earthworks were removed to be used in the flood barriers along the Fazeley Road. By 2015, all that remained was about 100 yards of embankment between the public footpath and the river



shown on the photograph. That has now disappeared as the result of the housing development that has recently taken place.

The construction of what is known as the "Tamworth Curve" resulted in a very expensive white elephant. Not a single engine ran along it. It had been constructed in 1866 by the Midland Railway at the behest of the London & North Western Company to enable the latter to run from Nuneaton to Burton. The work had been carried out in parallel with the construction of the Ashby & Nuneaton Joint Railway which joined with the Leicester – Burton on Trent line rendering access to Burton via the Tamworth Curve unnecessary which was ready in all respects for rail traffic. As is shown in the extract from an old Ordnance Survey, signals at the junction with the low level had been erected together with the signal box. While not wanting to use the Tamworth Curve the London & North Western Company was not willing



either, because of a spat that had arisen with the Midland Railway, for the track to be lifted. This did not finally take place until 1878.

There is an interesting blog "[Victorian railway ruin](#)" [here](#).

Michael Green
Tamworth
By email

Dear Editor

Photograph of brass plaque from Atherstone Cockfighting Association dated 1843. This was from a large house, the Ivy House, on the corner of Atherstone Road and High Street Measham.

This trophy was given to the late Wesley Hillman by the late Miss Blake who lived in this house; this dwelling has now been demolished and replaced by cottages. I do not know where this trophy is now. I thought this may be of interest



as cockfighting was a popular sport and was believed to have taken place on this site

Are there any descendants of the Carlin Family living locally in Tamworth Atherstone? Are there any reports of cockfighting taking place locally, may be worth a follow up story in the Tamworth Heritage Magazine. This could be one of the last plaques of its type as the sport was banned by Queen Victoria in 1849. Less than 6 years after the date on the plaque.

G Green

Measham The inscription reads

:
 ATHERSTONE COCKFIGHTING
 ASSOCIATION
 ALL COCKS MUST BE
 INSPECTED BEFORE
 ENTERING THE RING
 A CARLIN
 HONORARY SECRETARY
 APRIL 1843

Does anyone have any information on the Carlins or Cockfighting in Tamworth? : *Editor*

Letters (or articles) to the editor
 (with any pictures separate)
 should be addressed to:
editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk

Next Edition

Summer 2023

Publication Date: 1st July

Copy Date: 13th June

Articles on anything relating to Tamworth will be happily accepted. Articles should be 800-2000 words. Letters any length under 500 words.

Please submit any articles, letters or ideas to Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk

Copy Date (to in send article) 13th June.

However please give as much advanced notice as possible. So we can allocate space or just in case there is more than one person writing on the subject.

Please send in article/letters in text, RTF, MS doc or docx format. ***With any images sent separately.***

Images as high quality as you can manage in PNG, tiff or JPG. We can scan or convert most other formats. Also any video.

The Editorial Team can help with research, finding documents, scanning items, finding images (we have a photo library of over 15,000 images). We can take new photos if you need help with photography

Being a PDF magazine: We can also link-in web site links and video or audio files. **We can also produce video and audio if required.** Just contact the Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk

NOTE Any long articles may be shortened for the Magazine but also could be expanded and turned in to stand alone THT books. Contact the Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk



In the Next issue

The History of the Moathouse

Tamworth's Stately home

100 years of Tamworth Royal British Legion

Hopefully completed for this issue

Fire Brigade in Tamworth

A look at the history of Tamworth Fire brigade from the tragedy that started it.

The Co-op in Tamworth

The story of the Co-op in Tamworth

The Mines around Tamworth

There were a lot of mines around Tamworth at one time...

A Fascinating Story

Written by YOU! If no one contributes there will be nothing to read.

If you don't want the **next issue to be the last one** the editors need articles. The Editors, the History, Genealogy, Archive, and Castle groups can all help with research and information. Email the Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk

Tamworth

HERITAGE

Magazine



Preserving the Past, Recording the Present
Safeguarding the Future