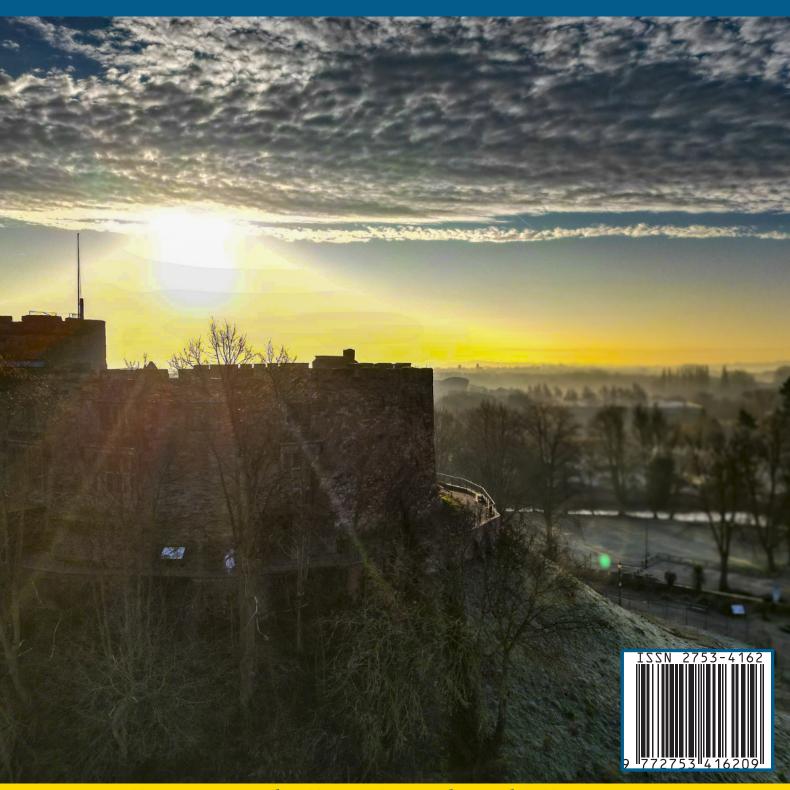
**Tamworth** 

# HERTTAGE Magazine v1i4 Autumn 2023



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 Edito**r Anthony Poulton-Smith BA email <u>AsstEditor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk</u>

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Cover Image: Tamworth Castle at Dawn © Mark Harper

Back Image: The Eternal Round Table Santa Sleigh in 1972 (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

Anthony Poulton-Smith Ba, Assistant Editor is a well known speaker and author on all things historical having written numerous books on historical subjects both local and national. Including Tamworth Pub Names, Tamworth Street Names and Tamworth Through Time

**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.

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**.

**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.

# Welcome the Editor Progress is being made



Well we made it! Issue 4 and volume 1 completed! The team is looking to Volume 2. It has been quite a ride. We are still shaking down the format, styles and the templates we use. There has been a good response from readers and after the first "Letters to the Editor" I had to write myself we have gone from one to two pages of real readers' letters!

One thing that we have manged to do is contact three of the other four Tamworth's in the world and they have all written about their Tamworth. This issue it is **Tamworth Ontario** on page 22. Only Tamworth, Virginia, USA is missing. We hope to rectify this soon. If anyone has any contacts there please give them a nudge.

It's not just the letters page; we are getting more people writing articles. It seems people get inspired by some of the articles we have had. If you look at *This Seasons Significant Dates* on page 20 many of them are 12 months short of a significant anniversary. Any of these might make a good article if anyone thinks they are interested in writing one. NOTE the Editorial team can help with research and pictures but email the editor before you start. Just in case there are three of you want to write the same article! Email the Editor@TamworthHeritage.org

One thing that is important to the Editorial team is that it covers local people. Not just the famous ones but the "ordinary" people; local family and business life. Everyone has a story. As you can see from our first article about the 5 Jewkes Brothers from Wilnecote who served in WW2. We had a discussion with a lady whose relative

worked at the Baths "under the co-op" and that story is fascinating and will be in a later issue. Many previous issues have articles about daily life and we could do with more of them.

If you have something that interests you, email the editor and we can help point you at places for research and what is needed for an article. Everyone so far has found it a lot of fun. *Make your new year's resolution to write one article for the Magazine*.

The articles and letters we get will dictate the direction the magazine takes. In the future we hope to expand some of the articles into standalone pamphlets or books. So any aspiring historical authors should contact us.

Talking of future directions; see the **Book Review** on page 26 it is: **Tamworth Report of Survey** this is the infamous report in 1965 that changed Tamworth forever in the late 1960s and 70s contact the Editor for a copy.

When the magazine was first envisaged over a year ago it was intended to be part of Tamworth Heritage Trust but the actions of the Chair at the time precluded this so the Tamworth Heritage Magazine is now a standalone publication and independent. However it is a member of Staffordshire Heritage Group, and the Editor is a member of the British Association for Local History. We hope to do an article on these, and related organisations showing what they can do for local amateur historians.

Email the Editor@TamworthHeritage.org

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## Five Jewkes Brothers from Wilnecote in the Services

**By Rebecca Jewkes** 

In the annals of history, few events have shaped the world as profoundly as World War Two. The cataclysmic conflict impacted millions of lives across the globe. While the war's scale might be daunting to comprehend, it is often through the lens of individual stories that we truly grasp its magnitude.

As war clouds loomed over the British Isles, Tamworth was inevitably gripped by a palpable mix of apprehension and patriotism. Families from all walks of life rallied together, preparing themselves for the inevitable storm that would soon descend. Men, women and children embraced their civic duty, donning uniforms, joining the Home Guard, and eagerly volunteering for service. With the declaration of war in 1939, families found themselves swept away on a turbulent tide of separation. Sons, husbands, and fathers bid farewell to tearful loved ones, heading off to distant battlefields and shores and the perilous skies above. The front page of



The Jewkes Brothers by Jewkes Family Archive

the Tamworth Herald in March 1942 shows how this story inspired five sons from a mining family from Wilnecote to join up to help fight for our country.

The mining industry in Britain at this time was a pivotal and challenging period. The economic and social landscape of the time heavily relied on coal as a source of energy and employment. Pre-war, it was an era of industrialisation as Britain was grappling with the devastating effects of the Great Depression. The mining

industry, like many others, experienced a severe decline in demand and output. Falling coal prices led to widespread closures of mines, resulting in staggering unemployment rates and economic turmoil in mining communities across Great Britain. However, the onset of World War Two brought about a significant shift in the fortunes of the mining industry. As the country mobilised for war, the demand for coal skyrocketed. Coal was needed to fuel the power effort, the factories producing arms and munitions, and keep the lights on during blackouts. Mines that had been closed were reopened, and new ones were hastily established to meet the heightened demand.

The miners played a critical role in ensuring the uninterrupted supply of coal. Their arduous and dangerous work in the depths of the earth became vital to the war effort. Despite facing harsh conditions and constant danger, the miners worked tirelessly, often risking their lives to extract the coal that fuelled the nation's war machine. Their tireless efforts helped sustain the war effort and played a significant role in the ultimate victory of the Allies.

As the war escalated, despite being a reserved occupation, numerous miners felt a strong sense of duty to their country and enlisted in the military. Men who had spent their lives toiling in the depths now found themselves venturing onto a different battlefield. These miners turned soldiers brought with them a unique set of skills and a deep-rooted resilience, honed by their experiences in the mining industry.

Their physical strength, endurance, and ability to work under extreme conditions translated well to the demands of military service. In addition, their deep understanding of teamwork and reliance on one anothers support helped forge strong bonds within their units.

If you were to look at any map of Tamworth and the surrounding area during the 1930s and 1940s, you would undoubtedly see how many collieries and brick-works there were, and you can understand just how vital these were for employment in the area. In this branch of the Jewkes family alone, Kingsbury Colliery, Tame Valley Colliery, Dexter Colliery and Averill Brickyard were major employers. Joshua Jewkes, the father of the five brothers who went to war, worked as a coal miner hewer at Kingsbury alongside his son, John who worked as a miner. Joshua's oldest son, Joshua, started his working life as a pony driver at Tame Valley Colliery. Edward worked at Averill's Brickyard and both Charles and Maurice had worked at Dexter Colliery before enlisting.

#### Joshua Jewkes

The eldest brother, Joshua Jewkes, was a transport driver in the Pioneer Corps and had already seen two years of service. He was 40 years old at the time of the Herald front page and had joined up in the early days of the war. The Pioneer Corps were established in September 1939, initially as Works Labour Companies comprising of Reservists. Shortly thereafter, these units were amalgamated to form the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps (AMPC). Setting a precedent for pioneer units, the AMPC held the distinction of being classified as a combatant unit from its inception. During the Battle of France in June 1940, a number companies of AMPC were urgently





deployed as combat troops before being evacuated. In November 1940, the unit became known as the Pioneer Corps. Its ranks also included individuals who had sought refuge from Austria, Germany, and Eastern Europe, including Jewish and anti-Nazi refugees. While heavier engineering tasks were entrusted to the Royal Engineers, undertook Pioneer Corps engineering duties such as constructing anti-aircraft emplacements on the Home Front, contributing to the development of the Mulberry harbours for D-Day, and participating in beach assaults in France and Italy. Additionally, the Pioneers were involved in stretcher bearing, airfield construction, railway repairs, and the transportation of stores and supplies. By May 1945, the Corps boasted around 180,000 British personnel and 400,000 Commonwealth members. and recognition of its wartime contributions it was granted the 'Royal' prefix in 1946.

### Francis Jewkes

Francis Jewkes, the second eldest brother, was a reservist and served in the Lincolnshire Regiment. He had been called

up for active service and went through the Battle of Dunkirk, one of the most significant military campaigns of the war. Francis's experience and bravery during the Dunkirk evacuation were instrumental in helping to save thousands of British and Allied soldiers from certain death or capture. Dunkirk was a critical event of the war. As the German army advanced through France, they quickly pushed the British and French forces towards the coast, trapping them near the town of Dunkirk. The situation seemed dire for the Allied troops, with the prospect of significant defeat or capture looming over them. In a desperate attempt to evacuate their forces, the British launched Operation Dynamo. The operation involved a massive undertaking to rescue and transport as many soldiers as possible across the English Channel to safety in Britain. A fleet of over 800 civilian and military vessels, including naval ships, fishing boats, and pleasure crafts were assembled for the evacuation. From 26th May to 4th June 1940, the evacuation of Dunkirk took place under the constant threat from German air attacks and artillery fire. The soldiers faced incredibly challenging conditions, waiting for their turn to be evacuated while enduring bombings and strafing from enemy aircraft.

The Royal Air Force were also playing a crucial role above their heads, engaging in fierce dog fights with the Luftwaffe. The evacuation of Dunkirk has significant implications for the war. It allowed the British Expeditionary Force to regroup and continue fighting, providing a vital boost to morale. Winston Churchill called the evacuation a "miracle of deliverance". The event also demonstrated the resilience and determination of the Allied forces in the face of adversity.

### **Edward Jewkes**

Edward Jewkes, 26 at the time of the article, joined the R.A.C and had been stationed in India for a year. The 163<sup>rd</sup> Regiment Royal Armoured Corps (163 RAC) was a short-lived armoured regiment in the British Army's Royal Armoured Corps, serving exclusively in India during World War Two.



above: Edward Jewkes

Right: Charles Jewkes

Jewkes Family Archive

As a part of the British Empire, India officially declared war on Nazi Germany in September 1939. India's strategic location at the southern tip of the Indian Ocean, its significant armament production, and its vast armed forces working alongside British troops played a pivotal role in halting Imperial Japan's progress in the South Asian theatre of war.

The collective efforts of India and its Allies proved instrumental in impeding the Axis powers.

## **Charles Jewkes**

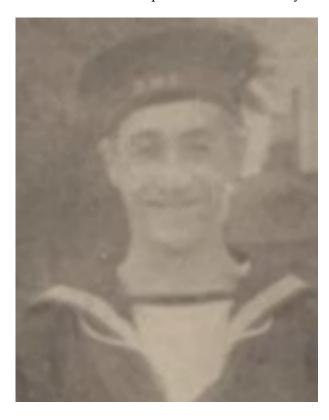
Charles Jewkes was with the North Staffordshire Regiment (Tamworth Territorials) and he was also stationed in India. Before India gained independence in 1947, a significant segment of the British Army was integrated with the Indian Army, to fulfil the role of 'policing' the British Empire and maintaining order, particularly in response to potential tensions between the Hindu and Muslim communities.



Over the course of its history, the North Staffordshire Regiment has participated in numerous campaigns and conflicts while being stationed in various parts of the world.

## **Maurice H Jewkes**

Maurice H. Jewkes had joined the Royal Navy ten months before the Tamworth Herald article was published. Like many



others from the Midlands who joined the Royal Navy, it is likely that Maurice would have been assigned to HMS Collingwood in Portsmouth for his basic training as an Ordinary Seaman. He would have had to catch the train from Birmingham Snow Hill station.

Once there, Maurice would have been accommodated in huts. Later in his career, Maurice completed training in Scapa Flow, where he practised tracking submarines, deploying, and detonating depth charges and doing target practise. He also participated in sea-based operations, where

targets were towed both by sea and by drones towing aircraft.

As we reflect on the extraordinary stories and sacrifices of the past, we are reminded that history is not a collection of isolated events, but rather a tapestry woven by countless individuals and families. In this article, we have delved into the account of one single family's contribution to World War Two. Their bravery, resilience and unwavering dedication to the cause are a testament to the spirit that defined an entire generation.

However, it is crucial to recognise that this family's experience is not unique. In every corner of our town and across the globe, countless families endured the hardships and heartaches of war. The war touched the lives of mothers bidding farewell to their sons, fathers leaving their families behind to fight for freedom, and siblings anxiously awaiting the return of their loved ones. It was a shared struggle that bound families together in solidarity and tested the very fabric of human endurance.

As we honour the memory of this one family, my great, great uncles, we must also remember the multitude of families who made their own sacrifices. It is through their collective sacrifices that we enjoy the liberties and privileges we often take for granted today. Let us never forget the countless lives forever changed by war and debt of gratitude we owe to those who served

At the going down of the sun, and in the morning We Will Remember Them

## Tamworth Castle Friends

The Friends of Tamworth Castle and Museum, "The Friends", is an organisation with charitable status. It was founded in 1967 with the aim of helping to promote, support and assist the improvement of Tamworth Castle, in co-operation with the Castle Management and Staff.

The Friends is run by an enthusiastic committee. The Annual General Meeting which was formerly held at the Castle, is now held in St Georges Chapel at St Editha's Church, Tamworth thanks to close ties between the Friends and the Church Wardens.

Tamworth Castle has played an important part in the history of the Midlands, and indeed of England, over the ages, and the Friends wish to ensure that knowledge of the Castle and the part it has played in history are made as widely available as possible to the public.

The Friends carry out a number of activities in support of the Castle, including various fundraising activities of social and public events. These events held in and around Tamworth such as a Quiz Nights at the Hopwas Club and a monthly Lunch Club and Guest Speaker event at the Globe in Tamworth. An annual Post Festive Meal in January is also held.

Our close co-operation with Tamworth Castle has also resulted in members of the Friends being invited to attend special events at the Castle which have recently included Historical Talks and demonstrations from accredited heritage individuals and groups. Members of the Friends have also been invited to exclusive previews of displays which the Castle have produced for the Museum and items which the Friends have purchased on behalf of the Castle Museum.

Funds raised by the Friends have been utilised for the purchase of items to be included in the Castle Museum Collection. These have recently included a Medieval Posy Ring. Funds have also



been used for restoration of objects currently in the Castle, a recent example being for restoration of one of the clocks by a heritage repairer. Although purchases a have been the main focus for use of funds the Friends have also funded the work of an intern at the Castle working on a special projects.

Objects purchased are usually items of significant historic value to Tamworth Castle Museum but have also included historically-accurate reproductions to be displayed in appropriate settings in the Castle rooms, historic clothing items for use in the many re-enactment events held in the Castle, and financial contributions towards the cost of refurbishment and improvement of the Castle buildings and contents.

The Friends have in the past supplied volunteers for marshalling events at the Castle, and to help in cleaning rooms and exhibits.

New members are always welcome so if you are interested in becoming a member you will find information on the benefits of membership and application details on the Friends website.

https://www.tamworthcastle.org.uk/

## **Thomas Argyle**

**By Michael Green** 

Thomas Argyle was born on 25th January 1815 at Heage, Derbyshire, the eldest son of Samuel and Jane Argyle. Samuel was a farmer and miller of Scots descent whose greatgrandfather had settled in Derbyshire.

Nothing is known of the education of Thomas but early employment found him working as a clerk in a solicitor's office in Derby. It was through his work there that he became known to Francis Willington, a Tamworth solicitor, who offered him employment as his clerk. In 1835, at the age of 20, he commenced work with him at a salary of £1 per week, having walked the 45 miles from Heage to Tamworth with an overnight stop in Repton.

The following year, his considerable ability was recognised in his appointment as Justices' clerk, a position he occupied until his death. It was later confirmed by his appointment as Tamworth's Town Clerk from 1861 - 1867 and the path taken to become a solicitor. The appointment as Town Clerk came to an abrupt and premature end as a result of a decision by of the corporation to dismiss him, a decision which appears to have been on the grounds of political expediency. In 1854, he had finally persuaded Francis Willington to accept him as an articled clerk and he was admitted as a solicitor in 1859. He was taken into partnership and, upon Willington's retirement, succeeded to the practice.

On his arrival in Tamworth, he had attached himself to the Wesleyan chapel in Bolebridge Street. This had been opened in 1816 on land leased from Sr Robert Peel under a 999 year lease to replace a smaller one built in 1794. It is highly possible that he attached himself to it because he had Methodist connections already. His namesake was a well known local preacher in the Belper area and the moving spirit behind the building of the first chapel in Kilburne. In 1836.



Above: Thomas Argyle Below Alice Argyle (Micheal Green)



he married his wife, Alice, in Derby who he had met whilst working there. She became a pillar of strength to him and with him devotedly supported the Wesleyan cause in Tamworth. One of their granddaughters was named after her and the granddaughter, Alice Evelyn Argyle, became the first female Mayor of Tamworth in 1937. (See the female Mayors of Tamworth page 5 Tamworth Heritage Magazine V1 Issue 2 Spring 2023.)

He was received on trial as a Wesleyan local preacher in the Burton on Trent Circuit in 1839, his first appointment being at Lullington. His last appointment was at the Wesleyan Temple in 1897 almost 60 years later. His sermons were described as models of diction, ... distinguished for their religious fervour, and their practical advice for both young and old. In his time, in addition to being a local preacher, he was variously a Sunday school superintendent, a

Above right: BoleBridge Street Methodist Chapel Circa 1861

Micheal Green

Mayor Miss A. E Argyle Granddaughter of Thomas (Tamworth Digital Archive)





class leader, trustee, circuit steward and church treasurer.

Although a staunch Wesleyan, he was also ecumenical in his outlook and took an interest in St Editha's Parish Church and the other nonconformist denominations including the Bolebridge Street Mission. He also played his full part in the life of the community, such as his support for Tamworth Working Men's Club and Reading Room. With John Evans, a fellow member and solicitor, Thomas Argyle played his part in the "Penny Readings" which were held at the Town Hall with as many as 500 present. So great were the numbers attending and the enthusiasm, that the local constabulary often had to be present to maintain order! These had been started by Etienne Bruno Hamel and other local businessmen to provide education for the working classes. There would be singing and, as the name suggests, readings-some of a serious nature and others not so.

Thomas Argyle died on 9th August 1898 and was interred in Tamworth Cemetery but situated in Victoria Road is a greater memorial to him than any headstone and that is the former Wesleyan Temple opened on 9th April 1878 at a cost of just over £4,000. He provided the site and was the church treasurer. So ably did he handle the

There is reference to Thomas Argyle in the video <u>"A History of Tamworth Methodism"</u>
Part 1" The video made by Michael Green



finances that, in June 1879, the Minister, Rev'd Ezekiel Burton, was able to announce that the work had been done without any debt being left upon this "House of God for which any interest will ever be payable by the Trustees from their fund". So appreciative were the members of the efforts of Thomas Argyle that they presented the trustees with a portrait of him, the inscription to which read

Presented as a Memorial of respect to their First Treasurer By the Congregation of the Wesleyan Temple Tamworth to the Trustees September 2nd 1879.

The portrait hung in the vestry alongside one of Rev'd Burton for almost the lifetime of the church

Although the church, later known as Victoria Road Methodist Church, sadly closed in April 1972, the building still stands.

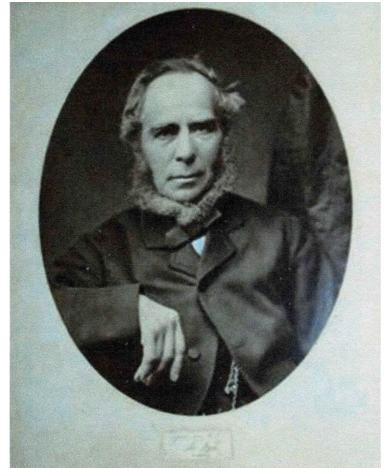
There is a further reminder of his name still in the town today in Albert Road. Upon his being taken into partnership, the solicitors' firm became

Willington & Argyle in 1859 and upon becoming sole proprietor it was changed to Thos Argyle. It

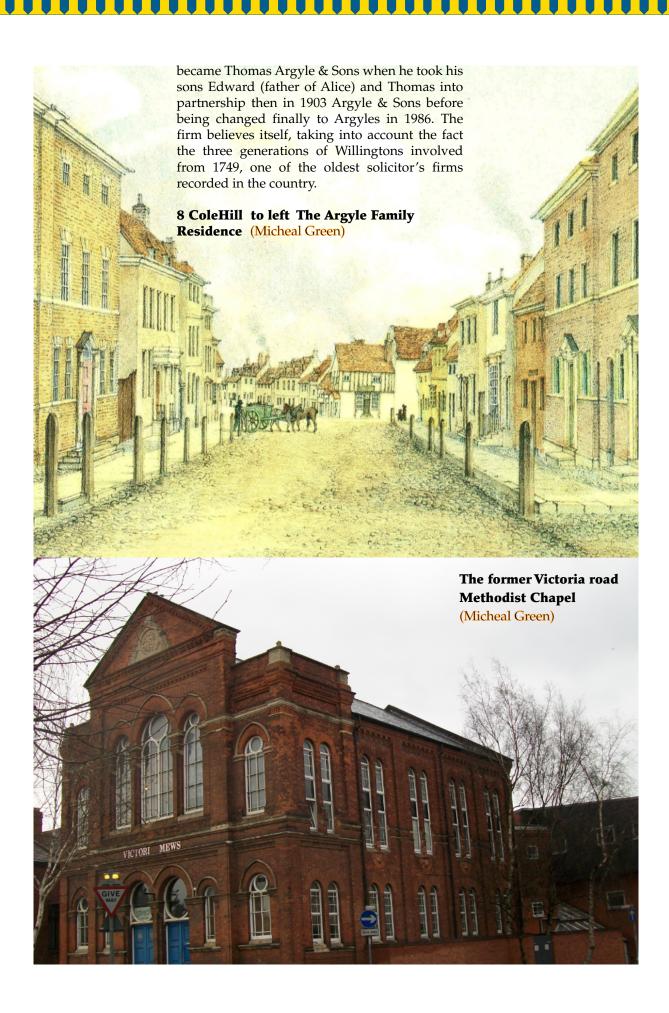
Above the site of the former Methodist Chapel sometime after 1880. It later became and auction house.

(Tamworth Digital Archive)

Left: Thomas Argyle Below: Rev E Burton Micheal Green







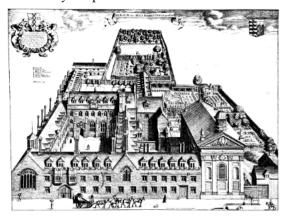
## **The Rawlet Trust**

**By Richard Hughes** 

#### **The Trust that shaped Tamworth**

John Rawlet was born on the 27th March 1642, subsequently baptised in Tamworth, and died on 28th September 1686. Despite passing away at the relatively young age of 44, John left a huge legacy to Tamworth which has benefited thousands of the town's residents. It is still doing so more than six centuries later. In 2023 the Rawlet Trust was valued at around £1,000,000

Recognised as an English Anglican cleric with a close sympathy for Presbyterians. Baptised at Tamworth in Warwickshire on 27 March 1642 and by the time John got to Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, the English Civil war had come and gone. Charles the 1st beheaded, Cromwell taken over. However, Charles II returned to the throne by the time John matriculated on the 15th December 1659. He was prevented by poverty from proceeding to an ordinary degree, but later obtained a Bachelor of Divinity on the 23rd June 1676 with a Royal mandate of King Charles II. This clearly shaped his later life.



Pembroke Hall circa 1690 (Public domain)

Initially he carried out his clerical work in London before becoming Chaplain to the Bishop of Chester in 1668. He moved on to become a Minister in Kirkby Stephen, Westmorland before accepting a lectureship at St Nicholas Church, Newcastle on Tyne on the 25th June 1679. In 1682 he turned down the offer of the vicariate in Coleshill, Warwickshire.

Whilst dying, he is said to have married the daughter of Thomas Butler, a merchant from Newcastle.



John Rawlet (Tamworth Digital Archive)

St Nicholas Church, Newcastle on Tyne
© Peter Cumiskey



John Rawlet 's will included bequests to the Vicar of Tamworth on Good Friday and 5th November providing he preached a sermon on each of those days. He further provided money for the teaching of English to 10 poor children and a small quantity of bibles to poor scholars when they were able to read. He left most of his property and his library to Tamworth having published various religious works in the late 17th century.

Why these bequests to a town he spent most of his life away from? His mother, and many other members of his family lived in and around Tamworth. His great-great-grandparents had lived in Whittington, a parish of Grendon, so they were a local clan.

Education was something dear to John Rawlet. It appears that he contributed to money raised for an extension to the Grammar School in 1672. He had attended Tamworth Grammar School prior to Oxford. As noted he failed to complete his degree in Oxford because of lack of funds which seems to have been the spur to his educational donations to Tamworth.



Tamworth Grammar School (Tamworth Digital Archive)

Apart from education John Rawlet made land purchases in the early 1670's although he wasn't living here himself, some of the money was borrowed from a Tamworth resident. So whilst not a resident he had family and friends locally.

A total of three charities were set up involving education, non education and Tamworth Grammar School, although these were much later merged together on advice from the Charity Commission.

Deeds for these charities are held in the Staffordshire archives in Stafford together with

various changes to the Rules of the Trust made on a number of occasions including 1862, 1910, 1962, 1965, 1967 and 1979. Some of these changes enabled the Board of Trustees to dispose of the real estate and invest the proceeds

At the date of the reading of the will, it is interesting to note that income stood at £109, 11 shillings and 6 pence **per annum**. This equates to about £8,500 in today's money. Though in 1790 it would buy you 10 horses, and was equivalent to 2 years wages for a skilled craftsman [National Archives currency converter] One inflation converter I looked at suggested the figure was closer to £31,000 though you can't get a skilled worker for £15,000 a year.

The proceeds were divided as follows:

Four apprentices.	£32
Minister.	£4
Schoolmaster.	£2
Education of 12 boys.	£20
Education of 10 girls.	£5
Distribution to the poor.	£15
Repairs, administration etc.	£13
Total.	£93

The balance was retained for future years

The minutes and accounts for the trusts are, of course, all done in longhand and can be quite difficult to read and comprehend as can be seen from this extract from John Rawlet's Will.

He some of Jad Amen I fell parted of the landing ( Junty of standing) with a surrent to the sound of the landing of the landing to the sound of the surrent of the sound of th

#### Extract from the will of John Rawlet, Sept 1686. Prob. 10 1183, Public Record Office, London

However, it is interesting to read the notice of a meeting dating back to 1862 following the update of the trust deeds that year.

#### Notice for the First Meeting of Rawlett's Charity

We the undersigned Trustees under the new Scheme established by the Charity Commissioners. For administering Rawlett's Charity do hereby invite and summons you as authorised by the said Scheme to attend a Special Meeting of the said Trustees to be held at the Vestry of the Parish Church of Tamworth on Monday the 22nd day of September next at 3 o'clock in the afternoon for the purpose of making the necessary arrangements for putting the said Scheme into operation and for making all such orders and for providing all such Payments and investments of money as shall be necessary under the said Scheme for the current year. Dated this thirteenth day of August 1862.

It was signed by: John Mould, Vicar of Tamworth, A. Clarion, ex Mayor, and E.B. Hamel

The meeting was subsequently attended by eight trustees:

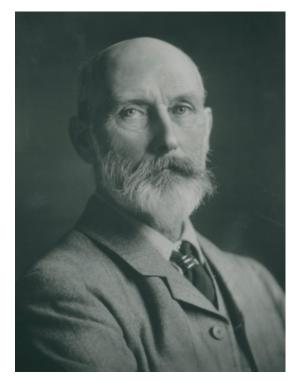
Rev J Mould, Mr John Hill, Robert Adams, Abel Clarson, E.B. Hamel, W.Knight, J.L.Jennings and R.W. Nevill

The Vicar was elected as Chairman with Mr R.W.Nevill as Clerk and Treasurer.

At a subsequent meeting held in December that year a total of £94-15s-3d was approved as the year's distribution. This included £20 to the Vicar, £6 to the schoolmaster, £5 for educating 10 poor children and the sum of £18 for distributing to 72 poor persons

It is noted that by 1873 the Reverend Brooke Lambert had become Chairman of the Trust and in the meantime money had continued to be similarly distributed together with various property repairs and tenancy amendments. Each year a list of poor people who had received donations was listed in the minutes.

There was a further change of Chairman in 1878 when the Reverend William MacGregor assumed the vicariate in Tamworth and in 1879 the distribution of grants included payments to the Vicar of £20, the Grammar School £15, apprentices £20, the Eye Hospital £2 and the



Rev'd William MacGregor (Tamworth Digital Archive)

Cottage Hospital £20. The Reverend William MacGregor remained as Chairman until 1887 when he resigned from the vicariate following much vilification due to his involvement in the forming of a Co-operative Society in the town.



Another renowned Chairman of Trustees was the Reverend the Hon. Maurice Berkeley Peel who was the youngest son of Viscount Peel, the Speaker of the House of Commons. Whilst serving as Chaplain to the 7th Division in France he fell in action whilst leading one of the battalions carrying nothing but a walking stick.

Whilst recuperating he was appointed to the living in Tamworth before returning to action and being killed by a sniper. For his heroics he was awarded the Military Cross and bar.

Rev'd Maurice Peel (Tamworth Digital Archive)

There is a stained glass window dedicated to his memory in St Editha's Church and it is interesting to note that his son, David, was also awarded the Military Cross whilst serving in the

Second World War.



Rev Maurice Peel Memorial Window, St Editha's (Jamedia)



By 1938 the Trustees included a lady amongst its Trustees as she was the Mayor of the town,

Miss A. E. Argyle and the money available for distribution remained fairly stable with £135 available for distribution, but by now the names of the poor who benefited was no longer minuted.

Following on from the sale of some land to the local council for housing purposes the amount for distribution started to increase and by 1958 totalled £258. The methods of supplying grants was unchanged with funds being maintained for education and distributing to the poor. Six bibles were shared amongst six different denominations of the church.

After the changes to the Trust Deeds more land was disposed of including a substantial holding of 3.48 acres fronting Gillway for the significant amount of £30,000. The net proceeds from this sale were invested in the Charities Official Investment Fund through the Official Custodian for Charities. This resulted in a dramatic improvement in monies available and in 1965 a total of £1,452 was allocated, half of which went to education and the rest to the poor and a small number of local organisations working with the elderly and sick. This figure continued to increase and by 1969 had passed the £2,000 mark and during the next decade this amount had doubled. In 1977 a further parcel of land at Comberford Road, Wigginton was sold and the proceeds passed on to the Charities Investment Fund.

In 1980 the Trustees received advice from the Charity Commissioners that the three separate trusts should be merged into one, and after a few changes agreed to the draft this was approved. In 1981 the county archivist examined the records of the trusts and reported that they were a very fine example of the type of records produced by a 17th century charitable trust and they welcomed the possibility of the papers being deposited with the county at Stafford.

Nowadays the construction of the Board of Trustees stipulates that they total twelve in number and they are appointed for terms of five years.

They consist of
The Vicar of Tamworth,
The current Mayor of Tamworth whilst in office
A nominee of Staffordshire County Council
A nominee of Tamworth Borough Council
Eight co-opted trustees

Five trustees are necessary as a quorum.

The Trust Deeds now stipulate that after the distribution of a minimum of £65 for the purchase of bibles, two thirds of the annual income should be utilised for the relief of need or sickness and one third for the advancement of education.

The Trust deeds also stipulated that the area of distribution should be the area of the Borough of Tamworth as at the date of *31st March 1974*.

This was due to the rapid expansion of Tamworth with the new housing estates in the years immediately prior to this. See the Book Review [page 26] on the 1965 Tamworth Report of Survey from which this map comes.

Income is variable according to the national economy but is approximately £30,000 per annum with the total assets of the Trust now valued at around £1,000,000.

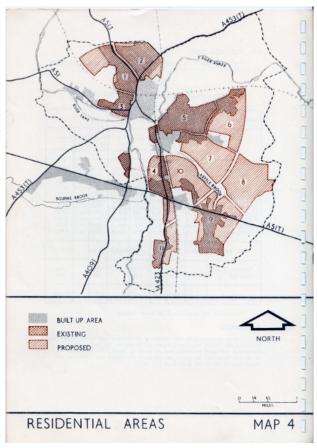
Unlike in its formative days, there is now a good mix of male and female trustees, and there is now in place a Safeguarding Policy, in order to ensure the protection of any trustees who might visit applicants on their own to gain assurance of their particular needs so that care is taken in the distribution of the charitable funds.

During the year ending 9 March 2018 the annual accounts indicate that the investment income was £25,905 and the charitable expenditure totalled £27,067

The following year saw the Investment income rise to £26,484 and year ending 9 March 2022 this had again increased to £29,009. The total funds by the end of that financial year showed a balance carried forward of £1,036,332

The Trustees comprised eight Co-opted local residents equally split between men and ladies together with the Staffordshire County Council nominee, the Tamworth Borough Council nominee and the Mayor of Tamworth. At that point in time, there was no current Vicar of Tamworth which left a vacancy and the Elected Chairman was Richard Hughes. At the time of writing (Autumn 2023) a new Vicar of Tamworth is now in place and it is expected that he will take up that appointed role very shortly.

The Trust remains a remarkable achievement by a man who lived such a relatively short life, but had this wonderful ambition to help and support



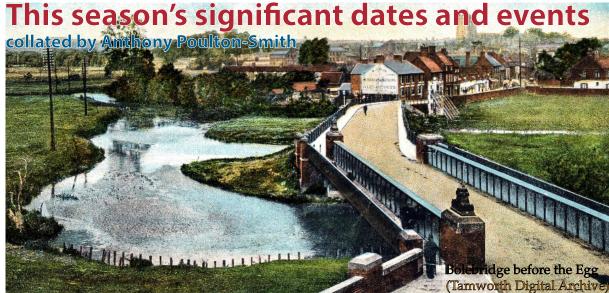
1965 Map of proposed residential areas for Tamworth (Tamworth Digital Archive)

the young and needy of Tamworth.

Editor's note: As of 2023 the Trust has been running for over 335 years and under careful stewardship donated many times the original amount bequeathed.

Despite John Rawlet's strong support of education and learning he has no connection to The Rawlet School in Tamworth that started in 1960, some 275 years after his death. Ironically without this school named after him most in Tamworth would not have heard of the name Rawlet as the Trust goes about its business with quite discretion.

There is also the Wikipedia page on John Rawlet (click here )



**Monday 16 October** - 74 years since Drayton Manor Theme Park opened! *Is anyone interested in writing an article on the 75* 

anniversary for the Magazine?

Wednesday 25 October - 169 years since Charge of the Light Brigade, and Private Samuel Parkes won the Victoria Cross. *This is another subject* 

where an article for the Magazine would be appreciated by the team for the 170<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

**Monday 30 October 1942** - death of AB Colin Grazier retrieving Enigma code-books from U-559 in the Mediterranean.

**Monday 30 October** - 145 years since the company of Gibbs and Canning was incorporated.

Saturday 11 November - Armistice Day. Sunday 12 November - Remembrance Sunday.

**Saturday 2 December** - Sixty years since the Rolling Stones perform at the Assembly Rooms.

A band which have probably given more 'farewell tours' than any other came to Tamworth on Monday 2 December 1963.

Tickets were purchased either on the door on the night or in advance from Weavers of Bolebridge Street. In 1963, the Rolling Stones played no less than 308 gigs, with Tamworth number 281. A contemporary report told of girls screaming as the green velvet curtains drew back at 8:52pm, and five young men – described as "having more hair than the Beatles ever did" – began to play. At that time the Beatles had released just two singles – *Come On* in June reached number 21, and *I Wanna Be Your Man* (written by Lennon and

McCartney) reached number 12 around Christmas this year. Judging by the start time, we must assume there was a support act (maybe two), but no record of who is known. What we do know is that the Stones had just finished (in early November) as part of the tour headed by the Everly Brothers, Bo Diddley, and Little Richard. Today, we see the list of acts playing on an event – often for a cost of a couple of shillings – and think how lucky that generation was. However, this tour saw the Rolling Stones play for no more than ten minutes (3 or 4 songs), and therefore those who saw Sir Michael Philip Jagger and company play in December '63 should think themselves very lucky.

Monday 18 December 1834 – Sir Robert Peel created the Tamworth Manifesto, a pre-election speech which laid out the principles of the Conservative Party. We would say more but Tamworth is in the midst of a historic By-Election

**Wednesday 20 December** - 18 years ago, the Bolebridge Egg is voted the 4th worst roundabout in the country.

The worst five traffic islands were: Magic Roundabout in Swindon The Plough in Hemel Hempstead The Pork Pie in Leicester The Bolebridge Egg in Tamworth East of Tamar Bridge in Plymouth

**Wednesday 27 December** - 299 years since the death of Sir Thomas Guy, who started the internationally renowned Guy's Hospital in London. *Another subject for an article in the magazine?* 

## **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? I can guarantee almost everyone visiting Tamworth has walked past it





#### **Who and Where is Tamworth Ontario**

The Canadian village of Tamworth is located in eastern Ontario, approximately 2.5 hours from the provincial capital of Toronto to the west and 2.5 hours from the national capital of Ottawa to the east.

Rural Eastern Ontario is a scenic area, populated with smaller communities originally settled for the most part by European immigrants, though our First Nations peoples were here long before that.

The Canadian Shield, a layer of bedrock formed during the last ice age, provides the foundation for a landscape filled with lakes, rivers, forests, and agriculture. Visitors and residents alike enjoy boating, fishing, swimming, canoeing, kayaking, SCUBA diving, and many other water-related activities. Hiking, cycling, and bird watching are prevalent on the many trails and in nature parks.

Stargazing, golf, and geocaching appeal to tourists who arrive for educational programs and annual events. Other much-anticipated events include studio tours (of artists' studios), farm tours (with various stops to connect with growers of livestock, crops, and market gardens), agricultural fairs (which celebrate and

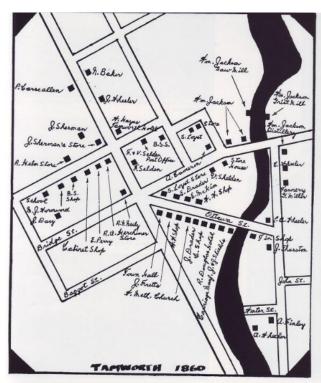
demonstrate the rural way of life - including petting zoos, livestock shows, crop competitions, tractor pulls, and drag racing), and community events (outdoor movie nights, charity events, concerts, and of course, hockey games).

Tamworth and the surrounding area of eastern Ontario is also home to many entrepreneurs and home-based businesses. **Local business owners** often attend networking and professional development events to create connections and share best practices.

#### **A Brief History**

Located in scenic Ontario East, the village of Tamworth's population grew in the late 1840's with the arrival of Irish immigrants, largely tenant farmers seeking a better life amidst the potato famine. Farmers purchased land for \$1 per acre. They cleared fields, built rock fences, and raised timber barns, making money selling potash. They tapped trees and counted on maple syrup to make their annual sugar supply.

Settlers were also hired by The Canada Company, to log nearly 22,000 acres, moving logs down the <u>Salmon River</u>, which runs through the middle of the village. Settlers began to purchase



From the Map of the United Counties of Frontenac, Lennox and Addington, by H.F. Walling. Putnam and Walling Publishers 1860

Tamworth 1860 © W. F. Walling 1860

livestock - cows, pigs, and oxen. Labour was a community effort, with land clearing, stone picking, and barn raising bees.

Mill-wright Calvin Wheeler built the first house in the village and a saw and grist mill at the falls on the Salmon River. The village became known as Wheeler's Mills. Wheeler was instrumental in gaining mail delivery in 1848. Asked to name the post office, he chose the name Tamworth in honour of the constituency in England held by his favourite Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel.

Several homes, businesses, schools, and churches were added. Local hotels provided a gathering place to obtain local and world news. By 1860, horses were more common. Wealthier farmers purchased buggies. Improved roads allowed farmers to sell produce in larger centres nearby. For livestock sales, a central location was chosen closer to home. Buyers, including butchers, came out from Napanee (south), Kingston (east), and Belleville (west). At the end of the sale, three separate groups of buyers drove the livestock in each of the three directions.

Horses and buggies continued to increase the frequency and ease of travel. People were able to travel to larger centres with less time and effort. Around 1875, many smaller communities in the area began to see a decrease in business and stores to close. In contrast, Tamworth flourished with such a sufficient array of mills, foundries, and stores. There was little residents couldn't readily purchase in the village. House parties provided entertainment and social connection, often including live music.

Tamworth gained a railway station in 1884, courtesy of the Napanee, Tamworth, and Quebec Railway. Renamed Kingston, Napanee & Western Railway, then acquired by the Bay of Quinte Railway, and finally purchased by Canadian Northern Railway, the line continued until 1941.

During World War I, many youth left family farms to serve overseas or work in factories that supported the war effort. Afterwards, they headed west to harvest wheat or south to the American state of Michigan to work in automotive plants.

Post WWI, motor cars became commonplace. Residents travelled to Kingston, Napanee, or Belleville for materials and machinery they'd previously bought only in Tamworth. Small businesses couldn't compete. But despite the decrease in industry, the village continued to thrive.

With the stock market crash of 1929 and subsequent Great Depression, jobs vanished and possessions became worthless. Young people returned to the farms of Tamworth, once again working alongside family and community to survive.

As the Depression eased, young people again sought employment in cities. More prosperous farmers bought rubber-tired tractors to assist with agricultural labour. Poorer farmers either took on another job for additional income or sold their land to wealthier neighbours.

Business and trade continued to be attracted to Tamworth. In 1951, a Community Centre was built - a place for hockey, curling, public skating, and other community gatherings - now modernized and still very much in use today.

## Celebrating 175 Years of Community, Resilience, and Spirit

2023 marks the 175th birthday of the village of Tamworth, based on the naming of the post office. Celebrations held Saturday, June 10th saw an impressive collection of celebratory activities along Tamworth's Main Street. World champion town crier Chris Whyman of Kingston opened the day's events followed by live entertainment: Napanee Pioneer Square Dancers, The Harp of Tara Irish Dancers, and performances by Kelli (internationally renowned, 3-time nominee for Fiddle Player of the Year by the Canadian Country Music Association), and Séan McCann (co-founder of Great Big Sea, acoustic guitarist turned solo, and Order of Canada recipient for mental health and addiction advocacy).

Main Street was closed to traffic and open to pedestrians only with artisan's market booths along the sidewalks. Festive decorations include flower baskets, wagon wheels, milk cans, hitching post, and new street pole banners with an Irish flare. A free BBQ lunch was provided by Tamworth & District Lions Club.

Attractions included: children's activities & face painting; games for youth & adults; cotton



candy, popcorn, snow cones, maple taffy on ice; family bingo; antique carriage, cars, farm equipment; displays/demonstrations on quilting, tatting, basket weaving, spinning, beekeeping, soap making; and historical displays. Volunteers were dressed in locally handmade period costumes, reflecting styles of the mid-1800's.

Home, since June 2007, to the North American Gaeltacht (an area "in which Irish is spoken as a community language, and in which the culture and traditions of the language are very much alive and thriving"), Tamworth's Irish heritage is still evident today. The only official Gaeltacht not located in Ireland, it provides a valuable link to Irish history, language and culture. Various classes, camps and festivals are held on the acreage in Tamworth.

The <u>Tamworth Hotel</u>, featured in the novel In the Skin of a Lion by Canadian author Michael Ondaatje, will open rooms for rent for the first time in decades. Tours will be available of the



newly renovated guest spaces. Ondaatje's mention in his story of immigrants, physical labour, vision, passion, and the tumult of growing industry is a fitting tribute for a town so steeped in history.

Tamworth's 175th celebrations are about more than just a milestone birthday. This year is just one of many occasions to honour the pioneering spirit, agricultural heritage, entrepreneurial drive, and community bonds which have been historically evident and served the village well. In a time when many small towns are struggling, Tamworth continues to be a thriving centre of social, economic, and educational activity - a monumental credit to individual and collective resilience.

#### **Thriving in the 21st Century**

A spectacular combination of natural settings and human creations give <u>Tamworth</u>, <u>Ontario</u>, <u>Canada</u> what it needs to continue to thrive well into the twenty-first century and beyond.

Appealing tourist attractions, welcoming accommodations, delicious food, and there's lots to explore in the area while you visit. Outdoor enthusiasts, gardening experts, language learners, astronomy lovers, history buffs, geology fans, and geocaching experts are regulars. Tamworth gladly hosts writers, artists, and photographers. Close to major highways, and less than three hours from airports in Toronto or Ottawa, the village is a favourite stop on the drive from Toronto to Ottawa or Kingston to Belleville.





Local businesses are a key part of Tamworth, providing a delightfully extensive shopping experience. In addition to grocery, pharmacy, and hardware stores, many local artists and artisans sell gifts and souvenirs to nurture the soul. **Check the Tamworth website** for current information on community events.

Check out <u>Tamworth and area drone footage</u> taken by a local drone expert, to get a great view of the local landscape and village layout.

He also recorded the <u>175th celebrations</u> for Tamworth's historical records. Once you've checked out the videos, we invite you to plan a visit. The best way to get to know another person or village is to spend time with them.

It is truly the people who make the Tamworth community so welcoming, enjoyable, and memorable. People who support our local businesses. People who pull together in good times and bad; who raise money and lend their energy. An important part of any community are volunteers. It takes hundreds of volunteer hours to keep Tamworth attractive and running

smoothly. People who work together for the good of all, who find common ground between the generations, and who see their differences as complementary strengths.

For 175 years, it has been the people of Tamworth who keep visitors coming back and create a thriving home for residents new and old. Tamworth's community, resilience, and spirit are a joy to celebrate for many years to come. We hope to see you soon in our Tamworth!

## **Book Review**

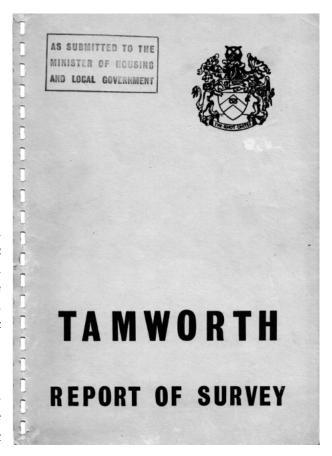
## Tamworth: Report of Survey, County Development Plan 27 By TBC 1965

## The document that changed Tamworth!

Recently I came across a comb bound, hand typed, 59 page document, with a grey cover that simply said "Tamworth Report of Survey" and the borough crest. Whilst not dated some reading it you can see it was compiled in 1965. This is the document that forever changed what Tamworth had been for 1000 years

The report sets out the status of Tamworth, in great detail, in 1965, apart from all the usual demographics on the population it includes the geology and geographical information. Also, the industry and commerce in the area past, current, in 1965, and predicted for the decades to come.

Much of the planning was under the Planning Acts of the post World War 2 1950s. The latest Act mentioned in the text is 1962 so would have been researched in 1959-61. I would recommend that readers look on the internet for any 1950s UK films, particularly from government or local government. (e.g. https://youtu.be/z9RZ5ul4SOs? si=r9pXm8KODNAlWiVx or <a href="https://">https://</a> voutu.be/z9RZ5ul4SOs? si=Dz4EJnl8pL6t6Nde ) It will give you some idea of the times. Remember the "swinging 60's" happened mainly in the cities and not small provincial towns like Tamworth. In any case the "swinging" (and rock and roll etc) was more the domain of the teenagers, not their parents or the adults in power.



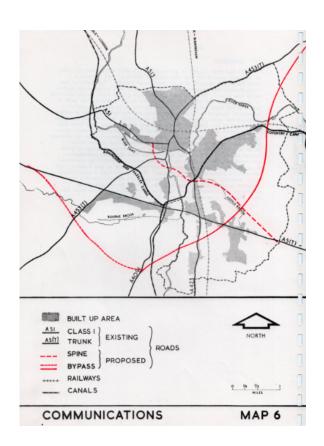
There is a two paragraph assessment on the regional and local problems as they were seen in the mid-1960s before all the transformation and modernisation. There are also a lot of 20 year predictions estimating where things would be in 1985 (i.e. about 40 years ago) some of you will be able to remember the mid-1980s in Tamworth and you will be able to see how correct, or not these predictions were. This gives some idea how difficult estimating is.

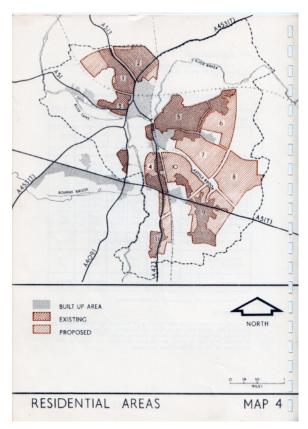
No one foresaw the internet, mobile phones, or mass communication and travel in general. Indeed getting one land line telephone per household was a novel idea then and most didn't have them. One car per family was a goal not the reality. Hence the lack of parking on most of the 1960s Tamworth estates where it was unthinkable that anyone would have more than 1 (small) car per family.

Likewise the industry and schooling. In the 1950s-60s there were several thousand coal miners who lived in Tamworth and worked in the now gone local coalmines. There was other heavy industry related to mining in the area. The demographics of the population, and the changing national view on education meant the plan went one way as the governments went the other. Anyone remember the idea of "middle school" that came and went. It takes a decade to plan and build a school by the time some "middle schools" had been built the idea had come and gone.

This report is a treasure trove of a mathematical, statistical and geographical map of Tamworth. As well as the parameters used for predicting the next 20 years.

Map showing the proposed by-Pass and Spine road. Neither of which were built.





Map showing proposed news estates. These and others have been built.

## The chapters are:

Population and Housing Needs Industry and Employment Communications and Road Traffic Education and Community Services Open Spaces and Recreation Shopping

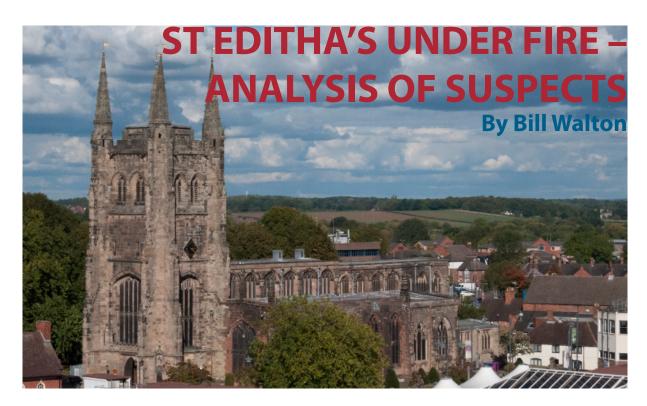
Appendix A: Traffic Study

Appendix B: Shopping in Tamworth Appendix C: Derelict Land in Tamworth

There are also 10 maps and 20 tables of data

## If anyone would like a PDF copy of the report email the Editor

Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk



ST EDITHA'S UNDER FIRE – IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS OF POTENTIAL SUSPECTS WHO MAY HAVE BEEN THE SNIPER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE EVENT

I read with interest the article in the Spring Issue (V1 Iss2) of the Tamworth Heritage Magazine regarding St Editha's under fire during the Great War, and am offering my thoughts on who the sniper might be.

As the person in question was described by Charles Michel as "a young officer in training who was billeted with the Territorial troops during the war" and whose name appears on the stone tablets within the north isle of the church, amongst the fallen, at the least I can provide a list of potential suspects, even if I am unable to identify for certain the person in question.

As I would not like to be accused of putting forward the name of a totally innocent man as being guilty of the "crime" it should be noted that my analysis is based on an acceptance of the accuracy of the statement that only one person took the shots, and that the person in question was a young officer with a connection to the town. However, I believe this may not necessarily have been the case as, for example, it is a reported fact that, at the commencement of war, battalions of several different infantry regiments were billeted in Tamworth. From this, I would assume that a considerable number of soldiers, with no connection to the town, would

have spent some time at the local Territorial Drill Hall. With this in mind, it is not too difficult to envisage a scenario where a group of soldiers came up with a bet, or contest, to see if anyone could hit the weather vane on top of the church, providing of course that these soldiers had access to ammunition that they did not have to account for accurately. If this was indeed the case, the marksman/men in question could actually have no connection to the town, and if killed during the war, would not have been commemorated on the memorial tablets in St Editha's Church.

By accepting the statement in the book, Tamworth Parish Church by H Charles Mitchell as accurate, then the sniper has to be an officer commemorated on the war memorial in St Editha's Church, Tamworth. This memorial remembers 267 men from the ecclesiastical parish of Tamworth who died during the war. The memorial consists of twenty one Hollington stone tablets classified under the names of the places in the parish to which the men belonged. The central tablet bears the inscription: "To the Glory of God, and to the sacred memory of the men of this parish who gave their lives in the Great War, 1914-1918." The remaining twenty tablets, list the names of the fallen as follows: Tamworth - 142 names; Glascote - 59 names; Amington - 20 names; Hopwas - 21 names; and, Kettlebrook -25 names.

For over twenty years I have been researching the names on the memorial, as well as all the other memorials to the Great War within Tamworth and district, and I believe I have identified the service records of all but five of those commemorated in St Editha's Church. So if the officer in question is one of these five men I am stumped as who it could be. For the record the five names not identified are: H Brown, W H (William Henry) Hollins, John Jackson, G Smith, and H Wood, all of whom are remembered in the Tamworth section of the memorial. If any readers have any information regarding these men this would be gratefully received. (email Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk)

Of the remaining 262 names on the memorial, analysis of my records shows that there are just thirteen officers commemorated, which considerably narrows down the list of potential suspects. In my opinion, this list can be reduced further, as ten of the officers do not appear to have had the opportunity to fire bullets from the Territorial Force Drill Hall at the weather vane. A brief description of the war service of each of these ten men follows:

Captain William Northey, DSO, 2nd Durham



Light Infantry, who was born in 1876 in Chaddesden, Derbyshire, and who lived in Hopwas. William was a regular army officer who had served in South Africa during the Boer War when he was awarded the

Distinguished Service Order in recognition of his service. William served in France and Flanders from 8 September 1914, and died at Boulogne Hospital on 22 October 1914 as a result of wounds sustained during the Battle of Armentieres.

Captain Timothy Butler Lycett DSO, 12th King's Royal Rifle Corps, who was born about 1879 in Warton, and who lived in Hopwas. Timothy enlisted in the army in 1897 as a Private, and had filled every rank up to that of Captain. He received his commission on 12 April 1915 and became a Captain in April 1917. He served throughout the whole of the Boer War, receiving the Queen's and King's South Africa Medals, and also held the Long Service and Good Conduct

Medal Afterwards he was stationed in India, receiving the Delhi Durbar Medal. When the Great War broke Timothy out returned England to train the service battalions. He served in France and Flanders from 21 July 1915, being wounded in 1916,



and later received the Distinguished Service Order: "For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. While advancing to its point of deployment for an attack on the final objective his battalion suffered such severe casualties from machine-gun fire that he found himself in command. He at once led them forward, captured the final objective and by promptness and skill in handling his reserve was able to stop a determined counter attack which had forced back his left flank. Throughout the ensuing three days his cheerful and vigorous personality inspired all under his command with confidence." Timothy was killed on 5 October 1918 after being hit in two places by bullets from a machine gun whilst on his way "to cheer up the lads" who had been fighting during the day. By the time Timothy reached the hospital he was unconscious and suffered little if any pain.

Captain Robert Nevill, MC and Bar, 2nd Prince



of Wales's Volunteers (South Lancashire Regiment) who was born about 1897 in Tamworth. Robert, a single man, was educated at Winchester, and afterwards was articled to his father who was solicitor and registrar of the Tamworth County Court. In December 1915 he enlisted in the

army, obtaining his commission in the South Lancashire Regiment. He served in France and Flanders from 18 July 1916, and was appointed Acting-Captain in September 1916. On 3 September 1916 he was wounded by shrapnel in

the chest and the shoulder, but this was not too serious as he soon returned to duty. In October 1916 he was awarded the Military Cross: "For conspicuous gallantry in action. He took command in the front line, and handled his men, both in the attack and during the consolidation of the position with great courage and ability." In June 1917 he was awarded a bar to his Military Cross: "For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. When under heavy shell fire with his comrades, his splendid personal example kept the men in good spirits under the most trying circumstances. He also showed great skill and judgement in carrying supplies to the front line trenches under severe hostile shell fire, and has at all times shown great coolness and resource at critical moments." Robert was killed on 10 April 1918 during a German attack in the Battle of Messines, during the 1918 Offensive in Flanders, when he was shot through the head, passing away shortly afterwards at an estaminet. In this action the 2nd South Lancashire Regiment lost a total of 42 officers and men killed. In addition to his name appearing on several of the war memorials of Tamworth and district, there is a memorial plaque to Robert in St Editha's Church.

2nd Lieutenant Eric Robert Chilwell, 7th Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry who was born in 1890 in Marylebone, London. Eric, a single man, was an old boy of Tamworth Grammar School, which he attended between the years of 1904 and 1906 and was employed as an auctioneers and surveyors clerk when he enlisted in the army. Initially Eric served as a Private in the Honourable Artillery Company but later gained a commission in the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. He served in France and Flanders from 1 July 1915 and was killed on 16 September 1916 in the Battle of Flers-Courcelette, during the Battle of the Somme, an action which cost his battalion 55 officers and men killed.

Lieutenant James Leonard Courtney Clarke, 47th Sikhs Indian Infantry, who was born in 1897 in Tamworth, the youngest son of the Reverend John Henry Courtney Clarke, vicar of Tamworth, and Arbella Charles Clarke. James, a single man, was educated at Tamworth Grammar School, which he attended between the years of 1907 and 1910, Mount House School, Plymouth, and, Blundell's College, Tiverton. He passed his examination for the Indian Army early in 1915 and, in August 1915 went out with the first batch of cadets, having obtained a King's Cadetship, to the Cadet College at Wellington, Madras. In April 1916, after six months training, James was

gazetted 2nd Lieutenant in the 15th Ludhiana Sikhs, a regiment which his grandfather had formerly commanded, and joined them at Peshawar. In December 1916, James was attached to the 47th Sikhs in Mesopotamia and after nearly a year on active service was killed in an attack on Tekrit on 5 November 1917 which was the day of his twentieth birthday. The Colonel writing to James's father said "I am writing to express the sympathy of myself and the regiment on the death of your son, killed in action on 5 November. We buried him near Tekrit, the site has been recorded. You will be partly consoled to hear that death was practically instantaneous, and he did not suffer. He was killed just after we had captured the enemy's trenches by machine gun fire. We are all very sorry to lose him. He was a keen boy and extremely plucky under fire."

**Lieutenant Thomas Cooke**, Royal Garrison Artillery, attached 18th Honourable Artillery



Company who was born in 1894 Tamworth. in Thomas, a single man, was educated Sywell House, Rhyl, from 1903 to 1906 and at Tamworth Grammar School from 1906 to 1912. After studying for a year at home, **Thomas** was awarded a Stapeldon Scholarship

Exeter College, Oxford in 1913 gaining a second class in honours moderation's in the summer of 1914. At the outbreak of war, Thomas joined the Oxford University Officers Training Corps and was gazetted 2nd Lieutenant in the Royal Garrison Artillery in February 1915. After a preliminary course of training, he was appointed to an anti-aircraft post at Portsmouth, of which he held command during the summer of 1915. On 24 November 1915 Thomas went to France and Flanders after a course in siege artillery, and almost immediately was appointed orderly officer of his brigade. On 21 January 1917 he was gazetted to be acting Lieutenant of the 18th Heavy Artillery Group and his name was mentioned in Sir Douglas Haig's dispatch of 9 April 1917 as deserving of special recognition.

Thomas died on 30 May 1917, two days after undergoing an operation for abdominal trouble.

2nd Lieutenant Alfred Edgar Jenkins, 7th Squadron, Royal Air Force, who was born in 1882 in Fazeley. Alfred was a pupil teacher at Fazeley Church of England School, and subsequently entered Truro Training College where he gained his teachers certificate. He later served as assistant master at Millfield School, Fazeley, where both the children and parents held him in high esteem. Alfred was killed on 28 September 1918 whilst serving as an observer in RE8 aeroplane number D6741, when the plane was shot down during combat over Moorslede, Belgium, by Unteroffizier Jeckert of Jasta 56. In this action, Alfred's pilot, 2nd Lieutenant WK Rose, was wounded.

**2nd Lieutenant John James Wilder Lassetter,** 11th attached 6th Loyal North Lancashire



Regiment who was born about 1892 in Tamworth. John was an old boy of Tamworth Grammar School, which he attended between the years of 1906 and 1910. was also scoutmaster of the St Editha's Company of the Boy Scouts, and had been

chorister and cross bearer at St Editha's Church, Tamworth for eighteen years. He was employed as a teacher at Amington School when he enlisted in the army in January 1915 initially serving as a Lance Corporal in the Coldstream Guards. John gained a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment from 17 June 1915 and after going out to Mesopotamia on 8 October 1916 was killed on 8 March 1917 whilst serving on the Diala River. As well as being commemorated on three local war memorials there is a brass plaque remembering John in the choir stalls at St Editha's Church, Tamworth.

2nd Lieutenant Ferrebee Sadler, 29th Squadron, Royal Flying Corps, who was born about 1895 in Tamworth. Ferrebee, a single man, was an old boy of Tamworth Grammar School, which he attended between the years of 1903 and 1909. He served as a pilot, being attached to the Royal

Flying Corps from the 9th Durham Light Infantry, and was the first Tamworth man to fly over Tamworth. Ferrebee had only been in France and Flanders for five weeks when he was killed on 21 April 1917 after his Nieuport XXIII aircraft, number A6797, was shot down by Lieutenant Karl Emil Schäfer of Jasta 11. Schäfer was a German air ace who had shot down 30 Allied aircraft when he was killed on 5 June 1917. In the action in which Ferrebee was killed, two other aircraft from a six-man flight of 29th Squadron were shot down by Jasta 11 as soon as they reached the front, with both pilots also losing their lives.

Lieutenant Alfred Henry Thring, 260th Canadian Infantry (New Brunswick Regiment), who was born in 1879 in Tamworth. Alfred was an old boy of Tamworth Grammar School, which he attended in the years 1891 and 1892 and later lived at 2 Hagley Grove, Birmingham before emigrating to Canada. He was employed as an insurance clerk when he enlisted in the Canadian army in December 1914. He served in France and Flanders from 21 May 1915, initially as a Corporal in the Princess Patricia's Light Infantry, and was wounded in the trenches in 1915, being admitted to hospital at Aldershot. In November 1916 Alfred gained a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant and after being posted to Russia died on 18 March 1919 from a self inflicted bullet wound.

If it is accepted that these ten men did not have the opportunity of shooting at the weather vane, this leaves just three men to consider. Each of these men served at some point during the war with the Tamworth Territorial Company, and so each may have had the means and opportunity to take the pot shots in question. A brief description of the war service of these three men follows:

Captain John Jenkinson, 1/6th Prince of Wales's



(North Staffordshire Regiment) who was 1870 born in in Mirzapore, India and who lived in Hopwas. John, a single man, educated was at Haileybury College and Cirencester Agricultural College and when employed as a land agent joined the Inns of Court

Volunteers in 1888. On coming to Tamworth, John joined the local territorials as a Lieutenant, and in 1909 was appointed Captain and placed in command of the Company. When the forces were mobilised at the outbreak of war, the company proceeded to the training ground in the eastern counties. In due course they went to France and Flanders as part of 137th Brigade of 46th North Midland Division, arriving at the front in March 1915. Later, John was placed in command of the Lichfield Company of the 1/6th North Staffordshire Regiment, and was serving with them at the time of his death on 13 October 1915 during the Battle of Loos, near Vermelles. The fighting that day was extremely severe, with the 1/6th North Staffords alone suffering 93 officers and other ranks killed. At the time it was reported that John was wounded in the stomach during the charge, and that he died in hospital, but it later became evident that he died and was buried on the battlefield. In addition to his name appearing on several of the war memorials of Tamworth and district, there is a memorial plaque to John in St Editha's Church.

**2nd Lieutenant Joseph Baker,** 1/6th Prince of Wales's (North Staffordshire Regiment), who



was born about 1895 in Fazeley. Joseph, a single man, took a keen interest in all sports, being an active member of the Wilnecote Cricket and Tennis Clubs and was employed on the staff of Messrs George Skey and Company Limited, Wilnecote Works,

when he enlisted in the army in the spring of 1915. He initially served with the rank of Private in the Army Service Corps before gaining his commission in November 1915. Joseph then spent nineteen months in Egypt, and had only been in France and Flanders for eight weeks when he was killed in action on 29 June 1917. His parents received a letter from his Captain expressing deepest sympathy and stating that although Joseph was only with them a short time, his cheery ways soon made him well-known and popular. The letter stated that during an attack he was hit by a piece of shell. The stretcher-bearers started to get him back, but he died before he could be got clear of the trenches

**2nd Lieutenant Basil Green,** 1/6th later 1/5th Prince of Wales's (North Staffordshire Regiment)



who was born about 1893 in Fazeley. Basil, a single man, was an old boy of Tamworth Grammar School, which he attended between the years of 1905 and 1908 and at the outbreak of had war just completed his term of service with the Tamworth Territorials.

month later he rejoined the unit and served with them in France and Flanders from 5 March 1915. Basil took part in the Battles of Loos and the Somme where several of his comrades in the Tamworth Territorials were killed and after being promoted Sergeant received a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant on 20 March 1917 originally being posted to his old regiment, but subsequently transferring to the 1/5th North Staffordshire Regiment. Shortly before his death, Basil was awarded the Military Cross: "For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. He led a raid with great dash into the enemy trenches after which he penetrated into cellars and dug-outs on the far side of the trench inflicting further casualties. Later he went out into no mans land with one man, and spent an hour searching for wounded near the enemy's wire, setting a splendid example of courage to his men." On 1 July 1917 Basil was reported missing believed killed whilst taking part in an attack which cost his battalion a total of 27 officers and men killed. At first it was hoped that he might have been taken prisoner of war, but his death was confirmed a short time later in a letter his parents received from 2nd Lieutenant Harold Gregory. He reported that on 1 July 1917 Basil was shot whilst leading his men into action during an attack on Lens. His Platoon Sergeant, seeing him fall, went to his assistance but he was already dead. Before writing, 2nd Lieutenant Gregory had verified the facts and all the men he interrogated, including the Platoon Sergeant gave the same information.

I find it difficult to accept that John Jenkinson, Commanding Officer of the Tamworth Territorials, was the sniper taking pot shots at the weather vane. However, if the event occurred prior to his death on 13 October 1915, I would expect that John would have known who the person was, and would have reported the matter. As it would appear that the matter was not reported at the time, this suggests to me that the event occurred some time after John had died. As Joseph Baker was only with the 1/6th North Staffords for a relatively short period of time before he was killed, I do not think he would have had the opportunity to take the pot shots, so that leaves Basil Green as the potential sniper, and I think a good case can be made that it is indeed him.

By the time that Basil was commissioned as an officer in 1917 he had taken part in two major engagements where he had seen men he knew well being killed, namely the attacks on 13 October 1915 during the Battle of Loos, and Gommecourt on 1 July 1916, during the Battle of the Somme. In the latter attack Basil was wounded and indeed in May 1915, he came very close to death when a friend, Private Frank Thompson, was hit in the stomach by a bullet, whilst they were sitting together talking having just come out of the trenches. Whilst at first it was thought that Frank would pull through, he died shortly afterwards, and this I feel must have impacted greatly on Basil. Assuming Basil spent some time at the Drill Hall after being commissioned as an officer, personally I can see him taking pot shots at the weather vane on top of the church, perhaps because of his experiences in the war. I do accept however, that this assumption may be completely wrong, and as stated above I would not like to be accused of putting forward the name of a totally innocent man as being the one guilty of the "crime."

Accepting the accuracy of the statement that it was a lone sniper who was a young officer with Tamworth connections who took the shots at the weather vane on St Editha's Church there does seem to be a good case to suggest that Basil Green is the man. However, I am reluctant to arrive at this conclusion, mainly as I cannot prove it, but also because in my opinion it is likely that more than one person was involved in the taking of the shots in question. Most WW1 British military rifles had a 10 round magazine. As about 30 shots were fired it might suggest more than one shooter.

Before I conclude my thoughts I feel it only appropriate to put forward two further names for consideration as potential suspects. Though both of these men could not be described as

"young" they could be described as officers, and their names do appear on the stone tablets in St Editha's Church as they died whilst serving as Chaplains to the Forces in France and Flanders:

The Reverend Donald Fraser, DSO, Army



Chaplains Department who was born about 1875 and who lived Tamworth. Donald came to Tamworth from Bedworth in 1906, when he became a pastor of the **Baptist** Church, for several and years was member of the Tamworth Board

of Guardians. Donald, a single man, served in France and Flanders from 25 July 1915, and the following year was Mentioned in Dispatches. In 1917 he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order, it being presented to him at Buckingham Palace. Donald died on 2 June 1918 as a result of an accident when returning by motor from a Sunday morning church parade.

Chaplain 4th Class Maurice Berkeley Peel, MC and Bar, Army Chaplain's Department, who was



born in 1873 in London, the youngest son of Arthur Wellesley and Adelaide Peel, his father being 1st Viscount Peel. Maurice was educated at Winchester and College New Oxford, where he took honours in History. After leaving Oxford, he

worked for some years at Oxford House, Bethnal Green, and was ordained in 1899. From 1899 to 1906 Maurice was attached to Saint Simon's Zelotes, Bethnal Green, and after filling the position of Rector of Wrestlingworth for a few years became Rector of Saint Paul's, Beckenham in 1909. While there he married Emily Alington in 1909, but he was left a widower in 1912 with two children, a son and a daughter. In the autumn of 1914 Maurice went to France and



Flanders to serve as an Army Chaplain, and early in 1915 was awarded the Military Cross. A few months later he was severely wounded, and as a result was obliged to return to England, where in the summer of 1915 he was appointed vicar of Tamworth, being instituted and inducted to the benefice of Tamworth on Sunday 7 November 1915 by the Bishop of Lichfield. In January 1917 Maurice returned to France and Flanders as a Chaplain, and was awarded a bar to the Military Cross: "For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. He went out to the advanced patrols with two stretcher-bearers and succeeded in bringing in several wounded men. Later he worked for 36 hours in front of the captured position and rescued many wounded under very heavy fire."

Maurice was killed when his brigade was put into a village for 24 hours. During that time the Germans made three desperate counter-attacks, gaining a little ground each time. At early dawn on the 14 May 1917 Maurice got out of his trench to visit a wounded man or an isolated post of men. On the way a snipers bullet caught him in



the chest and he died very shortly afterwards, a Royal Welsh Fusilier crawling out and staying with him till the end. His body was buried near Bullecourt on the 17 May 1917, a yard or two from the spot where he fell.

Whilst I do not believe either of these men would have taken pot shots at the weather vane on top of St Editha's Church, it is possible that the Reverend Maurice Berkeley Peel was in Tamworth at the time the event occurred. Also, as I assume he would have at some point visited the Territorial Drill Hall, he may have had the means to take the shots in question. However, as a motive for him taking this action has not been established, perhaps it is best to leave it to each individual to determine who they think is the most likely Tamworth person to have been the sniper. Also, to consider the likelihood of more than one person takes pot shots at the weather vane, and the possibility of the sniper(s) having no connection with Tamworth at all.

The Video on right (click on image or click here) is Bugler: Msn. Wykes, The Mercian Regiment, playing Last Post in St Editha's Church by the WW2 Memorial and the WW1 Empty Chair. During the one minute silence the video shows the Tamworth War Memorials and pans down all the names on the WW1 memorial including those mentioned in the article.

At the going down of the sun, and in the morning We Will Remember Them.

## Letters to the Editor

We start this letters page with an email from Paul Minshull pointing out an error in the last Letters page!

#### Dear Editor.

There is an error on the *LETTERS TO EDITOR* page, where there's a photo that shows the Glascote locks and Lock Cottage. The header says in the background is Thompson & Southwicks, this is incorrect. The factory on the photo is Wynn's which stood behind Cincinnati's off the Glascote Road. Thompson & Southwicks would have been behind the photographer. Hope this is of some assistance? regards

Paul. Minshull

**EDITOR:** Thanks for that, Paul. The error was entirely mine in selecting the wrong image. The correct image is above, this time!

#### **Dear Editor**

Many thanks for the latest edition of your magazine; I have now had an opportunity to look through all three issues, and must compliment you on the quality of the articles and illustrations. I have a suggestion for a future short article in the magazine.

Just over 50 years ago Staffordshire local education authority, constructed two middle school buildings, (pupils aged 9 - 13) in Tamworth, at Belgrave and Glascote Heath. They were intended to follow a first school (pupils aged 5 - 9), and be succeeded by a high school (pupils aged 13 - 18). The design of the schools was a standard County Council pattern, with others being built at Bilbrook, Walton (Stone), Penkridge, Cheslyn Hay and other locations.

Tamworth, uniquely amongst the locations where middle schools were built, never did introduce the three tier system. These buildings

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

became the lower school departments of high schools, originally 11 -18 and now 11 -16, at Belgrave (later named Tamworth Enterprise College) and Glascote (later named Torc High School).

So what happened to the three tier system planned for Tamworth, for which two middle schools were purpose-built? How was the system envisaged to be introduced to other parts of the town? Why was the scheme abandoned in Tamworth.....when it was introduced elsewhere, and has operated successfully for five decades? Yours sincerely William J Read

EDITOR Thanks for the kind comments and yes we would like an article on the development of Schools in Tamworth in 1960s to the end of the century if any one thinks they could have a go at doing one?.

#### **Dear Editor**

The door Shown in "Doorway to Tamworth" can be found on Lichfield Street on the old Peel School next to number 18 coffee house It is very sad that the door and indeed the building is in this condition.

Regards Barb Moulton

**EDITOR** You are correct. And should win a prize as the first correct response, though I am not sure what prize we can do by email! We have also photographed the inside for the Peel School and hope to have an article on it in a future issue.

# 

#### **Dear Editor**

Having read the History of Freemasonry in Tamworth in the last issue I note that all the [male] Mayors of Tamworth, bar one, have also been masters of Marmion Lodge. Though, not usually at the same time as both are jobs that take a lot of time.

Regards, Paul

EDITOR: I shall have to look in to which Mayor(s?) were not a Master of Marmion Lodge. The lists of both are public. It is just a case of time to dig them out and go through them. The current Mayor and Deputy Mayor are members of Marmion Lodge though both have not yet been the Master of the Lodge. It should also be noted that many Vicars at St Editha's were also members of Marmion Lodge in the past.



The Mayors of Tamworth in the Town Hall (JAmedia)

## **Dear Editor**

We are Launching Wessex Week 14-21 October in Malmesbury, Wiltshire. It is a celebration of the region's history and culture through the centuries, with a particular emphasis on Malmesbury and the Anglo-Saxon period with a full range of events. Wessex and Mercia are inextricably linked by blood history. Full details on

https://www.wessex-week.org

In 2024 we also have Aethelstan 1100 celebrations in Malmesbury and we will send you information on that as he was the Brother of Aethelflaed, the Lady of the Mercian's.

Regards Julia Bowen

Chair: Wessex Week

Chair: Aethelstan (first King of all

**England) Trust** 

## **Next Edition**

## **Winter 2024**

Publication Date: 1st January Copy Date: 13th December

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 December**

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, we can even accept odt format.

Any images sent separately NOT embedded in the text but please indicate in text approximate placement for each image. 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 <a href="mailto:Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk">Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk</a>

**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 <a href="mailto:Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk">Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk</a>



## In the Next issue

The Next Issue is Volume 2 and we hope to be a little more organised with what is in the next issues than we were for volume 1.

Several articles we hoped to have in this (and a previous issue) are proving longer to research and complete than anticipated. The History of the Tamworth Branch of the Royal British Legion for one! As we progress we should get a better process and schedule in place. As long as we get the input from the readers!

#### **Volume 2 Issue x A Fascinating Article!**

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

SANTA WILL TOUR **ON 1971 ROUND** TABLE FLOAT

Preserving the Past, Recording the Present Safeguarding the Future