

Tamworth

HERITAGE

Magazine
v1i3 Summer2023



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.



Editor: Chris Hills BSc FRSA, FRGS, RPS
Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk



Assistant Editor Anthony Poulton-Smith BA
email AsstEditor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk

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Back Image: Kingslake Butchers © (Tamworth Digital Archive)

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 Peuple 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.

Welcome from the Editor Progress is being made!



Welcome to the third issue with the good news that this time most of the content has not been written by the Editor and Assistant Editor. We have several new contributors. Please consider writing something yourself on any aspect of Tamworth Heritage and history. Email the editor with any ideas for articles. This can be anything from family history, local groups, to national events. The history of the "ordinary" people fills in the huge gaps between the dates of battles and the list of kings and is of a lot more interest than you might think. Next issue we have an article on 5 local brothers who went to war and last issue had the demise of a local workman. These are stories we need to capture.

If you can't do an article try a letter/email. See the interesting things raised in the Letters to the Editor. Either asking questions, or adding information, or comment to previous articles. Indeed one letter is asking for information on

something I am sure many of our readers will have the answer to. If so email the Editor!! Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk

Since the last issue Tamworth Heritage Magazine has joined the [Staffordshire Heritage Group](#) and the [British Association for Local History](#). (Click on the logos below) This gives the editor access to more research facilities also their members will see this Magazine. So we may get some more contributors.

We are hoping, in conjunction with the [Tamworth Digital Archive](#) to put together an archive, not just of photos (remember the 50s to 80s is ancient history to many!) but video interviews of some of our older residents talking about Tamworth in that period. This sort of oral history is very important. Eye witnesses to events and everyday life. If you are interested email the Editor!
Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk

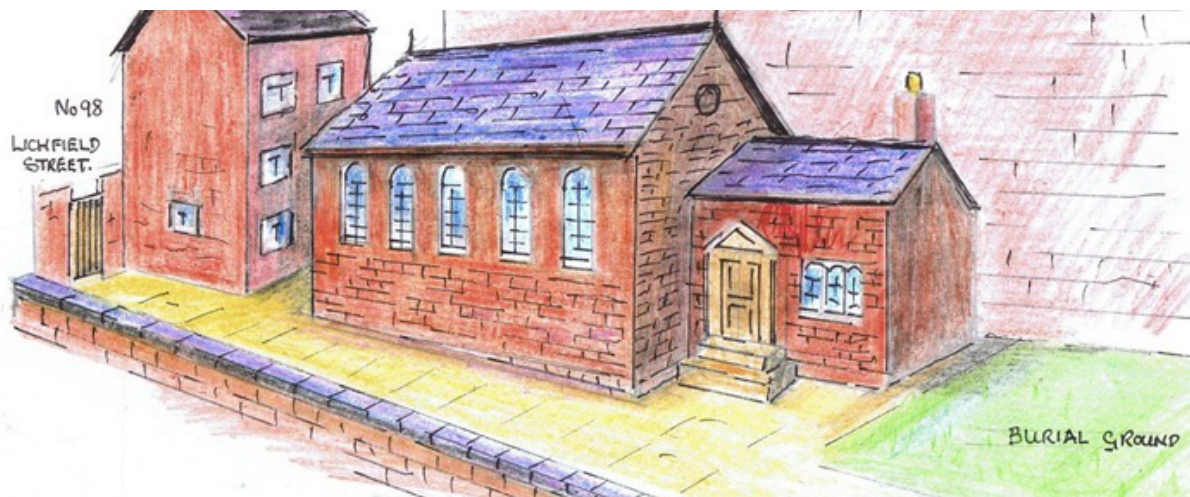


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Harvey Teasdale and the re-opening of the old Friends' Meeting House, Tamworth

By Michael Green



Old Quaker Meeting House
by John Tracey (used with kind permission of the artist.)

For the second time since the establishment of the Tamworth Station of the Primitive Methodist Church in 1869 an effort was made to establish a permanent Primitive Methodist presence in Tamworth itself alongside the Wesleyan and United Methodist Free Churches.

An ideal venue was found in the shape of the former Society of Friends' (Quaker) Meeting House built in 1753 on the north side of Lichfield Street opposite Peel Street which had been vacated in 1872. The go ahead was given by both the Primitive Methodist Chapel Committee and the Circuit Quarterly Meeting to re-open it as the Tamworth Primitive Methodist chapel and the date was fixed for 3rd January 1886. It was felt that the event required a star attraction and the name of Harvey Teasdale, the former clown and man monkey turned evangelist, was put forward.

Harvey Teasdale was born in Sheffield in 1817. In adult life he became an actor whose most famous role was that of a "man monkey" when he would astound audiences by leaping from the gallery onto the stage in his monkey costume. His most famous



stunt, however, was to be pulled in a wash tub by ducks on the river Don. It was heavily publicised and watched by large crowds but turned out to be a dramatic failure. The ducks were uncontrollable resulting in him getting well and truly doused.



Barry the clown being pulled by geese on the Thames.
Image from "The Life and Adventures of Harvey Teasdale" on [the proletics web site](#)

This had been an attempt to emulate Barry the clown who, in 1840, had been successful with a similar venture on the Thames but this time pulled by geese which were apparently more manageable. At other times in his career, he performed in pubs as a clown and was a theatre manager.

On his own admission, he was a heavy drinker. The nature of his lifestyle and his drinking led to an unhappy marriage resulting in his wife leaving with their two daughters who were relentlessly pursued by him who, on finding them, tried to kill his wife. He was charged with attempted murder but found guilty of the lesser charge of wounding her with intent to cause grievous bodily harm. Being the consummate actor he was, he had charmed the jury but not the judge who sentenced him to the maximum of two years hard labour and it was while in Wakefield prison serving his sentence that he states his conversion took place.

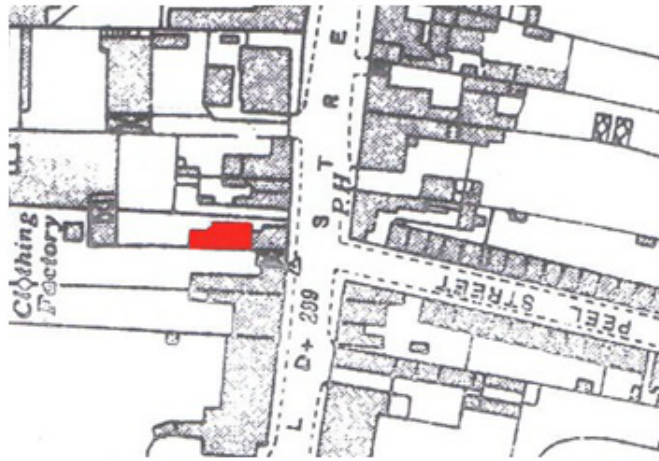
On his release from prison, he joined the "Hallelujah Band", a group of those converted who had been brought back from "the depths of blackguardism". In early 1865, the "Hallelujah Band" was at Sheffield Temperance Hall and it was an event the likes of which had never been witnessed before. There was much shouting, jumping about and gesticulating as well as prayers, singing (not all of it successful) and addresses. To mark his conversion and the ending of the old ways, Harvey Teasdale's old costumes were systematically cut up on stage the climax being the destruction of the monkey suit which had been filled with shavings and which was held aloft by two members of the Band who

stood on a table and vigorously attacked it with scissors

The invitation to Teasdale to attend the re-opening was accepted and over Christmas much hard work was done in renovating the premises. The benches went and were replaced by seats. Extensive advertising, which strangely made no mention of the Primitive Methodists at all, took place in the Tamworth Herald over a period of 3 or 4 weeks. In no time, the opening day arrived with Harvey Teasdale preaching at the morning and evening services. On the 4th and 5th January, he gave lectures on his "Life Story" in which he made full use of two of his skills, oratory and acting. He told of his childhood days, his road to ruin, the wages of sin and his narrow escape from death. In his acting role he re-lived episodes in his life such as being pulled by the ducks in the wash tub, and being in Wakefield prison and the gin palaces.

We know nothing of the impact he made and the following week events assumed normality. There was a belated Christmas Tree Bazaar the following Saturday going over into the Monday. Its conclusion was followed by a lecture given by Rev T Lowe on "Dr Livingstone the Explorer and Missionary of Africa" with tickets at 6d for the front rows and 3d at the back.

Sadly, the second attempt to establish a permanent presence in the town centre failed like the first and by 1890 no services were being planned. Attempts to revive the cause at the former Friends' Meeting House in 1893 also failed.



Location of the old Quaker Meeting House

This map appears to pre-date the 1900 maps with Shannon's mill when it was a large building situated behind and above the Meeting house. The "clothing factory" shown on this map is smaller.

Below shows the site of The Meeting House and Shannon's Mill, unfortunately after both had been demolished. It is the closest we can get to a photo of the meeting hall. (Tamworth Digital Archive)

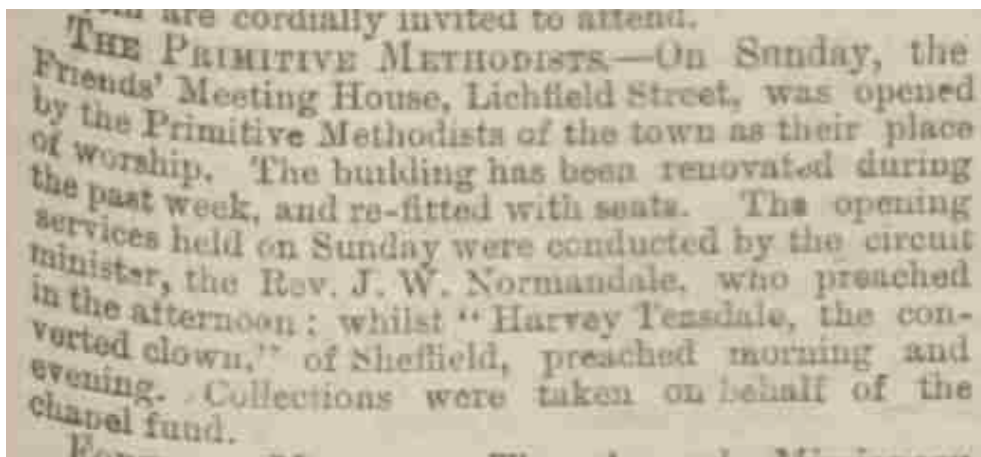
Harvey Teasdale died in the Firdale workhouse asylum in 1905 aged 86 and is buried in the Sheffield General Cemetery.

The late John Tracey, a collector of photographs of old Tamworth, was convinced that none of the old Quaker Meeting House existed (and in this he has been proved correct) so he painted a picture of it from memory for posterity. The old Meeting House fell into disrepair and remained in this state until being finally demolished in 1960.



EDITOR'S NOTE: If anyone has any photos of the Friends Meeting Hall, or the building at any time in its life please email the Editor at both the Tamworth Digital Archive and the author, Micheal Green would love to see them. Email Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk

Notice of the opening of the Friends Meeting Hall in the Tamworth Herald 9th January 1889 (The British Newspaper Archive) Despite photography becoming common in this period There are no photos of the meeting house that we know of. Whilst the Friends had an item in the Tamworth Herald almost every week it was for the Glascoate group meeting in Albert Road. As far as we can find this time below is the only mention we can find of the Lichfield Street group.



Tamworth History Group

Tamworth Local History Group was started in 2013 when Ian Burley from the Tamworth Library approached Diane Wells to form a monthly meeting promoting the research facilities provided in the county.

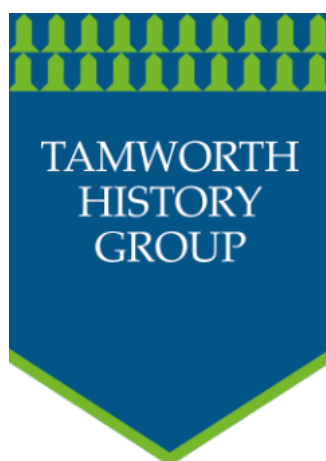
Both knew that people were visiting the Library for research and interest. This would open more avenues for them to explore. Initially there were less than ten attending, three from the Heritage Trust and others who researched for Lichfield and Staffordshire archive services. However, the group like Topsy grew and changed.

After initial meetings to introduce members to Tamworth Library, Tamworth Castle and the Stafford Archive facilities, we began to invite local personalities to speak informally. Some did presentations on subjects of interest; others like Maurice Arnold shared family knowledge. The enthusiasm and pooled knowledge helped those who attended develop their own interests. The discoveries of Settlement papers at St Editha's as well as information on WW1 were early areas of exploration for members the results of which were sent on to the Staffordshire Archive.

Sometimes we spent time just listening to each others interests and the odd things known or uncovered. The latter is especially interesting when elder members of the public talk about the Tamworth of their youth. That is how the group has evolved into meetings with invited speakers and more commonly an exchange of personal knowledge. Speakers may be friends of members and have enlightened us on Lawrence's Air Force, the importance of Macgregor to the wider world and our local connections with Peel and Middleton Hall. A visit can be arranged locally, and we pass on information about other active historic groups. The group is a very informal one and everyone is welcome. If you know of someone locally who has specific knowledge of an aspect of the town's history, they would be welcome to come along and talk with members, no formal presentation is required.

Due to changes at the Library the group can no longer meet there and other town centre locations are being used

For further information contact Diane Wells diane@tamworthhistory.org.uk





Cooperative Society shop ,Church street
(Tamworth Digital Archive)

TAMWORTH CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LTD

By Richard Hughes

The early days of co-operation in Tamworth were very similar to those in many other parts of the country.

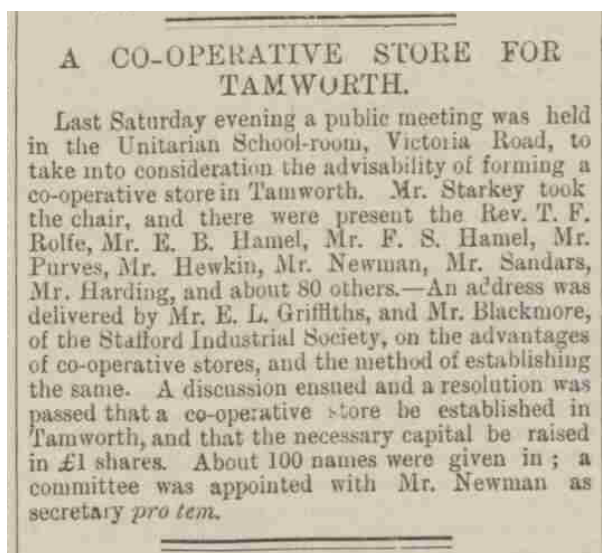
In 1844 the Pioneers initiated the Rochdale Society, and by 1865 the Movement had made progress throughout the North of England and had also established itself in the Midlands, in Derby, Stafford and Leicester amongst others.

In 1865 a Society was formed at Fazeley, a couple of miles from the Tamworth town centre, but this prospered for only about two years and was then dissolved.

From 1868 to 1872 further attempts were made within the Tamworth area and, in 1872 a Society was formed at Wilnecote, approximately three miles from the Tamworth town centre, which alas again only lasted for about three years before it was dissolved.

On 13th November 1886, a meeting was arranged in Tamworth, and this was attended by just over 80 people and was addressed by two members of the Stafford Society. It was decided at the meeting to form a Committee of twelve

and to setup a Society in the town, with the local vicar, Reverend William MacGregor appointed as the first treasurer of the Society.



The announcement in the Tamworth Herald
Saturday 20th November 1886
(The British Newspaper Archive)



The Reverend William MacGregor was a great benefactor to the town, and, apart from his endeavours on behalf of the church in the region, he also found the local hospital, erected swimming baths and became quite a rock on which the Society was built. His involvement with the Co-op resulted in his being vilified in the local press and he eventually resigned from the Vicariate due to this, although he remained for the rest of his long life within the Borough.

It is worthy to note that the chairs which were constructed individually for the original Committee were still in daily use in the Co-op's offices well over a hundred years later, and one of them bore the initials of Reverend MacGregor on the underneath of the seat.

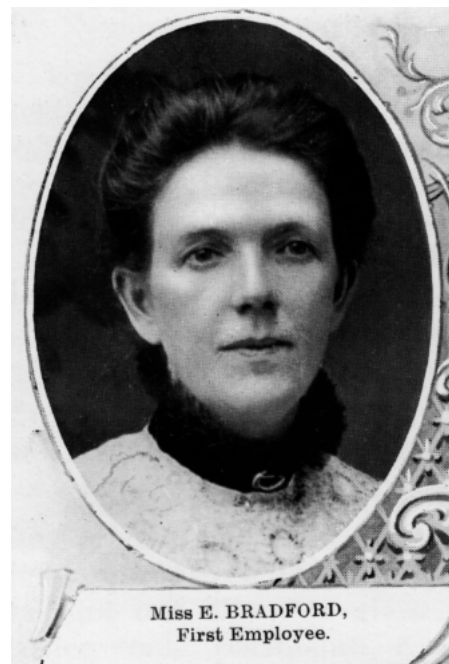
On the 29th November 1886 an initial consignment of assorted goods was ordered from the C.W.S. Ltd. to commence trading in Tamworth. The first employee was appointed, being a lady by the name of Elizabeth Bradford and her commencing wage was the grand sum of nine shillings per week (45 pence), for which she



Richard Hughes CEO 92-09 with MacGregor Chair (Tamworth Digital Archive)

had to work seventy hours. The shop opening hours were then 8.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. on four days, 8.00 a.m. to 4.00

p.m. on Wednesdays and 8.00 a.m. until 10.00 p.m. on Saturdays. The first week's takings were approximately £15. The Co-operative News tried an advertisement from the Society during February 1887 for a Manager, and the first Manager appointed was a gentleman by the name of Samuel Hardy who came to the Society from the Clay Cross Society in Derbyshire at an initial wage of thirty shillings a week.



Above: The first employee Elizabeth Bradford (Tamworth Digital Archive)

Left: First Co-op Store 46 Church Street (Tamworth Digital Archive)



35-36 Church Street and 6 Colehill in 1892-95 when the Co-op first started using the site.
(Tamworth Digital Archive)

The Society took out an insurance policy with the C.I.S in 1882 and a bank account with the Co-op Bank in 1890.

The Society trade built up over the next few years and when Samuel Hardy resigned in 1898 the sales were approximately £40,000 per year and Membership was 1800. The dividend paid to Members was then 2/6d in the pound (12 ½ p).

By 1907 sales had doubled to £80,719.3s.7d. And the dividend was still maintained at 2/6d in the pound.

By the end of the war sales were approaching the half a million pound mark, Membership was over 12,000 and the dividend had been reduced to 2 shillings in the pound.

By 1960 sales were over one and a half million, Membership over 18,000 and the dividend was further reduced to 1s 1d in the pound. The Society has continued to pay a dividend throughout its history and this has been an important factor in the build up of loyalty in the area, and a huge part of the reason why it has been able to remain as an independent entity whilst other societies have merged and merged bringing the total number of societies in the country down from over a thousand to double figures.

In 1986, the Centenary year sales were over £12 million, and Membership had built up to over 35,000 and a special dividend was created to celebrate the occasion.

Recently the Society has closed down its non food operations entirely, but still operates 12 food stores and 8 funeral offices. It also manages 4 post offices whilst turnover amounts to over



35-36 Church Street and 6 Colehill in 1896 after the rebuilding
(Tamworth Digital Archive)

£25 million. Total assets of the society have however shrunk in the last few years from a maximum of around £23million to around £13 million.

The Society has remained a huge and important presence in the town throughout its history. The success of the Society has been built up on the loyalty of its local staff and the continuity of its management. It is important to note that there have only been eight managing executives in its 137 years of existence and only seven deputies, quite remarkable statistics.

Right: A page from the original Co-op accounts from December 1898 (Richard Hughes)

Below: William MacGregor peeping over the barriers that were put around the co-op building shortly before demolition. He was a progressive man but what would he have thought of these changes in 2023? ©

Jamedia

1898 Dec 11

Returned to House Tenants Lacey, Bayle, Poynt	5
By Amount paid to 8 Trustees for distribution amongst the Poor £3.18.8 each	31 9 4
do to Mr. A. H. Pratt 1 year Salary as Librarian	3 3
do to Treasurer of Tamworth Cottage Hospital Subscription	10
do to Treasurer of the Birmingham & Midland Eye Hospital Subscription	11 4
do to Treasurer of the General Hospital Birmingham Subscription	11 4
do Mrs. Fawcett Subscription to Tamworth Lying in Charity	2 3
do Mrs. Thos. Angell Subscription to Tamworth Grammar School	10
do Rev. J. H. Courtney Clarke Subscription to Tamworth Parochial Nursing Fund	10
do Rev. J. J. H. Blaridge Subscription to Tamworth Clothing Club	5
do Messrs. Nevill Atkins & Matthews General Bill	3 3 6
do Mr. H. Dyer Insurance	6
do Edward Williams Premium with Apprentice Edw. A. Bird	5
do Alfred Barrow Premium with Harold Mackin	5
do Joseph Bundry Premium with Apprentice John Moore	5
do William Premium with	

1899 Jan 17



Baddesley Mine wheel
(Anthony Poulton-Smith)



A Walk Around the Former Local Mines (in Staffordshire and Warwickshire)

By **Anthony Poulton Smith**

As part of the research for a forthcoming book, I recently walked a route looking at some of the industrial heritage between Tamworth and Atherstone. This is a long circular walk but could easily be made shorter or turned into a linear walk by using the canal or railway to begin at Atherstone.

You can start at any point on the Coventry Canal from Fazeley Junction to Amington Green and head east towards Coventry, aided by Ordnance Survey Map 220.

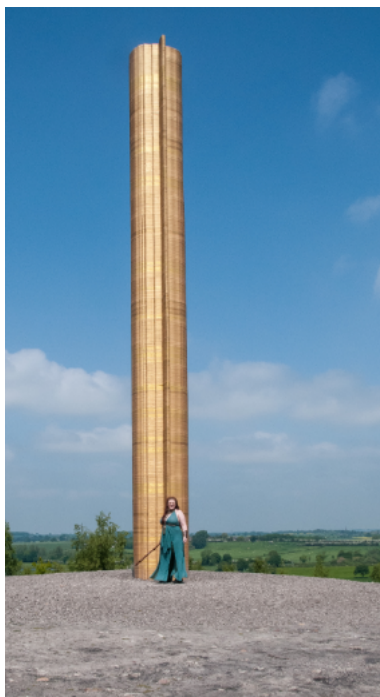
No matter where you begin note when you cross under bridge 63 and the signs for Hodge Lane Nature Reserve, we will catch up with this later. Other than the canal itself, the first sign of coal comes at Alvecote, with its marina and the Samuel Barlow pub, named after a haulier who will have moved tons of coal. Pass under Robeys Lane and opposite the ruins of Alvecote Priory,



Samuel Barlow Coal Wagon with team
(Tamworth Digital Archive)

to the left is the Alvecote Pools beyond the railway, created when the ground subsided post-mining and subsequently flooded. This is part of [Pooley Hall Nature Reserve](#), also known as Canal Pool. Note the adjacent spoil heap offers excellent views if you wish to climb it.

Photo of Golden Tower of Leaves by Dalziel and Scullion sits atop the spoil heap. [Click here for more information](#)
Photo (**JAmelia**)



Continue and alongside a straight stretch, note the war memorial erected by the colliery to those who fell in the Great War who had previously worked the mine. There are good views across to the left of the canal and countryside. At the bottom of this path is the B5000, turn left, cross the canal bridge, and then at the crossroads go straight on and cross the canal again along Grendon Road. Ignore Common Road and take the second right, St Helena Road. Just past Rowena Gardens there is a field gate on the left; here a stone marks the site of the Little Jim's Cottage miners' cottage. Look on the right and the first of three stiles heading off to the right where it takes you to a gate, almost invisible until quite near. Turn left here, then at the top at Hollies Cottage, take the path to the right around the cottage, through a kissing gate,

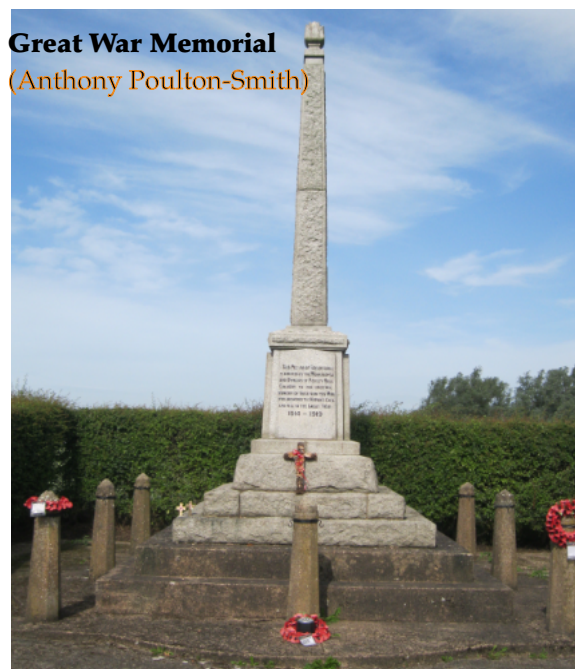
and then up a well-trodden grassy path to the top corner of the field and another kissing gate. Walk through, turn left, and take the left path across the stile.

Soon you will hear the M42 and as we approach the canal narrows – here the railway once crossed the canal, the arch on the opposite side from the tow path is modern strengthening but on the towpath side the brickwork of the bridge support is typical railway architecture. Beyond note there is a marker post, it has a blue arrow and indicates we are walking the Miner's Way. Just before where the M42 crosses are bridge 56, leading to Pooley Country Park, take this bridge and follow the metalled road – noting the images stencilled on the support of the motorway bridge. When you see the parking for disabled signposted, take a slight detour and take in the visitor centre and the former winding wheel for Pooley Hall.

Keep the hedge on your right and walk on until reaching the metal gate, and stile. Cross the road, the meeting of Dunns Lane and Church Road, and follow the footpath way-marked straight ahead through the small wood. Here another stile points us straight ahead, this field passes



Great War Memorial
(Anthony Poulton-Smith)



Great War Memorial
(Anthony Poulton-Smith)



Pooley Hall Colliery in 1924
(Tamworth Digital Archive)

between the site of the former pit to the right, beyond the woodland, and on the left is the remains of a spoil heap. Follow the hedgerow to a gap, then take a short detour through this gate to see said spoil heap not yet reclaimed by nature. Come back through the gate and turn left and head for the corner of the field. Across the stile and take the drive on the right. This brings you to the A5 Watling Street.

Here head downhill along the bust A5, crossing after the island until reaching the houses lying back from the road on the right. Turn in and find Waste Lane, which we follow south along here along a broad and well-made track. After a while reach Folly Lane and turn right. The aptly-named Waste Hill is to the right and in a while you reach the summit of this road where you will find a metal gate on the left. Pause and look across to see Merevale Hall on the top of the hill in the distance. Shortly we reach the junction with The Common, turn right along this road using the footpath on the opposite side as we skirt Baddesley Common. Eventually reaching Baddesley, take the third road on the left which is New Street, note the monument in the form of the winding wheel dedicated to the miners on the corner.

Walk down New Street until just before the end where it turn sharply left there is a footpath way-marked to the right, follow this gravel path to Watery Lane at the bottom where we turn right.

Follow this until we reach the first way-marked path on the left. Through the kissing gate and head to the right across the field to the gap in the hedge ahead. Continue on and come to a crossing over a brook. Cross here and turn left. Pause to see the major railway viaduct above, we will be following the path of the disused railway for a while. Pass under the viaduct and straight



(Anthony Poulton-Smith)

ahead to a gate. Go through the gate and turn right. Now keep the hedgerow on the right to parallel the former railway. Occasionally there is the opportunity to pop in to see and even walk the former track bed, but don't follow it too far as it does not give access to the rest of the walk, although once it did take coal away from the mines here.

Keep going until you have seen the embankment become a cutting and shortly there is a way-marker pointing diagonally across the latter part of the field to a stile. Cross the stile and turn right keeping the hedge on the right and soon come to a gap in the hedge and another stile. Emerge on the road and turn left, take the second footpath on the right and follow the markers taking you around the field keeping the hedgerow on your right. At the far corner is a kissing gate, go through and skirt the single property there by a narrow path. Follow this and along the drive away from the house come to another gate. Go through and keep the woodland on your left and walk between it and the fence until reaching a plank bridge which we cross and come to a kissing gate opposite, go through and at cross the field to the gap where two footpaths form a crossroads, turn right here. Ahead is a kissing gate and you can see further evidence of the dismantled railway to the right as we draw near. Ascend the steps and then turn left and quickly right across the remains of the disused railway. Now we see a tunnel (albeit effectively a large pipe) which we will go through to emerge between two green fences. On the right is the freight terminal, on the left the railway lines still run with rolling stock here. At the end the path funnels and takes us down to another tunnel, emerging and turning left along the gravel path where the spoil heap is visible to the left. As the path runs out, take the gate on the right and cross the railway track. Turn immediately right and then left when this track terminates at the gate. Soon we come to the modern industrial estate with roads named after former collieries. Cross over and turn left. Follow this through three traffic islands to emerge at Watling Street via Danny Morson Way. Cross at the pedestrian crossing and turn right. Opposite a large old building is an un-gated gap which we follow.

Along this track to the top of the rise and turn right through a narrow pathway and eventually come out on Green Lane and a dog leg to the right on to Cockspur Street, turn left at the junction and after the junction of the left, Cockspur Street becomes Hermitage Lane as you leave Birchmoor. At the end of Hermitage Lane we reach the B5000 again. Turn left and we can now choose between Robeys Lane on the right, this a metalled road with no pathway and nothing of interest until we reach the ruins of the priory and the marina again, when we can follow the canal back west to our chosen starting point. Perhaps of more interest would be to continue and turn right at the second traffic island. This is Mercian Way and passes an industrial estate and new housing until, after another two traffic islands, a grassy area to the right heralds the start of Hodge Lane Nature Reserve which we can follow through to the canal and then back west to our chosen starting point on the Coventry Canal.

Altogether this is a walk of more than ten miles (depending upon the starting point). No great climbs but gently rolling landscape with an excellent mix of former industry and modern countryside. As stated at the beginning there is ample opportunity to cut the route short at several points.



Anti-clockwise from
Amington
Kingsbury
Baddersley
Peel Colliery
Kingsbury
(Tamworth)



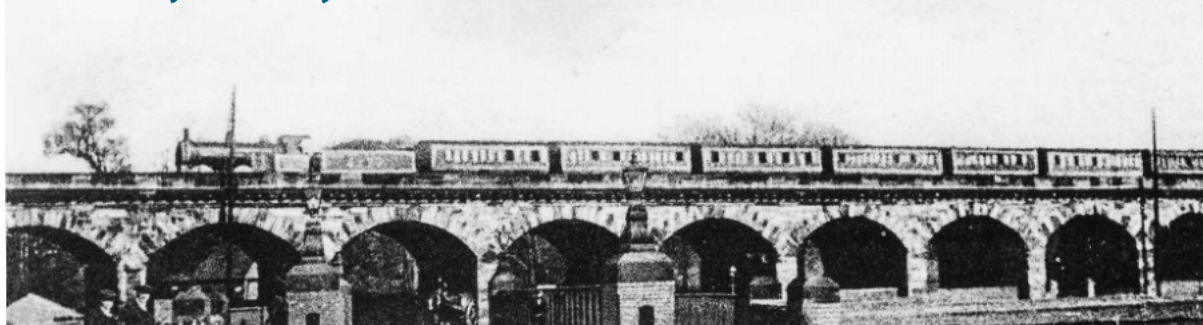


clockwise from below
n and Glascote Colliery rail truck
y Colliery
y Pit in NCB days
ery workers.
y Colliery
(with Digital Archive)



This season's significant dates and events

collated by Anthony Poulton-Smith



This is one of our more interactive pages with web links on almost every name.

4 July 1645 - Scots army are said to come to Tamworth

5 July 2009 - the first items of the [Staffordshire Hoard](#) are unearthed at Hammerwich.

13 July 1649 - Oliver Cromwell's Council of State orders Tamworth Castle be dismantled.

You may have noticed: it wasn't!

16 July 1934 - Fire at Pooley Hall Colliery, two fatalities

18 July 1861 - the transmitting mast at Hints, all 1,006 feet of it, began operations.

19 July 1907 - death of [William Gordon Bagnall](#), mechanical engineer born at Cliff House in Tamworth and founder of [W. G. Bagnall Ltd, locomotive builders](#).

20 July 1702 - First meeting in the new Town Hall of the Bayliffes and Capital Burgesses of Tamworth.

23 July 1852 - Matthew Noble's Peel statue unveiled in front of the Town Hall

26 July 1629 - birth of [John Ferrers](#), son of [Sir Humphrey Ferrers](#) of Tamworth Castle.

27 July 1930 - death of [Alfred Edden](#) politician, trade union organiser, and coal miner in New South Wales, Australia. Alfred was born in Tamworth, son of a miner who died in a mining accident shortly before his birth. Alfred worked as a miner himself from the age of ten, emigrating to Australia in 1879.

29 July 796 - death of [King Offa](#)

4 August 1839 - on completion of the nineteen arches viaduct the Birmingham to Derby railway is complete and George Stephenson is at the controls as the first engine, appropriately named Tamworth, crosses the biggest man-made structure in the town.

20 August 1930 - birth of [Henry John Roby](#), son of a Tamworth solicitor he went on to become an English classical scholar and writer on Roman law, a Liberal MP, and a [Cambridge Apostle](#).

Bolehall Railway Viaduct
([Tamworth Digital Archive](#))

1 September 1967 - [Friends of Tamworth Castle and Museum](#) are officially constituted.



4 September 1964 - Pop Bar, a page devoted entirely to popular music, makes its debut in the Tamworth Herald.

5 September 1949 - birth of [David 'Clem' Clemson](#) rock guitarist best known for his work with [Humble Pie](#).

17 September 1875 - birth of Harriet Alice Dumolo, eldest daughter of John Thomas Dumolo, colliery owner. Emigrating to Australia in 1881, in 1897 she was one of the first five to be awarded a Kindergarten Teacher's Certificate by the Teachers' Association of New South Wales.

28 September 1686 - death of [John Rawlet](#), one of Tamworth's most famous residents.

[Click to see video of Humble Pie - Honky Tonk Women - 1972](#)



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?



Last Issues Doorway was 63a Church Street

Photo © Jamedia

Tamworth Around the World:

Tamworth, New South Wales, Australia

by Val Leet, Secretary, Tamworth & District Family History Group



Tamworth from the Oxley Lookout
New South Wales Government.

In the beginning of European exploration of NSW it was mostly on foot in the early 1800s. They were on the lookout for rivers and good grazing land, which eventually led to the establishment of huge pastoral enterprises.

On May 1818, the Surveyor-General, Lieutenant John OXLEY RN set out from the town of Bathurst in Central Western New South Wales with plans to follow the Macquarie River to its mouth. Oxley and his party then decided to continue north towards the north east of the state to a point that Captain Cook had marked as Smoky Cape to the north of present-day Kempsey. Oxley then took his party into difficult terrain which is now the lower reaches of the Pilliga Scrub and onto the Liverpool Plains.

On 2 September 1818, John Oxley discovered a stream which he named the "Peel's River" in honour of the Rt. Honourable Robert PEEL, MP, then Chief Secretary of Ireland. The point at which Oxley crossed the river was about nine and a half kilometres downstream from where the present-day city of Tamworth stands. Oxley reported that the river valley appeared to be well-watered with luxuriant grass and good timber.

It was largely left to the explorers (John Oxley in this case) to name rivers and places and they had quite a list of prominent English people to name

places after. Places like Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide were named after Lords or their Ladies. Sir Robert Peel was very prominent at the time hence his connection by name to the area, there do not seem to be any direct connections. In Tamworth there are Oxley High School, Oxley Vale Public School, the suburb of Oxley Vale, and the highway running east-west through Tamworth is the Oxley Highway. None of these places were named by him, but obviously his exploration results in the early 1800s left an impression on various communities.

In 1824, the Australian Agricultural Company was formed in England. They began with a capital of one million pounds sterling and the authority to select one million acres of uncommitted Crown Land. The early aim was to produce fine wool for the European market. The A A Company (as it is more commonly known) continues today but most of the original lands have been reclaimed and subdivided for localised farming.

In the early years of Tamworth, the growing town was developed on both sides of the Peel River. The government controlled the eastern side and the A A Company controlled the western side. The town grew rapidly on the eastern side, and more slowly on the company side. An annoying product of this development was that some street names were duplicated and it wasn't until the early twentieth century that

the duplicate streets on the western side were renamed and the city became one.

The first known store set up in the town was in November 1835 and opened by a young man named James Charles WHITE, who had initially been employed as a Clerk by the A A Company.

Tamworth first appeared on a map on 20 July 1837. It was Robert Dixon's "Map of the Colony of New South Wales". The first hospital was opened in 1840, the Matron appointed was Mrs Sarah Anne WILLIS.

Today Tamworth is a city of around 40,000 residents. The area is still largely rural, but there are many aspects of industry situated in the north western corner of the city. Aside from the town's name of Tamworth, the river is still known as the Peel River, and the main street is Peel Street.

The Tamworth & District Family History Group don't recall ever helping anyone with research who had family origins in Tamworth UK, but they do have a decent connection to Somerset though with a number of families moving here in the 1800s. Some came from the village of Tintinhull. So Tamworth NSW has an outer suburb called Tintinhull.

The Post Office (built C1884), one of the few older buildings still standing in the town.

[The Northern Daily Leader.](#)

Tamworth & District Family History Group (<http://tamworthfamilyhistory.org/>) has been functioning since the mid-1980s.

One huge problem facing researchers today is that parents are often not married so it is more difficult to work backwards successfully with a lack of recorded earlier generations. In New South Wales, when Civil Registration began in 1856 our marriage certificates were meant to contain the names of both parents, plus the birthplace of the bride and groom. This worked well until the church clerks got sloppy and left off the bits of information we really need today. Before the turn of the 20th Century though the Registrar became stricter and parents' names and places of birth were recorded as required.

Tamworth & District Family History Group offices



Book Review

King Alfred's Daughter: The remarkable story of Æthelflæd, Lady of the Mercians, the heroine who was written out of history

by David Stokes

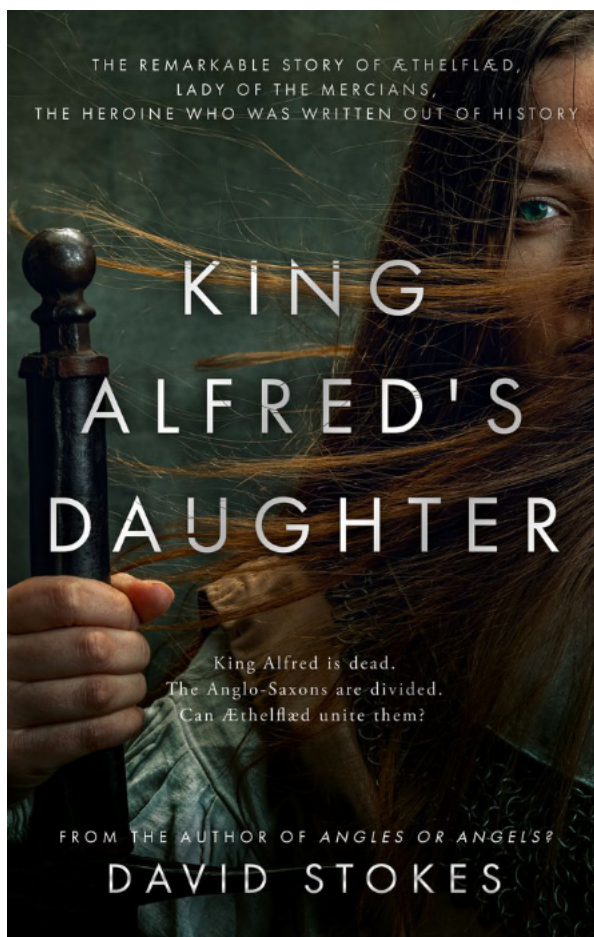
Published by The Book Guild, March 2023

ISBN 1915603196

Who is King Alfred's daughter? It is the Lady of the Mercian's. Our Aethelflaed whose statue stands outside Tamworth Railway station pointing to the town with her spear.

This is a fascinating fictional story written by a historian used to writing non-fiction. Consequently the book is a wonderful story of people that threads through the known history without disturbing it. In fact you could read this adventure story as history as there is nothing you could point to and say that didn't happen. Of course the conversations are fiction but as mentioned in the prologue and epilogues they are as accurate as any other history of the period. Apart from explaining how the history happened and, potentially, Aethelflaed's thought processes and discussions with her brother the King of Wessex, Aethelrad, her husband King of Mercia and Aethel...

Actually there are a lot of Aethel-something's in the book, but it is history and nothing the author can do about that. However, there is a very helpful historically accurate family tree as well as a full list of characters and who they are. It also highlights the very few fictional characters the author has added where the actual people are not known. There is also a map of the British Isles at the time. There was no "England" then (well not at the start of the tale) along with a set of historical notes from 865 to 927 and some notes on historical interpretation. So for the historians amongst you it will answer most of your questions and give an insight into history. So you can immerse yourself in the 25 years of



Mercian history, the bit between Alfred the Great and the birth of England.

I recently met David Stokes at an Aethelflaed event in Tamworth castle and discussed some of the points of the story with him. Particularly the Mercian's starting to use cavalry where they had traditionally used a shield wall on foot. There was a discussion about this between two characters which he said he had "made up" but it actually fits the known history so is probably closer to the reality than not. Even if it was someone else in Aethelflaed's circle who had the idea than the character in the book. Also the change in tactics from the leader/king being in the shield wall, as warrior kings were up to this time, to instead directing from the rear. Directing from the rear became common in the years after this period to the current times. As David pointed out Aethelflaed appears more of an educated tactician than a brawler.

In fact in the book Aethelflaed discusses her strategy for creating fortified towns and defence lines which you can still see in many towns today, if only in the street names and in some cases still in the line of the streets. She started a lot of building work from churches to castles to burhs.

For those of you who just want a dammed good adventure story it certainly is that! There is even a romance in there as well as lopping off heads. The story roams over much of Mercia and Wessex, also the Welsh borders. You will see the towns across Mercia (and Wessex) in a new light.

As the central character is a Lady and the story supposedly written by her daughter, you might think it is feminist, a sort of "*Jermaine Greer went to war*", but it isn't, and chick-lit it certainly isn't. It is more a subtle game of chess, and a bit of romance in passing, amidst the blunt clash of

spears on shield walls and the birth of Saxon cavalry. There are Bishops, Kings and Queens along with an insight into the number of different nationalities, tribes and languages across the island. It is more like The West Wing with more violence, though not graphical violence.

So do yourself a favour and grab a copy of King Alfred's Daughter and over the summer slip back a thousand years for a great story. You could of course visit the locations mentioned as you read the story and move between towns you thought you knew. What better way to spend a summer?

Highly recommended!

David Stokes at in Tamworth Castle for AthaelFest (JAmedia)





Co=op Front , Church Street, 2021 (JAmedia)

In 2022, the proposals for the redevelopment of Tamworth town centre were sufficiently advanced for Tamworth Co-operative Society to begin to plan to move its headquarters out of the historic headquarters on the corner of Colehill.

Whilst the proposals had been under discussion, there had been the inevitable look around at the cupboards and rear storage areas of the historic part of the building. In a room off the boardroom, there were cupboards full of copies of the published quarterly accounts dating back to the founding years of the society.

The Board of Tamworth Co-op were clear that the historic records of one of the very few Co-operative societies that had remained independent throughout its history should be preserved. Therefore, it was decided to contact Tamworth Borough Council who maintain a professional archive service led by Curator, Sarah Williams. Both Sarah and Tamworth Co-op were in touch with local historian Dr Simon People. Although Dr People's recent publications focused on the Great War, his original publication related to Victorian social history. It was therefore agreed by Tamworth Co-op to donate the archive to the care of Tamworth

Castle and Museum Archive Service (TCMAS) with Simon People as the volunteer who would ensure the material was archived.

In due course, staff at the Co-op, along with Simon and Sarah effected the transfer to the TCMAS premises in the The Castle Lodge at the Castle. Tamworth Borough Council were under time pressure to complete the acquisition and assessment of the Co-op site so everything had to be moved "at the double".

Therefore, the first task was to undertake a massive sort out. Copies of annual tax guides, books of statutes and other general items were recycled. It rapidly became clear that the archive included large numbers of books such as the "People's Year" that related to the general history of the Co-operative Movement but not to Tamworth Co-operative Society in particular. So, as well as beginning to archive the collection, it was important to create a list of items that would be offered to the Co-operative Heritage Centre in Manchester. This was done and resulted in a lot of Co-operative Union pamphlets, in particular, being set to one side to go there and fill gaps in their national collection.

The Archive and its relevance to local History

Tamworth was a small market town on the edge of Staffordshire following the creation of county councils in 1889. Previously the county boundary had run through the centre of town so now Tamworth was allocated to Staffordshire as 557 more people lived in the portion of the town belonging to Staffordshire. Tamworth Industrial Cooperative Society had been set up in November 1886 and registered in March 1887. It aimed to serve the needs of the local people during a time of price inflation. Railwaymen who had been transferred from Stafford raised the need for a co-op in Tamworth as they had seen the benefits of the one in Stafford.



Co-op Jubilee Mug
Dr Simon Peaple

The archive contains a large quantity of material relating to the ordinary day-to-day life of people in Tamworth. The records cover the shops and other premises of Tamworth Co-op as well as financial and sales records. These ordinary transactions reveal a great deal of the ongoing lives of the people in Tamworth. Some of the records relate to bread and milk deliveries. The amount of bread consumed by working class households helps to illuminate the debates taking place in 1906. A local insight to major



Co-op Advert
Dr Simon Peaple

events is also provided by the records for World War One and the Second World War.

Tamworth Co-op initially focused on tea and then bread and other goods were added. As well as running its own bakery, it added a butchers and later it acquired farmland. Other Co-ops seemed to have followed a similar pattern of development but in many cases the original records are no longer extant, only the early histories of those societies. The surviving records for Tamworth therefore help illuminate the path followed by many societies.

One of the treasures of this archive are the copies of the Co-op Home Magazine. The magazine was a general publication with a 4-page insert for each society. Approximately 80 copies survive (cataloguing is not yet complete) which is more than for many bigger societies that merged in the 1960s and 1970s when the urge to preserve was limited.

Apart from the Tamworth specific content, these magazines provide a fascinating record of fashion and food in relation to ordinary households, during the late 1950s up to the mid-1960s.



Richard Hughes CEO 1992-2009 with the Co-op Records and First Minute Book
(Tamworth Digital Archive)

The famous tiled stair case in the original 1996 building that will be maintained in the 2023 refurbishment. **(JAmedia)**



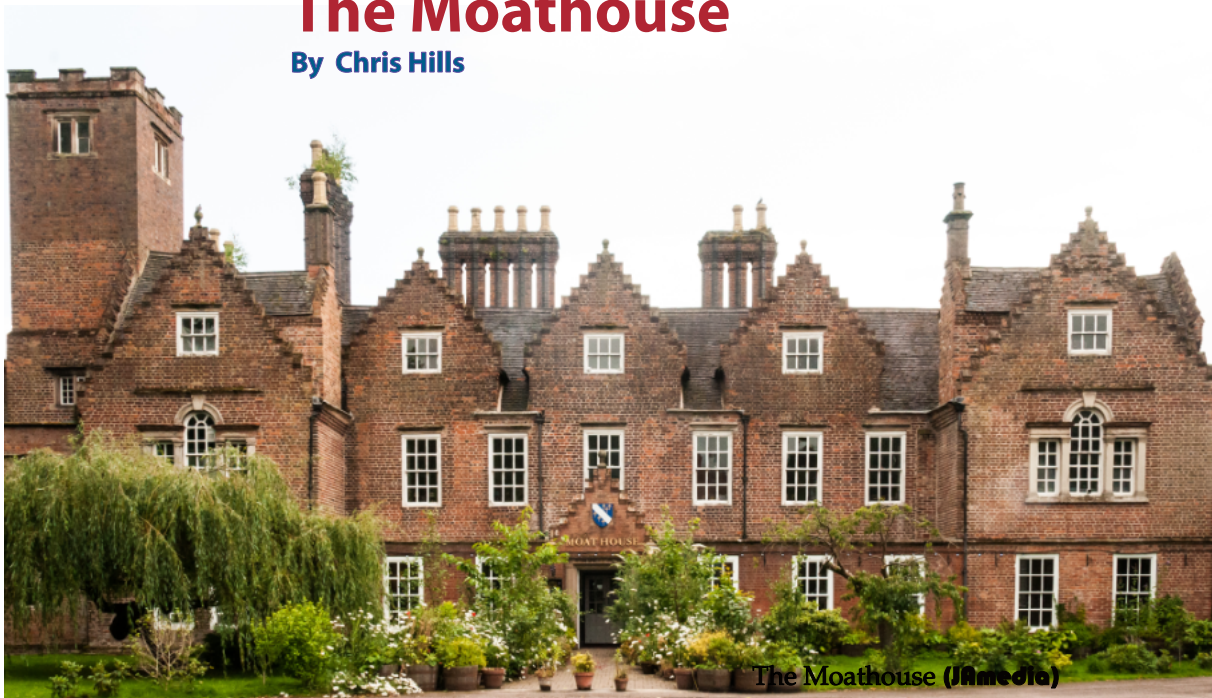
The Future

One of the positive aspects of working on this project has been the ongoing interest in it, by the Board of Tamworth Co-operative Society. They have preserved the historic boardroom furniture by moving it to their new boardroom. They have provided substantial funding for boxes to help store the archive. This grant was made as part of their "70 at 70" awards to local charities, honouring the late Queen Elizabeth's Jubilee. They also receive regular updates on the project's progress which are circulated with the agenda for Board meetings. I would like to extend my thanks to the Board for all their support and encouragement.

Any archive today needs to be easily accessible and therefore work to secure funding for digitisation is a key priority. It is also hoped to work with schools and other educational bodies to create activity packs that will mean information about Tamworth Co-operative Society engenders interest in the past for new generations. In age of video, a key goal will be to interview former employees and customers to create an enduring living record of the history of the society. The annual history of the Co-operative movement was entitled "The People's Year", the focus of the work on this archive is to bring to life the history of the daily life of the people as it was in a small town set in a largely rural county.

The Moathouse

By Chris Hills



The Moathouse (JHmedia)

Everyone in Tamworth knows of the Moathouse though, despite it being in Tamworth town, many have not seen it. Probably because it is at the set back several 100 metres at the end of a long drive, now a car park lined by trees, on a main road on the edge of town.

Most barely glimpse it as they pass in cars and busses. Though, many know “someone” who used the Moathouse in the 1960s to the 2010s, usually when it was a pub, a Berni Inn™ or a Schooner restaurant. However the rest of its history as commonly understood is sketchy and often somewhat incorrect. For a start it is claimed The Moathouse was built in 1572. However several sources say that before 1572 the Moat Hall stood on the same site. Indeed it is noted that in 1563 Walter Harcourt was living in Moat Hall (Stone 2003) This name is confirmed “in medieval times, ‘Motehallzende’ appears in local records.”(Swift) and that “Although the Moathouse had been Comberford family property in the previous century, in 1549 it was granted to Thomas Endsore”(Comerford 2023). Meaning there was a building there in the 1400s. EDIT *In discussion with Moathouse owners as this was being typeset they commented that “somewhere”*

in their conveyancing documents there was mention of a building on the site in the 1300s!

All agree that the Moat Hall became the Moathouse when it was rebuilt in 1572 by Walter Harcourt, to be substantially along the current lines, including the tower, in Grand Elizabethan style (Historic England) It is beyond the scope of this article to go into how much of any original building was incorporated in the current one. This will be in a later article. It is fairly certain that some of the original stonework would have been reused. So parts of the Moathouse, if only the materials may date from the 1400s or earlier.



Brick detail Moathouse (JHmedia)

Walter Harcourt married Mary Comberford. Walter died in 1599 and the Moathouse passed to the Comberford family.

The Comberfords were a staunch Roman Catholic family, even after the reformation. They were “recusants” and refused to go to the new protestant Church of England despite weekly fines for non-attendance in church. The Moathouse was raided several times and this gives rise to the possibility of Priests Holes, effectively concealed spaces, cupboards or rooms to hide the priests in. However in 1606 when Sir Humphrey Ferrers sent the bailiffs in to search the Moathouse three suspected priests were found, with no mention of priest holes, and clerical vestments were found “under the bed” (Stone 2003) along with religious texts suggests there were no priest’s holes. EDIT: *Just as this was being typeset the owners mentioned they were told there were three priest holes by the previous owners. However one of them at least has a concrete floor and is under stairs that were put in in modern times (they were reclaimed from another castle) Thus that “priests hole” didn’t exist in the 1600s* Though Mable Swift notes “it was whispered that the oak panelling inside the house hid more than one ‘priest’s hole’” However it seems it was whispered but none were actually found. The Comberfords got away with it as there was no actual proof that a Catholic Mass was or had been celebrated in the house. It sounds a bit like “going through the motions” rather anything else, as at that time others were penalised for similar evidence.

In 1619 King James the 1st of England (James 6th of Scotland) visited Tamworth and stayed with Sir Jon Ferrers at the Castle. The King’s son Prince Charles, who 5 years later became Charles 1st, stayed at the Moathouse as a guest of William Comberford. The Paris Register notes “The King lodged at ye castle, and ye Prince at the moatall” Which suggests that even in 1619 the Moathouse was still referred to as the Moat Hall. It should be noted it was not until 1755 and Samuel Johnson that English spellings and words started to stabilise with the OED not appearing until 1884. Even so spelling mistakes are still made in the 21st century.

Where is the Moat?

People often ask “Where is the moat?” when they see the building. There is no water visible as you approach, nor indeed from anywhere in the garden as the river is behind a fence. Well the “moat” in Moathouse does not refer to the building but the town. The Tamworth defence, as with so many towns was a combination of ditch with an earth bank and a fence/wall type fortification on top combined with a river on at least one side of the village or town. The maps show the burh ran north from just west of Ladybridge to what is now Hospital Street and then east along Albert Street and turned south along Marmion Street back to the Anker. Therefore the Anker and the Tame formed a moat along the south of the town. A moat overlooked by the castle mott giving a good view to the south. When the Moathouse estate was built it ran from the Burh west long the moat with the views from the Moathouse looking south over the (Wikipedia) moat hence its name. Maps of the 1800s show the stretch of river past the town as “The Moat”. So the building itself did not have a moat surrounding it as seen on many castles.



Tamworth in 1834 showing the river named as “The Moat” where it protects the south of the town (Tamworth Digital Archive)

As can be expected when the English Civil War (1642-1652) started the Comberfords and hence the Moathouse were on the Royalist side. In 1643 Cromwell's Army under Colonel William Purefoy attacked the Castle. The castle was captured but Cromwell giving orders for it to be destroyed little damage was done. Whilst Comberford escaped the Moathouse was ransacked by the Parliamentarians. At the same time the Comberford Manor in the village of that name was also ransacked. Mable Swift notes that "The people, it appears, favoured Cromwell." which would explain why the siege of the Castle was so short. At the end of the Civil war, having backed the losing side, the Comberfords went to Ireland and then to the estates in France.

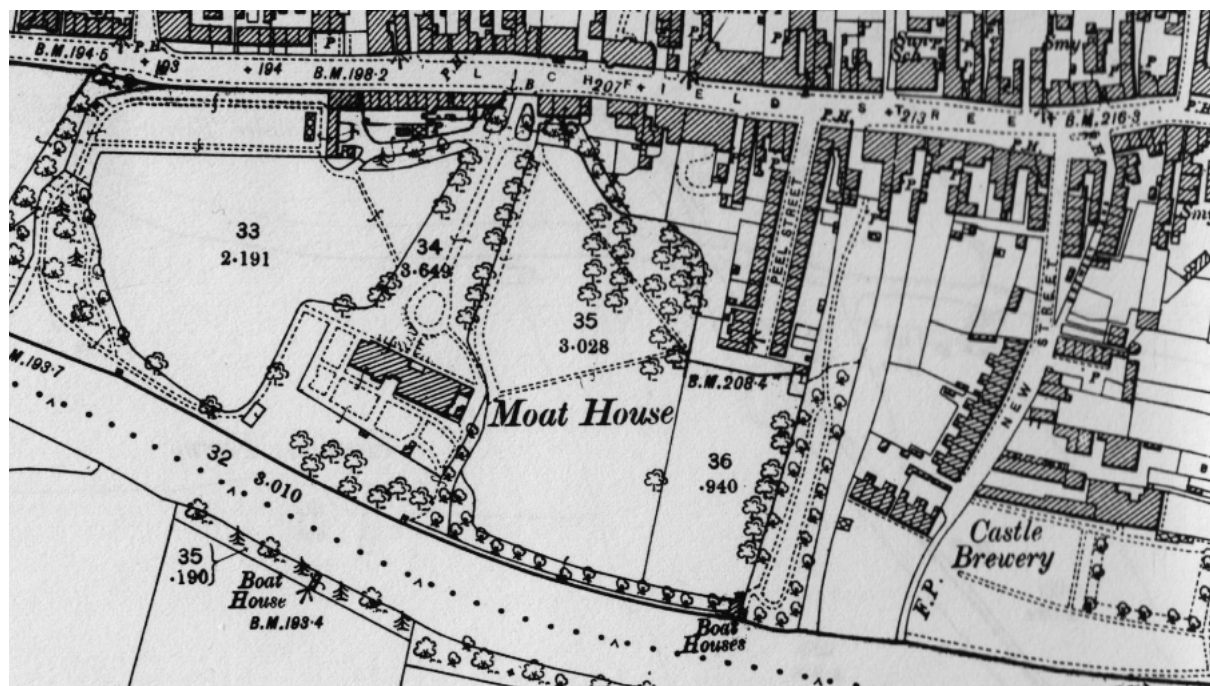
In 1654 Robert Comberford was forced to sell the Moathouse for £160. To add insult to injury the purchaser was Thomas Fox who was a Captain in the Parliamentary Army and various writers say Fox was a "bitter enemy" of the Comberfords.

The Moat House passed into the possession of the families of Boothby, Littleton, Wolferstan, Abney and later the Marquess of Townshend. This will require some more research but appears to have been a stable time as a family home. *If anyone has any information on these families please contact the Editor.*

By the early 1800s the Moathouse was owned by George Ferrers Townshend 3rd Marquess of Townshend (Wikipedia) Note the Ferrers name cropping up there. His Grandfather the 1st Marquess married Baroness Ferrers of Chartley. In 1815, Dr Robert Woody (1770-1823) became a tenant of the Moat House.

Now George Townshend had an interesting life with several scandals and court cases, none involving Tamworth. Townshend ran up debts and in legal proceedings, John Robinson from London claimed the 2nd Marquess, who died in 1811 owed his Auction house a lot of money. Robinson moved into the castle and sold the Moathouse to Dr Woody. At the time the conveying papers say the Moathouse comprised A paddock, Gardens, two houses, two barns (in Lichfield Street) and 8 acres. In addition the right to mark (claim) 6 Swans on the River and the fishing rights for the Moat (i.e. river) (Comerford 2015)

Dr Woody served as House Surgeon at the Salop Infirmary in Shrewsbury, subsequently be became a doctor on East India Company ships, Asylums Project Team 2022) Dr Woody came to Tamworth early in 1800 and by 1806, he was one of the two bailiffs of Tamworth.



The Tunnel from the Moathouse..... to the Castle

There are rumours of more of tunnels in Tamworth than canals in Venice. This goes with the territory for every old town and city in the UK. However, you only have to look at the path behind the Moathouse that runs along the river, the river that runs past the castle, to realise that any subterranean tunnel will be flooded 99% of the time. Indeed the cellars of the Moathouse do flood from time to time despite the best efforts of modern engineering and electric pumps. As does the flood plain on the south of the river and the Moathouse back garden at times.

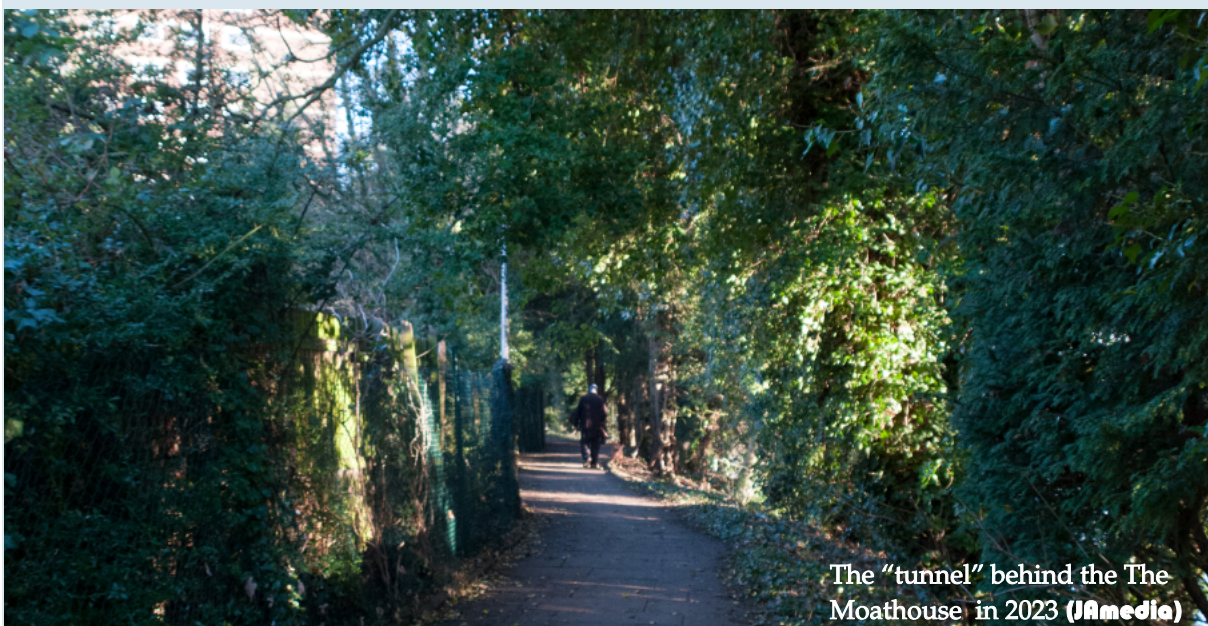
That said there was, and still is, a tunnel from the Moathouse leading towards the castle. It is just not what you think it is. Consulting my OED that cites the earlier, pre 1800, use and spelling sends us to the French words it was derived from where it meant a foliage covered walkway. In the 1500s the English Nobility would still have been using French, indeed after the English Civil War the Comberfords returned to their old estates in France. The English word Tunnel at the time referred, as did the French, to barrels (the Three Tuns Pub for example whose sign showed three barrels) and other forms of pipe, tube or tubular passageways including covered walkways that "tunnelled" through foliage. It was not until the

1800s, as noted by the OED, the word primarily came to mean subterranean passages. Indeed game keepers still construct above ground tunnels from hoops and nets for pheasants

Looking at the maps of the area from 1900 and photos of the mid-late 1800s it can be seen that there was, as partially remains now, trees and bushes in a line along the bank, forming what would have been a tree and foliage covered pathway from the Moathouse to Ladybridge and the Entrance of the castle. The construction of the Castle Brewery seems to have removed this foliage tunnel but the building of the tower blocks and the area around has reinstated the route as a path if not as tree-covered as the maps of 1900 showed.

It should be noted that had there been any subterranean tunnel from the Moathouse to the castle then the construction of the Castle Brewery would have found it. If not the subsequent redevelopment of the Brewery, New St and Peel St area for the tower blocks would certainly have discovered it. Unless you are asking us to believe in the 1500s they dug a tunnel, well below the water level 3-5 metres from a river that, even then often flooded.

There is still a tunnel in the original sense behind the Moathouse but these days it only goes 100 metres east and west of the building along the north bank of the Anker.



The "tunnel" behind the The Moathouse in 2023 (JAmedia)



In 1808 the **County Asylums Act** permitted counties to set up private Asylums. In 1815 Dr Woody, whilst still a working surgeon apothecary, applied to the magistrates for a license for *'the reception of insane persons'* the license being £15 annually, which equates to £1,100 in today's money ([Bank of England Inflation Calculator](#).) The licence permitted him to house *"more than ten lunatics"* though he does not seem to have gone over 6 patients at any one time. Indeed in 1816 an inspection by a local Doctor found they had three male and two female patients. The inspection further noted that each patient had a two rooms, a bedroom and a sitting room, they also had an attendant/servant. Actually the number of attendants was higher than the number of nurses employed. The Inspection reported the beds were clean and the attendants were neat and in order.

An inspection in 1917 found that one patient though said to be cured was still living in the house as a family friend (Asylums Project Team 2022) and it was normal for the patients to eat their meals with the Woody family, including the children.

A year later, 1819, a visiting JP commented on the humane and kind treatment given to patients. Further reports in the early 1820s also make similar comments. 3 to 6 patients, mainly female all well cared for in what would these days be seen as a high end private spar-sanctuary. The sort of thing celebrities go to when they to have treatment.

Dr John Woody died in 1835 and his wife took over as principal. The good reports from visiting physicians continued in 1837 and 1842. At the later inspection the patients came from Mold, Chester, Cobham and Sutton Coldfield. So clearly the reputation of the Tamworth Asylum had spread. Indeed Mable Swift noted that "These people were often well to do, but eccentric old ladies who went out in the landau round the town streets to shop, bestowing largess on the shopkeepers and errand boys who ran out to serve them." In the 1850s a visitor commented that Alice Woody limited the numbers, 'in order that the patients should not be dependent on one another for society, the object being to provide the society of sane people, rather than that of the insane'. Rehabilitating patients by contact with 'normality' appears to have been one of Alice's main approaches. It was also somewhat different, in deed far advanced, to common

The Moathouse Ghosts.

There are many reports of reports of someone who knows someone who felt a presence in the Moathouse. However looking at the records only 8 people died in the Moathouse. Most of the were the owners in their 70s and 80s who died of natural causes. A couple were patients of a similar age and one young woman, none called Emily. For some reason in Tamworth there are lots of reports of ghosts called "Emily". None of which have any historical background of any sort. They seem to come and go, caused by people's imaginations

Those who died the Moathouse were all to natural causes bar two. One a patient, in her late 60s, who suffered depression, committed suicide which is not uncommon with the malady she had. The last death was one of the family's staff, a young lady, who committed suicide in the 1920s aged 19. There was a suggestion it was due to being unmarried and pregnant but this can't be corroborated. However, no ghosts were ever reported before recent times and these were coupled with TV programs and commercial ghost walks. Even then nothing related to any of those known to have died in the Moathouse.

The Ghosts seem to have largely come from an enterprising land lord in one of the many incarnations of the Moathouse as a pub in recent times looking for an increase in revenue from the ghost hunter TV programs. Though, these programs didn't find anything tangible. Nothing other than creaks and bangs that are normally associated with a 500 year old house cooling down at night. With the notoriety of TV, organised commercial, "ghost walks" soon followed. However whilst many since then "know someone who knows someone" who has heard/felt "something" in the Moathouse there have not been any credible reports or sightings of anything.

The current owners who have lived on site 24/7 since 2018 have not seen or felt any ghosts at all. They point out the 500 year old building currently has 7 different boilers and heating systems. These multiple systems were installed in different decades, all of which creak and clunk, independently, at odd times. In particular, during the evenings and overnight when the building cools down. Hence some bar staff, in the past, reporting "ghost noises" when they are closing up late at night. The current owners have been "exorcising" the ghosts by fixing and updating the 7 separate heating systems and as they do many of the "ghostly" noises disappear.



The Moathouse and full moon
(JAmedia)

practice at the time. Though Alice Woody was only taking female patients. By 1841 the Moathouse was known as "Mrs Woody's Private Lunatic Asylum."

1856 When Robert Peel took married Lady Emily Hay it was Dr John Woody, named after his father, paid for St Editha's bells to be rung for 2 days to celebrate the occasion (Stone 2003) I am not sure that 2 days of church bells would be permitted now!

In 1863 on the death of his mother, Alice, Dr John Francis Woody, became licensee. He had followed in his father's footsteps as a doctor. He went to the Medical School in King's College, London. 1840-42 he was the house surgeon and apothecary in the Stockport Infirmary.

Also in 1863 the Moathouse was opened for a horticultural show. Over 2000 people visited. Which was a lot and some must have come from far and wide as the total population of Tamworth was not much higher. They came through the avenue of lime trees on the drive to see the displays of flowers, fruit and vegetables. There were also entertainments: archery, dancing to the Warwickshire Militia Band and some pleasure boats on the River Tame. Again underlining that the Moathouse was hardly a "secure hospital" but more an open convalescent home.

Dr John Woody continued to operate the asylum until the 1890s with a co-proprietor Edward Hollins (Woody's grandson). A small number of patients was still usual – 5 women in 1891 census, along with 6 servants and 3 nurses.

Dr John Francis Woody died in 1894 Edward Hollins continued until his death aged 84 in 1921. In 1922 a new owner, Dr William Lowson, continued to operate it as a form of convalescent home until he retired in 1950. Thus after 135 year of being one of the most advanced convalescent asylums in the world it closed.

Dr Lawson tried to offer the Moat House as a free gift to Tamworth Borough Council but after initial interest, they declined his offer. Though do remember this was less than 4 years after WW2

Moathouse brickwork



and food rationing was verted into flats. Another Historian said "After much discussion the council foolishly decided that they could not afford to look after it and refused the offer. Highly indignant, the doctor quite rightly sold thstill in place (it ended in 1954) Dr. Lowson, allegedly unhappy with the council, sold it to be cone mansion"(Swift) How right or wrong that decision was is up for discussion.

Since the 1950s the Moathouse has had a chequered history. It has had multiple owners, being stood empty, run as a Berni Inn, a Schooner Pub, several other licensees have run it as a pub with varying results. Somehow someone got planning permission in the 1960s to add a modern brick extension at the back for a commercial kitchen which would be very unlikely to get planning permission now.

The current owners boght the Moathouse in 2018 and set about sympathetically refurbishing it and updating the seven separate central heating systems that were installed in different decades. As of mid-2023 they have refurbished it so there are only two! The Moathouse was re-opened as a pub in 2019 and promptly closed in March 2022 due to COVID restrictions!

As of 2023 the Moathouse is open weekends as a pub and does functions during the week. Will it become a restaurant again or a hotel? Who knows? One thing we do know its future as a well looked after building is secure, hopefully for some decades to come at least.



The Moathouse interior 2023
(JAmedia)

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Letters to the Editor



Dear Editor

Regarding the article about the death of the Wagoner near Lichfield, I mentioned that the Thompson's foundry over the canal from the Lock Keepers Cottage at Glascote Bottom Lock did the mine wheels being transported. Thompson's were the only place in England, at that time that did them in one piece. Len Billingham had a hand written book on the subject that he lent to Paul (Len used to call Paul "lad") when we lived in the Lock Keepers Cottage.

Also I recall that the Laxey Wheel in the Isle of man <https://manxnationalheritage.im/our-sites/laxey-wheel/> was also made there in pieces and transported over. See video of Wheel <https://youtu.be/SoW2eK99dXw> from Manx National Heritage

Thompson and Southwick at Bottom Lock, Glascote ([Tamworth Digital Archive](#))
CORRECTION this is Wynns. T&S would be behind phtographer

PLUTO Pipeline ([Tamworth Digital Archive](#))



In addition there are pictures of PLUTO (from world war 2 parts) on Glascote boat yard on railway line that went all the way down that area and into the Gibbs and Caning/ Thompson and Gibbs and Southwick/ Reliant site and the railway lines were only removed when the site was cleared for houses.

With regards to the site being cleared, it was only then that the machinery to make the coal mine wheels was removed and had to be cut up and taken on the back of low loaders to scrap

And with the factory demolished we noticed we had views right into Tamworth Town centre and of St Edithas Church, which will have not been seen for years and would not be seen again once houses were built. We got in touch with Paul Barber and he came and took pictures of the views somewhere round 2000-2002. Either Thompson and Southwick and Gibbs and Canning,

I don't know which pair, but I do remember in Glascote Cemetery and one pair of them has the plots next to each other and Samuel Barlow is the only gravestone facing the canal

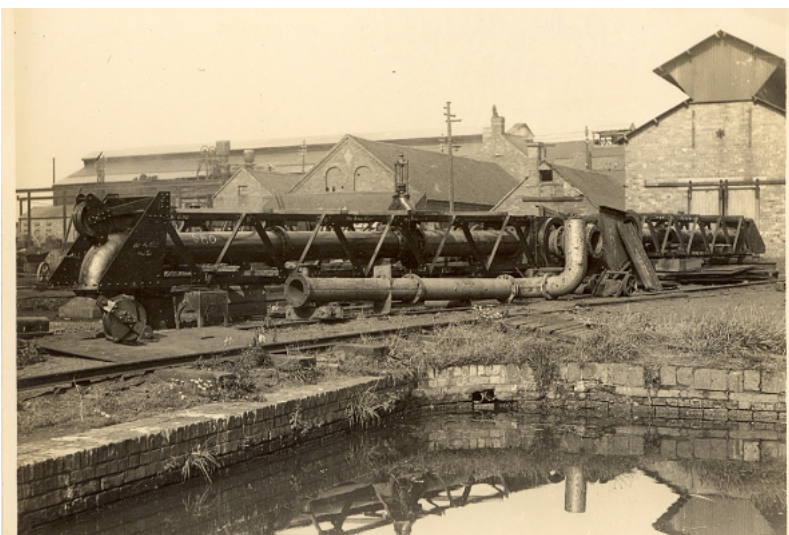
Regards
Pam Pearce
(Balloons and Tunes)

Editor If anyone has any history of Thompson and Southwick it would make a great article for the magazine.

Hi Editor

I was born in Strode House High-rise in Tamworth, 1969. I've described, in a family history, a number of the key places I remember enjoying as a child. The play area with the old tractor and big slide being one of many we kids would frequent, but I have not been able to locate a picture. It wasn't long after my accident that my family moved out of there. Possibly fearing my new-found head for heights?

I spent my formative years in a council house in Gillway. But we'd often frequent the Castle Grounds and the Lido and the playground. Unfortunately I don't have any photos, for one reason and another. I've looked at local groups and have seen my face pop up now and then in old photos. Most recently the Landlady of the Tam 'O Shanter shared a Queen's Silver Jubilee one and I'm in it, fancy-dressed as a little-man bus driver.



Thompson and Southwick at Bottom Lock, Glascote ([Tamworth Digital Archive](#))



Photo by Chris Gibson

It's extraordinary how one shared photo or one memory can spark off so many others. The bulldozer had that effect on me. It would spark up many others too. Proust had it nailed! I am open-minded about being involved in writing something else about those years, if it's of interest to people.

Kind regards, Mark Collins

Editor: *Would anyone like to hear more of Marks memories of those years? Would anyone like to contribute with words and photos especially photos where you can name the people in them. Contact the Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk*

Next Edition

Autumn 2023

Publication Date: 1st October

Copy Date: 13th September

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 Sept.

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.

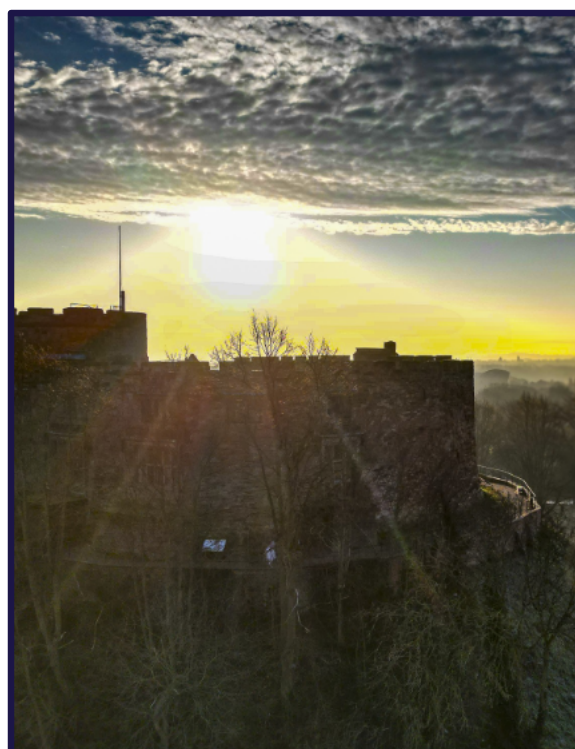
Please send in article/letters in text, RTF, MS doc or docx format. **Any images sent separately.**

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

The Editorial Team can help with research, finding documents, scanning items, finding images (we have a photo library of over 20,000 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

100 years of Tamworth Royal British Legion

Hopefully completed for this issue. More information came light to late to complete for current issue

Fire Brigade in Tamworth

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

The Rawlett Trust

The Jewkes Brothers

Five brothers who went to war

Goddard and Gibbs Window (Ankerside)

The Life of Thomas Argyle

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