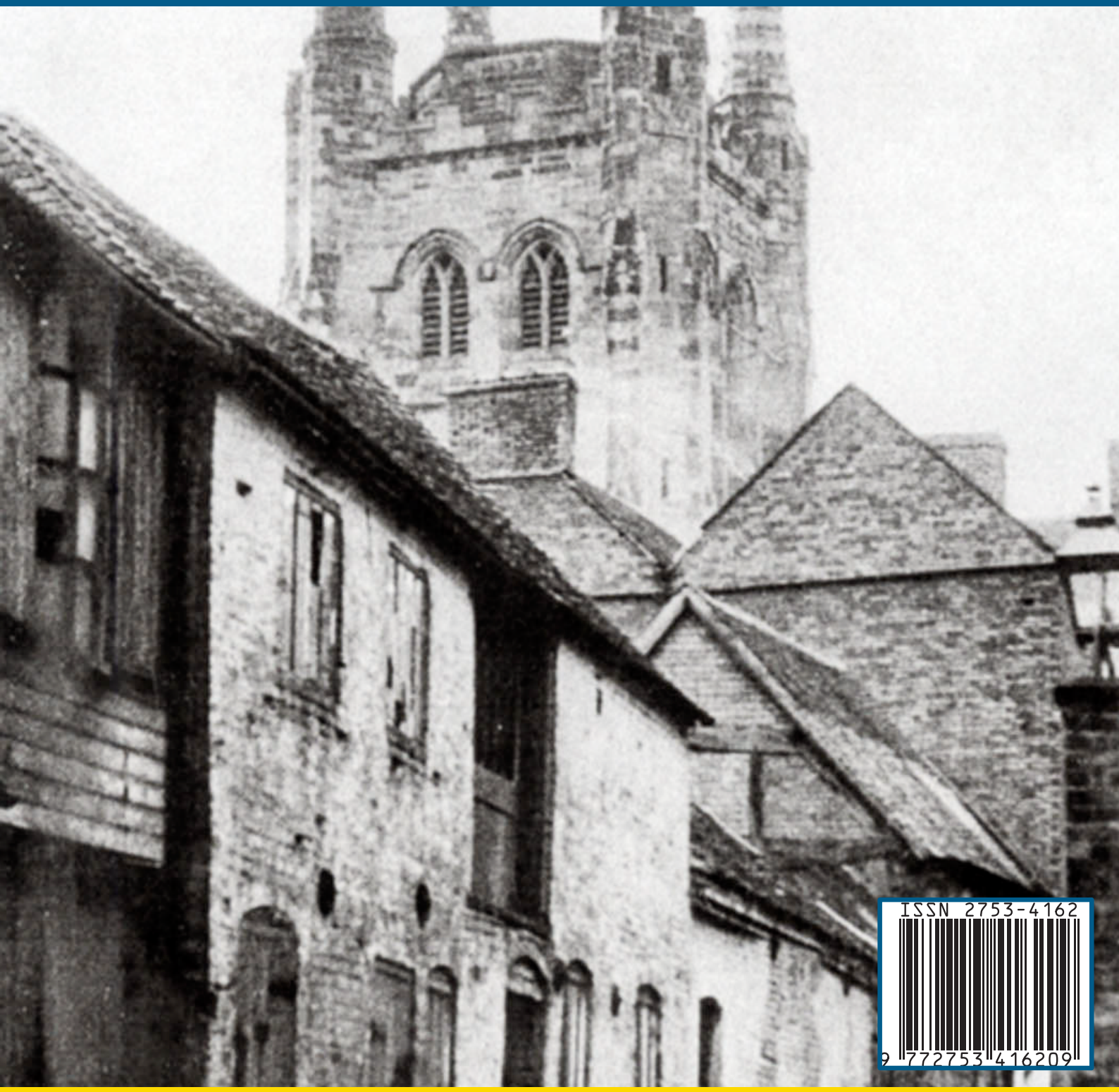
Tamworth

HERITAGE

Magazine

V4 i4 Autumn 2026



ISSN 2753-4162

Preserving the Past, Recording the Present
Safeguarding the Future

Tamworth Heritage Magazine

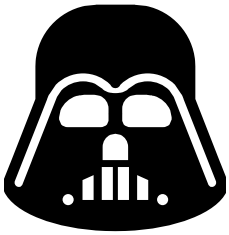
The magazine is produced four times a year, Winter, Spring, Summer, Autumn, by the Holloway Society for the public with an interest in Tamworth Heritage and history.



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

A published author for 45 years on history, culture, travel and related topics. He also runs Tamworth Digital Archive.

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



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Back Image: St Edithas Church, from Collage Lane 1962 © Tamworth Digital archive

Tamworth Heritage Magazine Editorial Board

The Editorial board assists production of in house articles and checking of submissions.
This board currently comprises:

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

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.

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

Fred Bromwich, Vice Chairman of the Birmingham Press Club, 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.

Margaret Jones BA(Hons) History A historian passionate about social history, especially in Tamworth. After years of administration in Parishes she is now putting her degree to good use.



Holloway © Tamworth Digital archive

Welcome from the Editor

Lift off!

We now have lift off! Thanks to some donations from County Cllr Wayne Luca (Reform UK), and from TBC Cllr Chris Bain (Independent), TBC Cllrs Ben Clarke and David Foster (both Labour and Cooperative) via the Staffordshire Community Foundation

The Holloway Society now has a permanent and secure on-line server (based in Switzerland/EU) so we can start building our Digital Archive, more on this later. Additionally the Holloway Society is now a bona-fide registered Publisher, more on this later. We also have updated and upgraded our web hosting, So thanks once again to County Cllr Wayne Luca, and Tamworth Cllrs Chris Bain, Ben Clarke and David Foster for supporting the Holloway Society.

So what are we doing?

The Digital Archive: partially funded by Cllr Wayne Luca using the Staffordshire County Fund. We now have permanent multiple terabytes of secure storage, based in the EU, acting like a secure office server.

Therefore we are now collecting our [digital] archives together in a permanent home the project teams can access 24/7. The current archive is about 30,000 images along with scans of multiple maps and documents. We are adding to the archives with new photos all the time. Tamworth Council keep changing Tamworth!

This is just the start and we are working on a catalogue database (Postgre for the geeks who know) to Spectrum and MDS standards. This is so we can work with other Accredited Museums. Anyone who wants to be involved in creating this database (or a Z39.50 interface) please email Curator@TamworthArchive.org.uk

Eventually the plan is to have the catalogue publicly accessible on line through several web and other interfaces.

The Holloway Society is now an **Officially Registered Publisher** with our own imprint thanks to Cllrs Ben Clarke and David Foster (using the Community Foundation Fund) we have two books we are publishing this quarter: Wigginton Village History and Memories of Fazeley (we have had to wait for the ISBNs), with several more books in the pipeline for publication in the first months of 2027.

We have plans to be in double figures with publications by the end of 2027. As well as our free PDF's we are talking with printers and bookbinders about some special limited edition hardback versions.

If anyone is, or is thinking of, or is actually doing, a book on any aspect of Tamworth's history or heritage or people please come and talk to us about publishing. Contact Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk

We are now able to **upgrade the web sites and hosting** thanks to Cllr Chris Bain (using the Community Foundation Fund). We have 8 domains (not all of them live yet) but we now need to expand all our web sites with more information and content.

So if anyone is an HTML web builder/designer we need you! The web sites will be hosting the magazines, books, videos, audio and a lot more information soon. Eventually the on-line catalogue as mentioned above.

In the other news, after 26 years the Trustees of **Tamworth Heritage Trust** finally closed it over the summer, after two attempts at an AGM in 2025, both non-quorate, following an AGM in 2024 that voted to continue by just one vote.

As with many Tamworth groups Tamworth Heritage Trust aged out. After being in storage for several years' the remaining contents of the Heritage "shop" in Middle Entry went to St Editha's (mainly the furniture). What was left of the heritage collection items being split between Tamworth Castle Archive and Middleton Hall.

As the collection was never catalogued, unfortunately it was impossible to work out what originally came from where and where many things had gone. This was compounded by the several moves to various storage places in the last few years.

This is why the Holloway Society is doing a digital archive and handing physical artefacts to Accredited Museums that can look after them properly.

The silver lining is that the Holloway Society is continuing what the Heritage Trust was originally set up to do.

By the end of its first year the Holloway Society hopes to have done a lot that will be permanent. The Holloway Society's magazines, specials and books are lodged with the British Library as a permanent record. Also our own archive now has permanent secure storage.

So if you want to join a young (in both senses) Society that is actively doing things that will last go to www.HollowaySociety.org.uk and join us. Apart from those with an interest in history/heritage see page 42 for the other skills we need such as Video production, web site construction, database design and construction.

Scanning and Digitisation Service

The Holloway Society now has the facilities to scan to Accredited Museum standards with A4 and A3 flatbed scanners. In some cases we can scan up to A2 size documents. Additionally we have a dedicated Nikon 35mm slide and film scanner.

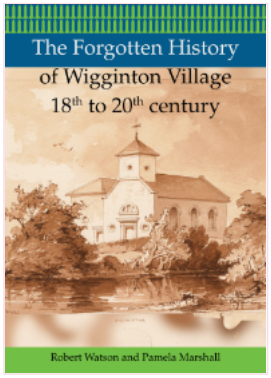
Therefore if any individual or society has any heritage or historical items they would like scanned please contact us at:.
Curator@TamworthArchive.org.uk

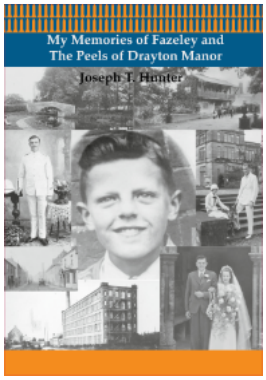


Publications from the Holloway Society

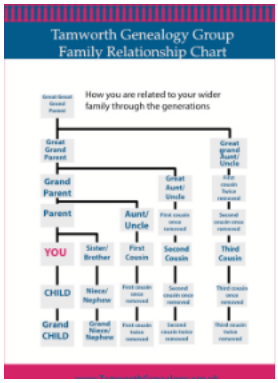
Being a research Society we publish work and so far, other than the 16 issues of the magazine here are some of the documents we have published. Most have an ISBN so they are in the British Library catalogues. We have many more in the pipeline as well as some limited edition hardback books and of course videos.

Apart from new work we are hoping to be able to republish some lost and out of print documents from the pas, along with updated versions and commentaries on the originals. We also typeset and publish for other organisations in Tamworth





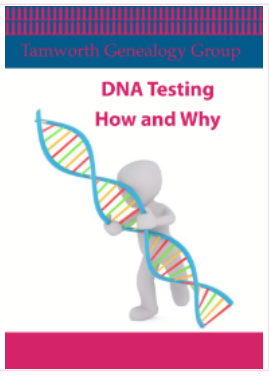




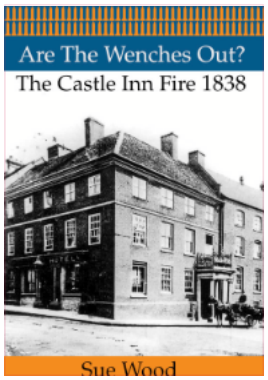


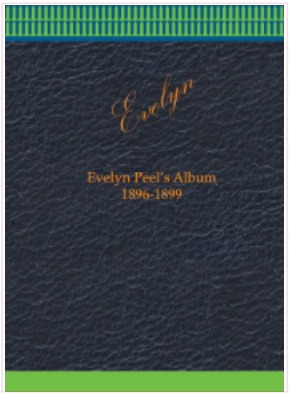




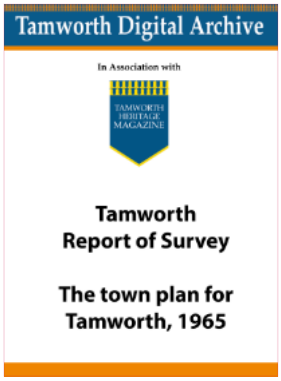




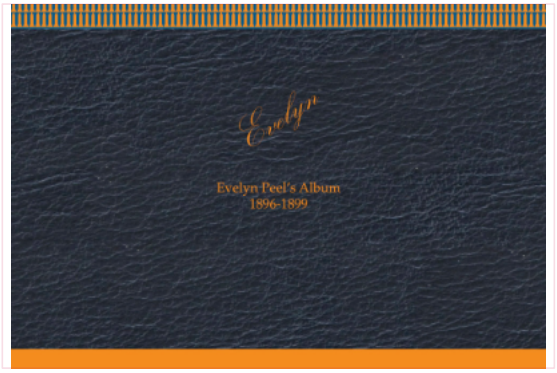












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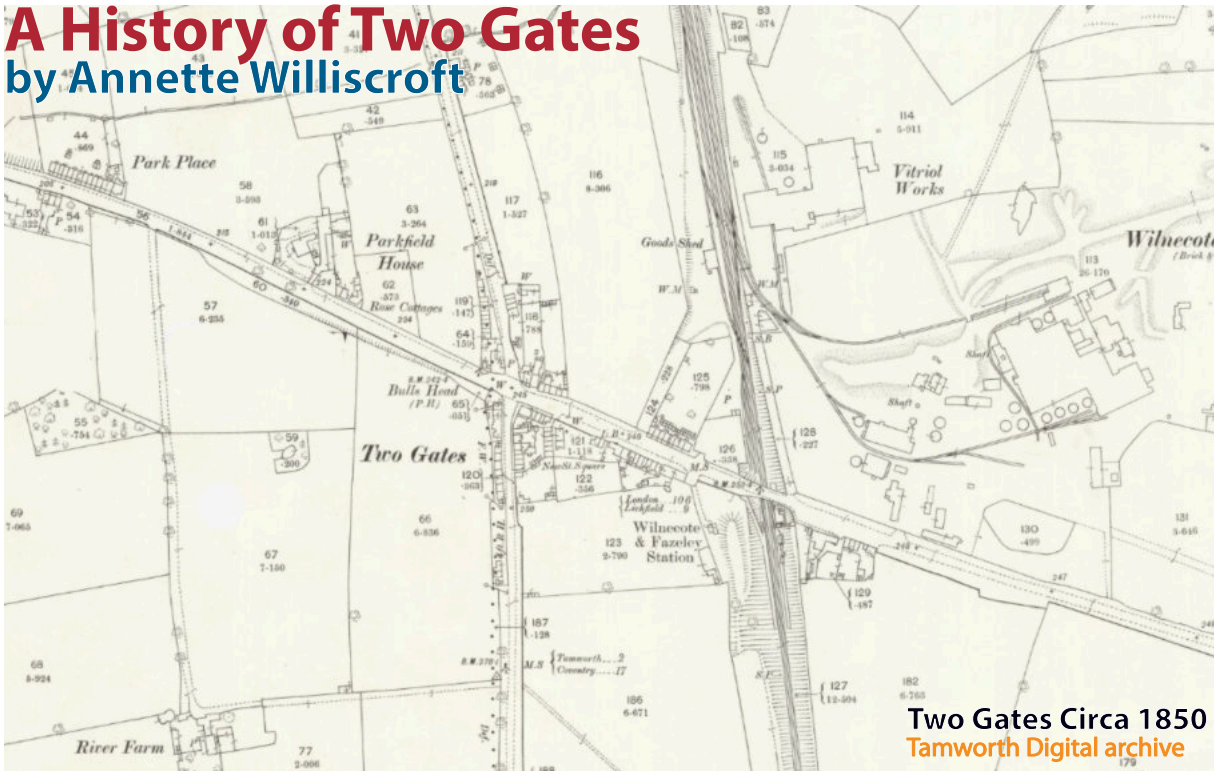
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A History of Two Gates

by Annette Williscroft



Two Gates Circa 1850
Tamworth Digital archive

The area of Two Gates, Tamworth, was previously known as Stretford. Stretford is described as a "Deserted Settlement (Medieval – 1066 AD to 1485 AD).

In his book, The Antiquities of Warwickshire Illustrated, Dugdale says "This is now a depopulated place, and had its name originally from the situation thereof upon that great Roman Way called Watling Street, where it thwarts the River towards Fazeley". He says that the first mention he had found of it was in 37 H 3, which means the 37th year of the reign of Henry III, this was the year 1253. There is a map which was once owned by King George III dated 1764 which shows Stretford.

In the time of Henry III it was owned by James de la Lande in free warren. A free warren, or often simply warren, was a type of franchise or privilege conveyed by a sovereign in medieval England to an English subject, promising to hold them harmless for killing game of certain species within a stipulated area, usually a wood or small forest.

The "sovereign" involved might be either the monarch or a marcher lord. Dugdale says *"it was at first a member of Tamworth and granted by one of the Marmions to the ancestor of James de la Lande"*. It stayed in the line of the de la Lande family during the 13th and 14th centuries but shortly after came to the Frevilles, Lords of Tamworth Castle who held it until at least 1580.

Stretford was part of Castle Liberty. The name Castle Liberty meant an area outside the boundaries of a borough where free men had certain rights such as grazing animals. Tamworth Castle Liberty was a narrow township, extending about two miles south from the Castle, between the townships of Fazeley and Wilnecote, and included Park Colliery, Two-Gates, Thistley-Field and a stone quarry.

Stretford/Two Gates Circa 1764
Tamworth Digital archive



In 1851 it had 78 inhabitants and covered about 300 acres of land. It stretched from South of the river Anker to Dosthill Hall and was bordered on the west by the river Tame and on the right by the Kettlebrook and Tamworth Road. At some time Stretford became de-populated,

What we now know as Two Gates started to develop around Watling Street. Early mentions of the area are around the bridge spanning the river Tame, although strictly speaking it is Fazeley and called Fazeley Bridge. Two Gates ends at the start of the bridge.

The patent rolls for March 1313 record the appointment of a commission to "*view the bridge across the River Tame between Stretford by Wilnecote and Fazeley to compel those who are liable to execute all necessary repairs*", which means it must have been standing for some time before that date. John Leland (Chaplain and Librarian to Henry VIII) passed over Fazeley Bridge in the mid 16th century on his antiquarian tour of England and Wales and speaks of a bridge of 16 arches of stone over the Tame.

A new bridge was built in 1829 and a new line of road at the Watling Street about 600 yards in length was to be built towards the Two gates crossroad. I have not so far been able to find out where the old line if the road was. The old stone from the bridge was sold off and a Mr Knight bought 15 perches (5.5 yards)of old Road.

The Watling Street was turned into a turnpike road in 1761. The first mention of Two Gates is recorded in the 1770 enclosure awards and is thought to be a reference to the toll gates on the turnpike road which were established at a similar period. Although, there are other theories that the gates were erected by the farmer who farmed the land and lived in the house that became the Bull's Head on Two gates crossroads. The gates would have been put up to keep his cattle in.

Most of the development of Two Gates started along the Watling Street. The oldest building on the Watling Street is considered to be the Bulls Head Inn. In 1841 the only other property was Aqueduct Cottage which would have been built about 1789 when the canal was built, a farm at Thistley Fields (South of the Watling Street towards Dosthill) and a few cottages on the Watling Street. Gradually a few more were built and a map of Two Gates dated 1884 shows 2 rows of cottages on the north side of the Watling Street, between the railway line and the Bull's Head crossroad. The one row near the station is still there, but the row which was near what is now the window showrooms has gone.

There was another row along the south side which included the Two Gates Inn.



The area on the corner of Dosthill Road, behind what is now the Dug Out Chip Shop, was New Street and New Street Square, some of which still exists. The row of cottages on that side of Dosthill Road are still there. On the other side of Dosthill Road there was a row of cottages which included the Jolly Collier, a small inn or beer-house, which later became the original Two Gates Club.





Reliant, Two Gates
Tamworth Digital archive

Further along the Watling Street towards Fazeley was the Flour Mill which became a boot makers and bus garage. Later still it became part of the Reliant.

Opposite that on the north side was a row of cottages called Park Place which also became part of the Reliant before they were demolished. Parkfield House, which is still standing, was there by then and coming back up Watling Street towards the Bulls Head there was Two Gates Tool & Die and Two Gates Wheels, these were in buildings to the side of Parkfield House, then there was a cottage and another row of houses which remain today.

There were also a few cottages starting to appear in Mount Pleasant. (or as known by older residents, Mount Gob, after the waste from the coal pits)

The oldest building in Two Gates is considered to be the Bulls Head Inn at Two Gates crossroads. This would have started life as a farm house over 200 years ago. Probably providing passing travellers with home brewed ale and perhaps some fresh bread baked in the large bread oven, parts of which were found when the pub was modernised in the 1980's. It was named as an Inn as early as the beginning of the 19th century. As well as being a popular hostelry the Coroner also used to hold inquests there.

Bulls Head
Tamworth Digital archive



An interesting article in the Tamworth Herald shows a seasonal service we don't come across today. During the season of 1875 a Cart Stallion called "Prince Imperial" belonging to a Grendon farmer was booked for the week to serve brood mares. The costs were £1 10s each mare and 2s 6d for the groom. The groom's fee was to be paid at the time and the remaining monies were to be paid by Midsummer next. The stallion's journey started at the Cock Inn at Sibson on Monday moving via several Inns each day. On the Saturday he was to be at the Bull's Head at 10am and the Chetwynd Arms at Polesworth at 2.00pm. He would then get a (deserved) rest on Sunday, back at home, until he started again on Monday. This was obviously a necessary event at the time which was carried out each season.

SEASON 1875.

"PRINCE IMPERIAL,"

The Property of Mr. Geo. Baker, Grendon, Atherstone.

This celebrated CART STALLION will serve Mares this season, at £1 10s each, and 2s. 6d. the Groom. The groom's fee to be paid at the time of serving and the remainder at Midsummer next.

Barren Mares half-price next Season.

PRINCE IMPERIAL is 5 years old, and was bred by Mr. James Hibbard Stantoon, Chippenham, out of a superior black mare by King of the Valley; who took the prizes both at Chippenham and Melksham, as the best Mare and Foal; he took the prize at Melksham, at 4 years old, as the best Entire Horse. "King of the Valley" was by "England's Beauty," and considered one of the best horses in Wiltshire, and did great service in the County in improving the breed of cart horses generally.

HE WILL TRAVEL AS FOLLOWS:—

Monday.—Through Sheepy to The Cock, at Sibson, to bait, then to Hinckley, at the Blue Bell for the night.

Tuesday.—White Hart, Atherstone, to bait, and home at night.

Wednesday.—Through Orton, Twycross, Norton, to the Wheatsheaf, Austrey, to bait; then through Newton, to the Four Counties' Inn, Noman's Heath, for the night.

Thursday.—Through Clifton to the White Hart, Harlestone, to bait; The Bell, Tamworth, for the night.

Friday.—Through Drayton to Bassett's Pole, to bait; the Swan Inn, Kingsbury for the night.

Saturday.—Bull's Head Inn, Wilnecote, at 10; Chetwynd Arms, Polesworth, at 2; and home at night, where he will remain till Monday.

No attendance on Sundays.

Opposite the Bull's Head just along the Dosthill Road in a row of cottages, which backed on to where Two Gates Working Men's Club stands today, was another inn, called the Jolly Collier. The owner had several battles with the licensing committee through the years but the pub finally closed in 1905. In1906 the original Two Gates Working Men's Club was set up in the premises. The club eventually moved into new premises built on land at the rear of the cottages and over the years the building has been enlarged and modernised.

A building that is still there today is the Dug Out Fish and Chip Shop. The Dug out Garage and Café was built in the 1920's by Charles Smith and named the dug out because it was "dug out" of the earth by the Price Brothers, local builders from Fazeley and the name was also possibly as a reminder of the war time dug outs. Later the Smiths branched out into coaches and road haulage. The fish and chip shop was run by Charles' wife Doris Smith. It is still serving the nations favourite today

Dug Out Garage and chip shop
© Tamworth Digital archive



Rear of Free Grammar School late 1800s© Tamworth Digital archive

Watling Street


The Post Office, Two Gates
© Tamworth Digital archive

Next to the Dug-out was Two Gates Post Office which also sold groceries. This shop later became a phone shop. Opposite on the corner by the traffic lights (now the window shop) was Hawley's shop, quite a large shop selling groceries, vegetables, general goods and an off licence selling beer etc. If you were to stand facing the shop, on the left hand side was a house and a covered entrance large enough for a cart and horses to pass through. These were demolished to enable the crossroads to be widened leaving the shop standing.

Next to the shop was a row of cottages, no longer there, where the Two Gates hero Colin Grazier lived with his parents. Colin was in the Royal Navy. On 30th October 1942, he and his colleague Francis Fasson captured code books from a German U Boat submarine, these code books were vital for the breaking of the German "Shark" Enigma Cipher. They passed what books they could to a sailor on the conning tower of the U Boat, suddenly the submarine lurched and slipped beneath the waves and both Grazier & Fasson were lost.

In the early 1900 at the end of the cottages where the Graziers lived was the mission Hall built by Mrs Elizabeth Hutton. She was a member of the Bolebridge Street Mission as was her husband. She started another mission in Two Gates, holding the meetings and services in a cottage. In 1888 a mission hall was built due to the support of Mrs Hutton. It was described as a plain iron structure lined with pitch pine capable of holding 150 worshippers. The opening ceremony was conducted by Mrs Hutton, who made a very appropriate address on the occasion. Observing that she had done her part in erecting the building and she trusted the villagers would do theirs in attending the services. In 1941 the hall, having been adapted and brightly redecorated was opened as a British Restaurant (A scheme to provide a communal kitchen during the second world war to help people who had been bombed out of their homes or otherwise needed help, it was manned by the WVS). In 1947 the property was advertised to let or sale. It was described as a shed 18ft by 30ft suitable for trade or small industry, formerly known as the Hutton Mission. The building was used for many different purposes over the years including a library until the one on the Tamworth Road was built in 1968. Nothing remains of the building now, it is remembered as being by the walkway that takes you into Highcliffe Road.

This is a photograph showing the Hutton Mission, later to become the early Two Gates Library on the left and St Peter's Mission in the





Watling St. North Side
© Tamworth Digital archive

background just before the row of houses.
Further along past the SSWW building and next to the row of cottages that are still there, was another mission Hall. Originally know as Two Gates Mission it was the Sunday School for Wilnecote Parish Church. This building, (another corrugated building that many locals will remember) was erected in 1912 and enlarged to twice its size in 1925.

It was opened by the Bishop of Stafford who consecrated the alter. In the future it was to be known as Two Gates St. Peter's. Again this building was used for many purposes, apart from the Sunday School, the choir practised there, locals rented it for social functions such as children's parties, meetings and whist drives and a youth club was held there on a Tuesday evening. Mrs Ball ran the Sunday School along with her daughter Isabel Pratt. Isabel was also the leader at the youth club.

The writer remembers it as play school. It is believed that after the mission was de-consecrated the Stephen James Players used it to store the props and costumes that they used for the local pantomimes. Sadly the building started to become dilapidated and was probably unsafe, no one seemed prepared to take it on so it was demolished. The plot on which it stood is now fenced off and advertises "Used Car Sales".

Along the Watling street, over the railway bridge, the area now known as the Two Gates Trading Industrial Estate, was the Two Gates Prisoner of war camp. This was a camp for German and Italian Prisoners. After the war it was turned into a hostel for foreign refugees who were trained as miners.



Two Gates PoW Camp
© Tamworth Digital archive

TAMWORTH ROAD



Corner Shop, Two Gates
© Tamworth Digital archive

Taking the Tamworth Road heading towards Tamworth, between the 1880's and the 1900's more cottages were built along the sides of the existing road. Many of these houses still stand and show the date of construction. There was a terraced row running down the hill from the Bull's Head these stood on the ground now occupied by Hadrians Close. On the other side of the road there was a large shop on the corner now a window company.

There was then a block of public toilets these were removed in the late 1960's. Next to these were a modernised bungalow.

This home was built in 1928 for the Pooley Hall Colliery Co. This company had started putting electricity in houses in the area a couple of years earlier. The bungalow was to be for an exhibition showing the type of electrical equipment becoming available.



It was furnished, in the living room was a 3 kilowatt electric fire which they said would supply all the heat needed but they also added a 1 kilowatt portable fire. To give the room a normal appearance there was a small mantelpiece on which stood an electric clock.

There was also a toaster, hot plate, a wireless set, hoover vacuum cleaner and electric cigarette lighter. In one bedroom was a kettle for a cup of tea, curling tongues, a hair dryer and a bed warmer.

In the second bedroom was an artificial sunlight lamp (in consideration of the many miners from the area who spent a lot of time below ground !). In the kitchen a deluxe Creda Cooker, hot water cistern and a wash boiler, also a Magnet Wizard washing machine with an attachment which could be used for wringing clothes, cleaning knives, mincing meat, making sausages and making ice-cream. (It does say only to be used one at a time!).

This machine was made by the GEC (General Electric Company) and was only just being manufactured. You might note that at the time they did not mention a refrigerator. The exhibition was to last 2 weeks and at the conclusion it was to be occupied by the resident electrician in the Wilnecote area.

Next to the bungalow was another row of 6 houses. They were knocked down in the 1960's and the three sets of semis that are set back in their own service road, backing on to Highcliffe Road were built on what would have been the gardens to this row.



Then, there were 2 semi detached houses, these are still there now, one which used to be a grocers shop at one time run by a lady called Sheila. Sheila also was a dressmaker and a hairdresser. She used the back room of the shop for these other trades. Both houses were owned at some time by Limm's who ran the bus garage next door. The garage later became Washington's Garage and today R N Upton & Co trade from the premises. The writer's husband has memories of a glass domed bubble gum machine, which was of much interest to the kids at the time. Another memory he has is of the air raid shelter which was opposite and there was much peer pressure to go in as it was not very pleasant inside and supposedly locked up!In the mid 1800's the only other buildings along the Tamworth Road, when coming from the Bull's Head, up to Kettlebrook on the way into Tamworth, were the row of six houses which now stand next to the access road to the Highcliffe estate, in what was known locally as "The Hollow".

They originally had a block of 6 outside toilets, a wash house, coal houses and pigsty's. The outside toilets were still in use into the mid 1960's when downstairs bathrooms were built on to the properties and the old wash house, toilets and coal houses were demolished. The remains of what used to be the pigstys remained for a few years longer some of them being used as garden sheds by the residents. The gardens to the two three story houses, at each end of the row, were at the side of the houses. At the one end a house has been built on what was the garden and at the Highcliffe Road end the garages stand on what used to be the garden to that house.

Carrying on down the Tamworth Road past the long row of Victorian houses just before the shops was the police house built in the early 1970's. Its first occupants were Sgt. James Hicken and his family. They moved to the newly built house from the police houses next to the Wilnecote Police Station in Glascote Lane. Jim, as he was known together with his wife Molly lived there until their deaths in the early 2000's. After the police house was the Two Gates Library. In the early 1950's a library was opened in Two Gates as a sub branch of Atherstone library this was on the Watling Street.

In 1968 a new library was to be built on the Tamworth Road on land which had been earmarked for Police Houses. This was being built by the borough council with a loan of £8000 from the Ministry of Housing. The "old" library was to be used as a central book store. When the Library on the Tamworth Road closed it became St Catherine's Church which was demolished in 2017 and shops built in its place.The newer houses and shops built on the Tamworth Road and Highcliffe Road were built in the late 1960's. The newsagents was run by Mr & Mrs Franklin, the VG Store by Mr & Mrs Payne, the Post Office and by Mr & Mrs Jewkes and the Victoria Wines Off-Licence by Mr & Mrs ???? Before this the land was open fields with a pond in the area of Landsdown Crescent.

The housing estate off the new island by Peelers Way, was built on land which used to be a small industrial estate known as the Tame Valley industrial Estate, with companies like Tame Valley Alloys, started in the 1950's, Wilnecote Castings, Aston Metal Co. and Drome Garage and a scrap yard. Also a detached white house which belonged to Boulstridge who had a plumbing and builders yard, after Mr Boulstridge retired it was taken over by Mr Woodward.

Original Gu
© Tamworth H

Parkfield Estate

The land where Parkfield Avenue and Crescent are built was once known by the field names of Little Coal Pit Close and Great Coal Pit Close. These fields were part of Castle Liberty which was once owned by the castle. No records exist for the colliery, although "Park Colliery" is named on old 19th century maps. In 1787 a map made by a Mr John Sharp shows 4 pit shafts and a map by Yates & Son, produced 8 years later, shows a further shaft. Looking at the maps, three of the shafts were between the back of Parkfield Crescent and Peelers Way. A further one was on the other side of the road, and the last the other side of the railway. Up until at least the late 19th century the fields were farmed and use of the land was auctioned. In April 1896 114 acres including the Coal Pit Closes were auctioned as "grass keeping". A shepherd was to be provided so it is believed that the practice must have been to let a grass field for a farmer to put his sheep on. The fields were eventually sold, although the area was still called Castle Liberty.

Mr William Brookes bought the 2 Coal Pit Closes in the 1920's. He advertised plots of land which I may be where some of the properties on the Tamworth Road to the right of Parkfield Avenue were built. He then sold the land to Mucklows builders and in 1937 they built the houses in Parkfield Avenue and the semis on Tamworth Road which were sold for £425 each. Building came to a stop at the outbreak of war. Some of the remaining land was used as allotments during this time and the rent went to charity. After the war any building had to be approved by the Ministry of Health.

On 22nd March 1947 building began again and the first sod was cut, using a chromium spade, by Mr James Wilson for the start of 8 houses being built under the Apprentice Scheme. The Apprentice-Master scheme (often referred to in the context of the post-war building boom around 1947) was a UK Ministry of Labour initiative designed to train apprentices in the construction industry while simultaneously addressing the urgent need for housing after World War II. These were to be the first houses built under the government scheme in the country. It was apparently recorded by the BBC, it would be interesting to see if the recording still exists. Some of the other builders who submitted tenders and won contracts were Apex Building Company, T A Harper, Nichols Brothers and Shuter, T C Hilton and A E Jones. R J Whitehead submitted a tender to complete the houses started by Apex Building who went into receivership in 1948.

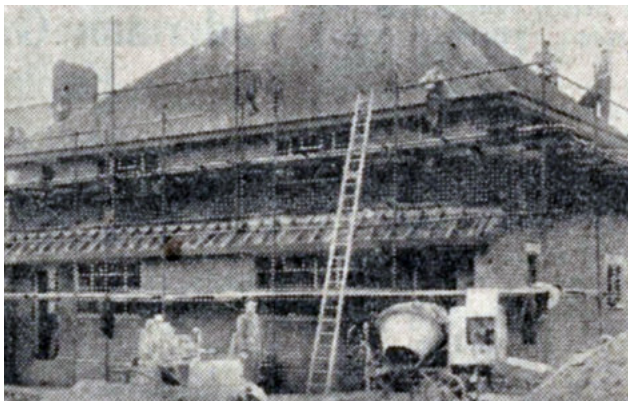


APPRENTICE BUILDERS GET TO WORK

START MADE ON EIGHT HOUSES AT TWO GATES

Councillor James Wilson Inaugurates New Scheme

TAMWORTH Rural District Council's scheme for the training of building apprentices was inaugurated on Wednesday afternoon when the Chairman of the Council (Councillor James Wilson, J.P., C.C.), using a chromium-plated spade, cut the first sod on a site at the Parkfield estate on which eight houses are to be erected.





uys Hospital
Digital archive

post 1913 Alms Houses

© Tamworth Digital archive



There are some house numbers missing. There is a gap where 67-73 should be. This area was left unused for some time and the local children used the area as a cycle track. In the 1980's it became part of the area where a new infant school was built. The school only remained for about 20 years when the infant department was moved back to the school on the Tamworth Road and then flats, which are there today, were built in its place.

There was another gap between number 13 and 31. There was a difference in ground levels between Parkfield Crescent and the old Two Gates School. In the 1950's Dennis refuse lorries used to back up to what was known as the tip and tipped refuse down the slope to level it. To the right of the tip, lorry loads of clay soil were dumped. This area was called the "bonks " by the local kids. They used to dig big holes, put iron fence panels on top and cover them with turf to make entrance tunnels. These were very good as trenches for war games and cowboys and indians.



There was also a path or "jitty" which went through to the Watling Street next to Park Place, still cottages then, but later acquired by the Reliant for use as stores. There was row of conker trees along this jetty which provided conkers for the kids. In the 1970's the Reliant got permission to build a car park on the area and there was a gate from the factory into Parkfield, there would be a great rush of people and traffic at the end of the shift.

The building of the car park still left a rough area and different levels. The path of the jitty was changed to come out on the Watling Street further along but it was very rough and muddy, not pleasant but still shorter than going home any other way.
Eventually the little children's play park was built but the land remaining was left as a very rough piece of ground until the houses in Parkfield Close were built. When the houses were built the roads on the estate were rough for a few years until they were resurfaced in the mid 1950's.the last houses to be built were the row from number 1 to 13

Coventry Canal.

The Coventry canal was completed in 1790. An article in the Northampton Mercury on 24th July 1790 said "19th July 1790, 15 boats from the collieries in the neighbourhood of Wednesbury each containing twenty tons of coal arrived at Coventry Wharf - The aqueduct over the River Tame at Fazeley in the county of Staffs having opened for the passage of boats on the Tuesday preceding - reducing the prices of Warwickshire coal from 8d to 6d per cwt and the Staffordshire coal from 10d to 7.5d and reducing the price of other merchandise"

Along the side of the canal there were osier beds, willow that was used in basket making, much of the manufacture of which was carried out in Fazeley. A lot of baskets were used on the canal for shipping goods like pottery .

Aqueduct cottage was built by the canal over the River Tame just below where the static caravan site at St Christopher's Close is today.

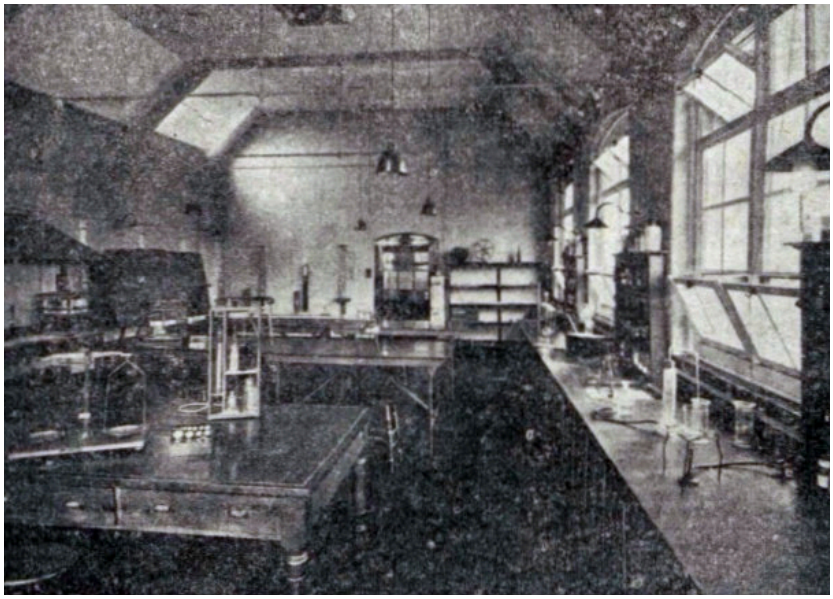
School

There were discussions at council meetings back in the 1890's and plans were even drawn up for a school. The state of the roads were always being discussed as the infant children from Two Gates had to walk to the school at Wilnecote through the bad conditions.

Eventually they rented Wilnecote Church Sunday School Building, (This may have been St Peter's Mission Hall) but it was not until 1920 that a tender from Messrs B Musson for £2585 was accepted to build the school.

At a meeting in 1921 it was mentioned that scholars were exposed to danger on account of



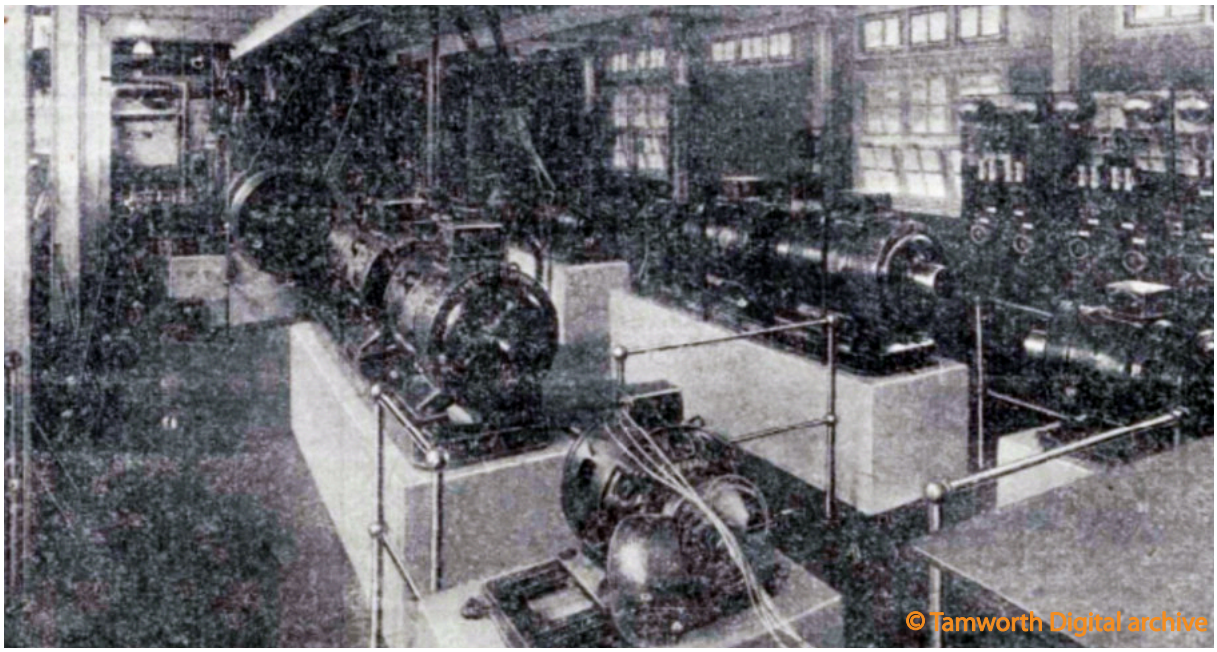


the fast highway traffic. The school was ready for occupation in April 1921. Most of these buildings would have remained until 1975 when work was started to replace them.

Older residents may remember the old toilet block on the right hand side just past the gate. Apparently the 10 year old boys used to hold an interesting competition there, much to the annoyance of the lady in the house behind. The nature of the competition has been left to the reader's imagination.

In 1925 the councillors were looking for a site to build a mining school. The site at Two Gates School was chosen. The Mining & Technical Institute, as it was known, instructed students from the mining profession, together with those from an electrical and mechanical engineering background and later provided a course in machine drawings. The syllabus also provided for those students who were studying for their matriculation examinations. The institute was well attended. The buildings were also used for various local events and charity does as well as being the venue where local council elections were held.

In 1980 a new school was built for the infants just off Parkfield Crescent and was aptly named Parkfield Infants School, the entrance was where the gap, mentioned in a previous paragraph, was. This school only lasted for about 10 years. It was closed as an independent school in 1990 becoming part of Two Gates Primary School and the infants were moved back to the Tamworth Road school which was eventually enlarged to accommodate them. Some of the classrooms were still used and it was often referred to as the annex. These classrooms became neglected as the Council no longer maintained them. In 2005 planning permission was granted for the flats which were built on the site and are still there today


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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 vaguely familiar. This should be an easy one, even though it is not in Staffordshire....

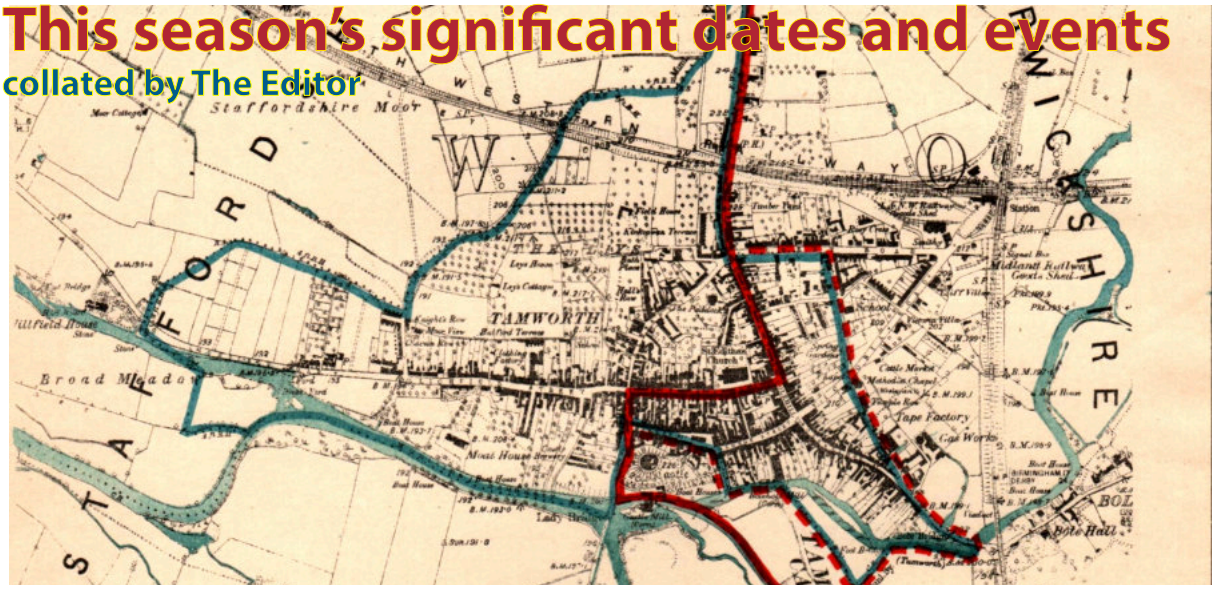


Last Issues Doorway: The inside of the front door of the former Central Methodist Chapel. Normally only seen when hoisting a coffin to the altar

Photo © Iamedia

This season's significant dates and events

collated by The Editor



Monday 16 October - 77 years since Drayton Manor Theme Park opened!

Wednesday 25 October - 172 years since Charge of the Light Brigade, and Private Samuel Parkes won the Victoria Cross.

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

Monday 30 October - 148 years since the company of Gibbs and Canning was incorporated.

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

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

A band which have probably given more 'farewell tours' than any other came to Tamworth on Monday 2 December 1963.
Tickets were purchased either on the door on the night or in advance from Weavers of Bolebridge Street. In 1963, the Rolling Stones played no less than 308 gigs, with Tamworth number 281. A contemporary report told of girls screaming as the green velvet curtains drew back at 8:52pm, and five young men – described as "having more hair than the Beatles ever did" – began to play. At that time the Beatles had released just two singles – *Come On* in June reached number 21, and *I Wanna Be Your Man* (written by Lennon and McCartney) reached number 12 around Christmas this year. Judging by the start time, we must assume there was a support act (maybe two), but no record of who is known. What we do know is that the Stones had just finished (in early November) as part of the tour headed by the Everly Brothers, Bo Diddley, and Little Richard. Today, we see the list of acts playing on an event – often for a cost of a couple of shillings – and think how lucky that generation was. However, this tour saw the Rolling Stones play for no more than ten minutes (3 or 4 songs), and therefore those who saw Sir Michael Philip Jagger and company play in December '63 should think themselves very lucky.

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

Wednesday 20 December - 21 years ago, the Bolebridge Egg is voted the 4th worst roundabout in the country.

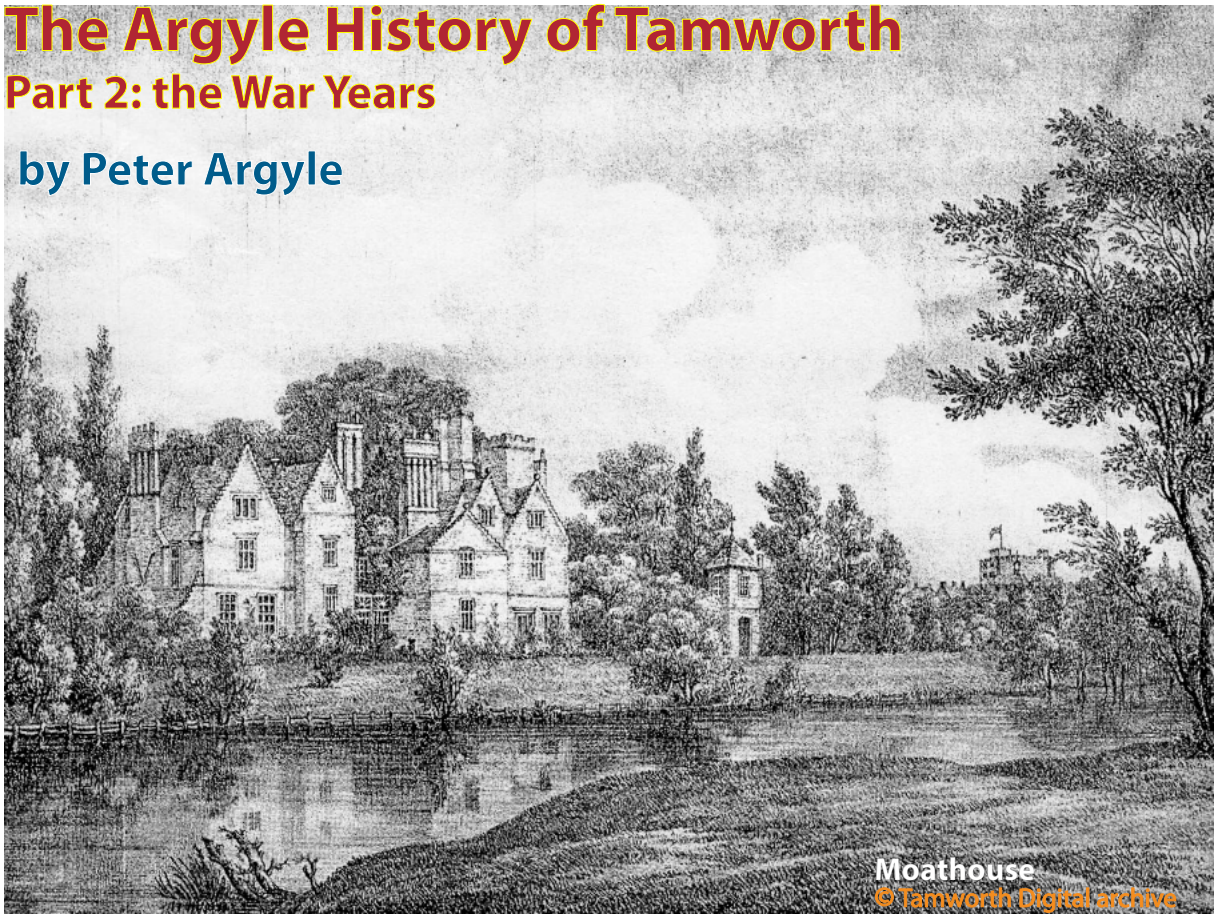
The worst five traffic islands were:
Magic Roundabout in Swindon
The Plough in Hemel Hempstead
The Pork Pie in Leicester
The Bolebridge Egg in Tamworth
East of Tamar Bridge in Plymouth

Wednesday 27 December - 302 years since the death of Sir Thomas Guy, who started the internationally renowned Guy's Hospital in London.

The Argyle History of Tamworth

Part 2: the War Years

by Peter Argyle



This Argyle History of Tamworth is the first chapter of Peter Argyles book *Victorian Tamworth: The life of Thomas Argyle*. It sets the scene by covering Tamworth from the mists of time to Thomas literally *getting off the bus* [stage coach] at Tamworth in 1834.

The review of the book is here. When the Editor looked at the book he noticed that the first chapter of 50 pages was a very good history of Tamworth that could be a stand alone book in its own right. Hence serialising it in the Magazine with the kind permission of the author, Peter Argyle. This is the second part. The first part is here and worth reading first.

So read on and when you get to the end of the serialisation of the first chapter in a couple issues time go and buy the book to read the rest: *Editor*.

The War Years

James 1st visited Tamworth on three occasions; for the first, on 18 August 1619, he stayed in the castle with Sir Humphrey Ferrers while his son Prince Charles stayed with William Comberford at the Moat House, on the edge of the town.

James also visited on 21 August 1621 and 19 August 1624 but on both occasions without the prince.

When the Civil War broke out in 1642, William Comberford garrisoned the castle for the King, although the borough was far from being entirely Royalist in sentiment.

At this time Lichfield and particularly the Cathedral Close within the strong defensive walls built by Bishop Walter de Langton between 1296 and 1321, was also held by Royalist forces, led by Sir Richard Dyott. Staffordshire was seen as important territory in the war and the Parliamentarians were determined to take

Lichfield. Soldiers from Tamworth were known to have been amongst the force of some twelve hundred men commanded by Robert Greville, 2nd Lord Brook, which reached Lichfield on 1 March 1643.

The Royalists initially defended the city but were quickly driven back into the fortified Close. The first assault on the walls failed and, more seriously perhaps, Lord Brook was shot and killed by a Royalist marksman stationed high on the Cathedral spire, while leaving the house in Dam Street he had occupied. The spot where he fell is marked by a plaque:

'March 2nd 1643 Lord Brook a General of the Parliamentary forces preparing to besiege the Close at Lichfield, then garrisoned for King Charles the First, received his death wound on the spot beneath this inscription by a shot in the forehead from Mr Dyott, a gentleman who had placed himself on the battlements of the Great Steeple to annoy the besiegers.'

The incident certainly did annoy the besiegers and since it occurred on St Chad's Day - St Chad being the patron saint of the Cathedral - it led to great jubilation among the Royalists in the Close. However, despite the loss of the Parliamentarian general, the Cathedral surrendered on 5 March.

However, the Royalists also saw the city as strategically important and were determined to regain it. A force commanded by Prince Rupert reached Lichfield on 7 April and successfully re-took the Cathedral on 20 April after a hard-fought siege which included digging a mine under the tower at the northeast corner of the Close and bringing it down with gunpowder, the first time such a tactic had been used in England. Lichfield remained in Royalist hands until the latter stages of the war.

Tamworth castle came under siege by Parliamentary troops in June 1643, commanded by Colonel William Purfoy (c1580-1659), one of the men who, a few years later, signed the King's death warrant, as well as being a Member of Parliament and a member of the Council of State during the Commonwealth. His estates were confiscated by the Crown after the Restoration for his part in the death of Charles I; the Act of Oblivion, which served to draw a line under the events of the Civil War, specifically excluded the regicides whose names appeared on the King's death warrant - even if they were already dead.



Charles 1st by the Workshop of Anthony van Dyck

Royalist troops in Tamworth were becoming an annoyance to the Parliamentarians around Lichfield.

It was recorded Tamworth men *'did keep their holy brethren from dulling their spirits with over much sleep, in giving their tattered alarums no rest nor respite night and day, with some particularised skirmishes*[1]*.'* The garrison held out for two days but surrendered on 25 June, after which command of the castle was given to Captain Waldyve Willington, an ancestor of the nineteenth century solicitor, Francis.

Tamworth was to remain in Parliamentarian hands for the rest of the war but with Lichfield only five miles away controlled by Royalists, there was a period of almost continuous low-level raiding and skirmishing between the opposing forces which must have made life almost impossible for people living in the area.

The bridge over the Tame at Hopwas, thought to have been built during the reign of Mary I, was made impassable during this time.

After the end of the Protectorate a bond dated October 1660 obliged Robert Robotham to repair the bridge and, to complete the story, it was ultimately washed away, with others, during

[1] Palmer, Ibid. taken from *; The History and Antiquities of Staffordshire*; Rev. Stebbing Shaw; 1801

serious floods in February 1795. In May 1795 a call went out for any bridge builder *'willing to contract for the rebuilding or necessary Reparation of Hopwas, Fazeley, and Blackbrook Bridges'* to contact the justices of the peace of the Hundred of Offlow. The new bridge was completed in 1796 and has stood over the river ever since.

Palmer gives an account of one incident from this period; on 16 April 1644 Captain Thomas Hunt, one of the officers of the Tamworth garrison and several of his men were captured by Royalists from Lichfield but were released in an exchange of prisoners. Soon afterwards Hunt wrote his famous challenge to Colonel Henry Bagot, who had been appointed to command at Lichfield by Prince Rupert: *'Bagot, thou sonne of an Egyptian hore, meete me half the way tomorrow morning, half the way betwixt Tamworth and Litchfeald, if thou darest; if not, I will whippe thee whensoever I meete thee. Thomas Hunt.'*

This message, which has something of Sir Andrew Aguecheek's challenge in Shakespeare's Twelfth Night, had the desired effect. Hunt and Bagot met at Whittington where after *'a sharp encounter'*, Hunt was ignominiously forced to flee the scene, narrowly escaping capture for the second time. Palmer probably got the story, directly or indirectly, from the Mercurius Aulicus, a Royalist newspaper published from 1643 to 1645. Despite its short life, it was a very influential publication in the development of newspapers.

In March 1644 the Royalists attempted to retake Tamworth by surprise. The bridge at Hopwas was made passable and a force of some two thousand men, five hundred of them cavalry, left Lichfield to make the attempt. However, Captain Willington had been informed by a spy and the expedition was successfully resisted. Charles I visited Lichfield on 15 June 1645.

Parliamentary forces returned to lay siege to Lichfield in March the following year, under the command of Sir William Brereton (1604-61); after a four month siege, again involving soldiers from Tamworth, Lichfield was forced to surrender, Colonel Bagot having become aware the King no longer had any forces in the field.
Once the Civil War ended the Council of State ordered Tamworth Castle to be demolished without delay; these instructions, issued on 13 July 1649, were not carried out and so for the second time the castle defied central authority and survived.

Penny for the Guy

During the years of the Commonwealth a boy who was to play a major part in the history of Tamworth arrived in the town. Thomas William Guy was born in Horselydown, Southwark in 1644, the son of Thomas Guy (1597-1652) and his wife Anne.



She was of a Tamworth family; her father, Thomas Harrison Voughton was born in the town in 1597 and died there in 1652. Her grandfather, also Thomas, was born in Tamworth in 1574, as was her great-grandfather John, in 1529.

Anne was herself born in Tamworth on 10 February 1625, meaning she was almost thirty years younger than her husband. His death in 1652 -and possibly that of her own father in the same year - led Anne Guy to leave London in about 1652 and return with Thomas and his sister Anne to her native town where they lived in the Manor House in Lichfield Street, probably with her brother.

The house still stands, although it was extensively remodelled in the early nineteenth century. Anne married a second time, to Joseph Seeley, in St Editha's on 18 June 1661 and she died in Tamworth in 1702.

Having been educated at the Free Grammar School in Gungate, Thomas Guy returned to London in 1660 where after serving an apprenticeship with a bookseller and bookbinder, he established his own bookshop in

Lombard Street in 1668 and went on to make a considerable fortune, principally through dealing in bonds and shares rather than from the sale of books.

In 1677 he subscribed £5 towards a fund established by George Antrobus, the school master, to rebuild the schoolroom at his former school and the following year Thomas Guy built almshouses in the town, on the site of the Chantry of St George which had stood opposite the grammar school, a plot he had purchased in 1673.



Front of pre 1913 Alms Houses
© Tamworth Digital archive

The almshouses were initially designed to accommodate seven poor women but a further donation in 1692 saw the building extended to provide for fourteen women. The original buildings remained until 1912 when Guy's almshouses were demolished and rebuilt in the Georgian style, one of the town's more successful twentieth century buildings. Yet his most notable gift to Tamworth was the Town Hall, which he commissioned in 1701 and was probably designed and built by William Gilkes at a cost of about £1000.
Before 1701 there had been two town halls in Tamworth; one in Lichfield Street to serve the Staffordshire part of the borough, the other, dating from mediaeval times, possibly at the end of Market Street on a site later occupied by the Peel Arms, possibly on or near the site of Guy's building, to serve Warwickshire. The Staffordshire building was demolished in 1701, while the Warwickshire hall was taken down as part of Thomas Guy's Town Hall project. He was an MP for Tamworth, representing the borough from 1695 to 1708; at that time, and well into the nineteenth century, the borough returned two Members of Parliament.

The Town Hall is a combination of town hall and market; the arcade below, with its eighteen sandstone columns, was used for the sale of butter and eggs, while above there is a sizable chamber, first used by the bailiffs and burgesses for a meeting on 2 July 1702 and subsequently for a great range of meetings, political, cultural and civic. There were regular dancing assemblies, concerts and even theatre during the eighteenth century, and the Town Hall was used for the

The Town Hall courtesy of Tamworth Castle Museum



important ball held annually as part of the fashionable Lichfield Race Week. The chamber was originally accessed by an external staircase at the east end of the building, leading to a balcony used for official announcements, particularly at election time.

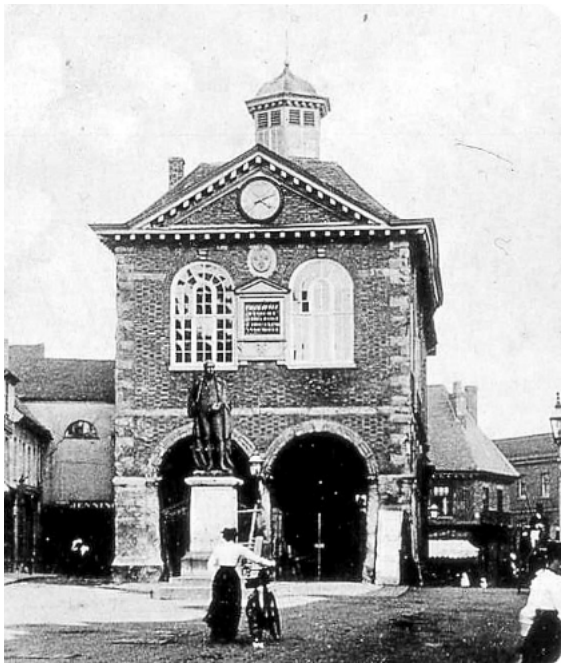
Various changes were made to the Town Hall over the years; the external staircase was removed, probably in connection with the first extension eastwards which saw two extra rooms added in 1771, including an office for the borough chamberlain which was noted as occupied by that official in 1772. A further extension was built in 1811, the clock was added in 1812 and a larger, less architecturally successful extension eastwards was completed in 1845, which included the Mayor's Parlour.

It was from a window of the main chamber that Sir Robert Peel, a Tamworth MP from 1830 until his death in 1850, was said to have read the famous Tamworth Manifesto in December 1834.



Michael Portillo re-creating the scene in 2012 during filming for Great Railway Journeys © Tamworth Digital archive

However, no contemporary newspaper reported on such an event but instead widely covered the letter or address Peel wrote to his constituents in the borough; it was published nationally on 18 December and later became known as the Tamworth Manifesto. Peel did not address his constituents in person until 11 January, when he gave a '*sumptuous entertainment*' in the Town Hall but did not read the Manifesto. Polling took place between 6 January and 6 February and resulted in Peel's Conservative Party gaining ninety-eight additional seats, but Viscount Melbourne and the Whigs retained their parliamentary majority.



The statue of the great Prime Minister standing in front of the Town Hall was proposed at a public meeting held in the Town Hall shortly after his death in 1850; a subscription was opened and a competition launched to find a sculptor for the work, resulting in the contract being awarded to Matthew Noble (1817-76), a leading portrait sculptor in England who also created the sculptures of Peel in Liverpool's St George's Hall and Parliament Square in London.

The finished bronze, eight feet four inches in height, was lifted onto the plinth on 22 July 1852. The inauguration took place the next day, when the statue was formally handed over to the Mayor, William Knight.

It was such a major occasion for the town it was deemed a holiday; all the shops closed, and all business was suspended, while people came into Tamworth from the neighbourhood and from as far afield as Birmingham.

The unveiling took place at two o'clock, in the presence of Sir Robert Peel MP, the 3rd baronet, Captain Townshend MP, Mr. Frederick Peel MP and Captain William Peel, the latter two of the late Sir Robert's sons. Sir Charles Mansfield Clarke, Bt (1782-1857), of Wigginton Lodge, unveiled the statue after '*an eloquent speech*'.



The Peel Statue , a contemporary drawing © Tamworth Digital archive

The ceremony was followed by a luncheon i the Town Hall for some two hundred ladies and gentlemen. Sir Charles was a noted surgeon and physician of the period and served as Royal Physician to Queen Adelaide, wife of William IV. His distinguished career was recognised when he was created a baronet on 30 September 1831. It was he who presented the portrait of Thomas Guy, which hangs in the Town Hall, to the borough in 1852.

Back to Thomas Guy; he was rejected in the general election held between April and July 1708, the first after the Acts of Union which brought together the English and Scottish Parliaments.

The Tamworth seats were won by the Whig Joseph Girdler, who had held the seat in 1705 alongside Thomas Guy, and the Tory Richard Swinfen. Thomas Guy was highly indignant at this treatment by a borough to which he had been so great a benefactor and promptly ended all further assistance.

He changed the rules of admission for the Almshouses to prevent any borough resident from being given a place there and even threatened to demolish the Town Hall he had paid for.

Palmer recounts how the burgesses, realising the grave mistake they had made, tried to make amends by offering him the seat at the next election; he rejected this roundly and indeed, never again stood as an MP.

Since 1704 Thomas Guy had been a governor of St Thomas' Hospital in London; in 1707 he gave £1000 to the institution, the first of a number of large donations. His fortune grew enormously after he sold the stock he held in the South Sea Company for the huge sum of £234,428, making a profit of about £175,000, shortly before the 'South Sea Bubble' burst in 1720, an event that brought ruin to many investors.

He determined to use £19,000 of this fortune to found a new London hospital, intended to care for 'incurables' discharged from St Thomas'; work on Guy's Hospital began in 1721.

He left £219,499 as an endowment for the hospital; giving the value of such bequests in modern terms is notoriously difficult but a reasonable estimate would be around £40m. The people of Tamworth perhaps had good cause to regret their rejection of him as their MP.

It was reported on 26 December 1724 that the 'famous Mr. Thomas Guy, the great Benefactor to

St. Thomas's Hospital in Southwark, is much indisposed.' He died on the morning of 27 December; after lying in state at the Mercers' Chapel, he was buried at St Thomas' Hospital until his 'Hospital for Incurables' was ready. He left instructions for his coffin to be moved there and 'laid in one of the Squares, with a magnificent Tomb-stone, and his statue upon it'. The re-interment took place in January 1725, and a bronze statue was erected in 1734. In 1732 it was reported the hospital, which 'relieves 400 persons with Dyet, Lodging and Physick' was being so well managed it had accumulated a surplus of £10,000, which would provide for the relief of two or three hundred more people.

Tamworth continued to prosper after the Restoration, to become one of the most populous towns in the Midlands. In 1663 Charles II renewed the charters granted by Elizabeth and confirmed the appointment of a high steward and town clerk for the borough.

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries brought with them the Industrial Revolution; Tamworth grew, thanks to the discovery of extensive coal deposits in the area. Mining rapidly became an important industry for the town, although the local economy also continued to depend on traditional sectors, including farming and market gardening.

Roads improved to some extent but perhaps more importantly, this was the period when canals were built across the country to provide a more effective means of transporting goods and, to a far lesser extent, people.

The Coventry canal, which runs for thirty-eight miles between Coventry and Fradley Junction near Lichfield, where it joins the Grand Trunk Canal, now known as the Trent and Mersey Canal, was initiated by the Coventry Canal Company, established in 1768. Work on the canal began that same year, reaching Atherstone by 1771 when the promoters ran out of money and work stopped.

However, the canal was vital to the Birmingham Canal Company, which was seeking a shorter route to London; after much negotiation, the Coventry Canal was completed in three stages, by three companies. The Coventry Canal Company completed the section to Fazeley in the late 1780s, while Fazeley to Whittington was built by the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal Company and the Trent and Mersey Canal Company built the last section to Fradley Junction. Fazeley was a key location on the canal; a trade directory in 1834 reported there were 'extensive wharves, one of which is free and has a powerful crane for lifting stone, timber &c.' The canal crosses the River Tame by the Tame Aqueduct at Fazeley and runs northwards from there through Hopwas and Whittington; it is still navigable today. Indeed, I can remember, while a pupil at Hopwas school between 1963 and 1965, seeing Father Christmas arrive at the school on a canal barge, to great local excitement.

A flood event occurred in June 1799, one that is probably now forgotten. The embankment of the reservoir on the Wytley and Essington canal, which ran with several branches between Wolverhampton and Huddlesford Junction, near Lichfield, gave way. The flood of water swept along the line of the canal through Shenstone, Hopwas and Drayton until it poured into the Tame at Tamworth.

A bridge at Blackstone was washed away and a number of sheep and cattle were drowned. The damage would have been worse but two or three people rode rapidly ahead of the flood to warn farmers who were able to move their stock; nonetheless the damage was reckoned at many thousands of pounds. At Hammerwich, near Lichfield, the fields were left covered with gravel some twelve inches deep, carried there by the flood.


Robert "parsley" Peel
© Tamworth Digital archive

The development of the Coventry canal opened links into the wider canal network and made the area attractive to manufacturers like Robert 'Parsley' Peel (1723-1795) who had moved his mill operations to Burton on Trent after riots and strikes in his native Lancashire. Peel experimented with calico printing with enormous success, his nickname coming from a

design featuring a parsley leaf pattern. He built three new mills in Burton and constructed a canal, at a cost of £9,000, to supply one of them with water; by the time of his death he owned twenty-three factories.



The Turner painting from 1832 and a more recent photograph showing the mill
© Tamworth Digital archive

His son Sir Robert Peel, 1st Baronet (1750-1830) established the first cotton mills in Tamworth, one of which was based close to the castle; it appears in the watercolour painted by J.M.W. Turner in 1832. It was around this time the great hall of the castle, which was not lived in, was used as a blacksmith's shop. Sir Robert Peel went on to become one of the wealthiest textile manufacturers in England, known to be a millionaire by 1799, with a fortune of some one and a half million pounds.



Drayton Manor approx 1919
© Tamworth Digital archive

He moved permanently from Lancashire and purchased Drayton Manor from the descendants of the Earls of Essex in 1796, at which time the old house appears to have been occupied by Thomas Fisher 'the younger', whose household furniture and effects, livestock and farming equipment were sold at auction by Mr. Boott of Loughborough in March 1796. Peel had purchased other extensive property in and around Tamworth by that time and he served as one of the borough's Members of Parliament from 1790 to 1820, having enough property to secure him a Parliamentary interest.

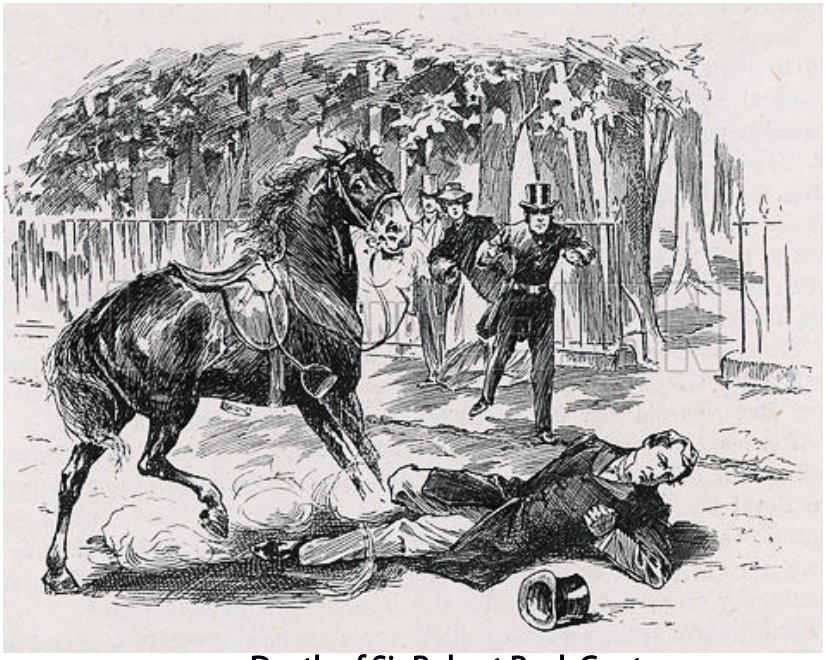
His son, Sir Robert Peel, 2nd Baronet (1788-1850) demolished the old manor house and in 1831 started to build a great Victorian mansion, with its three-storey clock tower, as a suitable residence for his dynasty.



The house was completed in just two years at a cost of some £50,000. Peel, who went on to become one of

the most famous of the Victorian Prime Ministers, was first elected for the rotten borough of Cashel in Ireland at the age of 21 in 1809; the electoral roll contained just twenty-four names, and he was sponsored by his father and Sir Arthur Wellesley, later the Duke of Wellington.

After representing Chippenham in 1812 and Oxford University from 1819, he became MP for Tamworth in 1830 on the death of his father, representing the borough until his own death, caused by a fall from his horse while riding on Constitution Hill on 29 June 1850.



Death of Sir Robert Peel. Contemporary drawing © Tamworth Digital archive

The horse stumbled on him after he fell, and he died three days later at the age of 62. He was buried at the church at Drayton Bassett beside his parents, his family having declined the State Funeral Queen Victoria wished. Sir Robert Peel and his son played their part in the story of Thomas Argyle.

In passing we should note that Sir Walter Scott visited Tamworth in 1828, writing in his journal for 6 April that he had breakfast at Ashbourne, went on to Derby and from there to Tamworth where his party stayed the night.

On 7 April they visited the castle which was '*inhabited by a brother-in-law of the proprietor*'. This was Thomas Bramall, and the castle was then owned by John Robins. Scott commented: '*this was not a name quite according with the fine chivalrous old hall, in which there was no small quantity of armour and odds and ends, which I should have been glad to possess.*'

Tamworth Castle © Tamworth Digital archive



He noted the rooms had been modernised around the time of James I and there was a saddle on display which was said to have belonged to James II. The castle and the Marmions of course occurred in Sir Walter Scott's romantic epic poetry.

Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851) also visited Tamworth, completing his famous view of the castle, part of a series entitled Picturesque Views in England and Wales, in 1832. The painting was acquired by the Tate Gallery in 1986 and shows the castle, the church tower, the old Lady Bridge and the mill which used to stand in what are now the castle grounds.

Queen Victoria was crowned on 28 June 1838. In Tamworth the events of the day began at six o'clock in the morning with a Royal salute of twenty-one guns, which must have been popular with those still abed and slumbering, followed by peals of church bells and a band in the street playing God Save the Queen. At eleven o'clock a church service was held, after a procession to St Editha's led by the Mayor and the Town Council, with two bands and several thousand inhabitants of the borough. At one o'clock there was a public dinner held in George Street.

Notably the children present were *'regaled in Market-street in the afternoon with cake and wine'* - a rare treat, one unlikely to be repeated in this century. In the evening about eighty gentlemen sat down to a dinner in the Town Hall, with Henry Pye, of Clifton Hall, in the chair.

A committee had been formed in May to arrange this dinner and on 21 May it was able to announce that many people had already *'declared their determination to be present on this highly interesting occasion.'* Tickets for the event were priced at 16s, to include 'Dinner, wine and dessert' and were available from the Castle Hotel.

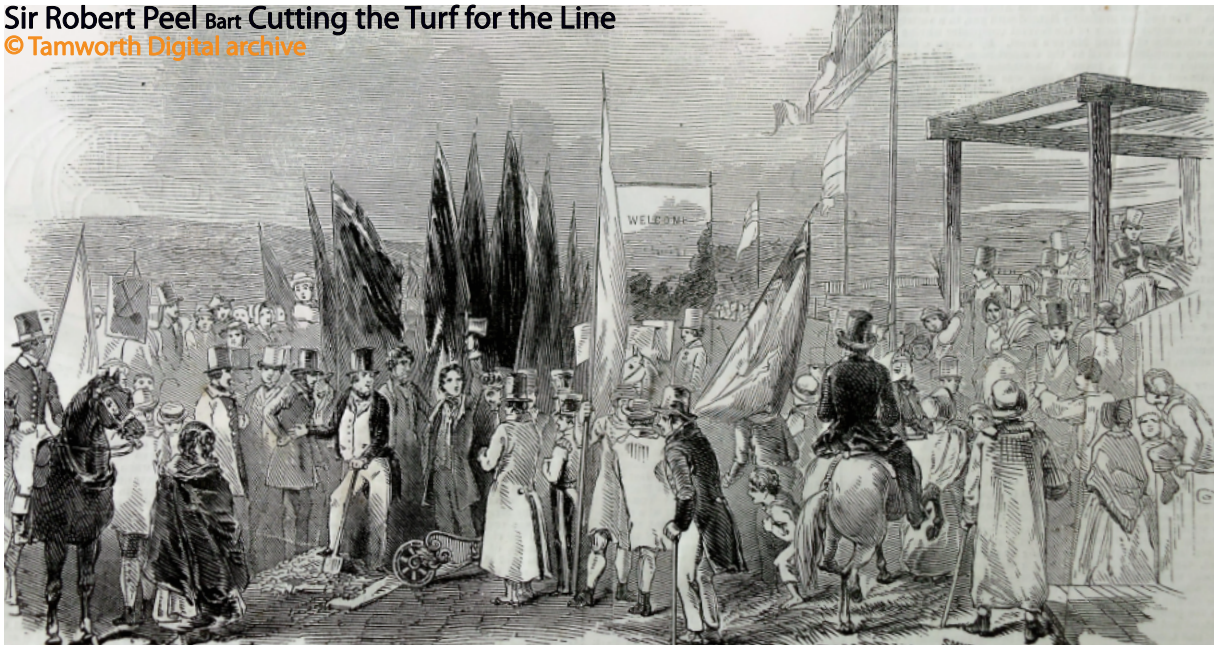
It was noted *'all party feeling was banished; it would have puzzled a stranger to have told which was a Tory, Whig or Radical, on this eventful day'*, a reflection of the borough's often turbulent approach to politics in general and elections in particular.

It is diverting to speculate whether Thomas Argyle took part in any of these events; it is probable. It is difficult to imagine Francis Willington not attending the Town Hall dinner, as Town Clerk and a leading citizen of ancient lineage and while whether Thomas was with him is open to question, it does seem a reasonable proposition. On the one hand 16s was almost a week's pay but on the other hand his employer was generous, and Thomas was beginning to play a role in borough affairs and was attending public dinners by that time.

The Birmingham and Derby Junction railway reached Tamworth in 1839, with an inaugural run taking place in early August for the directors and shareholders. The party stopped in Tamworth to admire the viaduct of eighteen arches over the River Anker, which had been built by Macgregor & Howe at a cost of £18,000; the full service was launched on 12 August.

Sir Robert Peel Bart Cutting the Turf for the Line

© Tamworth Digital archive



The pace of such developments is striking; George Stephenson (1781-1848) surveyed the route in 1835 and in a speech in December, Sir Robert Peel remarked that while he understood there was to be a station in Tamworth, it was not yet known where it would be located, although he hoped it would be in the most advantageous position for the inhabitants of the town.

Royal assent for the Act of Parliament establishing the line was secured in May 1836 and in December a public meeting was held in the Town Hall, where it was unanimously agreed to support the proposed railway, with a committee set up to watch over the borough's interests. Robert Stephenson (1803-59), only son of George, was appointed the engineer for the project and a mere three years later the whole line was in operation.

In 1847 Tamworth also became a stop on the Trent Valley line from Rugby to Stafford, on the route from London to Manchester built by the London and North Western Railway to avoid Birmingham and reduce journey times between London and the northwest.

A new joint station was erected, to service both companies' lines. The original Birmingham and Derby Company's station building was demolished in the summer of 1846; tragically a workman was killed when part of the building fell on him on 19 August. William Barber was a Tamworth man, about 45 years of age; he was working inside the building, undermining the back wall, when the whole structure, consisting of between two and three thousand bricks, collapsed and crushed him.

William had previously worked as an agricultural labourer in Hints; he and his wife Charlotte had eight children recorded in the census of 1841.

The opening ceremony for the new London to Manchester line was held in Tamworth on Saturday 26 June 1847 and was attended by six hundred people. Many of the guests were brought in by train; one came from Stafford and points north, with sixteen carriages pulled by a new engine built at Crewe.

The second ran from the Euston Square station, achieving a record speed of sixty-three miles per hour on its journey to Tamworth, arriving just two minutes after the first. A huge pavilion had been erected for the guests, with a dinner presided over by Edward Tootal (c1800-1873), the Deputy Chairman of the railway company who was also a manufacturer of silk scarves and ties, trading as Edward Tootal & Co, an enterprise which grew into one of the largest cotton manufacturers in Manchester.

The principal guest was Sir Robert Peel, with whom Edward Tootal had worked closely. With him were a great many distinguished people from Tamworth and beyond, directors of railway companies, Mayors from towns along the line and others, including Joseph Paxton, later to design the Crystal Palace.

Sir Robert Peel, who had cut the first sod for the railway on 13 November 1845, gave a speech which was extremely well received, concluding with a toast to the prosperity of the Trent Valley Railway. At twenty-five past five, the trains and guests left Tamworth.

The 1847 main building

© Tamworth Digital archive



The architect of the new joint station building of 1847 was John Livock (1814-83) who had designed several stations for the London and North Western, including the station at Atherstone. They were all in a similar style; sadly, Atherstone is the only one to have survived.

A contemporary description observed Tamworth's station building was larger than any other on the line and was very extensive, in the Elizabethan style. It was built of red brick, with stone dressings, which gave it a very pleasing effect; in addition to which, its general outline had '*considerable pretensions to architectural character*'.

The lower floor of the building was taken up by the booking office and waiting rooms of the LNWR, whilst the upper floor was used by the Midland Railway Company, the two floors connected by '*a handsome stone staircase*'. The chimneys were a notable feature of the design, of red brick and of a style matching the whole. The magnificence of the building was probably a reflection of the frequent use made of the line by the leading statesman and local landowner, Sir Robert Peel.

Very sadly this wonderful building was demolished by British Rail in July 1961 as part of its proposals to electrify the line, which included reconstructing and renovating stations as deemed necessary; it was deemed necessary to sweep away Tamworth station.

The new station was built by Sir Alfred MacAlpine & Sons at a cost of £200,000 and was formally opened on Monday 24 September 1962 by Mr H.T.W. Millar, director of the Midland Region of the General Post Office.

It was reported the station had a machine, which had cost £5,600, to print tickets on demand - a great innovation - but had no public telephone, something that led to some local argument. The fee for parking on the station approach was 1s 6d which the Mayor thought rather exorbitant.

Despite efforts to improve the look of the station in 2002, it is a bleak and ugly edifice with absolutely no pretensions to architectural character whatsoever, a sorry and disappointing replacement for the exuberant original.

The railway and the rapid access it enabled with major English cities added to Tamworth's prosperity; passengers could travel with ease and new markets were opened up, particularly for agricultural and horticultural produce which from then on could quickly access the burgeoning markets in Birmingham.

We ran out of space. So brace yourselves for Part 3 in the next issue! EDITOR.

Remember this is Chapter one of the first of three books on ***Victorian Tamworth.*** *We have the review of the second volume on the following page and the full review of the first one you have been reading* **on this link**



The 1962 main building
© Tamworth Digital archive

Francis Wilson

by Maurice Wilson



My great grandfather Francis Wilson was born on the 5th February 1835 in Whittington near Lichfield and baptised on the 8th March 1835 at St Giles Whittington.

He was the son of John Wilson and Ann nee Nevill. Francis married Eliza Percival at St Bartholomew's Hints on the 30th June 1864. Eliza was born at Over Whitacre in 1835 and was a servant at a farm house in Hints at the time of their marriage. Francis and Eliza went on to have 10 children, William, Ann, Frank, Martha, Mary, Samuel, Joseph, Alice, Henry (my grandfather), and Lizzie.
On the 26th March 1866 Francis, Eliza with son William moved to Canal Road Hopwas. Canal Road is today's School Lane but in the 1890's it was also known as Hopwas Wood Road. On finding no Methodism in Hopwas, Francis opened up his cottage in May 1866 for public services and church meetings.

In the succeeding year he started a Sunday School with 24 scholars in his parlour.

School Lane
© Tamworth Digital archive









When the cottage became too small for holding services a new Wesleyan Chapel was built in 1888 in Hints Road.

The four corner memorial stones were laid by Mr Bassett, Mr Argyle, Mrs Slater on behalf of Mr Slater and Mr North. Bricks were then subsequently laid by other people who had paid half a guinea each.



All Pictures © Tamworth Digital archive





Wesleyan Temple, Victoria Road
Hand coloured image
© Tamworth Digital archive

I'm not sure when or how Francis came to embrace Methodism but on the 1861 census he was at Orgreave Hall as a servant aged 26. There was also a visitor there at this time a George Bussell who was a Methodist Minister. Was this the man who encouraged Francis to Methodism?

The house where they lived on School Lane was later named Percival House using Eliza's maiden name. Francis's business was a baker, caterer and grocer. In some trade directories he is also described as a farmer.

Post Office/Percival House

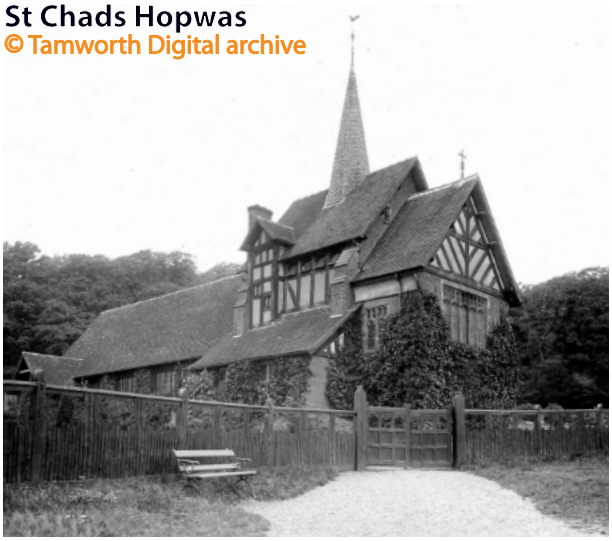


He rented Long Lea a field in Nursery Lane Hopwas. There was a granary adjacent to the shop as well as many outbuildings. There was a large room at ground level and the granary was accessed by steps outside.

In later years Percival House was split into two. One side being the local post office run by Lizzie Wilson, Francis's youngest child. Lizzie took over the post office role on 1st July 1929. She died in 1967 and was buried in St Chad's churchyard.

Beside Francis being a local preacher and Sunday School Superintendent he was also one of the original trustees of the Tamworth Wesleyan Temple in Victoria Road and the Methodist Church in Lichfield.

St Chads Hopwas
© Tamworth Digital archive



He held the post of chairman of Wigginton Parish Council, he was vice chairman of Hopwas Band of Hope and manager of Thomas Barnes School as well as a trustee there for 25 years. He was a staunch temperance advocate. He preached at Hopwas, Lichfield, Little Hay, Shenstone and Alrewas travelling there by horse and cart.

His son Samuel followed in his footsteps and became a local preacher covering many local villages. His main occupation was a furrier. In the Tamworth Herald of 1948 detailing his funeral at the Chapel the Reverend J McLoughlin, superintendent minister of the Tamworth Methodist circuit praised *"his personal character and outstanding loyalty and devotion to the church in Hopwas and indeed to Methodism throughout the district. He had inherited a great and worthy tradition from his parents, and throughout his life had played his part in carrying on the work they had begun.*

A local preacher of 45 years standing, last year Mr Wilson had been presented with a diploma for long and valued service by the connexional local preachers' secretary. One of his most treasured memories was when he was invited by the priest in charge of St Chad's Church to give the address at a united peace service at that church."

Sam was buried in St Chad's churchyard.



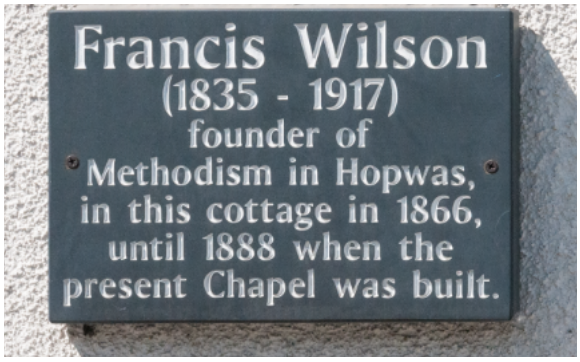
Hopwas Band of Hope

Francis was not perfect and was fined for having unjust scales in the shop, working a lame horse and also for having a horse and cart without lights! He liked Sundays to be a day for the Lord and if any of the family thought he was going to visit they would hide newspapers and anything they knew he would complain about.

Eliza died on the 10th May 1890 and is buried in St Chad's churchyard Hopwas with a large memorial stone. Francis died on the 3rd September 1917 at Swynnerton near Stone at his daughter's house. He was brought back to Hopwas and buried, I believe, with Eliza. His name is not on the memorial stone because I was told there was no money for it to be inscribed. It seems he was very generous with his money in advancing the Lord's work!

In recent years I had a memorial stone added to the grave and also a plaque attached to Percival House in School Lane. A dedication service took place on the 4th October 2013 and a photo was taken of four great grand children and a great great grandchild.





As the congregation grew at the Chapel in Hints Road a new school room was opened in 1903 and a new vestry in memory of Francis was opened in 1936. In the Tamworth Herald of January 1936 it reports that *"the opening of a new vestry immortalises the religion's work of the late Mr*



Tomb of Eliza Wilson
© Tamworth Digital archive

Francis Wilson, the founder of Methodism in the village in 1866, to whose memory the building has been dedicated. At the same time a framed portrait of Mr Wilson was unveiled.

Mr Bonas JP of Derby a well known Methodist local preacher and great friend of the late Mr Wilson said *"he took great pleasure in declaring the vestry open. A building dedicated in memory of one of his greatest friends - and in unveiling the photograph, Mr Wilson, he found, was a man who believed in God, and his faith was the great factor which moved his life and helped him to live in righteousness and truth."* This portrait is still in the vestry today.

In the garden at the Chapel is a bench made from a ship called the "SS Reina del Pacifico" which had been built in 1931. This ship was eventually scrapped in 1958 and a company in Blyth

Northumberland made the bench from the oak timbers. The bench was given by Miss Lizzie Wilson in memory of her father Francis.

The chapel has been used by the Wilson family through the years for baptisms, funerals and weddings. The chapel has always had a close association with St Chad's church and they often work closely together. The 2 churches signed a covenant to worship and work together for the Lord.

Francis would be so pleased to know that the Chapel is still open today with a good congregation still worshipping and serving the community



Hopwas Methodist Chapel
© Tamworth Digital archive


St Chads Church, Hopwas
© Tamworth Digital archive

Mounted Police in Tamworth



Mounted Police, Colehill, Tamworth 2026
© Tamworth Digital archive

You may ask yourself what a photograph of an event from September 2026 is doing in the October 2026 issue of a Heritage magazine, as well you should.

I am going to fall back on the trite answer of: Today is tomorrow's history but there is more to it. When editing the photographs of the demonstration on the 12th September I wondered when was the last time there were mounted police in Tamworth?

There have been suggestions that there were mounted police in the Tamworth Carnivals in the past. However searching our limited database of about 150 photos Tamworth carnivals we have drawn a blank.

We assume there were some for Queen Victoria's visit, but that was more ceremonial. There have been a couple of minor riots in Tamworth but those were more spontaneous.

The local police and their media team said "nothing recent" and they are delving back in to the records but this may well be a first. Nothing says a Heritage Magazine cant record history as it happens.

Unless… does anyone have any photos or any information on mounted Police in Tamworth town centre?
Contact Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk

Mounted Police, at Domino's Ride Through
© Tamworth Digital archive

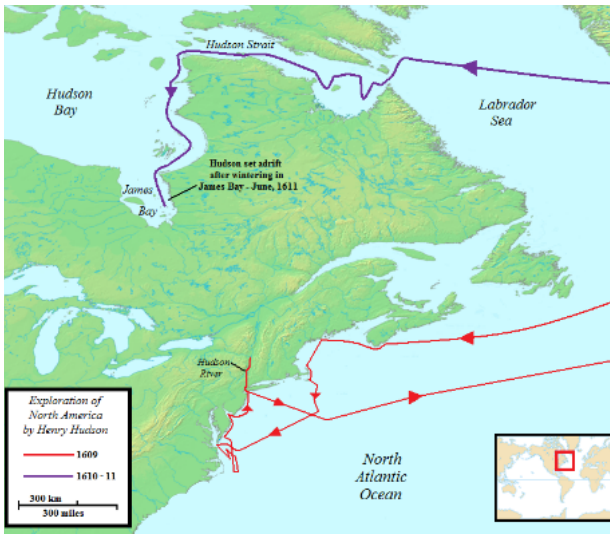


Tamworth Re-name's a river in the USA

There has been a lot of renaming of things of late. Well… a lot of erroneous renaming as these days there are processes and procedures for re/naming things like museums, theatres, areas of land, areas of water and rivers.

However going back even 100 years it was possible for "those in charge" and that is a loose term, to change names at will. Many native peoples will point out that they already had names for places before someone from somewhere else turned up and renamed it on a whim. There are several Tamworth's around the world where an explorer tried to curry favour with an Earl or Prime Minister who had a home near Tamworth.

Our story is a bit like that Sir Henry Hudson though probably born in London came from a long standing Tamworth family. Certainly his Great Grandfather, Rudolph, and Grandfather, Henry, were born in Tamworth (1475 and 1500 respectively) Grandfather married Barbara in St Editha's in 1525. Their two sons were also born in Tamworth, 1528 and 1541, one being a Henry. This is where things get vague and it is thought that our man was born in London. His Grandfather was a founder of the Muscovy Company that traded with Russia by sea. This is the key! The North West Passage over Canada to get to Russia, China, India etc. is far shorter than any other route to the south. This was long before the Panama and Suez Canals. The Dutch were also looking for the North West Passage. It was a race.





In 1607 Our Henry Hudson set off in a small ship with10 crew for a recce of Greenland and Canada. He did a follow up in 1608 both for the Muscovy Company.

However in 1609 Henry was employed by the Dutch East India Company for a third expedition. This was when he found the river "Mauritius" named by Italian (Giovanni da Verrazzano) in 1542. However he renamed it the Hudson River and it has stayed as that ever since.

It is worth noting that on his way back to Holland he out in at Dartmouth and was detained and his logs examined by the English authorities and that his next voyage was for the British East India Company. That might be suspicious to some, who was he really working for?.

On his 1610/11 exploration again to the north looking for a way to the Pacific he named the "Hudson Strait" at the northern tip of Labrador and then the Hudson Bay as he moved west. Possibly having in mind finding a route south to the Hudson river he wintered in James Bay.

After that it gets murky as there was a mutiny (we only have the winners account) and Hudson with a few others were put in a small boat and that is the last anyone saw of them.

There are however sightings, myths and legends abounding about that last voyage and the aftermath, enough to fill a book, which some have done..

For now it is enough to know that a Tamworth Family (re)named a great river in the USA (and a strait and a bay).

Book Review

The Infant Impressionist

Peter Argyle
Published: Peter Argyle Publishing
www.peterargyle.com
Published July 2026
ISBN 978-1036992972
Softcover 210 pages
14.2cm by 22.8cm



This is the fourth book in Peter Argyle's family history *trilogy*, even though he claims it isn't. The other three are the Argyles in Tamworth from the Victorian and Edwardian eras through to the first part of the 20th century. The first two volumes having been reviewed in Vol4 Issue, 2 and Vol 4 Issue. 3 with the Third volume is due out at the end of 2026.

In contrast this book is about John Argyle (1911-1962) He was born in Tamworth but much of his schooling was elsewhere and his career was in London or Africa. However he is a son of Tamworth and he did start his career in Tamworth. So we will include it here.

Like all Peter's books they are very well researched and his journalistic nose lead him down many rabbit holes to give a full picture [sic] of John Argyle's life though in print not celluloid.

John Argyle had, it appears a fascination with making movies that showed at school. Hi did not complete the 6th form but aged 17 went to London to be an apprentice film cameraman. After a year and a half came back to Tamworth to start his own film production, Note these were silent films that were successful as B Movies. After 3 years he then moved back to London.

The book works its way through 20 years of UK film production. Mentioning actors and actresses, directors, cameramen etc. In Peter Argyles normal style everyone mentioned gets an abridged biography which can slow up the flow of the main story. but the information will be invaluable for anyone with an interest in British movies of the 20s 30s and 40s because John Argyle whilst being "only" a B movie producer actually spotted and launched many British film stars that became household names. He became known for it.

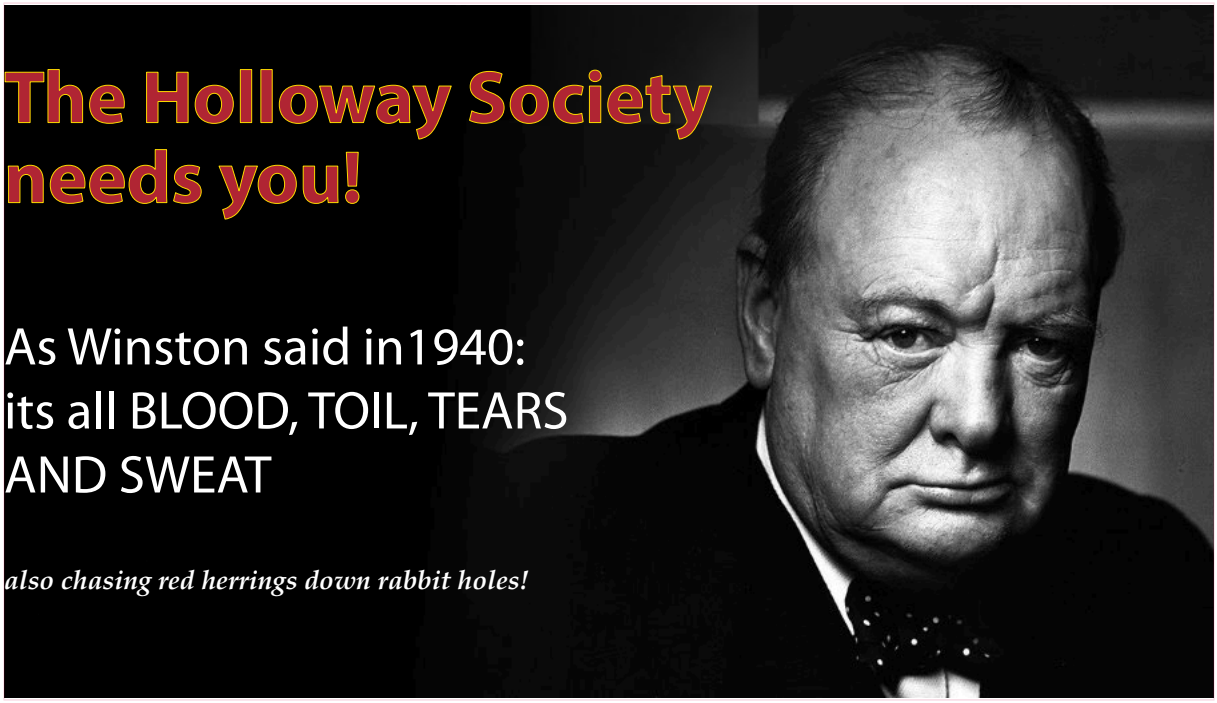
The latter half of John's career after WW2 was for Government Film Units in several African countries, though the information on this is light. Records are sparse and people long gone.

Despite all the detail of the films, crew, locations and studios John's first marriage is mentioned in about three places with a line in each. There is more on John's second marriage but again the information is light. Having spoken to Peter Argyle I think, his advice, and this reviewer's, is to talk to family members whilst they are still alive (and write things down)!

Sadly, none of the films from John's three years in Tamworth are thought to exist.

One thing that is apparent in the book is that the London Movie trade magazine "Kine Weekly" did not like John. Probably because of his age, he was half the age of other film producers, though this softened when back in London he was attracting the top talent. One wonders where things would have gone with less criticism from "Kine Weekly"magazine. In John's first three years

Readers of the book will be left wondering if with a different roll of the dice Tamworth could have become the UK's Hollywood?



The Holloway Society which includes the Tamworth Heritage Magazine also the Digital Archive and both Genealogy and History Research groups, has many on going projects. Our only problem is time. We could cut corners as others have done but the teams want do to things properly. This involves research, cross checking and often *chasing red herrings down rabbit holes*! Hence our motto!

We are looking for volunteers to help with the video team, the [digital] archive team, web team, general research, photography, magazine and book artwork and cover design. Despite most of our work being on-line, sometimes it means actually going to look at something physical in the wild outdoors. Occasionally working with authors to find additional material for their article from our extensive archive is required.

The current team ranges from their 20s to 70s Base skills needed are being computer literate. We are happy to utilise whatever skills you can offer. We can also provide training sessions and we have access to half day courses, which we encourage team members to take. New skills are often learned on the job.

We are a dispersed working group so we don't have formal meetings, though as we expand socials will be a good idea. In fact THM hasn't met some of the authors face to face, they come from across the UK. Its all email and phone!

So if you have an interest in documentary film making, journalism, photography, publishing, database design, catalogue creation, HTML web design, book design, cover art, researching, architecture, and of course any interest in history and heritage contact the Chair of the Holloway Society.

Volunteers do need to be 18+, own a computer and have internet access. The rest we can sort out. See www.HollowaySociety.org.uk

Contact Chair@HollowaySociety.org.uk

Come and Join the Team!

THE HOLLOWAY SOCIETY

Persequimur allecibus rubrum in cavernis leporis

Letters to the Editor



Max Headroom, A presenter you can trust.



Marmion Junior School, Salters Lane
© Tamworth Digital archive

Dear Editor
I have come across a fascinating video explaining why you have to be so careful when searching the internet for history. There has been a veritable explosion of AI generated history content on places like YouTube. This video Click here explains why several YouTube "history" Channels should be avoided at all costs.

Whist this video focuses on videos about WW2 there are similar AI or simply wrong videos covering all parts of history.

This is exacerbating the bad history on Wikipedia. Therefore check your research.
Regards
Max Headroom

EDITOR: Thanks to Max Headroom for pointing out this trend. If anyone should know it is Max who has been doing this since 1985. However the Editor can confirm that dozens of new YouTube Channels have sprung up with auto generated AI videos that are at best (poor) fiction.

Dear Editor
I am not sure if you can help/advise, my husband and I are trying to source a school photo from 1968.

We both attended **Marmion junior school, Tamworth, Salters Lane.** Together, we were in Mr Watsons class in 1968, this is were our friendship /love began, and 60 years later and lots of life in between me in UK him in Australia, we have recently come together again and married.

We would love to find a class photo, any help would be appreciated. We have found some pictures but class photos form they 60s are evading us.
Kind regards
Gail & George

EDITOR Can anyone help Gail and George with pictures of Marmion Junior School? 1986 is the target date but if you have any years from the 80s and 90s might have at least one or the other of them in it. Sadly all we have for the school is the picture above and the demolition below.

In any case The Holloway Society's Archive www.TamworthArchive.org.uk would like to build up as many class photos of possible where the school, teacher, year and as many people as possible are named. This will be invaluable in the future.



Dear Editor
I am writing to introduce my new book, **The Unofficial Wolverhampton**, which I hope may be of interest to your readers and followers of Staffordshire and West Midlands history.

The book explores Wolverhampton's history, people, music, industry, sport and some of the city's stranger and less familiar stories. Organised from A to Z, it is intended as an accessible account of the city and its historical connections with the surrounding region.

I wondered whether you might be willing to mention the book through your magazine, or share the link with readers who have an interest in Wolverhampton and regional history.

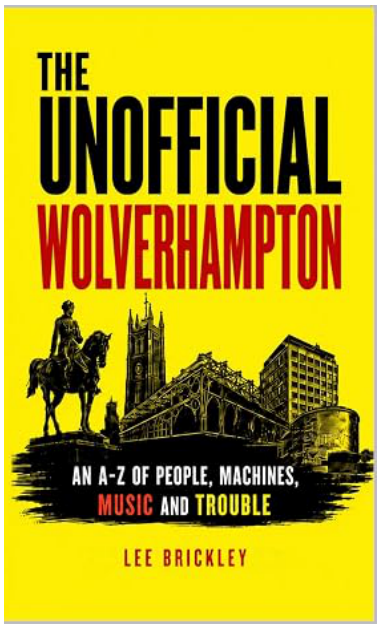
Publication details:
Title: The Unofficial Wolverhampton
Author: Lee Andrew Brickley
ISBN-13: 979-8188393120
Publication date: 21 July 2026
Format: Paperback
Length: 334 pages
The book can be viewed here:
https://amzn.eu/d/0cwskihc

Thank you very much for considering it.
Best wishes,
Lee Andrew

Editor: *Whilst your Editor (who hails from London) has no comprehension as to why any sane person would be interested in Wolverhampton we do understand that there are some in Tamworth who formerly lived in, or have had connections with Wolverhampton and may have an interest in the city.*

Therefore, hoping that it does not cause to much stress, we mention the book her for those who would like to read it.

We note that in the example pages on the above link there is a "Bibliography" listed after the "Z" listings! Which leads your editor to believe that this is a well researched book and that+ those buying it may find that it is the start of a journey. Possibly in to the ***Houses of the Holy****, for those who might have guessed who is in the "Z" section for Wolverhampton.*



That said we have not read this book and it is a bit far out from Tamworth to go in to the Review section but we mention it here as not everyone in Tamworth came from Brum.

Dear Editor

Have you got any photos of coop bakery and slaughter house in orchard street please. My gran use to work at coop bakery just wanted to see some photos as I've not seen any photos in any books or google. I don't have any photos or info as i was a kid just told she worked in the bake house
Regards
Lee Latham

EDITOR: *The Picture below we believe is Orchard Street in 1888, the west side but we have no idea if it*



is the co-op. Does anyone have any other photos that can be confirmed as Orchard street? Preferably with any dates.

This will help Lee and it will help the Holloway Society as we are building our archive of Tamworth from 1960. Its not just getting the photos but identifying where and crucially when they were taken then we will be able to rebuild the streets through the ages and maybe even identify people in them.

Dear Editor
(See document below from Letters to the editor in the last issue V4 I3)

That is Cole Hill in Tamworth, it's just the way it was written. There was never a Cow Hill or Mow Hill.

The document reads:
"Mrs Susannah Willingtons purchase of the Ground on which the House on Cole Hill in Tamworth is built with Length from Street to Summer House – is 135? Or thereabouts (abbreviated) Yards – Breadth 10 Yards in Narrowest part & 12 Yards in the Broadest = purchased for £30"

'1684' has been added by someone else in different handwriting. Also just below the line – "The will messuages" (abbreviated) – messuages was the term for outbuildings.
Having spent many years reading similar documents in museums and the Castle Archives I could see it straightaway.

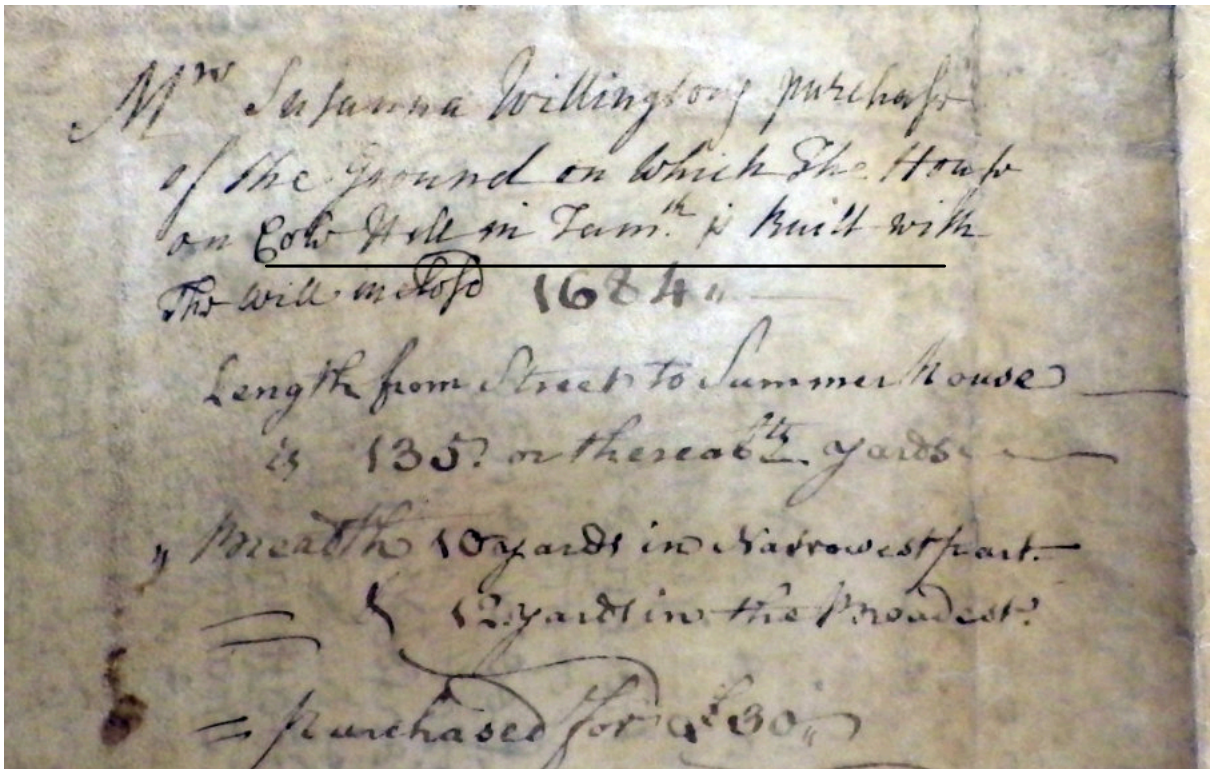
Colehill as a road runs from Lower Gungate to Bolebridge Street. This runs north-south just to the east of St Editha's Church in the town centre.

This is why the words are "the House on Cole Hill in Tamworth is built" You, like me and a good many other people confuse it with Coleshill which is the town about 20 miles to the south. It doesn't help that Colehill in Tamworth is just that. No "street" or "road" just Colehill.

Kind regards,
Sarah

Editor *Many thanks for that Sarah. It defeated the several teachers on our team who can read most things, but as you demonstrate you do have to understand the current and old street names .*

Sadly the owner of the document is more interested in the cash value than the historical or heritage value of the item. He did send us a transcript of the document with all the names replaced with XXX asking is we wanted to buy the Original! Not having the very high amount he wanted it looks like we will loose the history too.


Mrs Susanna Willingtons purchase
of the Ground on which the House
on Cole Hill in Tam.th is built with
The will messuages 1684
Length from Street to Summer House
is 135? or thereabouts yards
& Breadth 10 yards in Narrowest part
& 12 yards in the Broadest
= purchased for £30

Dear Editor

Firstly thanks for the chance to access your Tamworth Heritage magazine, which I enjoy reading even when the articles are not about railways, although in fact you seem to cover railways quite frequently. The recent Irish Mail accident article caught my eye, as did those about the Trent Valley line and Tamworth Railways, and even Part 4 of your Elford Childhood series about railway folk and the item about an MP's son falling from a train. However I was also fascinated to see the online history of Rugeley Power Station, having been employed by CEGB for many years before the privatisation and my move to Germany, having visited power stations all around the country and met Granville Camsey who features in the video, a real, sometimes larger than life character, and not someone who you'd forget.

A reason for writing especially today is to mention that the Midland Railway Society and Lancaster University's Regional Heritage Centre are organising a Conference on 21 November 2026 to mark the 200th anniversary of railways, as well as the 150th anniversary of the Settle & Carlisle opening. To be fair, Lancaster isn't exactly around the corner from Tamworth despite both being on the West Coast main line, and a large majority of our own members are at a similar distance, but for this reason we're also offering the conference online via Teams. The key details are:

Midland Railway Society & Lancaster University 200 Years of Railways Conference, Lancaster and online, 21 November 2026 How the railway transformed population, society, literature, law and everyday life in 19th and early 20th-century Britain Details at: https://midlandrailwaysociety.org.uk/railways-200-years-that-transformed-britain/

Where you can see more about the conference arrangements and topics, which take a fresh look at aspects of railway history, for example the legal implications of George Hudson's business practices, railway accidents and Victorian literature, and the effect of railway development on population change, as well as the role of railway staff in the interface with railway passengers.

Unfortunately there is a charge for tickets but the event is not-for-profit and the ticket price for online is half the rate for those attending in



person. In order to attract the interest of more young people in railway history, **we're also offering a reduced rate to students,** not least of course those at Lancaster; with this in mind, our discussions with the University include the potential for student research into the Midland, with support which we would provide and hopefully the benefit for the Society of new knowledge and insights.

As a voluntary organisation yourselves, you're no doubt more than conscious of a constant need for new blood and the difficulty of attracting people.

The overall conference concept includes a series of follow-up online talks during the coming winter, which will have a more specifically Midland flavour, and perhaps these could also be of interest. Themes already under consideration, particularly linking Derby and Lancaster, are for example the Midland's route to the Lancashire coast and its ports for the Isle of Man and Ireland, or the Cavendish family with their interests in Derbyshire and the Midland as well as in Furness – its railway and the iron and steel industry there. Further details of the programme will be available in time for the conference.

Regards
Graham Booking

EDITOR: *Many thanks for the information of both the conference and your Society. I know that the several authors who have written about the railways in the Tamworth Heritage Magazine have leaned on your website and archives. The Railways have always been very important for Tamworth with a direct lines to London, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol, Nottingham and Sheffield, though I don't think the town capitalised on it as much as it could have done. Two main lines and two good yards should have made it a major rail hub.*

Dear Editor

Many thanks for the update on the Fazeley banners.

I have an update of my own on the history of the banners. Please see the attached copy of John Harper's article from the Tamworth Herald of 29/3/1995 – www.newspapers.com/image/1012936361 - relating to the discovery of the banners during alterations some years after the chapel's closure and their rescue from the skip. I was involved with the exhibition at Central Methodist Church referred to and have no recollection of the banners being displayed and cannot ask Joe Hunter what happened to them as he has now passed away.



Victorian banners were destined for bins

Worshipper saves historic standards as work starts on church conversion

As far as I am aware, the Fazeley banners join the Tamworth and District Band of Hope and Total Abstinence Union and Tamworth Baptist Band of Hope banners in the Castle archives.

Yes, I can certainly write something for the Magazine and would be happy to do but will need to know how they came to be stored in a "barn".

On another matter, it would seem that nobody came up with an answer to "Doorway to Tamworth" in Volume 2 Issue 4 of the Magazine. I'd soon loose count of the number of times I walked up and down the steps of 10 Colehill whilst working at Dewes & Son, Solicitors now the Sheriff of Tamworth (which Tamworth never, of course, had).

Of some concern to me and I'm sure others to others to is the future of the Trust in the light of the decision of St Editha's PCC with others to acquire and convert the former TSB premises into a Heritage Centre in the light of the principal objective of the Trust *"to work towards the creation of a Heritage Centre and to acquire a building to this end."* I do appreciate that, as yet, to my knowledge, completion of purchase of the premises is yet to take place.

Regards,
Michael

Editor: *Many thanks for your letter. We would love an article on the history of the banners found in the barn. There was a strong Temperance movement in Tamworth and indeed the UK as a whole. A lot of it supported by the wealthy industrialists who wanted a sober workforce. This support dissipated somewhat when the Licensing Hours were curtailed around WW1 and the 1920s. The Temperance moment and indeed the Baptist congregations declined as the support from the employers also declined.*

Yes the doorway was indeed the Sheriff of Tamworth as it is now. You are correct that Tamworth never had a Sheriff. I thing they tended to be county wide.

I should note at this point that Micheal's letter came in just as we were putting the Spring Issue to bed and unfortunately missed the summer issue due to the Editors filing system and things have moved on.

The Tamworth Heritage Trust was indeed intended "to work towards the creation of a Heritage Centre and to acquire a building to this end." but resisted all attempts to do so, certainly in later years. However as we mention in the Editorial Tamworth Heritage Trust closed over the summer and is no longer.

As for St Editha's PCC attempt to acquire and convert the former TSB in Church Street, that to failed for multiple reasons as far as we can ascertain. St Editha's is now working with the Castle to have a "pop-up" gallery in Ankerside which at least, puts a plaster over several problems at once. Though at the moment this appears to be a 12 month venture only.



weave a narrative around the facts and to bring her story to life.

Nick has agreed to write a future article, about researching Mary's fascinating story, for the Tamworth Heritage Magazine. If you would like to know more about this local lady who went on to do marvellous work within nursing and who started her humble life in our lovely little town continue to watch this space. We will also be reviewing of Nick's book, when it is written.

The Genealogy Group hosted Sir Nick Black and his wife Pippa at Christopher's in Tamworth for a coffee and to catch up on the progress of Nick's new book.

Nick contacted Tamworth Genealogy Group to request assistance in researching the family of Mary Jones born in the Tamworth in 1812, daughter of Edward and Mary Jones. Mary moved to London and joined the St John's Sisterhood in Fitzroy Square, London. Whilst she was Sister-in-Charge, the sisterhood took over the nursing and day to day running of Kings College Hospital, under the supervision and instruction of Mary, transforming how the hospital was run. Over the next decade all the other London hospitals were to implement the same transformations. Mary became a close friend of Florence Nightingale through her work in the London hospitals. In 1868 Mary resigned her positions at the London hospitals and within a month had founded her own religious community of St Mary and St John at Mecklenberg Street, Kings Cross. She became their Mother Superior. The Order provided nursing care to the workhouses of London. Mary died from typhoid fever in 1875, aged 75.

The research into Mary's life in Tamworth, provided by Tamworth Genealogy Group, has helped Nick to put together a detailed understanding of Mary's life prior to her move to London. Also providing him with many research links, within archives in London, to investigate about her life once she was there. He expressed his sincere gratitude for the contribution Tamworth Genealogy Group had made in establishing the life events in Mary's early years in Tamworth which has enabled him to begin to

The aims of the Holloway Society are to record Tamworth's rich history and focus on the lives of the ordinary folk of the town. Like Mary's there are many more interesting stories to be told of the people that once made Tamworth great. If you would be interested in researching some of these people, or other aspects of the town's history, we would love to hear from you.
Please contact either:- editor@tamworthheritage.org.uk or info@TamworthGenealogy.org.uk

Additionally members of the Holloway Society met Peter Argyle when he gave a talk in Tamworth about his Argyle Family history that, as the family were solicitors, town clerks, Councillors and film makers covers most of Tamworth life in the Victorian, Edwardian times through to the present day. The Magazine will be reviewing the 4th book in the Trilogy early next year.



Next Edition

Winter 2027

Publication Date: 1st January

Copy Date: 16th November

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) 16th November
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 indicate in text approximate placement for each image. Images as high quality as you can manage in PNG, tiff or JPG. We can scan or convert most other formats. **Also any video. We can link in Video**

The Editorial Team can help with research, finding documents, scanning items, finding images (we have a photo library of over 20,000 images). We can take new photos if you need help with photography

Being a PDF magazine: We can also link-in web site links and video or audio files. **We can also produce video and audio if required**. Just contact the 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 5 Issue 1 and we hope to be a little more organised with what is in these issues than we were for volume 4.

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 45 Issue 1 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