

Tamworth

HERITAGE

Magazine
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Preserving the Past, Recording the Present
Safeguarding the Future

Tamworth Heritage Magazine

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



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Deputy Editor *Could this be You?* THM is looking for an Assistant Editor to take over as Editor for Vol 6 on-wards If you are interested contact the Editor

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Tamworth Heritage Magazine Editorial Board

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

This board currently comprises:

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.

Dr Sara Read, FHEA, FRHistS is a literary and cultural historian and historical novelist [see sararead.co.uk] She is a senior lecturer in English at Loughborough University. Sara has lived in Tamworth for thirty years.

Rebecca Jewkes BA(Hons) MA(History), is a family historian passionate about social history, especially in Tamworth. She focuses on the lives of ordinary people from the 1800s onwards, capturing their voices and experiences. Rebecca also runs [Tamworth Digital Archive](http://TamworthDigitalArchive).

Jill Gadsby of the [Tamworth Genealogy Group](http://TamworthGenealogyGroup) With a background in the legal profession her research is thorough and precise. Jill has access to all sorts of databases on genealogy, history and newspapers with which she is forensic.

Fred Bromwich, Vice Chairman of the [Birmingham Press Club](http://BirminghamPressClub), the worlds oldest Press Club and formerly the Business Editor for the Birmingham Post and Mail. Fred has written books and Articles on Drayton Manor Park and other events and issues around Tamworth.

Preserving the Past, Recording the Present
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Welcome from the Editor

The end of a Chapter!

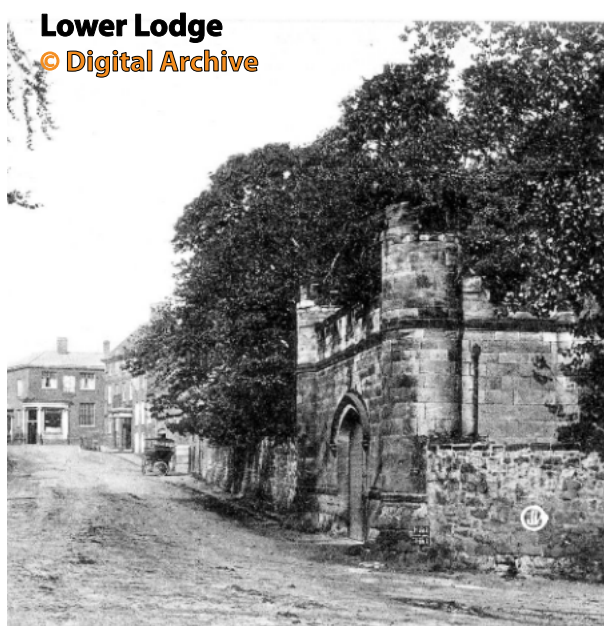
Don't Panic! It's only moving from one chapter to the next! The next "chapter" being Volume 3 of the five this Editor intends on doing before handing over to the next Editor. Who, being younger than me, will know what vinyl records are but have no idea what a CD is! It's a strange world!

This magazine is a bit like a swan, serene on top but pedalling furiously under the water. Unfortunately personal circumstances intervened during the typesetting phase at the end of September. Hence this issue being a week, or so, late. However, we have a lot of the next issue ready to go, bumped from this issue. We are currently restricting the magazine to about 45 pages. In the future it might end up averaging 50 pages in volume 3! Two years ago with the first issue someone said that 36 pages was "excessive"!

The good news is that in that Volume 3 will herald a lot of big news and changes to announce, along with some opportunities. So make sure you read Volume 3 Issue 1.

One thing we can announce now is that we want to start talking to the older residents of Tamworth about their lives. We would like to do video or audio interviews where you tell us your story. If you can illustrate it with items or photos so much the better. We want to know anyone who worked in the mining industry or any company or shop that is no longer here. Today is tomorrow's history.

In the same way the Digital Archive is looking to digitise artefacts, photos, maps, documents etc. We do the copying; you get them back with a high quality digital copy. The important thing with both this and the interviews are getting the information recorded whilst people still remember the details. We lose so much history and heritage every day so we want to record as much as possible.



There is so much to do if anyone wants to get involved, especially undergrads, doing history, photography, film making, journalism or related fields. We have the audio and video equipment. We can provide training both on the job and ½ day formal courses if you can provide some time and interest. Email Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk

It doesn't have to be students in fact anyone with an enquiring mind and an interest in history and heritage who would like to help do some research.

Tamworth Heritage Magazine Special: Drayton Manor Leisure Park

In the previous two issues of the Magazine we persuaded Fred Bromwich who wrote the original book on the Bryan's Dayton Manor Leisure Park to write about the history of how and why the Bryans built the park. Including many family photos of the early days. These articles we have pulled together to produce a stand alone special you can download from here. [Click here.](#) We will be adding to this series of specials.





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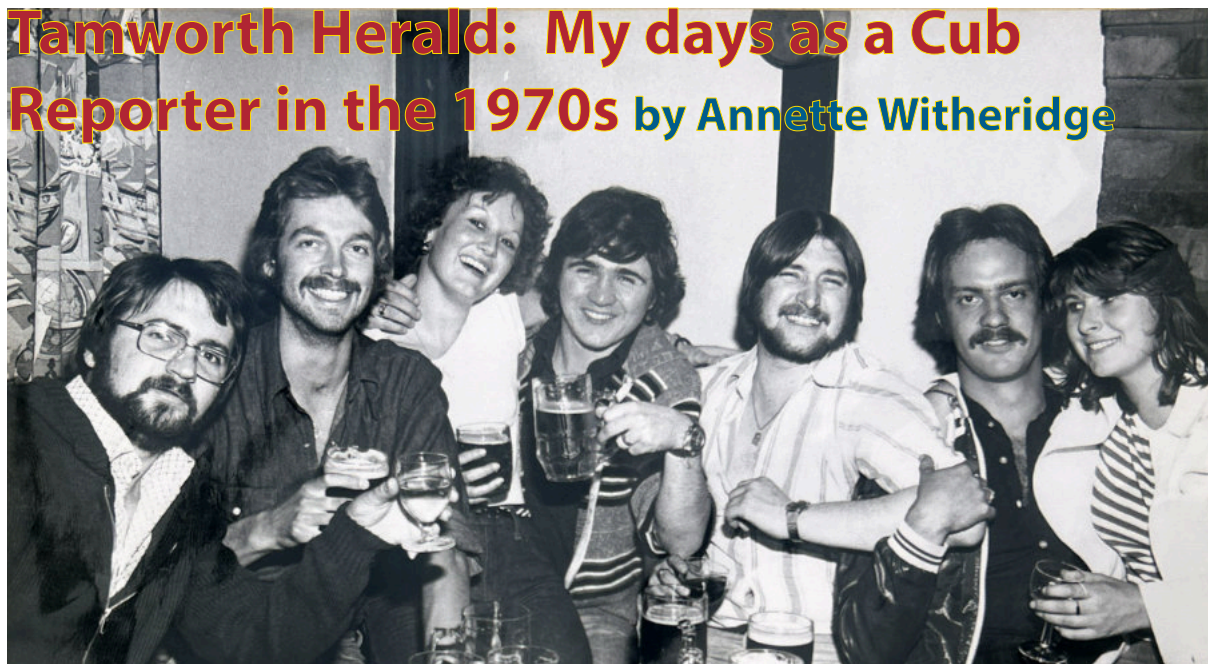
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Tamworth Herald: My days as a Cub Reporter in the 1970s by Annette Witheridge



In my lengthy career as a journalist I've been a crime reporter, pop columnist and foreign correspondent. But my first specialist job on the Tamworth Herald in 1977 was wedding expert.

Every week a wad of forms arrived at the Herald's Aldergate office from happy couples starting married life. It was my job to turn the forms into stories. A honeymoon abroad was considered highly exotic and would always be mentioned in the first paragraph. A bride or groom with an interesting job was a Godsend -- "policeman cops bride" or "cleaner swept off her feet" -- but much of my task involved deciphering unreadable handwriting and trying to work out how the bridesmaids were related. And I quickly learned the correct spellings of *Stephanotis* and *broderie anglaise*. [It should be noted the Editor of THM is also dyslexic! ED]



When the waitress at the Bus Station Café discovered I worked for the Herald she entrusted me with her Women's Institute reports. Back at the office I would helpfully jazz them up, taking out the inevitable "*Mesdames Smith and Jones served the tea*" and, I thought, making them more interesting. One day, while waiting for my food, I heard wailing to a colleague that her reports were always re-written and she didn't know what she was doing wrong as no other institute ever had their words changed. Oops!

Our wonderful editor **Vincent Moseley** was incredibly brave to take me on as a trainee. I was 16, fresh out of school and, in reality, knew absolutely nothing about anything. I dropped clangers galore along the way. Back then there was no internet, half the population didn't have a telephone and there was no way of checking anything much except for a battered dictionary and a few reference books.

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**The
Tamworth Herald
Co. Ltd.**

ANNETTE WITHERIDGE, Reporter

I loved history and was delighted to interview a woman celebrating her 100th birthday. She vividly recalled Sir Robert Peel's funeral, so I devoted a good few paragraphs to that. Luckily an eagle-eyed colleague pointed out Tamworth's celebrated prime minister had died in 1850. We never did manage to work out whose funeral procession she'd watched.

Four months into my career there were national celebrations for the Queen's Silver Jubilee. I wrote a feature about royal trinkets on sale locally but our model (in reality, another reporter's girlfriend) pulled out of the photo shoot at the last minute. Guess who ended up pictured in the shopping precinct wearing a pair of Jubilee knickers and t-shirt, blowing a trumpet? Nowadays, there would have been a storm of protest. I was, after all, only 16. But I didn't care. I'd do anything to get my name in the paper.

When I asked Joe Gormley, leader of the National Union of Mineworkers, why he was visiting a local pit, he said: *"To be interviewed by pretty young things like you."* Today, that would be deemed outrageous. But Gormley, who started work at 14 and went on to bring down the Heath Government, clearly spotted my nerves and encouraged me to keep on asking questions. That interview landed me my first front page.

My initial attempt at an exclusive was thrown into the rubbish bin by chief reporter Nick Hudson. I'd been accosted by a concerned man who'd spotted a Union Jack flag hanging upside down in the Castle Pleasure Grounds. He told me that was an insult to the queen. He then trotted out his name, age, address and occupation without me even having to ask. I duly wrote up my scoop, only for Nick to groan: *"Not Batty again."* Yup, our resident loony really was called Batty and he regularly attempted to make his way into the Herald's pages.

Many of our stories came by way of the front office. A steady stream of people popped in to report their news. Most terrifying of all was Doreen Argyle, who was terribly posh and ran the Red Cross. Her solicitor husband was a Herald director and she insisted on being addressed in print as *Mrs David Argyle*.

Whenever the editor went on holiday, we used her real name and she would come



Annette aged 16 in 1977. We found the image from the Herald 6th August 1993 as part of a tribute to Annette!

flying into the front office, screeching: *"You've divorced me..."*

All nature of horrors happened when Mr Moseley was away. The News of the World printed a story about the daughter of Judge Michael Argyle, who had presided over the Oz Magazine obscenity trial, appearing in a porn film. We duly followed up the story, noting that the judge had been born in Tamworth. The editor had only been back in the office for 20 minutes when David Argyle came storming in to defend his niece, shouting: *"How dare you say she appeared nude, if you had to say anything at all you should have said she was in a state of undress."*





Brian Grice leaving do at the Wiggington pub, Tamworth, 1977.

Left to right: deputy editor John Bennett, Annette W, sports editor Bob Paterson, reporter Andy Gough, Johnnie Walker's wife Annie, reporter Peter Brown, Brian Grice, Flic Grice, Freda Bennett, director Alan Smedley, Sue Robinson, Martin Robinson.

A prominent businessman threw an almighty tantrum after we printed a negative story. He stormed into Mr Moseley's office to announce his company would never advertise in the Herald again. Two weeks later the ads reappeared – we had no rivals and he had nowhere else to plug his wares.

Mr Moseley really was a saint. He always supported his journalists, never raised his voice and was patience personified. As a former theatre critic of the Bristol Evening Post, he took a keen interest in Tamworth's arts scene. When I handed in my first ever review, a dire school performance drowned out by crashing scenery and noisy musicians, he went through it with me line by line. They were kids, he said, amateurs who deserved encouragement. Once re-written into a glowing piece, the only criticism read: *"Perhaps at times the orchestra was a little boisterous."*

Luckily, Mr Moseley didn't know much about pop and once I got my hands on the Musicbox column, he gave me free range. Not that I actually understood everything. I interviewed a fantastic new band called The DHSS and asked



Music box days: Annette with "Diddy" David Hamilton DJ

photographer Johnnie Walker to take a picture of them outside the Department of Health and Social Security. The band had other ideas and persuaded Johnnie to take photos outside the men's public toilets. I was delighted with the moody-looking snaps. Deputy editor John Bennett was disgusted and refused to publish them. Confused, I went home and mentioned John's horror to my mum. She burst out laughing and had to explain that the initials possibly stood for Department of Happiness and Self-Satisfaction, in other words the gents' loos.

Johnnie was our only photographer and he insisted on remaining freelance. He crammed as many people into pictures as possible, explaining: *"Every face sells a photo."* He got a big cut of the proceeds and ploughed his money into cutting-edge gadgets. He was the first person I knew who owned a video recorder and he had a car phone that linked back to his house. Driving along, he was constantly on the phone, announcing: *"Tel car one to base, do you read, over?"* His long-suffering wife Annie would reply, in normal English, asking about his day. He'd brush her off, saying: *"Roger, over and out."*

During my three years at the Herald we went from broadsheet to tabloid in size and we did our best to mimic the Sun. Johnnie would go to beauty contests, usually in working men's clubs, with specific instructions to get sexy pictures of the winner. He always came back with a photo of the girl in a gown and sash, surrounded by a

committee of men in suits. Once I was sent alone, to meet the winner and fix up a photo shoot for later. The organisers went mad, pinning me in a phone box until I called Johnnie to rescue me and take a "proper" picture.

Johnnie had a zillion catchphrases. I was *"always surrounded by men"* – not a compliment as he'd actually had to fish me out of a crowd of angry Mods in a pub upset about something I'd written. Explaining his aversion to alcohol, he'd tell people: *"Funny name, don't drink."* That led to some hazy Christmas stories as we'd interview couples celebrating golden or diamond weddings, then run between festive lunches and booze-filled afternoon soirees. Everyone would crack open the sherry, which meant I slugged back Johnnie's glass as well as my own. I have never touched sherry since.

Tamworth was a newsy area and we had a staff of eight reporters to cover everything from courts, council meetings and crime to the more mundane garden fetes and funerals. I was the only female when I joined the paper but soon the wonderful Mable Swift, who wrote about local history, decided to work from the office. She launched a woman's page and I often found myself as a guinea pig, testing out false nails, vitamin supplements *and* acupuncture.

I learned a lot from Sue Fisher, who joined us from the Lichfield Mercury. Once I returned from magistrates' court with a note from a shoplifter begging me not to write about her case. I felt awful and thought Sue would be sympathetic. Instead she told me to report it to the editor, insisting that no one could dictate what was or wasn't printed. The story duly ran and I often saw the woman again – she was a regular in the dock.



The Glamour of journalism:
Annette W having acupuncture for a feature.

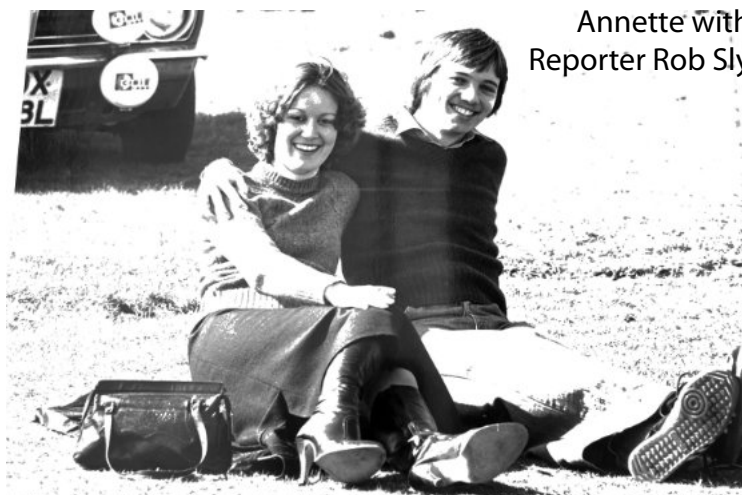


Editorial Staff 1979 Left to right: Sue Fisher, Vin Moseley, (Editor), Pan Whitehead, Rob sly, Annette W , Steve Garey, Chris Harding, Richard Whitehead, Mable Swift, John Walker

Amazingly, for a small regional newspaper with a circulation of around 30,000, we were constantly offered cars to test drive, albums and concerts to review and travel opportunities. Freddie Laker, who pioneered cheap flights between the US and UK, invited a plane-load of journalists to join him on a brief flight across the English Channel. Seasoned old hacks, who jetted around the world for a living, were deeply unimpressed. I was beside myself with excitement. It wasn't just my maiden flight, sipping champagne over Eastbourne while chatting to Laker. I was also treated to first class train travel to Gatwick and back. That, to me, was the height of sophistication.

Less glamorous was the Winter of Discontent when we went on strike. The Herald was a major print works for numerous local papers. We valiantly manned seven entrances, stopping everyone from the postman to the drinks machine supplier from crossing our picket lines. Mr Moseley got his revenge by printing pages of old Tamworth photographs. Readers wrote in to say how much better the paper was without the journalists!

When I joined the Herald, I signed a three-year indenture agreement meaning I would receive "proper" training. I was dispatched off to Cardiff for two three-month courses, where I lived in crumbling theatrical digs, learned shorthand, law and local government and discovered night clubs and punk. Amazingly, I sailed through my final exams and quickly started applying for jobs on bigger newspapers. Tamworth was a fantastic place to work but I was ready for a change. The Coventry Evening Telegraph snapped me up and off I went to the big city.



Annette with Reporter Rob Sly

From there, I moved to Fleet Street, freelancing for the national newspapers before getting a staff job on the News of the World. Soon, I was jumping on planes, checking into ritzy hotels and interviewing rock stars.

I've had an incredible career but I've never forgotten the sheer thrill of working for the Herald and even though the media has changed beyond recognition, *it's still a job I'd recommend to anyone.*

Annette's biggest story, to date, is when she broke the Prince Andrew / Jeffery Epstein story in New York in 2010. This has been made into a Netflix film called "**Scoop**" with Annette played by Kate Fleetwood. [See the Trailer here](#) though please note the film notes say that it is *inspired* by true events so make of it what you will, some of us have heard the real story directly from Annette in person...



Annette in 1979 at the Tamworth Herald with her National Council for Training of Journalists proficiency certificate **Note: the Heritage Magazine Editor is currently doing the same course.**



"Another boozy night out with Herald staff"

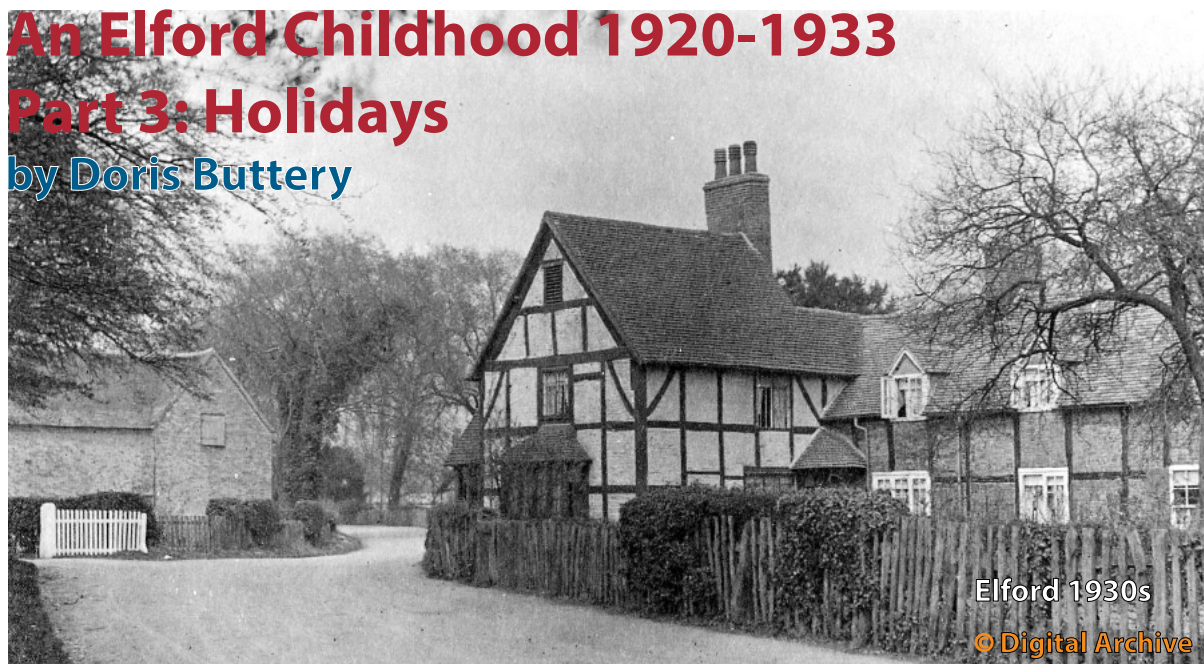


Annette in 2019 , 40 years on from the picture left, at the Tamworth Herald Archive at the Herald Office in Tamworth

An Elford Childhood 1920-1933

Part 3: Holidays

by Doris Buttery



Doris lived with her family – two older brothers, Bill and Frank, and her parents Jack and Lizzie – from her birth in 1920 until they moved away in 1933. It was a world far removed from the one in which we all now live.

Part 3 Holidays

Not many people in the village were able to go away for an annual holiday unless they went to stay with relatives. The families of some of the railwaymen managed an occasional trip to Blackpool, travelling on their free passes.

We went to Rhyl for a week when I was six. As there was livestock to be looked after, Mother and Dad could never go away together at the same time, so that was why Mother alone accompanied Frank and I on that holiday.

Our usual holiday comprised of a couple of weeks with my grandfather in Shropshire. He was Mother's father, a farm bailiff, who owned the house he lived in along with the two meadows adjoining it. Like the rest of that village (Tibberton), it had once been part of the estate of the Dukes of Sutherland.

When the estate was being sold, in the early part of the twentieth century (probably 1912 Ed.), tenants were given the opportunity of buying the house in which they lived. Grandfather's house had been tenanted by Grandmother's family for longer than anyone could remember and,



Doris in 'fancy' dress outside their home, Mill Cottage, Elford. 1st Jan 1932 © Ann Nibbs

although she was dead by then, Grandfather decided to buy it and was able to borrow sufficient money to enable him to do so.

My widowed aunt, Mother's eldest sister, kept house for him. Auntie Sallie had lost her husband in the 1918 'flu pandemic when their youngest child Kathleen was a week old. The same pandemic had also carried off Mother's youngest sister, Auntie Flo, who was keeping house for Grandfather at the time, so it seemed sensible for Auntie Sallie, her sons, Wally and Jack, and baby Kathleen to move in with Grandfather.

The boys were both at school and, as soon as they were old enough to leave, they went to live in Birmingham with their father's brother who found them work on the railway. Kathleen, however, stayed on with her mother, and I enjoyed having her to play with when we went there to stay. She was a couple of years older than me, but we shared the same interests, and I could join in any activities in which she and her friends were involved.

Unlike ours in Elford, milk was not delivered to Grandfather's house, so Kathleen had to collect it every morning and night from the farm. This was a novelty to me as I went with her. But I suspect that would have soon worn off if I had to do it regularly in all weathers and all seasons.

Like us, Grandfather kept pigs in a sty at the top of his extensive garden, and his privy adjoined the pigsty. This privy comprised of two comfortable round holes in a wooden seat of an earth closet. Kathleen and I used to sit side by side on a warm summer day and watch men at work in the fields or read one of the many copies of *The Family Journal* which used to accumulate there.

Grandfather also had a couple of cowsheds, along with a third in the far meadow. Fruit trees abounded – pears, apples (both cooking and dessert), damsons and plums. The sweetest plum was a pale, yellow round 'sugar' plum – or at least that's what everyone called it. The tree was ancient, and the crop diminished over the years, but the flavour remained constant. Juicy and so sweet that hardly any sugar was needed when they were cooked. That tree stood conveniently (for Kathleen and me) right beside the cow shelter in the far meadow. We used to climb up onto the roof and sit there, gorging ourselves. If the plums were out of reach, we would shake the

tree and eat the fallen fruit. We deserved to be made ill but, strangely, never were. At least, not as a result of eating sugar plums.

One day we had just given the tree a vigorous shaking when we saw Mother coming through the meadow with a basket on her arm, headed straight for our tree. We sat silently on the cow shelter roof until she had picked up a basket full and returned to the house. We had been ticked off on several occasions for climbing onto that roof so we hoped our presence would go unnoticed. We were lucky, but how hard it was to keep silent as we ate our pudding that day, and Mother said, 'I was really surprised at the number of plums on the ground today. After all, it isn't as if we've had any winds.'

Auntie Sallie did a lot of work for the village. She was secretary of the Women's Institute, a member of the Parochial Church Council (as was Grandfather) and also involved with organising dances and whist drives held at the Institute. She was a born organiser with a will of iron. As a result, there were occasional clashes between her and Mother, who also liked to have her own way and, like many tiny people, knew how to get it. On the whole, however, those Shropshire country holidays were happy times, and there were always tears when the time came for Kathleen and me to part.



Approving Elford, 1930s © Ann Nibbs



Doris with one of a succession of childhood cats (probably Jo, c.1936 when the family had moved to Steere Avenue in Tamworth) © Ann Nibbs

Enter a cat

As a small child, I was terrified of fur and caused my parents acute embarrassment by screaming if anyone wearing it came anywhere near. This happened with alarming frequency. After all, it was the 1920s when practically every woman had some scrap of fur which would duly emerge from mothballs every Sunday to be worn in church.

Dad and Mother decided the only solution was a cat (I believe this was at the suggestion of the family doctor – Doctor Losun, and duly obtained a small tortoiseshell kitten. This turned out to be a shrewd move as I became besotted with her and was soon pushing the long-suffering animal around in my doll's pram. She was called Fluff and seemed to know why she had come to live with us, for she even allowed me to dress her in my doll's bonnet and coat. Then she would obligingly go to sleep with her head on the pram pillow. She was much more interesting than an inanimate rag doll and I was never again afraid of fur.

Fluff grew up of course, and in due time presented us with a litter of kittens, several of which bore strong resemblance to Sooty, the tomcat who lived with Mr Day next door.

All the kittens went to good homes, and Fluff became my playmate again for a time. She had, however, developed a liking for hunting rabbits in the corn field behind our house. The farmer there was a short-tempered man, and Dad had crossed swords with him on several occasions when shots from the farmer's gun had

seemed a bit wild.

There were hundreds of rabbits about, so I cannot think that the odd one caught by a cat can have represented such a great financial loss to him, but he saw red whenever he saw a feline on his land. One lady in the village owned a beautiful Blue Persian, and this same farmer knocked on her door one afternoon to tell her that if she wanted her cat, it was lying by the



Doris on her bicycle, Elford c.1930 © Ann Nibbs

hedge in one of his fields as he had seen it stalking a rabbit and had shot it. She was heartbroken, but he was merciless in his war on felines.

He had a fright one day though. It was on a summer Saturday afternoon, and I was playing on the lids of the soft water tanks. A shot rang out, followed by an immediate unearthly scream. I jumped down as Mr Day's black cat raced pell-mell down the back path, along our yard, and into the coal-shed. He was making a terrible noise exactly like a child in agony. Dad sent me indoors and, as he went to look for the tortured animal, the farmer came dashing into the yard, his face white as he asked, 'Where's your little girl? Have I hit her?'

Dad was blunt. 'No, you haven't, but don't worry, you will if you keep trying.'

'It was a cat after rabbits...' began the farmer as the dreadful noise from the coal-shed continued. 'Yes,' said Dad. 'It was a cat. Mr Day's cat. You might as well finish what you started and put the poor beast out of its misery. Then you can go and tell Mr Day.'

Poor Mr Day was terribly upset, and, after that, we kept Fluff in as much as possible, but cats cannot be so easily confined as dogs.

Our promiscuous cat had another litter, and this time Mother kept one kitten because she looked so much like Fluff. It must have been a premonition because, when the kitten was weaned, Fluff suffered the same fate as poor Sooty, only we hoped it was quicker.

Fluff II was as affectionate as her mother and just as prolific. When she was three, she tired of having her babies taken from her right at the time they became interesting, so decided to do something about it. For two days, she went missing, and Mother was beginning to think she had met her end with a bullet from the farmer's gun when she reappeared. She had obviously had her kittens, but no one knew where. We searched all the likely and most of the unlikely places, without result.

For six weeks, Fluff appeared regularly morning and evening for her food but, although many hours were wasted in watching, none of us could track her to her nursery. When she saw us watching, she sat down to have a wash. As soon as you looked the other way for a second, she disappeared.

Mr Day made the discovery as he was digging his garden one evening. He thought he heard something high in his apple tree while he rested for a moment. He looked up, expecting to see a bird, and saw instead a tiny furry face.

Fluff was eating her supper, so Mr Day got his ladder and climbed up quietly to investigate. There, in a hollow in the centre of the tree, were three beautiful kittens. He left them and came to tell Mother. She and Frank hurried along there.

Frank carefully removed each swearing, spitting ball of fur and handed it to Mother. Fluff was by this time aware of what was going on and stood beside Mother, mewing and calling to her babies. Mother put them in her apron and, followed by an anxious Fluff, bore them into the house where she released them onto the kitchen floor. They immediately tottered unsteadily towards the darkest corner, despite Fluff's attempts at reassurance.

They had been so restricted in the hollow tree that they were not very steady on their legs and kept toppling over. Frank came with a cardboard box in which he had put some newspaper, and, with some difficulty, we caught the frightened kittens and put them inside. Fluff jumped in beside them and managed to settle them down. The kittens were all beautifully marked tabbies and, after we had tamed them, we had no difficulty in finding them good homes.

Fluff II disappeared completely when she was about five years old. We never did find out what happened to her but suspected she had met the same fate as her mother. As Dad remarked, she was, at a distance, a bit rabbit-coloured herself so, if she had been shot, it could have been by mistake, although, of course, it would have made no difference to that cat-hating farmer if she had been purple!

Mother refused to have another cat. It was too upsetting when they met their end and, anyway, it was obvious that as long as we lived there, no cat would be safe from a bullet or a snare. In fact it was not until I was fifteen, and we had left Elford for Tamworth, that we had another cat. Another tortoiseshell. We called her Jo.

It was after Fluff II disappeared that we acquired a temporary pet of a different kind. Bill found a young owl by the roadside and brought it home. Its wing was damaged, probably by a passing car or by striking the telegraph wires.

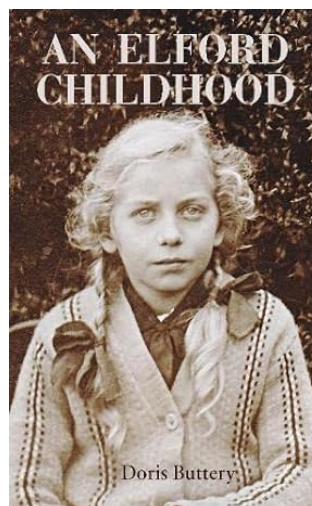
He put it into an old hen coop and cared for it until one day when Mother removed the front bars and it was able to fly, rather feebly, to our apple tree. We left the coop in the same place so that it could return if it wished, and Mother left food and water handy. It hung around for another week or so, then flew right away.

Frank then got hold of some rabbits. Mother did not think very much of those, and they did not last long. Their appetites were insatiable, and Frank soon found they took up a lot of his time in keeping them clean. He took them to school, one by one, and gave them to other boys.

That was the end of our pet-keeping activities in Elford. We have never been a dog family but, from starting as an infant who hated fur, I developed into someone who is a fool over cats. I find them quite irresistible, possessed of so much character and intelligence. Whoever it was who said, 'Dogs look up to you, cats look down on you, but pigs is equal', knew what they were talking about, in my opinion. Every cat who has owned me has left me in no doubt that I am there for her convenience, whilst the pigs we used to keep could, on occasion, take on an almost human identity.

Next time: Some local characters make an appearance

This extract is taken from '*An Elford Childhood*' by Doris Buttery published by Umbria Press, price £9.99 and available from Ann Nibbs by contacting her on Ann.nibbs@gmail.com.



Book Review

Illustrations of Tamworth

1829 EB Hamel

With foreword by Peter Ebben

Published by

1967 Tamworth Arts Advisory Council

1980 Tamworth Borough Council

This is a delightful hardback art book containing twelve EB Hamel prints of his engravings of Tamworth from about 1829.

Fortunately each print has an explanation of the scene, because even with the street views Tamworth has change a lot in 195 years. There is also a four page introduction by Peter Edden, a local historian, on EB Hamel and the engravings which is quite illuminating.

It is both a discussion of Hemel's life, the method of engraving and printing uses and a critique of the artworks.

The prints are

1 North view of Tamworth (from the north looking south)

2 Church Street (From the East looking West)

3 Interior of the Church (St Ed's from the alter looking to the screen)

4 The Moathouse (from the south west looking over the river)

5 Cole-Hill (Looking south from the corner with Church street)

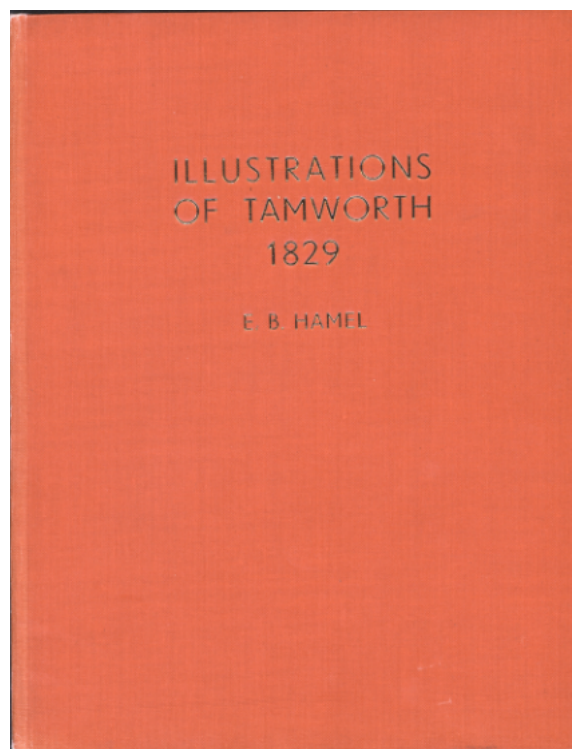
6 Tamworth from the South (from about the Castle grounds cafe looking north)

7 The Town Hall (classic view looking east on Market street, but no Peel stature)

8 The Castle from the East (roughly from where the bandstand is now)

9 Free Grammar School (now gone, it was next to Steve's Fish and Chips)

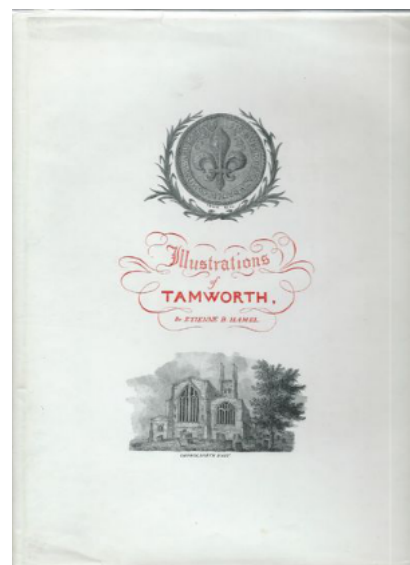
10 Tamworth from Bole or Bole Bridge (A South East view of Tamworth from the railway arches)



11 The National School (the building is now St Editha's Church Hall)

12 View on the River Tame (south of Tamworth looking north from the Snow dome area)

This book has no ISBN and is not in print though you can still buy it second hand but beware! There are two almost identical versions the original 1967 and the 1980 reprint. The two versions look identical other than the 1967 version has the more modern sans serif font on the cover compared to the 1980 version. Also the internal title pages are different.



Glen Cot



Tamworth's Spinning School

By Frances Biseker

Earlier this year I visited Tamworth for the first time. To my shame I've passed you on the M42 many a time, so my husband Jon and myself booked a room in the Travelodge, ready to visit the historic sights of the town.

Straight away I was not disappointed. I'm a keen spinner and occasional weaver so I was delighted to see that you have 'Spinning School Lane'. My curiosity whetted, I wondered about the history of the lane; a quick look on Postcode Finder told me there's not another one in the UK, and another bit of quick research told me that it was founded in 1687 but fell into disuse by 1719 – a period of 32 years.

So what's its story? Bearing in mind I don't know that town at all (but Jon and I really enjoyed our visit), I've pieced together what I could find, but let's start at the beginning with a bit of scene-setting.

A quick history of spinning.

Most of us don't give a second thought to the fabric that our clothes are made of, let alone the actual yarn that is used in its production; there's about 5 miles of yarn in a pair of jeans, which often stops people in their tracks. Wind back through several millennia, and you will find that fabric was always held in great value because of the intense labour needed to produce it, and the wonderful design and quality of what was produced. Weaving is another story to tell, but as far as spinning goes every single length of yarn that was produced for weaving before the Industrial Revolution was spun by women using a hand spindle, and later on a spinning wheel; firstly the 'great' or 'walking wheel' then latterly the Saxony wheel with flyer and treadle.

Click [here or on image](#) to see video to Great Wheel spinning



Image © Angela Lawson

Across the world women have been constantly spinning a whole range of fibres that have led to fabrics that brought huge wealth and power for some, and enslavement and poverty for others. Leading up to the Industrial Revolution every home, farm, hamlet, village and town would find women spinning to provide clothes and an income for their families, and children would be an integral part of that process. Gradually the Domestic System developed – a precursor to the factory, where clothiers would arrange for the preparation and supply of materials and then the collection of yarn. In time this system developed with variations across the country with some clothiers becoming wealthy merchants as they managed and invariably exploited the supply and demand of yarn. Before the invention of John Kay's 'flying shuttle' in 1733 it took approximately five spinners to supply one weaver, but faster weaving meant the need for more yarn, and in time we see the invention of the Carding Machine by Lewis Paul in 1748, the Spinning Jenny in 1770; (that involves another Tamworth resident – Robert Peel), and Samuel Crompton's Spinning Mule in 1779.

The advent of steam power in due course meant that mills were no longer dependent on a flow of water to operate so wool and cotton industries expanded rapidly across the Northwest and Midlands. Elsewhere, nearly every town would have its several mills. From the 18th century onwards fabric flowed off the loom to meet an ever increasing demand, and technology continually innovated to provide a wide range of textiles at a faster rate.

Learn why the girls learnt to spin yarn with a master spinner from the Irish Linen Centre, at the wheel [Click here or on the image below](#)



The advent of Spinning Schools.

But the demand for more yarn has another story to tell before these machines were realised: Spinning Schools. Until this point it is tempting to paint an over romanticised picture of spinning; a kind of cosy domestic production, with women gathering at home and in communal settings for spinning.

Communal spinning could be incredibly raucous affairs, and from time to time they were forbidden by church authorities due to the supposed moral degeneration they engendered. 'Wool spins best when the sheep are asleep' was a familiar saying – not just because wool had warmed through by the fire making it easier to spin, but I suspect it was a nod and a wink toward that drinking and merrymaking that could go on in the evenings. It was not uncommon for young men to drop by...

It's true, there were some profitable days for hand spinners, but for orphans, widows and unmarried girls, life could be incredibly tough, especially as there were few options for girls and women to support themselves financially.

Boys could be apprenticed to a number of trades, but occupations considered suitable for women were small in number. Being female imposed a stricter moral tariff than being male, and society would deem what was appropriate for each gender. Similarly, authorities were exercised (as they always are), as to how to respond to poverty, and in the centuries that concern us, finding useful employment for the poor was paramount. Whether it was to the benefit of the poor or the richer in society is another question to be explored.

Spinning Schools then sounded laudable enough – a place where girls in particular were taught a trade. However, the conditions could be harsh and at times were little more than forced labour. In a German school in 1685, 200 six year old girls at any one time were taught to spin and were punished if they didn't work hard enough.

The earliest School recorded in Britain that I could find was set up in 1628 by Sir William



The Authors spinning wheel collection

Borlas to teach 24 poor girls in Great Marlow to spin, knit and make bone lace. Despite being called a Free School, one wonders about the extent of the curriculum.¹ Susanna Wesley, the mother of John Wesley (1703 -1791) who founded Methodism, refused to teach her daughters to sew until they could read; sewing also has an equal story of child labour and exploitation to tell during the 17th and 18th Centuries. Scotland also had its own network of Spinning Schools, mainly for flax to be spun into linen, as did Ireland,² so it is not inconceivable that the vast majority of towns in the 17th century had such institutions as part of their provision for the poor often inextricably linked with the emerging form of workhouse. Included in that story are those who were regarded as criminal and how they were put to spinning and knitting work within the penal system. The debate will continue as to whether these were laudable institutions providing a trade for poor and criminally minded, or whether they were a form of forced labour offering no real rehabilitation or relief from poverty.

¹ Patricia Baines: Spinning Wheels. Spinners and Spinning p178 -9

² Ibid

Tamworth's Spinning School.

The story of Tamworth's spinning school starts as far as we know in 1687 when in Schoolhouse Lane a school was established where 'children from the age of five upwards are set to work spinning and knitting in return for board and lodgings.'¹ Although a date or location isn't specified by Charles Ferrers Raymund Palmer in his 1845 history of Tamworth, the Marquis of Bath (Lord Weymouth), left an 'annuity of £10 for two school mistresses to teach eight children to knit and read'². This may have been a precursor to the spinning school or an addition, but it reminds us that the knitting of stockings, caps mittens and other items that need more flexibility than fabric were important to any economy, and it was work for the poor.

Fortunately Palmer writes in detail about the founding of the Spinning School: *'Thomas lord Viscount Weymouth by indenture, dated 26th February 1686 -7 granted to the Bayliffs of the town and their successors, for the promotion of industry and provision of a place for the poor, a barn and fold on the south side of a lane leading from the School House towards Amington Hall; upon trust, that they convert the same into a Workhouse wherein the poor might be employed and their children instructed.* Palmer goes onto list a number of subscribers and then writes; *'this building obtained the name of Spinning School and was used only for children'*³

So, we can clearly see that the spinning school and workhouse formed one project. Henry Wood in 'Borough by Prescription' (1958), also records the history of the school: *'The minute book of the common Hall states that in 1687 Lord Weymouth gave to the town a barn and land in schoolhouse lane for conversion into a house for setting poor children to work. As the cost would be considerable it was ordered that £20 be made out of the Chamberlain's box, and also £4 per annum towards the cost of maintenance. The minutes for 1793 also record the continuance of a grant of £5 to the 'spinning School' (hence Spinning School Lane) from the town box and the acceptance of the sum of £10 from Thomas Guy for the same purpose'*

It's interesting to note that Guy commenced building his Almshouses in 1678, eight years before Lord Weymouth started on the Spinning

¹ Staffordshire Extensive Urban Survey Report. P 54

² Charles Ferrers Raymund Palmer. A History of Tamworth. 1845. p478

³ Palmer p 442

School. What relationships existed between these two institutions and their patrons?

It's difficult to know exactly what life was like for those who came to the School; one can only surmise from the wider pool of workhouse records, but it would undoubtedly been hard, and as mentioned earlier, we wonder whether or not it was place of forced labour or a place where skills were learned to make future living. The provision of board and lodging in lieu of a wage raises numerous questions, though it maybe the girls were then placed as apprentices having learned the basics of spinning. Further research is needed.

At this point in time the girls were probably using a Saxony wheel to spin on as this offered a fast continual production of yarn, but there would also have been the business of sorting and carding the wool. Questions arise too about the source of their raw materials; was local fleece suitable for local weavers, and was a particular breed of sheep favoured? They may have been spinning flax as well - which requires a different skill set- to be woven into linen for clothing and household items. In my research I was fascinated to see that there is a Flaxhill Junior Academy at Wigginton. Further reading of Palmer tells me that Sir Henry Gough of Perry Hall purchased by indenture '*...two headlands lying together in Flaxhill- field in Wigginton called Hunger Hill*'.¹ As well as providing further evidence to the growing of flax in Staffordshire, it probably explains the name of the Junior School². I simply note as well that Sir Henry Gough made this generous gift to the town's poor the year before he was first elected Member of Parliament for Tamworth. This would not have been lost on the electorate.

Once established the spinning school was continually needing funds, and a number of people continued to be generous. Ann Osburn's gift of 1688 directs that the interest on her bequeathed £5 be '*employed forever towards buying materials or in some other good way to set poor children to work in the spinning school...if the school not continue, interest be given to the poor of Tamworth in bread after morning prayer on the Sunday before Christmas*'.³ Similarly in 1793 Samuel Langley left a gift of £5 to assist the workhouse school, and earlier in 1683 John

Vaughton, also known as 'whistling John' (and how could I resist including someone with such a name), left two properties in Spinning School Lane to the Church Wardens to house the poor.¹ Both Ann and John were relatives of Thomas Guy, with John being particularly influential in the town.

The School's demise.

Palmer thus writes;

*The Spinning-school, in the course of time, — for what reason does not plainly appear, — fell entirely into disuse; so that, in 1719, it was directed by the bailifs and commonalty that the building should be converted into a number of houses for the poor. This order was immediately put into execution.*²

What happened? Did it simply become too expensive to run or was a business venture that simply failed? Was there a fall in the number of children being sent there? The mechanisation of spinning was still to come, so it can't be that it was obsolete in that regard. Perhaps, the national picture may help us here. In 1697 an Act was passed that paupers were to have a brass tag attached to their clothing, marking their qualification for poor relief. In 1712 the

¹ Palmer 465

² Palmer 443

Author distsff spinning



¹ Palmer 465

² [Dobson, Jennie. Flax and linen in Staffordshire.](#)

³ Palmer 470

Overseers of the poor in Tamworth were directed to have affixed on the paupers' outer clothing a tag stamped TP – Tamworth Pauper. In 1723, not long after the closure of the spinning school, Knatchbull's Act – the Workhouse Test – tightened up the means by which the poor could seek relief by making Workhouse conditions more severe and outdoor relief less available.¹ Then 1st August 1740 we see this happening to the converted Spinning School:

*'the Baliffs' and Capital Burgess...made an order "that the Chamberlains shall use such measures as they shall be advised are proper to be taken to turn out all the Paupers who live in Corporation houses". Although there is no record of the corporate property held at this time, it seems likely that this resolution applied to the converted building.'*²

Pressure had been growing upon the town as to how to respond to the increased numbers of paupers and the consequent strained financial resources. So in 1740 the Earl of Northampton built a Workhouse on Coleshill, opposite Church Lane. It's clear to see what was happening; the town's corporate body were, as far as possible bringing the poor together under one roof, and economies were being made by evicting the poor from corporate properties.

The Spinning School having failed once, is redundant once more despite it's conversion into dwellings for the poor, and becomes a liability on the town's resources. However, the Workhouse of 1740 quickly became inadequate, and in 1750 a new one was built by Lord Weymouth and Lord Middleton.³ Even so, by 1777 there were two parish workhouses in operation one in Tamworth and the other in Wigginton, adding to the 2000 other Parish Workhouses that existed in the 1770's. The Spinning School and it's successive conversion had had it's day. What happened to the houses after the evictions is another story to tell; how they were used, who lived in them and what was their ultimate fate.

Final Reflection

I'm glad to see that the name 'Spinning School Lane' has survived through the last four centuries, because it keeps alive a story that is important to tell. Through it we can catch a glimpse of some of the poorest and most vulnerable people in society at that time, as well

¹ Knatchbull's Workhouse test. Wikipedia entry

² A Borough by Prescription. Henry Wood p 136

³ Ibid

as wealthy and powerful donors whose philanthropy is both laudable and questionable. A wider story to tell is that of 17/18th centuries' geopolitical power and Britain's place within it; economies rise and fall through the vagaries of trade and war, and in society there will always be those who suffer as a consequence. What connections might we make with the then national picture and that of Tamworth's?

Although beyond our time scale we can see the havoc the Napoleonic wars wreaked on the British economy; the cost of poor relief quadrupled from £2 million to £8million pounds in the period 1795 -1815. The story of Spinning School Lane also asks pertinent questions about society's response and care of the poor and homeless today as our society struggles with those same questions as did our 17/18th century forebears; the trauma of poverty is no less than it was then.

Spinning School lane then has many stories to tell which should not be forgotten, and perhaps next time I come I bring my spinning wheel and spin some of those remembrances.



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The Workhouse. <https://www.workhouses.org.uk/>



The art of long draw spinning [click here](#) for video or on the image to see the video.

An introduction to making rolags by carding. This is the step before spinning [Click here](#) or on the image to see video



Spinning Yarn with Professor Alice Roberts at the Irish Linen Centre & Lisburn Museum [Click Here](#)

It is interesting that when Samson Shield's, the brick yard owner, reconstructed both his hotel and his residence he included Terracotta figurines on the hotel and home that he would never sell to anyone else locally. The lions head on hotel and the lady's head on his home.

He also built a brick carriage house behind his home, with the proverbial "brick sh-t house" incorporated in the structure. An elaborate out house was a two seater with hardwood floors, plaster walls and even a window. Of course he had the bricks to do these additional items especially as he was supplying the bricks for the town hall which I assume was quite profitable.

TENDERS WANTED.

Tenders will be received by the undersigned at the Township Clerk's office, in the Village of Tamworth, in the Township of Sheffield, in the County of Lennox and Addington, until

MONDAY, THE 27th DAY OF MAY, 1895,

at the hour of 10 o'clock a.m., for the erection of a

BRICK TOWN HALL,

in the Village of Tamworth.

Plans and specifications can be seen at the Township Clerk's office, in the Village of Tamworth, on and after the 13th day of May, until the 27th day of May.

19

W. J. PAUL, Reeve.



Town Library



Ottawa Street



The hotel has changed hands a number of times over the years. Currently it is a restaurant and Air B & B. both very nicely done. The remainder of the buildings are all homes, although for a time in the 1950's -1960's one of them was also the town Post Office

Today all of the brick buildings are still standing and there has only been one timber frame home built. That was quite a number of years ago and a small timber frame service station that has long been torn down to make room for parking. The former Township Hall is now the local library.



This season's significant dates and events

collated by the Editor



Wednesday 16 October - 75 years since Drayton Manor Theme Park opened! We have a special on the History of the Leisure Park with many unseen Bryan Family archive pictures. [Click here to read it.](#)

Friday 25 October - 170 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 Editor.]*



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

Wednesday 30 October - 146 years since the company of Gibbs and Canning was incorporated.

Sunday 10 November Remembrance Sunday
Monday 11 November - Armistice Day.



2 December 1963 (a Saturday) - Sixty years since the Rolling Stones perform at the Assembly Rooms. Mick Jagger also banned from Old Stone Cross Pub. In 1963, the Rolling Stones played no less than 308 gigs, with Tamworth number 281. However, this show saw the Rolling Stones play for about ten minutes (3 or 4 songs), and therefore those who saw the Stone play in December '63 should think themselves very lucky.

18 December 1834 - Sir Robert Peel created the Tamworth Manifesto, a pre-election speech which laid out the principles of the Conservative Party. We hope to have a video on this soon.

20 December - 19 years ago, the Bolebridge Egg is voted the 4th worst roundabout in the country.



After Magic Roundabout in Swindon, The Plough in Hemel Hempstead and The Pork Pie in Leicester However in 2022 the Egg did not feature on the list of the top 20 dangerous roundabouts in the UK

27 December - 300 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 if anyone wants to write one. Editor]*



Temperance and the Band of Hope in Tamworth. A short outline by Michael Green

One approach to the problems of excessive drinking in the early 19th century was the formation of temperance societies applying the adage that "prevention is better than cure". Underlying them was "taking the pledge" initially to abstain from spirits and be moderate in the consumption of other alcohol.

Later, the pledge was extended to abstaining from all alcoholic beverages and the following or similar was printed on the tickets of membership given on becoming a member – "I hereby promise to abstain from the use of all intoxicating liquors as a beverage".

Membership Card with Pledge ([click here](#))



Well known temperance societies, were the "Good Templars", "Independent Order of Rechabites" and the "Band of Hope". The latter, with the motto "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it" was formed in 1847 with the aim of encouraging children to live a healthy, alcohol-free lifestyle but having members from all age groups. Fifty years later, in 1897, the Band of Hope numbered 3.5 million.

[It should be noted that in 1897 the population of England and Wales was just over 31 million. So the membership of the Band of Hope alone was over 10% of the population. So probably a least a quarter of England and Wales was abstaining. Editor]

The Central Temperance Gazette for 1845 records visits by temperance lecturers to Tamworth and reports that at a meeting in the Town Hall on 17th April there was an attentive audience including 5 who signed the pledge.

There is no evidence of a temperance movement being established in the Tamworth area until the Band of Hope was formed in early 1864 in the chapel of the United Free Methodists then in Mill Lane, Fazeley.



Fazeley BoH banner with portrait of founder Joseph Dent **Micheal Green**

The founder was Joseph Dent, a member and the Sunday School Superintendent. At first, meetings were disrupted by the opposition of publicans and their supporters which only ceased when Sir Robert Peel became patron.

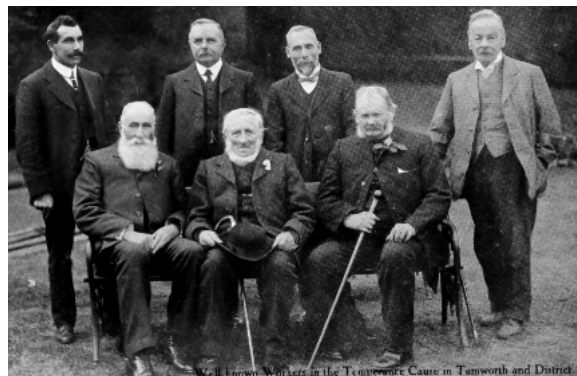
Another patron was Mr Tolson who allowed a large weaving shed on land of his to be used for meetings before building a Temperance Hall which was used for several years until it had to be demolished to make way for the large factory known as "Tolson's Mill". This local landmark, which has now been converted into flats, still stands today.

Tolson's Mill
© Digital Archive



Peel Street looking to Lichfield Street and what is now Peter J Hicks Offices **(Tamworth Digital Archive)**

The first Band of Hope in the town itself was started around the same time with just 8 members in the Baptist Chapel then in Peel Street. Later the meetings were transferred to the Town Hall and the name was changed to the Tamworth Temperance Band of Hope. Other Bands followed like the Tamworth United Methodist one founded by temperance stalwarts there such as Joseph Sadler and Joshua Griffiths.



That same year the Tamworth and District Band of Hope and Total Abstinence Union was formed encompassing all temperance groups in the area. This played a vital role in promoting the movement and organising events the principal one of which was the annual Fete and Gala referred to as "Children's Day" held on Whit Tuesday. However, the first of them was organised by Messrs F Wharton and C Neale on behalf of the Tamworth Temperance and Band of Hope on Whit Monday 1869 4 in the Castle Grounds with entertainment in the form of temperance recitations, dialogues and singing. It had been intended that the procession would first proceed round the town but the weather proved too inclement.

Venues for the Fete and Gala were the cricket ground on Fazeley Road. Lady Meadow and the Castle Grounds which was the preferred one.



The groups would assemble and be marshalled in Corporation Street for their procession round the town. So great were the numbers that there was an overflow into St John Street. In all, there could be well over a 1000 taking part. At the head of the procession the handsome banner of the Union was carried followed by the officials. Next was a temperance band hired for the occasion such as the "Notts. Saxe-Tuba Temperance Prize Band," followed by the various groups with their banners and in many cases their striking displays also. Naturally, everything was on the temperance theme such as "Buy bread not beer", "The best working man's club is his home" or "Water - God's Gift" on banners. In 1914, the Union's Jubilee year, 22 groups took part. The nonconformist churches and missions in the area



were represented plus the Women's Total Abstinence Union, the Kettlebrook, Glascote and Polesworth Good Templars together with the Belgrave and Fazeley Juvenile Templars.

The extremely colourful procession would wend its way to the Castle Grounds via Church Street, Silver Street, Market Street, George Street, Victoria Road, Albert Road, Hospital Street, Orchard Street, St John Street, Aldergate, Silver Street and Holloway. Following arrival at the Castle grounds, the children would be given tea and entertainment was provided for all age groups. There would be concerts, songsters and such as hurnourists, (forerunners of today's comedians), ventriloquists, a Punch and Judy, dancing, a merry go round and maypole dancing displays. A public meeting with addresses on the temperance theme concluded the day

The Band of Hope children's meetings were lively, informal affairs which contrasted with the rigidity and formality of the Sunday School. There was much singing including the Band of Hope theme song 'Come, all ye children, sing a song', There were talks with magic lantern slides to illustrate the damage caused by alcohol and recitations, sketches, choirs, competitions and exhibitions. The climax of most meetings would have been an invitation to the children to sign the pledge of total abstinence. However, in time, this was only one aspect of teaching children how to lead a good and clean life.

In the first half of the 20th century for various reasons, including a changing society, in common with temperance groups generally those in the Tamworth area started to decline. Here, the cancellation of the 1938 annual Whit Tuesday Fete and Gala thus ending an unbroken sequence of 59 years signified the beginning of the end and by mid-century the temperance movement had all but disappeared.

Band of Hope

© Digital Archive



Robert Peel's Sauce Tureen by Roger Bragger

Recently the Peel Society obtained, from an auction, a sauce tureen from the dinner service belonging to one of the Robert Peel's. In this case the father of Robert the Prime Minister. The Dinner service appears to have been made about 1800. When it arrived they discovered the lid was broken and the Peel Society asked [Tamworth Digital Archive](#) to photograph it for the repair people to see the problem.

However that is not the end of the problem. When writing up the notes to go with the photos the Digital Archive looked at the auctioneers description and provenance. It didn't make sense. This is where proper research and cross checking is important when cataloguing. The notes said *"This crest and a full coat of arms was granted in 1792 to the industrialist Robert 'Parsley' Peel (1723-1793). The red hand between the initials under the crest indicates this service was ordered by the third son of the grantee, also Robert (1750-1830) who was granted a baronetcy in 1800."*

The problem is it was not Robert "Parsley" Peel who was the Baronet. It was his son, also Robert, who bought the Baronetcy for £10,000, a vast sum in 1792. Though, he was one of the few, millionaires in the UK at the time. The error in the provenance might have occurred because Wikipedia does not list the 1792 Peel grant but does list, a row or two below 1792, a "Pasley of Craig", Admiral Sir Thomas Pasley a Scott who gained Great Britain Baronetcy.

The Baronetcy is between a Knighthood and a Peerage. It is hereditary but the holder cannot sit in the House of Lords. Since 1611 when it was invented the Baronetcy was a way for the Crown to generate money and get wealthy, but "common", industrialists in buy their way in to the aristocracy. As noted at the time the Peel who bought it was possibly one of the 10 wealthiest people in the country.



The Red Hand does not denote "the 3rd son of the grantee". Whilst the Peel who was granted (bought) the Baronetcy was the 3rd son of Parsley Peel, the Red Hand, of Ulster, was used to denote all Baronets on their coat of arms because initially it was used to raise money for troops in Ireland. Though, from 1707 they were combined to Great Britain Baronetcy's and UK from 1801 The United Kingdom Baronetcy's. There being a Red Hand would suggest the dinner service was from 1801 because it was not used for the Great Britain Baronetcy's and came back into use for the UK version. However those Irish Baronetcy's granted before 1707 would have continued to use the red hand it in the GB phase.



EST: £600 - £800

A Flight and Barr Worcester sauce tureen, cover and stand from the Sir Robert Peel service, circa 1800. Of gently lobed circular form, with bifurcated handles, painted with the crest of a demi-lion rampant, wearing a blue collar and holding a gilt shuttle between its paws, above the cipher 'RP' interrupted by a red hand, reserved on a wide band of gilt foliate scrollwork on a 'Barr's orange' ground, 17.7cm high incised B marks (3). Footnotes: Provenance Bonhams, 10 December 2008, lot 232 Charles Dawson Collection. This crest and a full coat of arms was granted in 1792 to the industrialist Robert 'Parsley' Peel (1723-1793). The red hand between the initials under the crest indicates this service was ordered by the third son of the grantee, also Robert (1750-1830) who was granted a baronetcy in 1800. The service was probably commissioned soon afterwards to mark his elevation to baronet. It was his son, the future British Prime Minister Sir Robert Peel (1788-1850), who inherited the baronetcy in 1

The 2nd Baronet was 12 years old in 1800 when this dinner service was apparently ordered and he was the eldest son. In fact 1800 was the year Robert was dispatched to Harrow School but didn't inherit the Baronetcy until 1830 on the death of his father. So this is a Dinner Service probably dates from 1801 and belonged to the 1st Baronet. We will do some more research but one thing we note is you can't trust Wikipedia, but we knew that anyway. Though auction houses should do better with their provenance notes.

The Tamworth Digital Archive works closely with Tamworth Heritage Magazine to digitise maps, books, documents and photos, of which we have over 20,000 going back to the mid 1800s.

The most important is cataloguing them so that the information is retained. There are far too many photos where no one knows when they were taken or who is in them even if they have some idea of where it is!

To this end our team liaise closely with Tamworth Castle Museum and Archive. As far as possible we work to accredited museum standards. In fact the team go on Staffs County Council training sessions and some of the team are also volunteers at the Museum Archive.

When people offer things to the Magazine, or the Digital Archive, we accept them on loan, we do not keep items for digitising, where we can. In some cases this is only preliminary photographing as the items require conservation that is outside our skill set. It is important when handling these things not to damage them further.

Once digitised, go if they don't want the items back, we then talk to the owners about where they want the artefacts to go and we research the proper museum or archive for each item. In 2024 The Digital Archive has assisted

TAMWORTH DIGITAL ARCHIVE

donations to Tamworth Castle Museum & Archive, The Staffordshire Regimental Museum and Mercian Archive, the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University and Burma Star Memorial Trust.

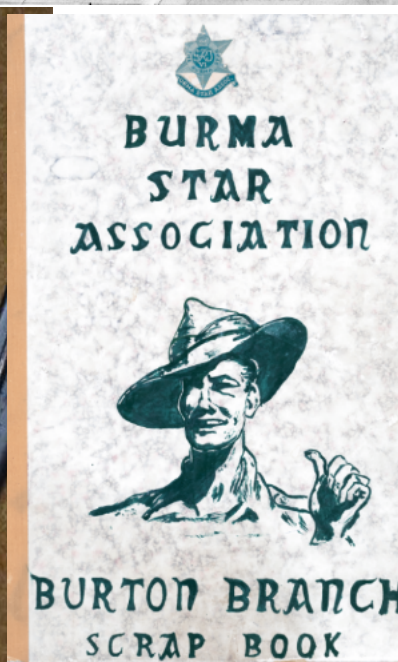
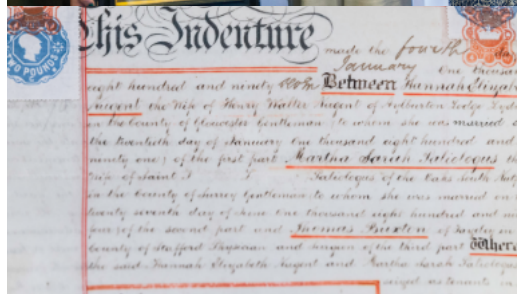
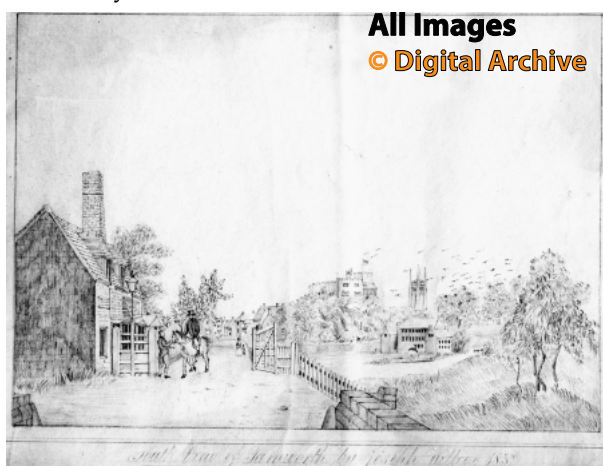
That is we assist the owners to donate, the provenance of where these artefacts some from is important. With the James Blount Memorial Plaque the people donating were the grand children of the friend of James Blount's younger brother. That story will be in the

next issue of the magazine.

So if you have any heritage we could digitise email curator@tamwortharchive.org.uk We will take great care of it and return it with a digital copy for you to keep. Future generations will thank you for this.

All Images

© Digital Archive



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, like this unmarked door. It is in a main shopping street in the town centre. But do you know where?



Last Issues Doorway:
Doorway between HSBC and Nat West Bank north side of Market Street.

Photo © Jamedia



Tamworth Railway Station 1850s

© Tamworth Archive

The Trent Valley Railway History Project. by Robin Mathams

The business opportunity and reason for building the Trent Valley Railway (TVR) was to bypass Birmingham, hence it being promoted as 'The direct line from the Metropolis [London] to the North'.

Up to that point, the only rail route connecting London and the north was via Birmingham with the London & Birmingham Railway (L&BR) and the Grand Junction Railway (GJR) from Birmingham to the north via Stafford, enjoying the monopoly of the traffic.

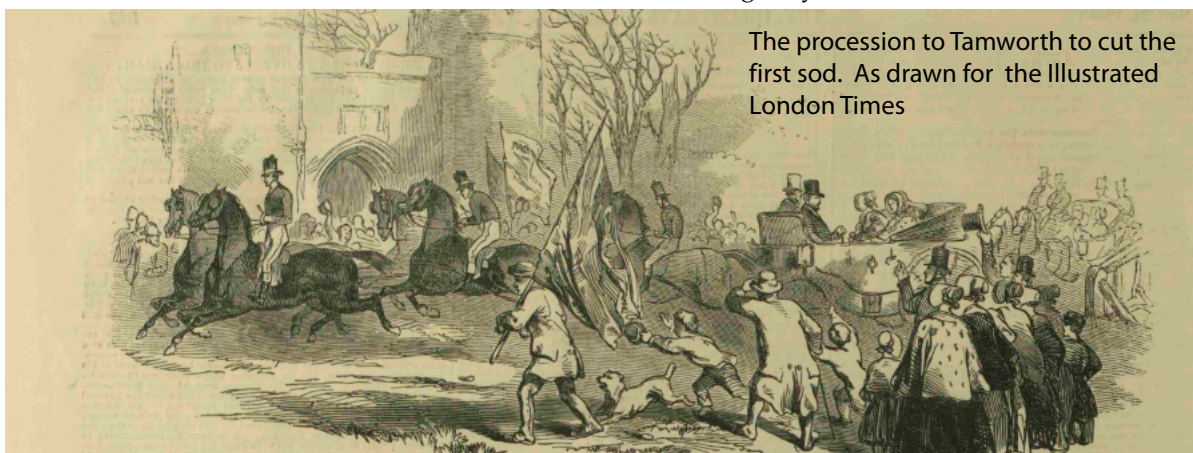
The L&BR's terminus was Curzon Street Station whilst the GJR had a temporary terminus at Vauxhall with passengers and freight having to be transferred between the two by horse-drawn coaches and wagons. Birmingham New Street Station was opened in 1854, and the Curzon

Street Station entrance building, designed by Philip Hardwick, will be the centrepiece of the forthcoming HS2 terminus. Vauxhall Station is still operational, being on the Cross-City line.

The TVR Company.

The TVR was financed by a group of mainly Manchester-based entrepreneurs and Sir Robert Peel became its most prominent supporter, leading to its 'Peel's Railway' nickname in some circles.

Sir Robert's brother, Edmund, succeeded William Copeland as Chair of the TVR Provisional Committee on 22nd February 1845 and when the TVR Bill received the Royal Assent on July 21st 1845, he became Chair of the incorporated TVR Co. and remained so until it was bought by the L&BR Co. in March 1846.



The procession to Tamworth to cut the first sod. As drawn for the Illustrated London Times

Sir Robert Peel (left of centre) turning the first sod with the silver spade. The wheelbarrow can be seen beside him. Illustrated London News on 22nd November 1845

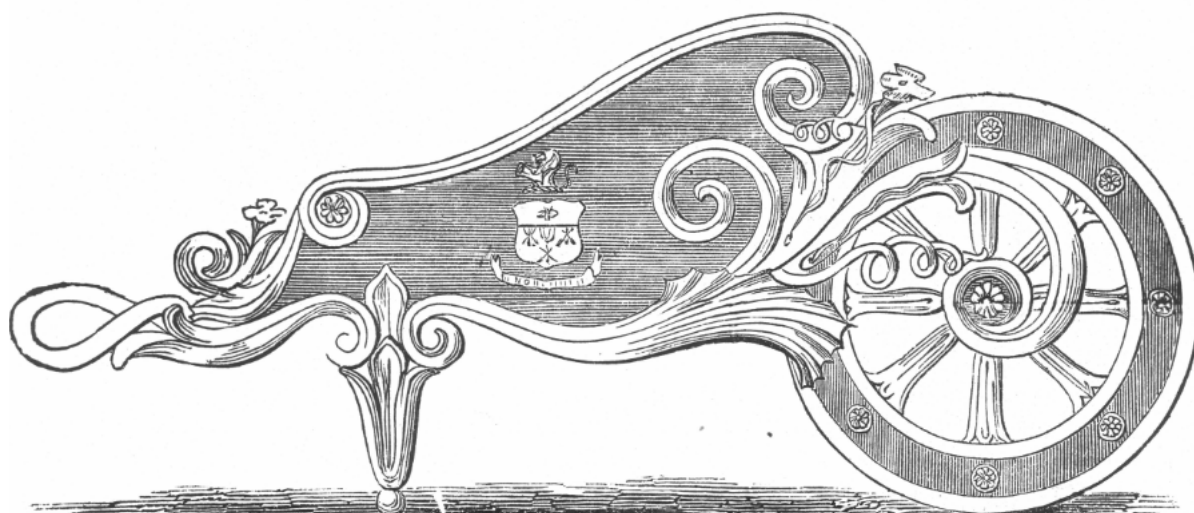


The turning of the first sod of earth.

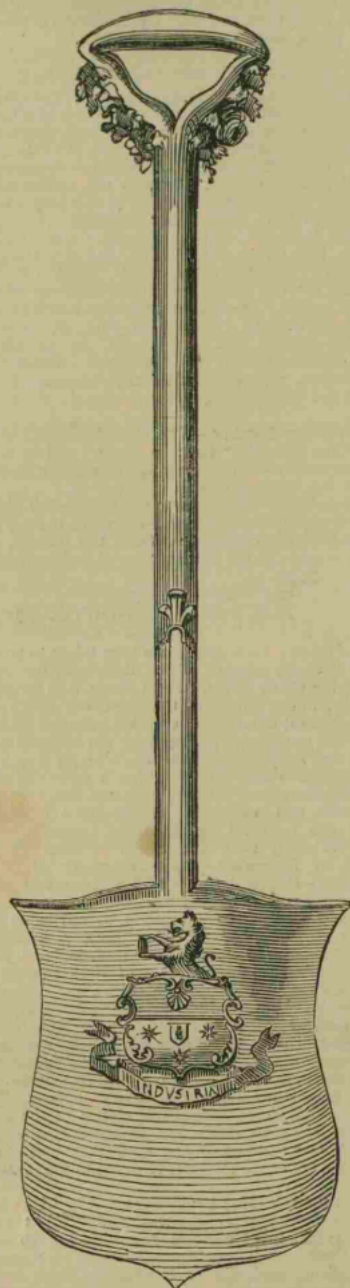
Sir Robert was invited by the Directors to initiate the construction of the new line for which a ceremony was held at Tamworth on 13th November 1845 at which Edmund, on behalf of the TVR Co., addressed brother Robert then invited him to turn the first sod. Sir Robert had a very ornate wheelbarrow and silver spade made specially for the occasion, prompting Lord Bentinck, during a commons debate on Railway Bills to acclaim Sir Robert as; "The hero of the silver trowel and mahogany wheelbarrow".

The Wheelbarrow

The Illustrated London Times (27th November 1845 page) says the wheelbarrow is of mahogany construction designed by Mr Holmes of Liverpool also that it is "richly carved". Apart from the decorative carving the wheelbarrow has the crest of Sir Robert Bart. on each side. Along with is motto "Industria" This fits with the general theme of Baronetcy being used to elevate middle class "industry barons" to a title, of sorts. The Baronetcy falling between a knight and a peer.



On Thursday, the ceremony of turning the first sod of the Trent Valley Railway was performed by the Right Hon. Sir Robert Peel, at Tamworth. A Spade was manufactured for the occasion, at a very short notice, by Messrs. Elkington and Co., of Birmingham. The metallic part is in electro-silver, and shaped somewhat in the form of an heraldic shield. On the front are engraved the arms, crest, and motto, of the Right Honourable Baronet, and underneath is the following inscription:—



ORNAMENTAL SPADE, USED BY SIR ROBERT PEEL IN COMMENCING THE TRENT VALLEY RAILWAY.

The works of the Trent Valley Railway, from Stafford to Rugby, were commenced on the 13th day of November, 1845; on which occasion, the first sod was turned by the Right Honourable Sir Robert Peel, Bart., upon lands in the Parish of Tamworth, and County of Stafford.

On the reverse of the Spade is engraved the Official Seal of the Trent Valley Railway Company; together with the names of the Chairman, Edmund Peel, Esq.; the Directors, Engineers, Solicitor, Secretary, &c.

The shaft, or tree, is formed from a piece of old English oak—the upper part dividing into two branches forming the handle—appropriately carved with oak-leaves, acorns, &c., and highly polished.

Our artist was present at the ceremony, of which we shall, next week, present to our readers an Illustration.

The Spade.

The Illustrated London news dated 15th November 1845 contained this article, transcribed here in full:

'On Thursday, the ceremony of turning the first sod of the Trent Valley Railway was performed by the Right Hon. Sir Robert Peel, at Tamworth.

A spade was manufactured for the occasion, at very short notice by Messrs. Elkington & Co. of Birmingham [now part of American-owned Delta Metals: Author.] The metallic part is in electro-silver, and shaped somewhat in the form of an heraldic shield. On the front are engraved the arms, crest and motto of the Right Honourable Baronet, and underneath is the following inscription:- *'The works of the Trent Valley Railway, from Stafford to Rugby, were commenced on the 13th day of November 1845; on which occasion, the first sod was turned by the Right Honourable Sir Robert Peel, Bart., upon lands in the Parish of Tamworth, and County of Stafford.'*

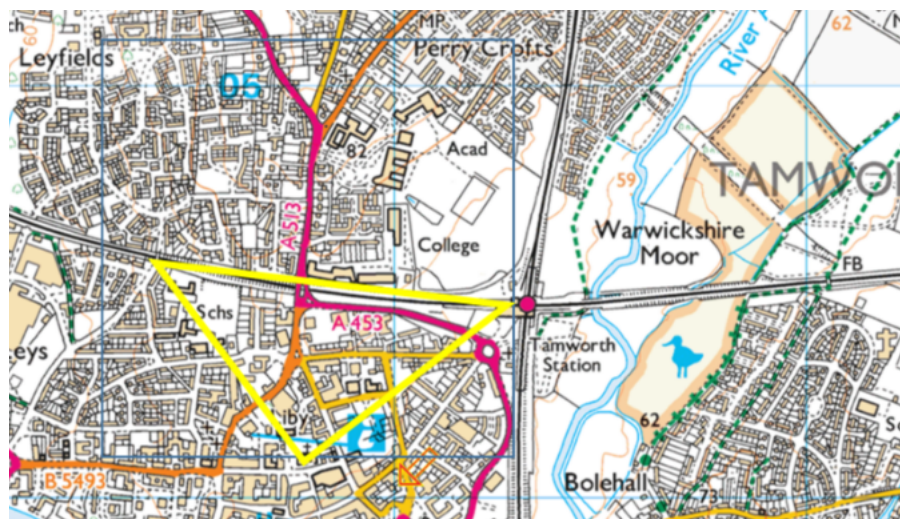
On the reverse of the Spade is engraved the official seal of the Trent Valley Railway Co.; together with the names of the Chairman, Edmund Peel Esq.; the Directors, Engineers, Solicitor, Secretary etc.

The shaft, or tree, of the spade is formed from a piece of old English Oak- the upper part dividing into two branches forming a handle – appropriately carved with oak-leaves, acorns etc., and highly polished.

[It is interesting that the Trent Valley Railway seal is "on the other side" as neither the author nor the editor have been able to locate an image of the Trent Valley Railway seal anywhere! If any one has a drawing of it please let the Editor know! On that note observant readers would have noticed quite a few discrepancies between the Peel crest on the spade and wheelbarrow. Is that due to the artist or the constructors? Editor]

The location.

Exactly where Sir Robert turned the first sod is not entirely known, but there is anecdotal evidence from which a speculation can be made. Norman Webster, in his book 'Britain's first trunk line' about the Grand Junction Railway, described the site being in a field '½ mile from Tamworth'.



On this Ordnance Survey map, the points where the overlaid yellow triangle apexes meet the railway are a maximum of a half-mile from St. Editha's Church which indicates somewhere between Tennyson Avenue and the Midland Railway Bridge (there would not have been a Midland Railway bridge at the time).

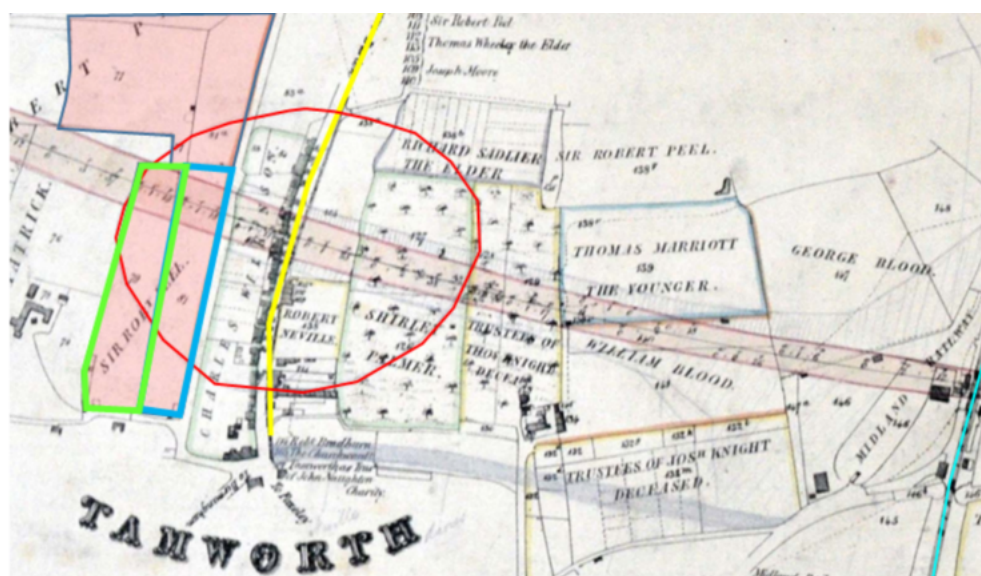
However, the Illustrated London News article reporting the ceremony stated; '*...upon lands in the Parish of Tamworth, and county of Stafford*' (our emphasis). If this is accurate, and as the county boundary of Staffordshire and Warwickshire is along the alignment of Gungate, this would place the spot in a field to the west of Gungate - in Staffordshire - and possibly near to the Gungate road to afford easy access to the ceremony.

The land at the time would have been level, later excavated to make the railway cutting across which would be a bridge for Gungate and to enable the line to pass under the Midland Railway. Webster stated the field was called 'Camel Close', but he did not elucidate on his source of the name.

In this tracing of an extract from the 1845 Trent Valley Railway Co. Parliamentary plan held in the National Archives, we have highlighted the Staffordshire/Warwickshire county boundary (Gungate) purple and the Midland Railway turquoise. We have shaded pink the land belonging to Sir Robert Peel. Was the sod turned on Peel's land? If so, it would either have been in the field referenced 79 (outlined yellow) or 81 (outlined blue). If not Peel's land, then it could have been in field 85 owned by Charles

Wilkinson adjacent to Gungate, in yellow.

If not the foregoing, the alternative would have been in Warwickshire, between Gungate and the Midland Railway (where the low-level station is today).



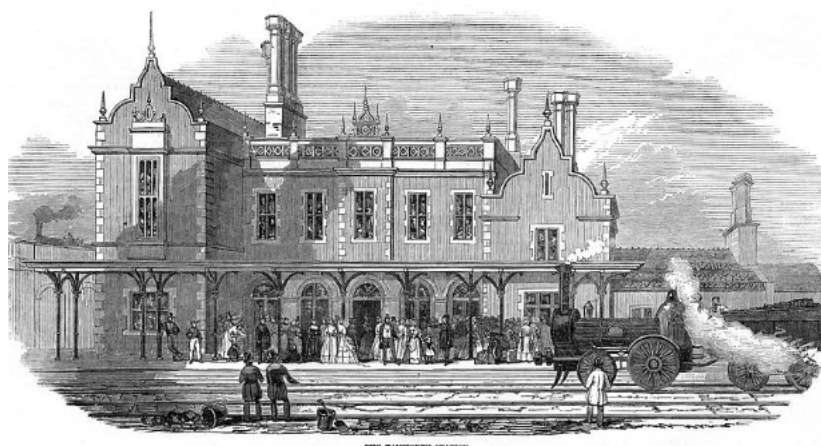
Construction.

The Consulting engineers were Robert Stephenson, George Parker Bidder, and Thomas Longridge Gooch who was also appointed the TVR Co's. Chief Engineer. The fifty-mile line was built in a little over 18 months by the London Railway Contractors partnership of Thomas Brassey, William McKenzie and John Stephenson. Most of the structures survive, but alas all the original station buildings except Atherstone (see below right), Bulkington and Colwich, have been demolished. During the course of construction the TVR Co. was bought by the L&BR Co. which itself became vested in the new London & North Western Railway Co. (LNWR) on July 16th 1846.

The Grand Opening ceremony.

This lavish event was held at Tamworth on June 26th 1847 with Sir Robert Peel as guest of honour. The principal source of evidence unearthed so far, is the extensive reporting in the Staffordshire Advertiser newspaper, copies of which were held in the William Salt Library, now by the Staffordshire Record Office and we've used extracts from the reports (in *italics*), to tell the story. The event could have been located on the land where the station car park is today.

The event – 'a sumptuous déjeuner' – reportedly for 600 guests, was catered for by the proprietors of the "London Tavern". Of the two trains which carried guests from London, and Liverpool and Manchester, the newspaper reported on the latter's departure from Stafford; 'It consisted of 16 carriages, each surmounted with pennons (long triangular



The magnificent Trent Valley Railway's Tamworth Station building, in the Dutch (or Jacobean) architectural style of John Livock. Below, the carriage approach side and above, an engraving of the platform side. It was demolished in the 1960s, a victim of the modernisation of the West Coast Main Line.



A rare photo of Atherstone station though to be before 1900



flags). The train was hauled by a new and powerful six-wheel engine. At 12-20 the train was put in motion and turning out of the Grand Junction into the Trent Valley line was greeted with the acclamation's of the spectators...

After leaving Lichfield the short remaining distance to Tamworth was accomplished in 20 minutes and the train arrived at its destination shortly before the appointed hour 1-30. The Rugby [London] train was not long in making its appearance and the arrival of so many visitors created a scene of great interest.' Both trains arrived to the accompaniment of; 'the fine band of the 1st Dragoon guards'.

'The interior of the pavilion was very chastely and appropriately decorated. Hung with white and pink drapery, and ornamented with emblazonment's of arms, banners, evergreens, and flowers – having six rows of tables running its entire length, each laid with the utmost taste, glittering with plate and glowing with flowers of every hue, the room itself was an object of great interest.' The food was reported as; 'a collation', a light, cold buffet with; 'wines of great variety, including champagne, hock, claret, Moselle, port, sherry, &c., and were as fine in quality as they were abundant'.

The cross [top] table guests were; The Right Hon. Sir Robert Peel, Viscount Sandon, MP, the Hon. Colonel Anson, MP, the Right Hon. W.Y. Peel, Viscount Ingestre, MP, Lord Henry Fitzroy, Capt. A'Court, MP, the Hon. Capt. Carnegie, MP, Edmund Peel Esq., George Stephenson Esq., George Hudson Esq., MP, H. Houldsworth Esq., Hardman Earle Esq., H. Booth Esq., Alderman Copeland MP, E. Buller Esq., MP, the Mayor of Manchester, the Venerable Archdeacon Hodson, Sir Charles Thomas Douglas Young, Esq., W.S. Dugdale Esq., MP, and George Carr Glyn, Esq.

Sir Robert Peel, in his address reported in the newspaper in full, compared the new railway to the Watling St. Roman Road; 'My Hon. Friend

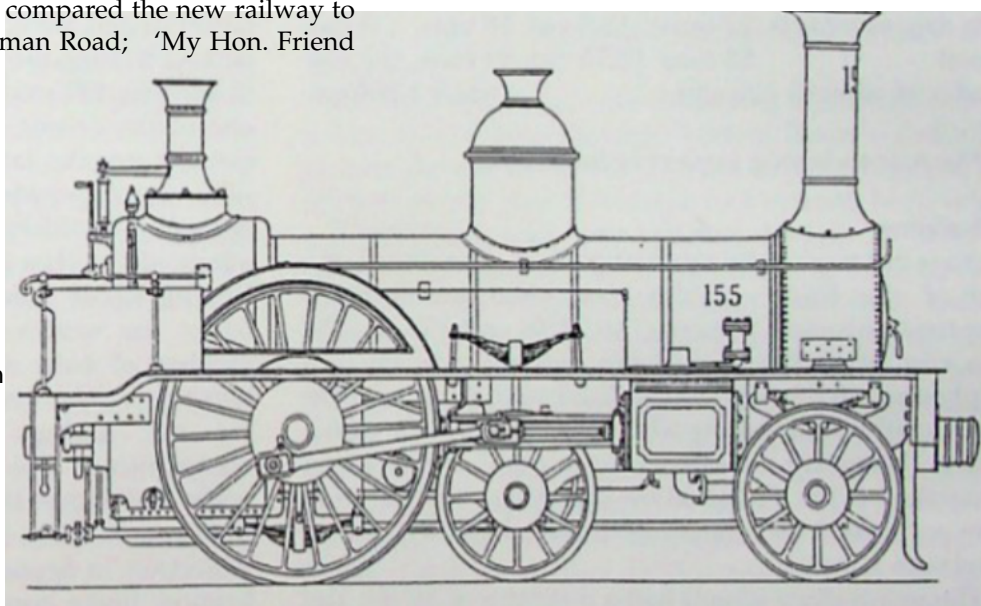
reminded me of a remark I made to him on a former occasion, to the effect that this was the line the Romans had adopted. I thank him for reminding me of that circumstance, as it is perfectly true that about 2000 years ago, the Romans did open a direct North Western line (*laughter and cheers*) the termini being London and Chester.

The engineer was a celebrated man, being both engineer and contractor, combining in himself the Stephenson and Brassey of his day (*laughter and cheers*). He was no less a man than Julius Agricola... I felt certain that if 2000 years ago, the direct line was preferred, that this line would also be preferred in modern times (*Cheers*).'

Thereafter, the newspaper reported a series of toasts being drunk, some as 'bumpers' (glasses filled to the brim and usually drunk in one draught, or 'go'), and from the reporting it could be assumed some guests returned to their trains and carriages somewhat the worse for wear!

NOTE A search of available records, has revealed there was no "London Tavern" in the Tamworth area, nor any other hostelry large enough to cater for 600 guests, a very sizeable number which begs the question of the accuracy of the Advertiser report. The most notable "London Tavern" was a famous hostelry of that name, in Bishopsgate, London which served food and drink and had the facility to cater for large numbers, being patronised by politicians, business people across London Society. If this was the London Tavern reported, then the food and drink would have been transported by train to Tamworth.

A 'Long Boiler' 4-2-0 locomotive, built for the LNWR by Stephenson & Co. in 1847. Probably the type which hauled the guest trains to Tamworth, and later, Queen Victoria's train.



Concerns about some bridges.

However, the ceremony did not mark the opening of the railway to traffic. On May 24th, one month before the planned opening of the TVR, the LNWR's bridge over the River Dee at Chester, designed and built by Robert Stephenson, collapsed resulting in the deaths of 5 passengers, and setting the alarm bells ringing within the LNWR! Thomas Gooch, the TVR Chief Engineer, had designed a compound trussed-girder bridge for long spans, based on the same principles as Stephenson's bridge, but a much stronger version. Stephenson advised delaying the opening to subject the bridges to heavy load tests which they all passed, but on Gooch's advice they were strengthened anyway, to allay public fears. In the Tamworth/Atherstone area, the bridges were; over the River Tame at Comberford and over the Coventry Canal at Atherstone. The others were at Colwich, Armitage and Cathiron (north of Rugby). The Comberford bridge was strengthened with additional piers, the others had additional deck girders fitted.

The Railway is opened.

On September 15th 1847 the railway finally opened to local passenger services, and through goods trains only as the goods-handling facilities at the stations were not ready. However, on September 21st, the first through passenger train was the Royal Train conveying Queen Victoria, Prince Albert and the children. They had been returning from a holiday in Scotland and their boat was diverted to Fleetwood because of a storm whereupon the LNWR hastily laid on the train to take them forward to London.

References

Minutes of the Trent Valley Railway Company & Trent Committee of the L&BR & LNWR

Trent Valley Railway parliamentary plan (1845)

Press reports on the opening ceremony and Queen Victoria's journey (Record Office).

Commons Debate on the Railways Bill

Peel's spade & wheelbarrow

Notice - Opening of the line to all traffic

Britain's First Trunk Railway

Drawing of Long Boiler Loco.

LNWR Queen Adelaide state coach

The Staffordshire Advertiser and the Times newspapers reported that the train paused at Tamworth where a crowd of 500 had assembled. The line was opened to all traffic on 1st December 1847 and The Times newspaper for November 23rd 1847 contained the following notice: *'The public is requested to take notice that, on and after 1st December, the MAILS and other trains, between London and Liverpool, Manchester and the north, will be TRANSFERRED to the TRENT VALLEY RAILWAY, and that from that date the clocks at every station on the London and North-Western Railway will be set to Greenwich time... By order of the Board'* December 1st, 1847 was the introduction of standard time throughout the UK railway system. The public caught on (slowly).

In 2022, the opening of the Trent Valley Railway was marked by talks by the Trent Valley Railway History Project and the display of two splendid information panels at Stafford Station, all sponsored by the Stoke on Trent Community Rail Partnership and Avanti West Coast.



(National Archives) RAIL 699/1 & RAIL 699/2

(National Archives) Rail 699/4

Staffordshire Advertiser archive, William Salt Library (now Staffordshire County

Hansard - 23rd April 1846 Vol 85 cc892-958

Illustrated London News (November 15th 1845)

The Times newspaper (November 23rd 1847)

Norman W. Webster – SBN 239 00105 2

LNWR Society

National Railway Museum (Photo. Robin Mathams).

Corporate History and Great Seal of the Trent Valley Railway April 1844 to April 1846

The Trent Valley Railway Company was established on April 11th 1844 and the Parliamentary Bill to build its railway was enacted on July 21st 1845. July 26th 1845 was the first meeting of the board of the newly-incorporated company at which Edmund Peel (Sir Robert Peel's brother) was elected Chairman. Hitherto, the Company had been run by a provisional Board chaired by William Copeland who was succeeded by Edmund Peel on February 22nd 1845. The Company was registered No227 under the Joint Stock Companies' Registration Act on November 15th 1844.

The Company was bought by the London & Birmingham Railway Company (L&B) on April 15th 1846 and the minutes of the final Board meeting held the previous day recorded the last use of the Seal: '...the Solicitor and Company Secretary and Law Clerk be empowered to affix the Company's Seal to the conveyance of the Trent Valley Railway to the London & Birmingham Railway Company'. The Seal was handed over to the L&B at the first meeting of its newly-formed Trent Committee on May 6th and the minutes recorded the event; 'The Seal of the late Trent Valley Company was handed in by Mr [Edward] Tootal' and this is the last known record referring to the Seal.

Edward Tootal was the deputy chairman of the TVR Co. and became chairman of the L&B Trent Committee. The L&B, the Grand Junction Railway Co. and the Manchester & Birmingham Railway Co. were merged on 16th July 1846 to form the London & North Western Railway Co., which inherited the Seal. The Seal is now in the care of the National Railway Museum, York.



The metal seal is approx. two inches in diameter. The words 'The seal of the Trent Valley Railway Company incorporated 1845' are in an Old-English typeface around the circumference with the only capital letter in the initial 'The'. Around the edge is a 'rope' decoration. The main part of the seal is a quatrefoil with small overlaps and within each foil is a shield or escutcheon, the four shields meeting at the centre, and between the shields are scrolls. The quatrefoil has 36 small quatrefoil decorations around its edge. The Seal was made in 1845 and brought into use after July 21st that year, the date of the Company's incorporation. This inverted photograph is of the seal impression 'the right way round', for clarity. At the top, the Coat of Arms of the City of London, and at the bottom, the Coat of Arms of Ireland. On the left, a Liver Bird, from the Coat of Arms of the City of Liverpool and on the right, the Coat of Arms of the City of Manchester.

These signify the Company's 'business case' of creating 'the direct route from the Metropolis to the north' and to Holyhead, the sea terminal for Dublin (Ireland being part of the UK at the time), the 'direct route' being from Rugby to Stafford to avoid the Birmingham and Coventry conurbations.

There were only six recorded instances of Trent Valley Railway Company Board ordering its Seal to be affixed;

On 20th January 1846 – To the subscription contract for the Alrewas Branch (which was never built).

On 13th February 1846 – To the agreement for the purchase of one-third TVR Co. shares by the London & Birmingham Co.

On 17th February 1846 – To a Bond for Thomas Norman of Newbold-on-Avon for land purchase.

On 27th February 1846 – To an undertaking to pay the trustees of the Countess of Lichfield for land purchased.

On 14th April 1846 – To an agreement (unspecified) with Sir Robert Peel, The Countess of Lichfield and The Oxford Canal Co.

On 14th April 1846 – To the conveyance of the Trent Valley Railway Co. to the London & Birmingham Railway Co.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

I am researching evidence of football prior to 1860. There is far more of it than hitherto thought. The British Newspaper Archive has brought much to light from c1740 and has already upset the orthodox account of football's origins. Having discovered many pre-modern references to football in Staffordshire, I am interested to know of any further references in the area.

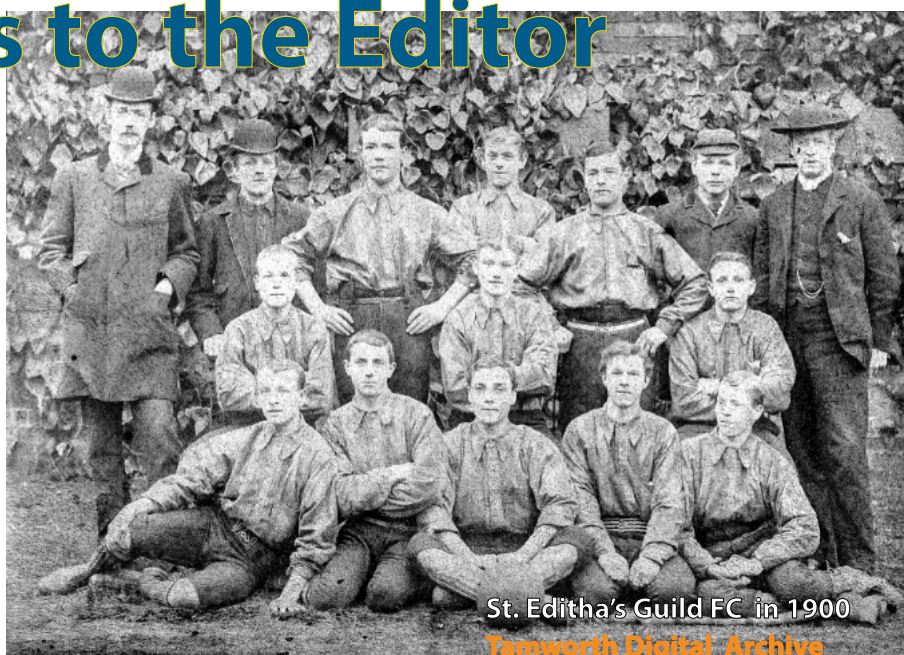
Research to date has indicated that some of the most fruitful primary sources are found in plans and maps (including place and road names), land ownership, tenancy and transfer of ownership documents, ecclesiastical and local petty session hearings, diaries and accounts of local events.

My aim is to uncover what evidence there may be to support the possibility that organised football, with rules, was commonplace in the British Isles several centuries before its accepted birth in the mid-nineteenth century.

Your help would be much appreciated. Each additional fragment of evidence adds weight to the possibility.

Please feel free to contact me via the Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk
Yours, Stephen Barker

Editor: *There's a challenge! Does anyone have any information on the old football clubs in Tamworth? There were many. In the 1900's St Editha's Guild, Tamworth Early Closers, Tamworth Castle, Tamworth Wednesday, Watley Brick and Tile FC, The Leys Miners Welfare FC, Tamworth Athletic FC, Bolehall Swifts and Fazeley Swifts, and these are only the ones identified in photos. We have more unidentified teams and I suspect more teams we don't know about. So let us know about them!*



St. Editha's Guild FC in 1900

Tamworth Digital Archive

Dear Editor

My name is Dr. Byran Korth and I am a professor at a Brigham Young University located in Provo, Utah USA. [*This is the Mormon University Ed*] I am researching some individuals that lived in the Tamworth area in the 1700s and 1800s. I will be travelling to England. I am hoping I might be able to meet with someone to assist me with my research. [*Some of the THM team did meet with Bryan over the summer, Ed*]

Specifically I am researching an individual by the name of **Thomas Brown Ward** who was born in Tamworth 1 January 1814. He died 11 Jan 1852 in Burton upon Trent and was buried there at the St. Modwen's Church. He is the son of **Seth and Mary Ward** who were married in Tamworth in 1806. I have reviewed the census for 1841 and 1851 and have found a number of items related to him on ancestry.com and Find My Past.

I'm interested in learning about the history of the area, accessing any materials that are not available online, hopefully finding the possible location of where the family resided in the Tamworth area, as well as any other information about the family and the area during this time period. Thomas Brown Ward ended up going to Burton upon Trent where he was an apprentice in cabinetry. I am reaching out the associations in that area as well. If you have recommendations of others I should reach out to, let me know. You are welcome to respond to this email
Regards, Byran

Editor: *Some of the team met with Bryan and gave some assistance but if anyone has any information please email the Editor and we will pass it on to Bryan.*

NOTE the Mormons believe that if they can trace back family members, even though they are long dead, and were not Mormons they can retrospectively induct or "seal" them in the the church so they go to heaven. Bryan has promised us an article on his research in to the families associated with Tamworth in a future issue.

Dear Editor

Just had an e-mail from the library and they now have on line list of books in Local History Reserve. The link is below. May be useful for future research. [Click Here for the link](#)

They also have the British Newspaper Archive available in the library now. This can be accessed at home but you need to check how you actually see the image of the report as I tried in the other day and could not access it.

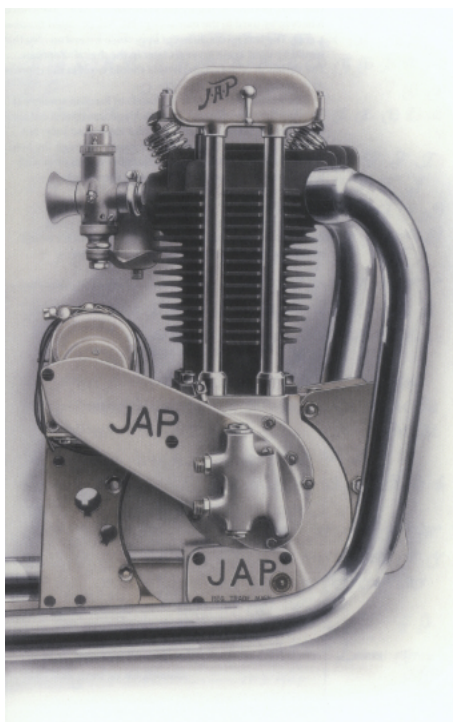
Regards, Jill

Editor: *Many thanks for that. This is a PDF of some 12 pages of local Tamworth history books so it will save a trip if you can see what they have from home.*

Dear Editor,

I read with great interest the article of the first Robin Reliant and was very surprised to see in a book on typography, Alphabet Stories by great font designer, Herman Zapf, the inventor of Zap characters one of his hand retouching, using a paint brush and a fine airbrush, of a JAP engine as used in the reliant cars.

Editor: *Many thanks and it should be noted this was hand done in 1937 with wet ink. Long before computers, let along graphics programs, had been invented.*



Dear Editor,

In skimming through the [Harding's of Packington site](#), I see there is a lot that could be of interest to your readers, especially re Tamworth, Peels and local banks.

When my father who was a descendent of several family solicitors died some years ago, I came across masses of papers about the Harding family and was able to create a website which I called Harding of Packington intended to contain all that seemed to be of interest. It has always been in the public domain for better or worse! I have not been able to add much to it for many years and don't know whether any of my descendants will be interested enough to take it on!

In skimming through it recently I have seen that there is much in it about Tamworth and so, having been contacted by you and earlier, by Peter Edden I thought I would suggest putting a [link to the Harding of Packington](#) site in your magazine.

"Annette's jottings" are interesting as she knew the Peel family who were MPs for Tamworth, founder of the police, PMs and so on. Also the Peel connection and Timeline page including about the Harding bank and bad behaviour of a Peel! Also the Bage connection page.

Amusing though not strictly relevant is the obituary etc of Charles Alva Harding on the Harding Family Tree detailed page. Known widely with considerable justification as *Lady Harding*.

Yours, Nick

Editor *Thanks very much for the link to the Harding's of Packington Web Site I am sure it will be a great resource for local historians. We are already talking to Nick about the future of his web site.*

Dear Editor

My name is Kate Smith I was born in Tamworth in 1949 and I have lived here all my life. I have always been interested in the history of the town so when in 2001 I saw an article in the Tamworth Herald about the Tamworth Heritage Trust's campaign to buy the Arts Centre and turn it into a Heritage Centre I thought what a brilliant idea.



Ian Gibbons a Trust member was doing a 116 mile sponsored walk from Guy's Hospital in London to Thomas Guy's Town Hall in Tamworth to raise funds and asked local people to join him in Mancetter and walk the last leg to Tamworth and get sponsored.

I decided I would do it and a colleague called Heather said she would too. I approached our boss Richard Calder asked him if the company would sponsor us he said yes if we wore our Calders tee shirts on the walk he would sponsor us for £25 each. Altogether between us we raised about £100.

On the day 14 women turned up but no men. Ian nicknamed us "Ian's Babes". The walk was great fun (except for the blisters) and it was really good to see that these women thought it was a worthwhile cause to turn out for.

Regards, Kate

Editor: Sadly since that day over 23 years ago the Heritage Trust has made no progress towards any Heritage Centre, or anything else, in the town. Perhaps it is time for a fresh approach?

Dear Editor

We, Brewin Books, have just published *The Yarnfield Yanks*: The story of the main American Army Air Force Replacement Depot at Yarnfield, Stone, Staffordshire during World War II By Fran & Martin Collins

The book includes many first-hand experiences

supplied by relatives of men who were there. It describes the day-to-day workings of the depot and the effect the American servicemen and women temporarily stationed there had on the local people. The book also describes the wider system of air force replacement depots that came under the jurisdiction of the Yarnfield Depot and recounts the activities of other bases in Lancashire, the Midlands and US rest-homes in the south of the UK.

Specification:

ISBN: 978-1-85858-775-2

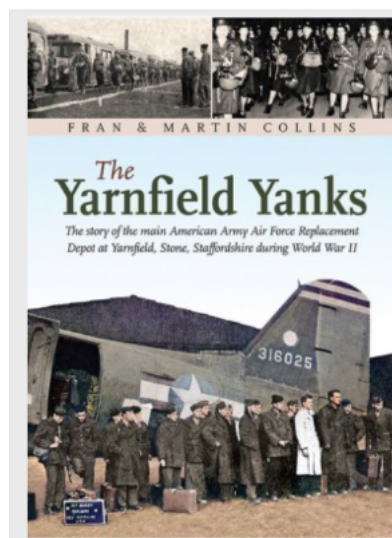
Price: £13.95

Size: 240mm x 170mm Pages: 190 – PB

Illustrations: 283 B&W

https://www.brewinbooks.com/the_yarnfield_yanks

Editor: We don't usually carry adverts but we know many of our readers, and authors are interested in military history so it might make a Christmas present, yes, its getting to that time of year!



Next Edition

Winter 2025

Publication Date: 1st January

Copy Date: 15th 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) 15th 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.

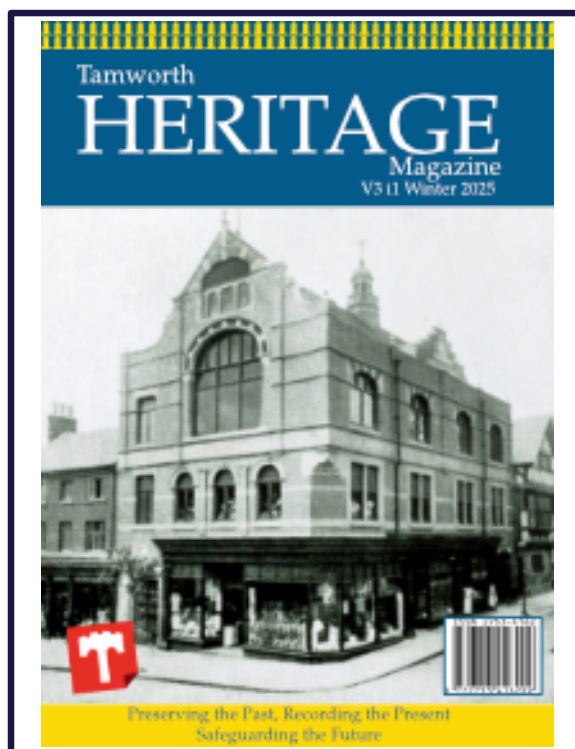
Please send in article/letters in text, RTF, MS doc or docx, we can even accept odt format.

Any images to be sent separately NOT embedded in the text but please intricate 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 Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk

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



In the Next issue

The Next Issue is Volume 2 Issue 2 and we hope to be a little more organised with what is in these 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



Preserving the Past, Recording the Present
Safeguarding the Future