

Tamworth

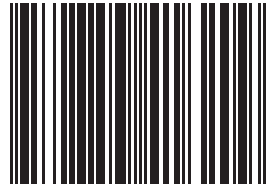
HERITAGE

Magazine

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Preserving the Past, Recording the Present
Safeguarding the Future

Tamworth Heritage Magazine

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



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Back Image: Tamworth Town Hall, Market Street, East elevation © JAMedia

Tamworth Heritage Magazine Editorial Board

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

This board currently comprises:

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

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

Rebecca Jewkes BA(Hons) MA(History), is a family historian passionate about social history, especially in Tamworth. She focuses on the lives of ordinary people from the 1800s onwards, capturing their voices and experiences.

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.

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Holloway © Tamworth Digital archive

Welcome from the Editor

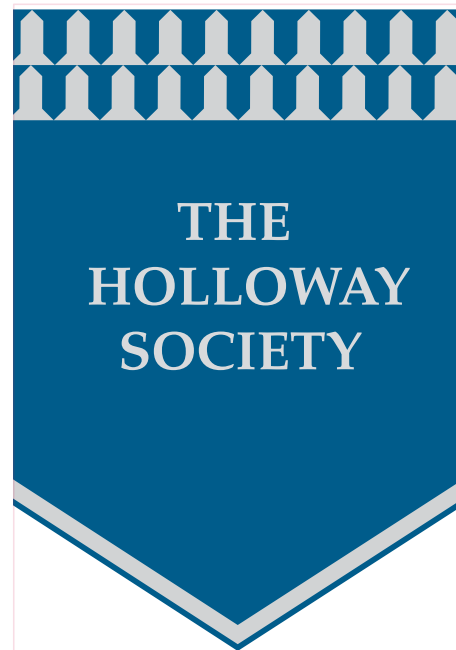
We did it!

Here we are at Volume 4 issue 2 and things really have changed a lot. Well the Magazine looks the same and is keeping up the 50 page format (up from 25 pages in volume 1). So what has changed?

The Magazine has been taken over! We are now part of the newly formed Holloway Society. See www.HollowaySociety.org.uk . This has been a long time coming.

The general plans for an organisation like this were set out some 5 years ago before the magazine even started. The idea is for a single group with various “departments” specialising in various things, the group being greater than the sum of its parts and actually researching and producing new works. Also cataloguing and detailing what we did know.

After much work, lots of discussions and a very quiet soft launch last month we now have the Holloway Society, comprising of the magazine, a [digital archive](#) (of some 30,000 items), a specialist [genealogy group](#), a generic [history research group](#), web sites, secure on-line storage and.... Well, that is on-going as we have various bits of the organisation to err... Organise.



Though, we do of course have an Executive Committee, bank account, constitution and operations manual with all the required protocols and policies.

There are about 20 of us and we expect that to grow by at least 50% in the coming month as we invite various people who have been helping to join us. Then there is everyone else. *You for example!* See www.HollowaySociety.org.uk .



We are project and skills based rather than having monthly meetings. So people can research at home (or a library) in their own time and meet the project team by email, zoom or over a coffee in a café (or a pint in a pub) whenever it suits the project team.

Would you like to join us? We have two levels of membership.

Member: This is someone who wants to actively research and contribute to the work we are doing.

Associate Member: This is someone who wants to support the Society but not commit to active work. The difference is the Members get to vote.

The Associate Members can attend any meetings, speak, offer proposals for projects etc. but the members actually doing the work get to vote on it. This stops the Associate Members forcing those actively working into things they don't want to do. Though there is nothing stopping Associate Members who have some time on their hands helping out on a project.

See [page 44](#) for some of the skills we are looking for. Not just an interest in history and heritage but a wide range of skills from journalism to film making and IT including databases.

Because we are project based and mixing up skills we hope this will attract people of all ages, indeed whilst many of our members are 50s 60s we do have people in their 30s and 40s. We are hoping that younger people who are still working and students will be interested in working with us.

We are aiming to work to professional standards wherever possible and talk to county and national bodies.

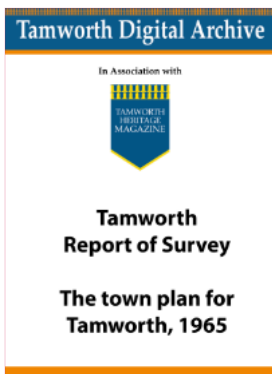
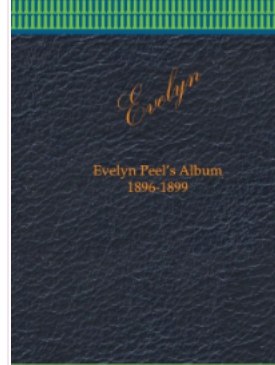
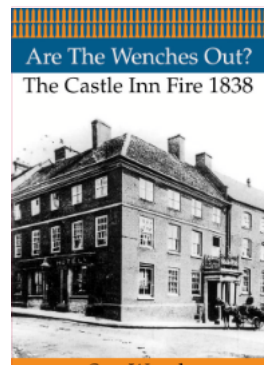
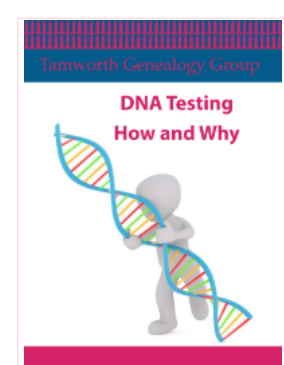
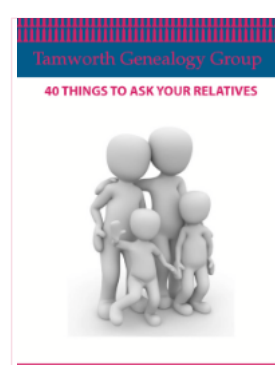
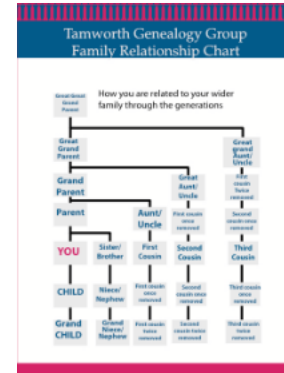
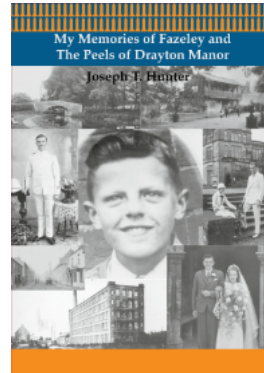
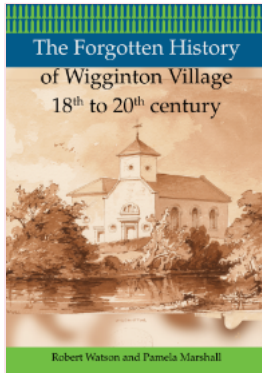
We are the Holloway Society because the Holloway was the old Staffs-Warks border and Tamworth has been in both counties (and could move again) so we are interested on anything on a 10(ish) mile radius of Tamworth regardless of county. See www.HollowaySociety.org.uk . For a membership form.

Publications from the Holloway Society

Being a research Society we publish work and so far, other than the 14 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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Thomas Guy

by Marg Jones



The Original Guys Hospital, now part of Kings College London is next to the current Guys Hospital in St Thomas Street..

After three years of Tamworth Heritage Magazine avoiding most of the obvious Tamworth Stories we have relented and have an article on Thomas Guy.

Most people will have heard Thomas Guy, The Alms houses and Guy's Hospital in London, but: Who was Thomas Guy and what is his connection to Tamworth? Why is there a hospital named after him in London? Why no one from Tamworth can stay in the Alms houses, and why was a statue of him in London boarded up in 2020? Read on to find out the answers to these questions and more!

Early Life

Thomas Guy was born in Southwark, South London in 1644 in the North East corner of Pritchard's Alley, number 7 to be exact, just off Fair Street in Horsleydown, near to the church of St John and not far from where Guy's hospital would later be built. Though the Alley has now gone Fair street still remains a few 100 metres south of Tower Bridge.

No record of his birth exists; his father was an Anabaptist and would not have attended the parish church or had his children baptised so his children's birth would not appear in the parish records.

Thomas Guy by John-Vanderbank 1706



Thomas Guy *senior* came from Egham in Surrey, he was a carpenter, probably a boat builder, and a lighterman (a lighter was a small cargo boat) and a coal merchant who would have taken coal from sea going vessels (which had travelled from Newcastle) in his lighter, to a wharf on the Thames where it would be sold, consequently he was no doubt quite well off.

Thomas Guy's mother was Anne Vaughton from Tamworth. There is no record of how his parents met or when they married, which was probably around 1643.

However after living until he was eight in London, Thomas's father died in 1652 (again no details are available) so his mother returned to Tamworth with Thomas and his younger brother John, born on 1648, and sister Ann, probably still a baby. Again being Anabaptist's there is no record of birth or baptism.

They went to live with Anne's relatives, a family called the Voughtons (or Vaughtons as spellings were less fixed in those days). Anne was the second daughter of Thomas Vaughton and had been baptised at St Editha's in Tamworth in 1625, so she was still fairly young at 25.

Members of her family were butchers and clothiers, they served as churchwardens at St Editha's and acted as bailiffs and burgesses (those who could vote for the town's member of parliament).

Anne's father died around the time the family returned to Tamworth, and other relatives must have helped the family, but she no doubt also had money from her husband's former business.

It is not known where they lived, although the hearth tax returns of 1671 show that John Vaughton, probably her brother, lived in George Street, in a house with 3 hearths, a fair-sized property.

Anabaptist religion

In the 1640s and 1650s, London Anabaptist were part of a growing movement advocating freedom of belief and separation of church and state.

They were sometimes seen as radical, but were also part of the wider Puritan movement of the time. While some were Dutch/Flemish refugees, others were English people influenced by continental ideas. They rejected infant baptism, believing that adults should choose to be baptised. They faced persecution as their views on separating church and state were deemed seditious but the chaos of the Civil War era allowed for limited growth.

They were active in the London area with members from various social classes. Many meeting houses were situated in Southwark where the Guy family lived.

Later after Thomas had left home his mother Anne remarried in 1661, to John Seeley of Coventry, although records do not show where they lived.

Little more of Thomas Guy's early life is known as records from the time are scarce and he left no diary but it is thought that he attended the free Grammar School, situated in Lower Gungate. On the row of shops opposite the junction with Spinning School Lane can be seen the tops of pillars which were on this building. (for more information see [Vol 3 issue 1 of this magazine](#))



Working life

In 1660, at around 16 years of age, Thomas Guy returned to London and became an apprentice to a bookbinder and bookseller, John Clarke of Cheapside.

No doubt his education in Tamworth made this possible, he would have at least learned to read and write and develop an interest in books. His mother may have financed his apprenticeship. This would have been an extraordinary change for Thomas, as London had a population of over 350,000, compared to Tamworth which had probably less than 2,000.

It was the time of the Plague, when around 100,000 perished, (around 15 or 20% of the population) and of the Great Fire of London, when few died but thousands of wooden houses, tens of churches and many other buildings burnt down, ruining vast areas and making many people homeless.

John Clarke's shop in the porch of the Mercer's Hall was one of the premises lost in the fire, however he must have been able to resume his trade afterwards as Thomas continued to work for him until his apprenticeship was over. An Apprenticeship was normally seven years.

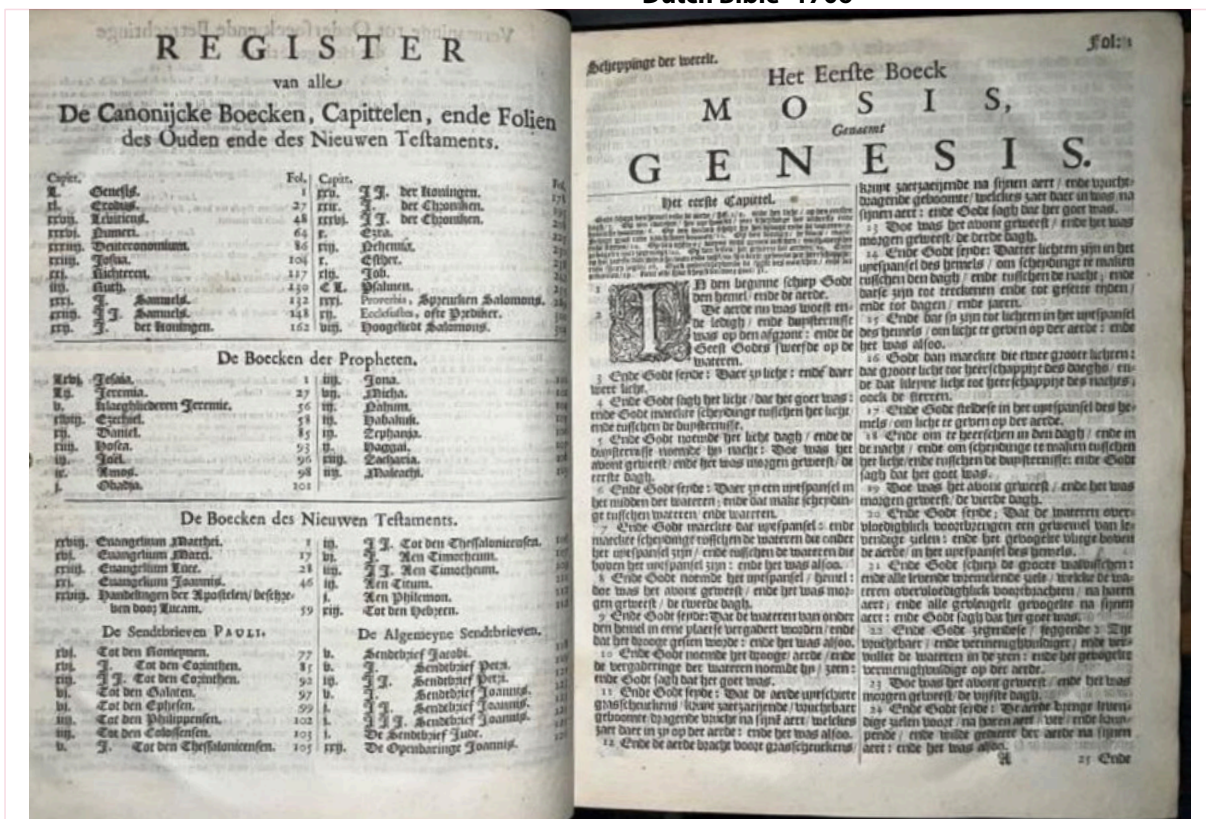
At the age of 24 in 1668 Thomas started in business with capital of £200 (perhaps inherited from his father) he spent this on books and opened his own bookshop on the corner of Lombard Street and Cornhill, one of the first houses built after the Great Fire, where he continued to live and run his business for the rest of his life.

He became a member of the Stationers' Company and was made a 'freeman' of the City of London, granting him the freedom or right to trade. He first sold bibles imported from the Netherlands, which were a better printed quality than those available in England, on better paper and with less errors, and were in great demand by English families.

This was risky as technically the King's printer had a monopoly and he could be fined, but as a religious man he felt that bibles should be available at a fair price to households.

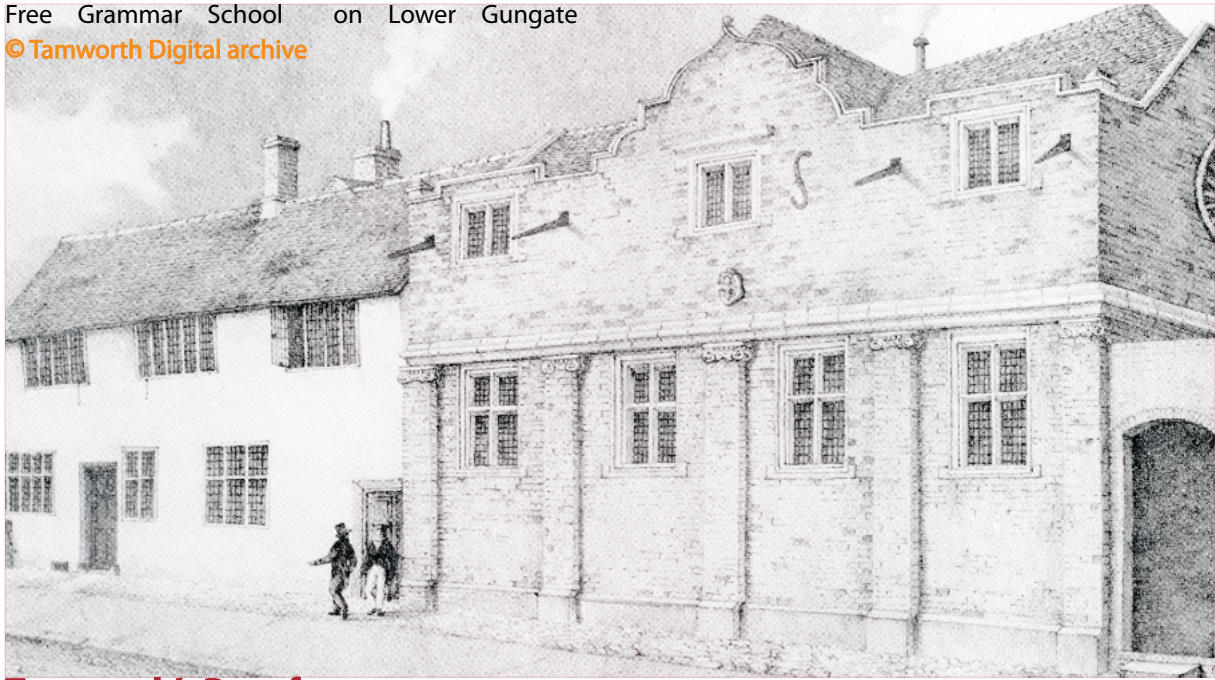
Later his business went on to sell bibles published by the Oxford University Press and to print and sell classical books by Roman authors, school texts, dictionaries, prayer books and other religious publications. He was a very successful and influential publisher and bookseller at the time and made a lot of money.

Dutch Bible -1706



Free Grammar School on Lower Gungate

© Tamworth Digital archive



Tamworth's Benefactor

It appears that Thomas Guy was very careful with the money that he made, he spent as little as possible and was able to donate to causes close to his heart. He had made such a success of his business that in 1677 he donated to his former school, Tamworth's Free Grammar School, founded in the previous century, contributing £5 (about £967 in March 2026) to a fund to rebuild the schoolroom.

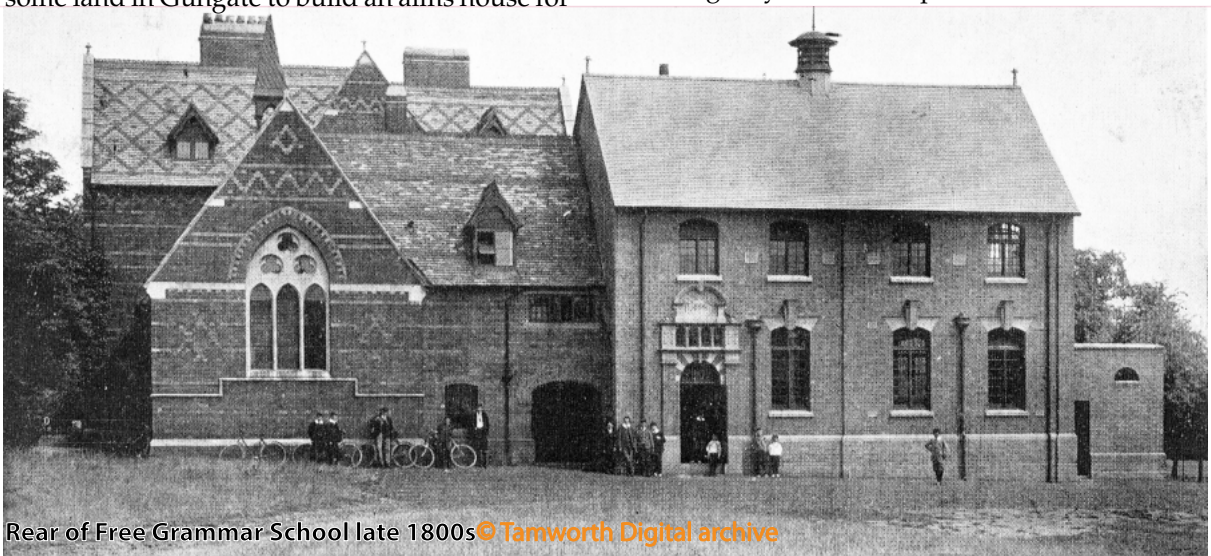
His brother John Guy was also a partner in his business and donated £1. The total raised by the fund was £158 16s 6d (about £30,700 in March 2026).

In the following year 1678, Thomas Guy bought some land in Gungate to build an alms house for

Tamworth's poor. The building cost about £200 (about £38,700 in March 2026). This was a place where poor widows could be cared for as there was no benefit system or pension as we have today.

There were rooms for 6 residents and also a library containing books bequeathed to the town by Revd John Rawlet (it is not known whether the six poor women could read!).

Fourteen years later he obtained land next to this where rooms for seven poor men were added, totalling £200 (about £33,600 In March 2026) for the building and for ongoing maintenance for the inhabitants. As a result in 1693 the Corporation of Tamworth passed a resolution calling Guy 'Our incomparable benefactor



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



Front of pre 1913 Alms Houses
© Tamworth Digital archive

Almshouses

Nearby was a building converted into a school in 1687 to teach poor children spinning so that they could earn money to help their families by spinning thread for their fathers to weave. Thomas Guy contributed £5 towards this and later gave £10 a year towards the school. The road named Spinning School Lane still runs alongside the present Almshouses. (see article in [Vol 2 issue 4 of this magazine](#) for more details on the Spinning School).

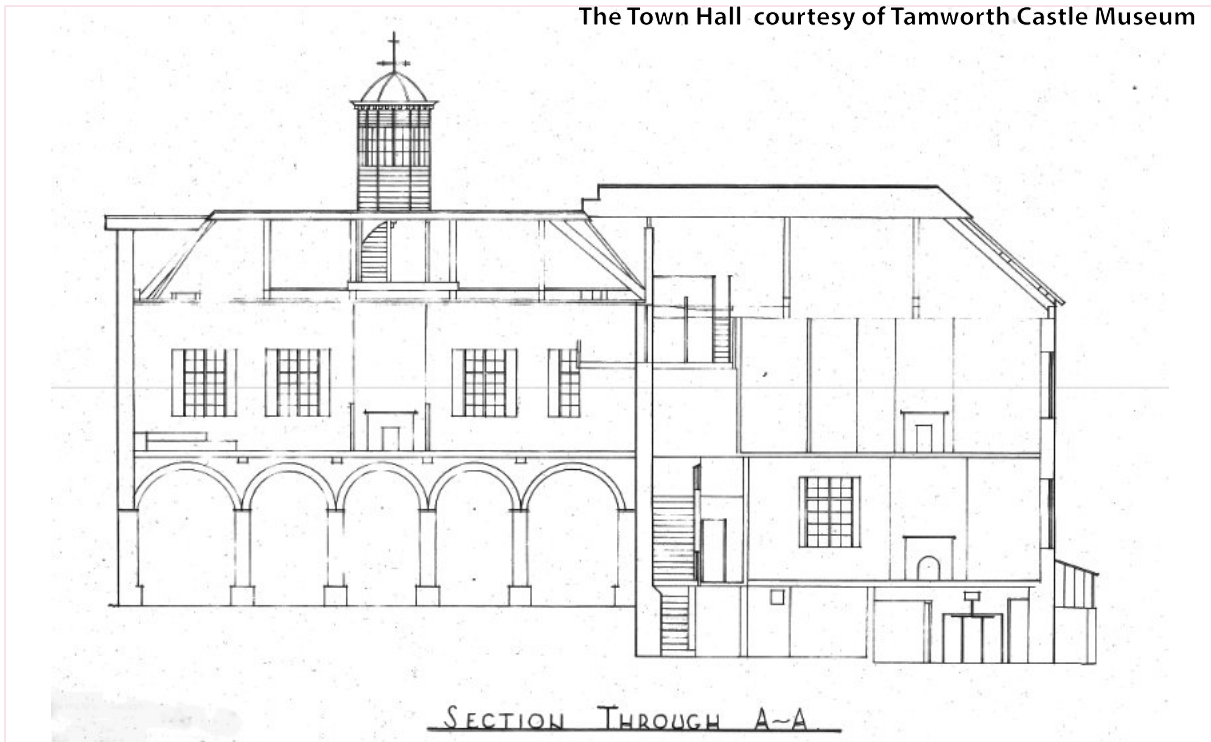
Thomas Guy stood for election as an MP for Tamworth in 1690 but was unsuccessful, however he became MP for Tamworth in 1695 representing the Whig party. (This later became the Liberal and later still the Lib-Dem party)

Thomas Guy commissioned and paid for a new Tamworth Town Hall in 1701. Until this time Tamworth had two Town Halls, by then in poor condition, one for each of the Staffordshire and the Warwickshire parts of the town.



Rear of pre 1913 Alms Houses
© Tamworth Digital archive

The Town Hall courtesy of Tamworth Castle Museum



The border between the two counties dated back to Mercian times and ran along Gungate, Church Street, Silver Street and *Holloway* then along Lady Bridge and followed the River Tame. Hence the [Holloway Society](#) in Tamworth.

It is believed the Staffordshire Town Hall was in Lichfield Street not far from the Moat House, whereas the Warwickshire Town Hall stood roughly where the new hall was built in Market Street. The new Town Hall was built of red brick and external steps at the east end. It also had a space below for market stalls, later used to house the fire engine. A hand or horse pulled manual pump.

It still stands to this day, although various modifications have been made including an extension by removal of steps at the east end to add the Mayors Parlour, some rooms below and a cellar. The cellar was used as prison, a store and finally public toilets until they were closed at the end of the 1990s.

However, Thomas Guy lost the election in 1707 and refused to help the town any further. It is not known why he was not re-elected, perhaps he spent too much time away in London? It was said that he was so annoyed at the rejection and ingratitude that he threatened to pull down the Town Hall and alms houses. As a result he stipulated in his Will that the alms houses could

only be used by the poor from villages outside Tamworth – Wilnecote, Glascote, Bolehall, Amington, Hopwas and Wigginton, as they had voted for him, or for his own relatives. He established a Trust to administer the alms houses, which still exists today, providing 32 homes. The alms houses in Gungate were rebuilt in 1913 to replace the buildings he founded, and on the front wall can be seen a plaque saying ‘Guy’s Alms houses for relations or hamleteers’.

Alms Houses plaque

© Tamworth Digital archive





post 1913 Alms Houses
© Tamworth Digital archive

At that time the only people who could vote for an MP were well off property owners known as burgesses, and it was over 200 years later before everyone could vote. Perhaps the burgesses of Tamworth later came to regret not re-electing Thomas Guy as after this time he no longer gave large sums to the town but instead donated towards the poor of London.

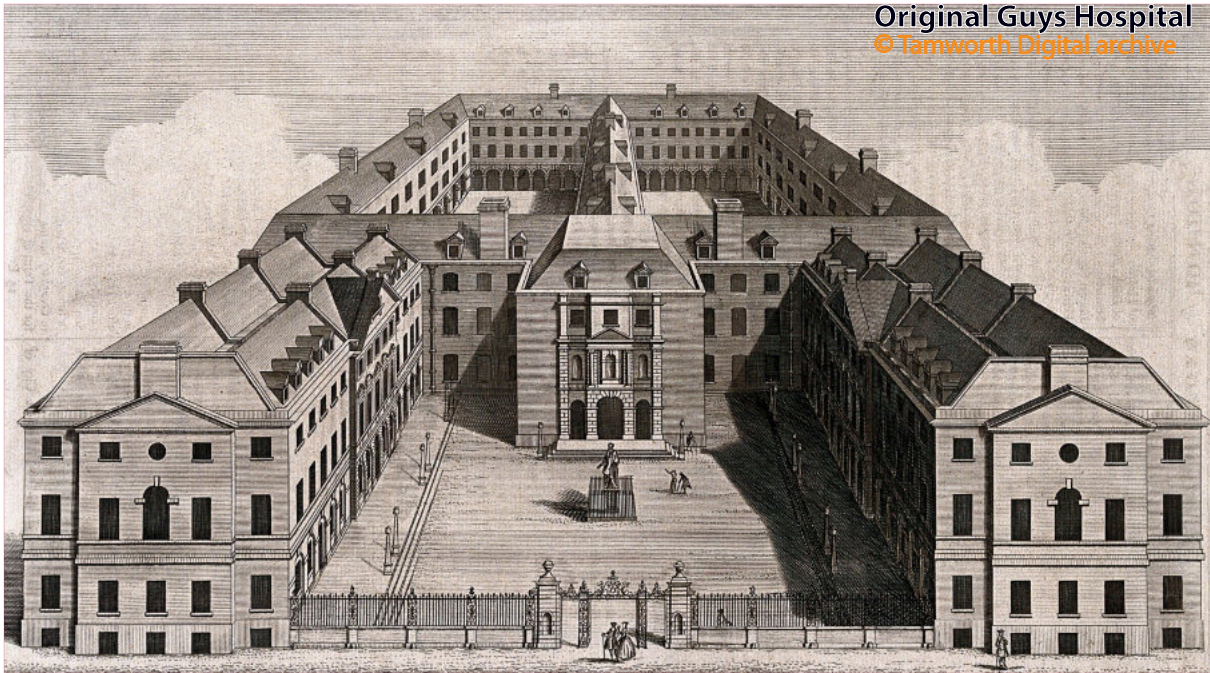
London for the year 1694. This was an extremely important role: Sheriffs were city officials who oversaw the collection of London's annual taxes for the Royal Exchequer and had judicial duties in the City's law courts and prisons including the Old Bailey and Newgate.

He was a valued and respected citizen of London and so was elected as a Sheriff in the City of

However it appears that he paid a fine of £420 (£71,000 as of Jan 2026) to avoid taking up this role, probably to avoid the ceremonial responsibilities.



post 1913 Alms Houses
© Tamworth Digital archive



Hospital Benefactor

From 1704 Thomas Guy became a Governor of St Thomas Hospital (situated on the south bank of the Thames in the area where he lived and worked) and in 1708 he donated £1000 (£200,000 in Jan 2026) for the building of 3 new wards and £100 a year to help the poor who attended the hospital.

He was particularly concerned about those who needed convalescent care when they left hospital and would be unable to work so he set up a fund to assist these poor people. He also gave charitable donations to other poverty-stricken people, refugees and widows.

From his role at St Thomas Hospital Guy realised that a hospital for those who could not be treated there – incurables and convalescents - was needed and he therefore arranged for a 999-year lease on land nearby to form the site of a new hospital.

This was solely funded by Thomas Guy and named after him. The land was cleared and foundations were built before his death. The first Matron, Mrs Anne Rowney, was a relative by marriage from Tamworth, and he may have recommended her for the position. Patients were admitted from 1726, not long after Guy's death in 1724, and his Will provided funds to continue to support Guy's hospital, which still stands and is used today.

Financial success

With the passage of time little is known about Thomas as a person. He was said to have lived a simple and frugal life, and this plus many good business decisions meant that he amassed a fortune over his lifetime which he spent on those in need rather than himself.

It should be noted that Anabaptist's like Thomas' parents emphasised forgiveness, humility, non-violence, reconciliation and sharing possessions. The Amish are an offshoot of the Anabaptist's.

There were some stories containing criticisms of him as a miser but this may well have been the result of jealousy at his success. One of these concerned his maid who when he was young he intended to marry – until he found out that she had agreed to him paying to extend the pavement outside his premises without asking him – so he decided not to marry her.

He never did marry or have a family, perhaps he was too thrifty and didn't want to risk the expense?

Investing money at the time was difficult and it wasn't until 1694 that the Bank of England was established. Due to poor management of the country's finances the government could not even pay its sailors in war time and they were given tickets instead which investors such as Guy bought, possibly to help the unpaid sailors of the Navy.

There were few options for investing capital, although Guy did buy some land and properties (some in Tamworth) and at times acted as a money lender to landowners with security.

From 1710 one of these options was the South Sea Company which the government set up to invite subscriptions to raise funds to address the national debt. Like many others Guy invested in this scheme which was advertised as a way to profit from trade with countries in the south seas.

When later the value of the shares rose enormously he sold them at a profitable time, probably recognising the risk of the investment; he received an excellent return on them before the bubble burst on the stock and many others lost large sums on their investments. These were the funds he used for the endowment of his hospital.

Thomas Guy's reputation

This investment in the South Sea Company led to a re-examination of Thomas Guy's reputation during the anti-racism campaign of 2020 at which time his statue was boarded up by the Hospital Trust to remove it from public view. The following statement was made in 2023:

Personally I don't think it is fair to impose modern attitudes on someone who did so much charitable work 300 years ago.

Very little was known at the time about the conditions endured by the slaves who were captured and removed from their families, transported from Africa in appalling conditions and worked to death in the plantations of the American colonies.

We have little evidence that these matters were generally known by the public in London until the time of William Wilberforce 100 years later when these conditions were publicised.

It seems unfair therefore to criticise Thomas Guy for profiting from slavery as he was clearly not personally culpable, he was not directly involved in this trade as were shipping and plantation owners or those who made fortunes from the goods produced by those unfortunate workers.

He was merely investing his money as wisely as possible for those times and like the hundreds of other investors would have had no inkling about

Guy's & St Thomas' Foundation statement on the Thomas Guy Statue at KCL.

Thomas Guy has recently come under scrutiny for his investment in the South Sea Company, which traded enslaved African people. As part of their ongoing work to address these injustices, the Guy's & St Thomas' Foundation have installed interpretation panels to accompany the statue of Thomas on our campus. These panels tell the story of Thomas Guy, explaining how he profited from the transatlantic slave trade and how we can interpret this through a modern lens.



Read more about these panels here <https://gsttfoundation.org.uk/our-work/arts-and-heritage/the-statue-interpretation-panels/>

Professor Roger Jones, editor of the British Journal of General Practice, is more cautious about Guy's legacy.

Prof Jones, who has been Professor of General Practice at Guy's, King's and St Thomas' School of Medicine, said: "Guy certainly wasn't remotely involved in the active business of the slave trade. We don't even know if he knew that the South Sea company was a slaving company. Of course you assume that he did."

"It was a government initiative to let the company offer shares, and Guy was literally one of hundreds of people who bought the shares."

Prof Jones drew attention to Guy's philanthropic work with the hospital.

"There is no doubt that Guy was altruistic," he added. "He lived down the road from where the hospital is and he saw the poverty and disease and lack of facilities for the indigent poor, and his hospital was called 'Mr Guy's hospital for the incurables' – it was for people who couldn't get help anywhere else."

the businesses that the investment made possible. As noted that Anabaptist's like Thomas' parents emphasised forgiveness, humility, non-violence, reconciliation and sharing possessions. The Amish are an offshoot of the Anabaptist's

It may be that Thomas was not "clever" in getting out before the bubble burst but got out because he discovered how the profits were being made. Hence putting most of his money into good works.

Thomas Guy did more than most people of his time to help others, especially the poor and sick, and deserves credit for this rather than this unfair criticism. During his lifetime and afterwards in his Will he ensured that the fortune he made was spent on the less fortunate, both in Tamworth and London.

Thomas Guy's death and Will

Thomas Guy died at home on 27th December 1724 at around 80 years of age, a long life for those times. Just over a week later his hospital was opened and on 6th January the first 60 patients were admitted. After he died he was given an ornate funeral by his Executors, with 40 coaches each drawn by 6 horses. This reflected the good opinion of him by most contemporaries.

His remains were interred at St Thomas's Church, Southwark, before being moved to the chapel of Guy's hospital in 1780. Later a statue was erected in front of the hospital to commemorate him.



A copy of his Will is available to read in the reference section of Tamworth Library and contains many pages of bequests to his relatives in the town as well as funding to ensure the future running and maintenance of Guy's hospital.

Throughout his life Thomas Guy was undoubtedly a philanthropist who spent his fortune on helping the less fortunate rather than on a lavish lifestyle for himself.

You can read more about Thomas Guy via the links below:

<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/people/thomas-guy>

[Thomas Guy | Founder, Hospital Benefactor & Publisher | Britannica](#)

[About Thomas Guy and Sir Robert Clayton - Guy's & St Thomas' Foundation](#)

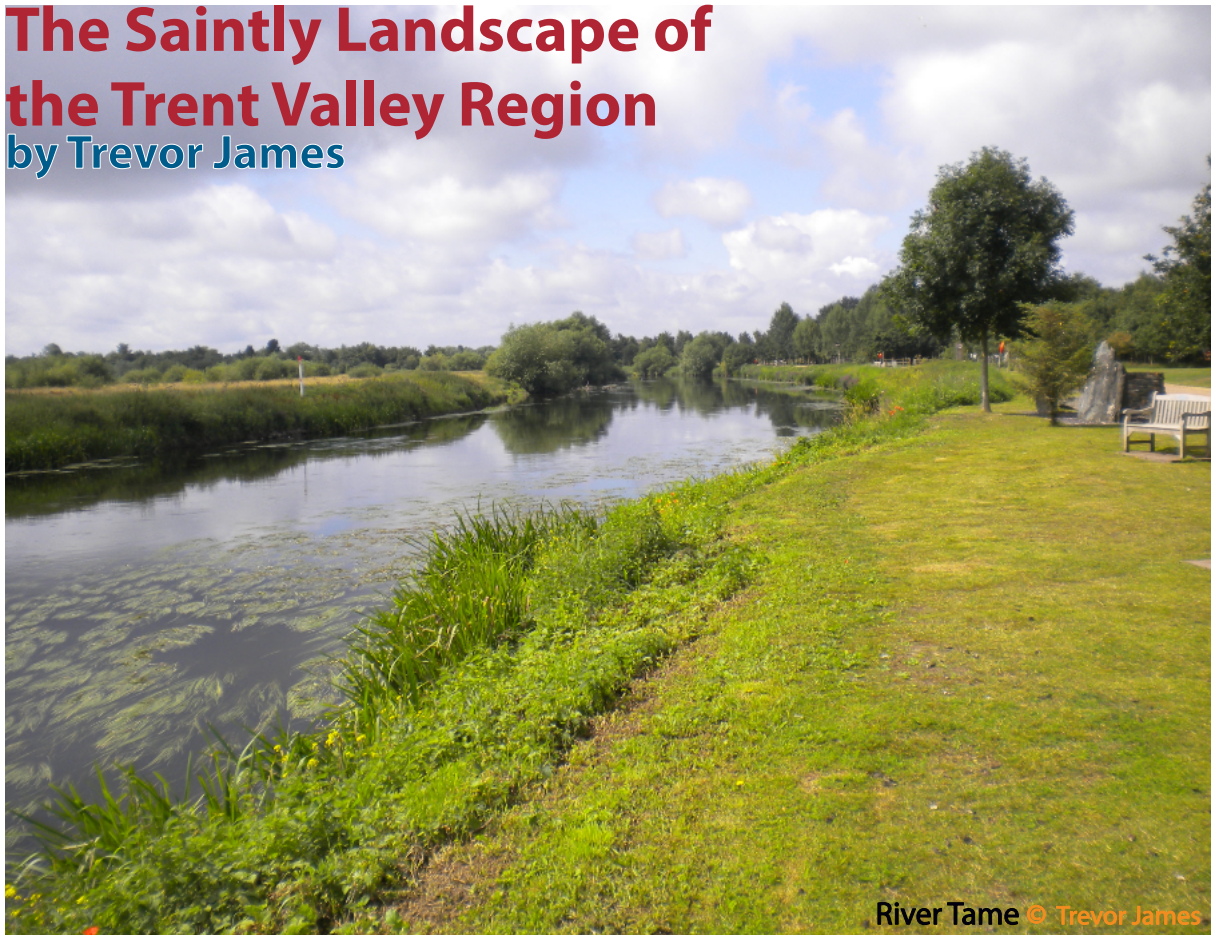
Books on Guy in Tamworth Library's Local History Section (reference only)

History of Guy's Hospital by Wilks and Bettany
Mr Guy's Hospital 1726-1946 by HC Cameron
Last Will and Testament of Thomas Guy



The Saintry Landscape of the Trent Valley Region

by Trevor James



The background to this paper is my *England's Saintry Landscape* which was published in 2020. In it I attempted to demonstrate that England did have a 'saintry landscape', as one would find in Wales or Cornwall, but that the English form was potentially more difficult to discern.

Whilst Wales and Cornwall have a proliferation of settlements which carry the local church dedication within their place names, the English evidence is more diverse. Inspired by W. G. Hoskins' encouragement to identify patterns in the landscape, the diversity that became apparent was revealed in church dedications, place names, inn names, street names and other possible phenomena.

This case study is an introduction to the saintry landscape in the broader reaches of the Trent Valley, dominated by its river system and two principal Roman roads.

Major Regional Shrine

To a very significant degree it is dominated by **St Chad**. His short period as Bishop at Lichfield [669-672], with his personal spirituality and the development of a shrine in his memory, led to a network of pilgrim routes which converge on his shrine. From our modern maps we can identify several:

At Church Wilne in the Trent Valley near to Sawley a relatively isolated St Chad Church, in the floodplain, indicates a route south westwards along the valley;

An ancient church dedicated to St Chad is situated in Stafford; and also, halfway to Lichfield in the Trent Valley, David Horowitz has identified a 'lost settlement' of Chadesholme, between them suggesting a route from the northwest [\[1\]](#);



Stained glass depiction from Saint Chad's Church, Hanmer, Wrexham, Wales ©Llywelyn2000, [Wikimedia Commons](#) Note that St Chad is shown holding a model of Lichfield Cathedral as he does in most of the depictions.

To the north of Derby the place name Chaddesden yields a reference to St Chad, indicating a route from the north;

To the west at Brewood the church is dedicated to St Mary and St Chad, with another clue being the place name Chadsmoor, just to the west of Cannock, suggests a route from the west;

Near to The Belfry golf course, east of Sutton Coldfield is the remote church of St Chad at Wishaw, giving a route from the south;

Just to the north of Nuneaton the isolated 'estate' church, with a multiple dedication which includes St Chad at Caldecote, gives a route from the east.

This means that there is a discernible network of six possible routes approaching Lichfield, with the additional evidence of a church with a St Chad dedication about a mile to the north of the Cathedral, in the traditional location of a last point of rest before the final arrival for pilgrims at a shrine, as equally illustrated by St Alkmund's Church at Duffield on the approach to his shrine at Derby or St Editha's Church at Tamworth on the approach to her shrine at Polesworth.

Editor's Note: St Chad's Hopwas was built by William McGregor starting in 1878 to replace St John's Church in the village near the Tame Otter Pub. Therefore being about 140 years old it is not on the traditional pilgrimage routes or part of the previous 1500 years of history of the Saintly Landscape. Indeed it is not even on the recently (2025) concocted St Editha's Way from Polesworth Abbey to Lichfield Cathedral despite it being on the route.

Other Shrines

There are five more major shrines within this river network:

St Editha was one of the most extensively venerated Saxon women saints. She was of royal descent and had been the abbess at Polesworth, on the borders of Warwickshire, Staffordshire and Leicestershire.

There is adequate evidence of pilgrim routes to this shrine. Bishop Kirk established that there were St Editha dedications stretching away towards the Welsh border and also to as far away as North Lincolnshire. In particular Kirk identified pilgrim routes arriving at Polesworth through dedications to its north east at Orton-on-the Hill; to the east at Monks Kirby on the Fosse Way; and to the west at Tamworth and Church Eaton [on the Shropshire border].

St. Editha in St.Editha's Abbey Church, Polesworth



St Wistan was buried at Repton, in the mausoleum of the Mercian kings, following his murder at Wistow, with an alignment of clues linking the murder site, via a church named in his honour at Bretby, following the route of his funeral cortege which became a pilgrim route. Fifteen miles north of Derby the village of Wessington yields the meaning of 'Wistan's village', thereby suggesting a second pilgrim route on an ancient upland alignment from the north.

St Alkmund was a martyred Saxon prince who was buried at Derby. Derby became the focus of his veneration after his remains were brought there from Lilleshall Abbey. Inexplicably the decision to bring his remains eastwards to Derby was to secure them from the ravages of the Danish invaders. This is indeed difficult to explain because, at much the same time, the remains of St Werbergh were being transported from Hanbury in Staffordshire westwards to Chester for much the same reason: in other words, in the opposite direction. It is also ironic because Derby's place name reveals that it became a Danish settlement. The plain truth is that the acquisition of St Alkmund's remains for Derby was almost certainly linked to the competition between religious houses to secure relics attractive to pilgrims so as to boost the volume of pilgrims and, therefore, revenue.

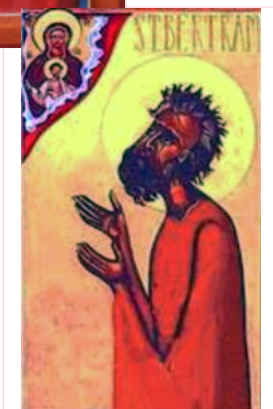
It is easily possible to identify two of the actual pilgrim alignments to that location, from the north via Duffield, signposted by its own ancient St Alkmund's church and from the south-west, via Alkmonton, where the place name yields a link with St Alkmund.



St Modwen, below is venerated and remembered only at Burton-upon-Trent where she was a hermit on an island in the River Trent, an island known then and now as Andressey, the island of Andrew, in memory of the Biblical saint whose memory she herself revered. To the north of Burton-upon-Trent there is a 'lost' village which was labelled as 'Modwenstowe', thus reinforcing the special linkage between this location and this very holy woman.



Equally **St Bertelin** is only celebrated in one ancient church dedication at Stafford but some miles away at Ilam there is a chapel to his alternative name of St Bertram, with some further local locational name evidence, in the form of an ancient St Bertram's Bridge over the River Manifold as a possible pilgrimage route approaches Ilam. It is thought that, whilst St Bertelin was revered at Stafford, he had a retreat at Ilam in the forested area. St Bertelin offers us another piece of place name evidence: the earlier name of Stafford, before it was re-named in the later Saxon period, was Bethenely, which translates as 'island of Bertelin'. This reveals to us that St Bertelin's base was on an island in the River Sowe, a direct parallel with the situation at Burton-upon-Trent.



We also celebrate **St Werbergh**, abbess of Hanbury and Trentham. Initially venerated in a shrine at Hanbury before being 'translated' to Chester. In its local form it attracted a pilgrim route along the River Trent from the east, with church dedications at Spondon and Derby, with another approaching from the north-east via Blackwell in Derbyshire where a rare St Werbergh dedication still remains.

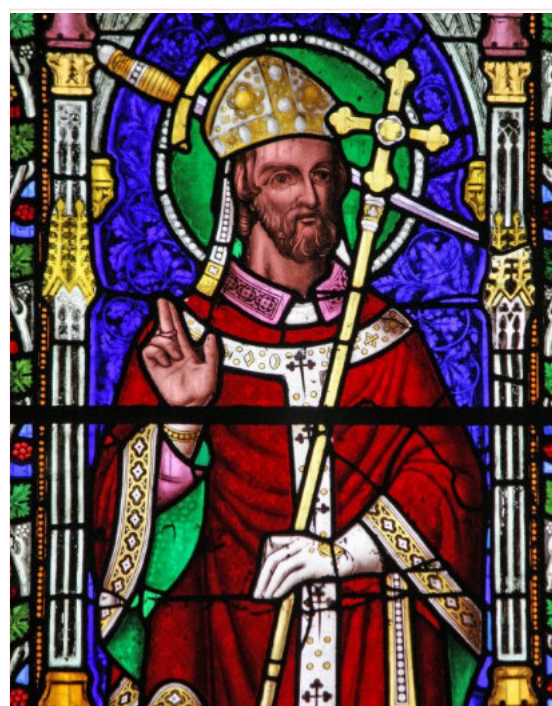


Near to Ticknall, near Melbourne, the church is now dedicated to St George but until the 1820s it was dedicated to **St Thomas Becket**. On being rebuilt, it was re-named St George for the curious reason that the landowner and source of funding was George Harper-Crewe. The St Thomas Becket dedication is an indication that pilgrims en route to Canterbury travelled this way and that this is part of a long-distance pilgrim route. To the north of Derbyshire the parish church at Chapel-en-le-Frith is dedicated to St Thomas Becket; just above the River Derwent the historic church at Crich contained a chantry chapel named in honour of **St Thomas Becket** below; and within Derby there was a Becket Well. These four examples are a strong indication of pilgrim movement southwards through our region.

Part of a western arm of the major pilgrim route to the shrine of **St Wilfrid** at Ripon can be found at Egginton on the River Dove and at Barrow on the River Trent. The main pilgrim route can be traced from Oundle, where he died, following Roman roads and the Rivers Soar and Trent through the East Midlands, in effect following the line of his funeral route in 709. The main St Wilfrid pilgrim route enters our region at Kingston-on-Soar, where there was an historic St



Wilfrid church dedication at the confluence of the Rivers Soar and Trent. It then passes through Wilford with its eponymous St Wilfrid church dedication, crossing the River Trent and traced through historic riverside dedications at Rolleston, Kelham, South Muskham, North Muskham, Marnham, Treswell and Scrooby, before leaving our region into Yorkshire.



Nearby is Swarkestone Bridge, a major medieval crossing point on the River Trent. To the north side is a dedication to **St James**. As this bridge has been built at an established traditional crossing point, the dedication may well be a signal that this north-south crossing is part of an international pilgrim route to the shrine of **St James at Compostella**.

Right, the Plagiarisms Shell for those making the Pilgrimage to Santiago Del compostella in Northern Spain.



Tribal Affiliations

We also offer three tribal memories. **St Swithin**, *right*, was the ancient church dedication at Elford and at Yoxall, both subsequently supplanted by St Peter. The former is close to the River Tame and the other is adjacent to the sporadically fast-flowing River Swarburne. These dedications demonstrate the commitment of the Saxon tribes as they brought their preferred dedication with them as they migrated northwards.



This is matched by the dedication to **St Cuthbert**, left, the very popular saint of the Northumbrians, found at a relatively southerly location at **Doveridge**, eponymously on the River Dove at the **Derbyshire-Staffordshire** border.



To the east of this region the predominant saint was **St Botolph**, right. The centre of his veneration was Boston. Ekwall argued that this place name should be translated as 'St Botulf's stone' because he believed that the name evolved from the fact that Botolph preached at a stone cross at that location. Ekwall did not believe that Botolph was buried at Boston but there is total unanimity that Boston was the focal point of a strong veneration of this Anglo-Saxon saint. From Boston his followers carried his veneration westwards into our region. In Leicestershire St Botolph dedications survive at Sibson and Shepshed and his veneration just crossed into Warwickshire at Burton Hastings, with these three examples being a testimony to just how far his adherents had travelled.



In addition further saints are also reflected locally in fragmentary form: **St Edburga of Repton** is mentioned in a document at Southwell Minister and is believed to have been a sister of **St Guthlac**; and two local martyrs, **St Wulflad** and **St Ruffin**, are memorialised in Tamworth, sons of King Wulphere, murdered at his behest for their faith, with the former being part of the ancient dedication of Stone parish church, near the site of his murder.



St Guthlac

Economic Evidence from Saint Dedications

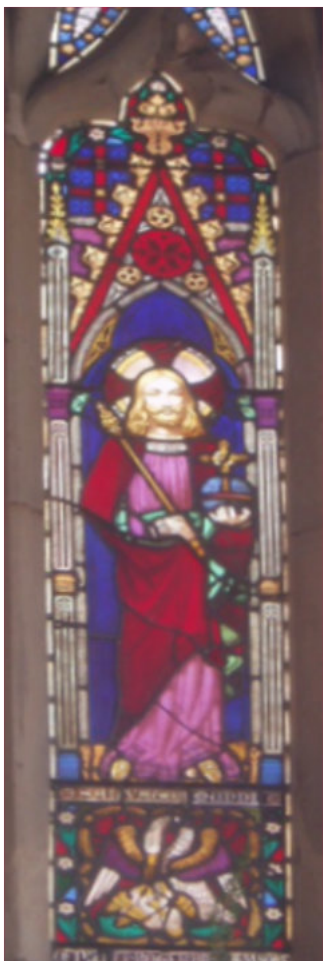
St Nicholas. There are 437 ancient church dedications to St Nicholas in England. St Nicholas had been the bishop of Myra in Asia Minor at the beginning of the fourth century and he became known to his contemporaries in the Eastern Church as a 'wonder worker'. This status led his translation into sainthood.

One of the miracles that is attributed to him is a legend that he saved three sailors from drowning. This led to him being seen over Europe as the patron saint of sailors.

Apart from Bawtry on the Nottinghamshire/Yorkshire border, which was an inland port with its own St Nicholas dedication, in the broadly land-locked Midlands another explanation for the proliferation of St Nicholas dedications needs to be sought. The answer is that, by extension, the spiritual patronage of St Nicholas extended to the merchants who benefited from sea-going trade.

Throughout the wider reaches of the Trent valley, significant St Nicholas church dedications are to be found amongst the multiples of dedications at major centres such as Leicester and Nottingham. This is evidence enough that these were important trading centres, with the church dedication reflecting the economic preoccupations of the townspeople and the location is likely to tell us the location of the medieval marketing sector of those towns.

However it is also clear that this must have been the driving force behind the selection of a



dedication at Abbots Bromley where there was an early market and here, because of its lesser scale, it just had the one dedication. This would equally have been the explanation at Nuneaton in Warwickshire

At Austrey, just to the north-east of Tamworth, and Curdworth, to the east of Birmingham, both in Warwickshire, two settlements with St Nicholas dedications are to be found but which do not seem to have had a particular trading past. Austrey was definitely a market town at some point in the past because it has a very fine and distinctive market cross.

Its role as a market centre was probably lost in medieval times when the route from Nottingham into the central Midlands was re-aligned, thus taking potential trade away but leaving these two large clues.

At Curdworth the St Nicholas dedication may well be an indicator of a former market function that was lost in the post-Black Death era when the significantly large regional markets began to cause smaller more localised markets to be abandoned.

Nonetheless in these two instances the choice of St Nicholas as their chosen church dedication is a certain confirmation of the priorities of the preponderant population of those communities when the selection was made.

The dedication to St Nicholas at Mavesyn Ridware may also tell us that it was a site of an early community of merchants.

St Bartholomew is the patron saint of those who work with leather and skins. His symbol is a butcher's knife because that is how he is supposed to have been martyred. One feature of the widest range of the leather trades is that work was extremely noxious and that meant that these types of process were likely to occur in neighbourhood well away from large population centres because of the processing odours. A splendid example of a St Bartholomew dedication is Derbyshire's Old Whittington, a mile or so from the major centre of Chesterfield. That would represent the type of distancing that kept the processing odours away from the main settlement. Near to Derby the relatively remote Elvaston church reflects the same pattern. Another example could be the parish church Edgbaston, slightly away from the bustle of Birmingham.



In the north of Staffordshire the remote market town of Longnor has a church dedicated to St Bartholomew. Here there may have been noxious challenges but this is a location where there was an upland livestock market where the primary stages of skins being purchased on their way to becoming leather may have occurred.

Another St Bartholomew clue is to be found at Abbots Bromley. Its ancient fair was granted for St Bartholomew's Day, 24 August. Selection of dates for principal fairs generally reflect a local economic preoccupation. We already know that the church dedication at Abbots Bromley is an indicator that there clearly was an early community of merchants at that location: this selection may well be an indication of a particular local specialism. The assertion is supported by the fact that when the calendar change occurred in 1752 the Abbots Bromley fair moved to 5 September, itself an indication that the practical economic intentions of the occasion over-rode the link with the ecclesiastical calendar.

A more complex example is provided at Wednesbury where the ancient parish church bears the St Bartholomew dedication. In relatively recent centuries nearby Walsall has become particularly associated with a variety of leather trades and yet having the ecclesiastical blessing of its ancient St Matthew's dedication. My assessment is that this juxtaposed evidence points to an economic migration.

St Giles has occupational and locational significance. He is frequently associated with fairs and, by extension, with lepers. The latter explanation being that St Giles Fairs tend to be on the fringes of urban areas, beyond which, in reality, lepers were not able to proceed. He is also linked with blacksmiths because of a legend which saw him carry out a miracle on a horse. This means that the choice of site for a St Giles Church may potentially be a combination of all three elements. It



is certainly the case that blacksmiths may well have been especially in demand on the edge of towns or may occur at cross-roads. In Warwickshire a line of St Giles churches follows a north-east to south-west route across the county, which may well have arisen because of this linkage with long distance travel. By contrast the dedication to St Giles at Matlock, Cheadle, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Willenhall may well be linked to the grant of a fair for his feast day of 1 September and may tell us something about the economic priorities for those neighbourhoods. The St Giles churches at Caldwell, Calke and Sandiacre may reflect the sense of the historic link between St Giles fairs and lepers at remote locations.

St Theobald is a rare dedication in England. St Theobald of Provins was the patron saint of charcoal burners. Charcoal was an essential energy source for specialist metallurgical industries in medieval times. To produce charcoal required a ready source of timber and an accessible water supply. One such location in this region was sufficiently developed that it attracted a St Theobald dedication for its church. This was at the remote estate church at Caldecote on the Warwickshire-Leicestershire border, just north of Nuneaton. Its location clearly had the necessary timber supply and it is situated alongside the River Anker. There has to have been a very substantial source of charcoal for its workers to have been of sufficient numbers for their chosen saint to be venerated.

Locational Evidence from Church Dedications

St Michael. Elsewhere in England, and indeed across Europe, the St Michael dedication is associated with elevated sites because it is believed that many ancient St Michael churches were constructed on pagan burial grounds, generally on high ground. Most of our local St Michael churches match this expectation. One, in particular, has yielded pre-Christian archaeological material. This is St Michael-on-Greenhill at Lichfield where a pre-Christian 'crouch burial' has been identified, along with material that dates back to the Mesolithic era. The correlation of elevated site and archaeological evidence is so strong that, with both in place at Stapenhill, some historians have speculated that St Peter's originally was a St Michael.



At Crich in Derbyshire from the early nineteenth century, and still not resolved in our own times, a debate has continued over its dedication, with factions assembled in favour of the present St Mary dedication but with others firmly of the view that it should be St Michael.

Its very dominant location suggests St Michael and one of its medieval fairs was granted for the

feast of St Michael but it has been impossible to draw a final conclusion.

David Horovitz has contributed to what I have defined as St Michael-related place names.^[1] He includes Mickle Hills which he explains is the modern-day Pipe Hill, located 1 ½ miles south-west of Lichfield; Micklewood, located 2 miles south-east of Penkridge; and Micklow, 1 mile south-west of Stone. In each case he has interpreted from the surviving evidence that the 'mykyll' element indicates 'big' but it is a remarkable coincidence that in these three instances these elevation overlook three of Staffordshire's ancient St Michael Churches. These three churches were important landmarks and important spiritual centres and so it is strongly argued that their standing led to the naming of these nearby elevations.

St Leonard is frequently associated with health cures and there is a belief that his dedication occurred at places linked with the possibility of health cures. The remote St Leonard's church at Wychnor entirely fits this pattern. In effect this church is a daughter church of Barton-under-Needwood which itself was a daughter church of Tatenhill. As population colonised down the western side of the River Trent, they discovered a healthful open riverside location basically overlooking its confluence with the River Tame and they could see the health benefits of that site, t h e r e b y dedicating it to St Leonard. Blithfield's St Leonard church stands overlooking to River Blythe in a similar relationship, as is the dedication at Thorpe on the River Dove on the Derbyshire-Staffordshire border.



Dedications of significant Antiquity

There are a small number of very significant ancient church dedications such as **St Martin** and **St Helen** which are strong indicators of significant antiquity. St Helen, the mother of the emperor Constantine, is remembered by her association with the discovery in Palestine of the 'true cross'. This is the reason for her early veneration. St Helen churches at Etwall, Darley Dale and Pinxton are good examples of this respect for historically venerated figures. Another relatively local Leicestershire example is the parish church of St Helen at Ashby-de-la-Zouch. St Martin of Tours was a very early French bishop whose name is memorialised at St Martin-in-the Bullring and at Alfreton on the ancient Roman route to Doncaster.

Another form of antiquity is reflected by the dedication to **St Augustine at Rugeley** because it is widely believed that such dedications are indicators of places visited by St Augustine during his brief time as Archbishop of Canterbury between his arrival in 597 and his death in 604. His commission from the Pope was to evangelise the Anglo-Saxons and he travelled widely in attempting to achieve his objective, and therefore Rugeley, with its position on the River Trent, may well have been one of the significant places where he made an impact.



St Augustine

St Edward King and Martyr



Very Unusual Saintry Links

Fragmentary saintly evidence can also be found at Etwall, on the Derbyshire-Staffordshire border. The place name means 'Eata's well' and, therefore, refers to **St Eata**, one of the companions of St Aidan.



In those remote times it was quite possible to venerate a holy person though holy water at a well, without there being a church structure. It is worth noting that the only known dedication to St Eata is at Atcham, an eponymous place name meaning 'farm of Eata', on the outskirts of Shrewsbury, about forty miles away.

Over-looking the River Trent on its south bank in Leicestershire the town of Castle Donington has its church dedicated to **St Edward King and Martyr**. There are only five ancient dedications to this St Edward and the rest are found much further to the

west because he was basically a young king who was murdered at Corfe Castle. No one knows why this dedication was chosen for this location but it is possibly that it relates to its annual spring fair which took place on 18 March, the feast day of St Edward.

At relatively nearby Breedon-on-the-Hill, the church is dedicated to **St Mary and St Hardulph**. As with St Eata, there appears to be only one reference anywhere to this saint who is identified by David Hugh Farmer as having been a hermit at that remote location.

St Mary

Statistically dedications to St Mary are really quite commonplace in England but the particular veneration of St Mary at Tutbury is quite rare. This is because Tutbury is associated with Feast of the Assumption on 15 August.

St Mary at Tutbury,



St Mary at Breedon on the Hill © James Yardley,

The only other one that I have identified in the wider Trent Valley and its tributaries is at Hinckley in Leicestershire. This is a particular reminder to us to assess the local significance of the six varying dates in the church calendar on which the Blessed Virgin is celebrated

St Mary at Hinckley



Inn Names

There is a more difficult to discern aspect of the saintly landscape in the names of ancient inns. This is extremely challenging to pursue because many inns lost their status and function during the dramatic changes of the late eighteenth century, and in the nineteenth century, when population growth and accelerated transport transformed, and indeed undermined, their role.

My sources for this piece of research are two Pigot Directories for the Trent Valley region which were published in 1828-29 and 1835. What follows is the result of a careful analysis of these two sources of information, but it cannot be deemed scientific or fully analytical.

Further research on each establishment would be needed to confirm their longevity and indeed whether they could have provided accommodation to travellers and their horses. Rather it can give a perspective on what we may be hoping to find.

Over the fullest extent of the Trent Valley and its tributaries there were literally hundreds of names of establishments that may have been inns. Amongst these there is a body of evidence which demonstrates that some of them, a small minority, have drawn their names from some forms of spiritual association, almost certainly from a role originally in providing accommodation as hostels on pilgrim routes or on routes to major shrines.

At least fifteen names have emerged from my research. In general terms they do not especially give more than just a wide insight, although some like the **Chequers** do provide a specific Biblical allusion – to the scene when soldiers drew lots for Jesus' apparel

– or the **Hope and Anchor** which is a direct Biblical quotation from Hebrews 6:19. *"We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain,"*





The **Cross Keys** brings us to St Peter, on whom the earthly church is founded and **The [st]George**, often with a Dragon, against the royal popular alternative King George, reminds of our national patron saint.



However, two do penetrate into spiritual belief more deeply. **The**

Pelican directly takes us to the Blessed Virgin Mary because the pelican is identified as a metaphor for St Mary because of the selfless way that it feeds its young, even on its own blood in extremis.

Even more significant in terms of Marian association is the fact that when the **Flower Pot** is identified, it is a window into a pre-Reformation era of Marian enthusiasm. At the Reformation



the Protestant reformers dislike of Marian association led to establishments with names such as 'the Vase of Lilies' being renamed in this secular manner. The establishment could continue but the name had to be removed. Therefore at the Flower Pot in Derby, we know that there had been strong Marian enthusiasm at that location in pre-Reformation times.

There is one wholly unique inn name in the Midlands saintly landscape. It is **The Scales** public house in Lichfield.



The meaning of the name of this uniquely-named establishment is a matter of debate but in the Harleian Manuscripts at the British Library 'the scales' is a heraldic reference to St Michael the Archangel, who frequently appears in Doom paintings 'weighing souls'. This is an especially good example because this establishment stands half a mile from one of the most ancient St Michael sites in England on Lichfield's Greenhill.

What we have is clear evidence of a saintly landscape strongly linked to our local river system, supported by a Roman road system which in medieval times was still readily viable for travellers and pilgrims.

[1] David Horowitz, *The Place Names of Staffordshire*, 2005.

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.

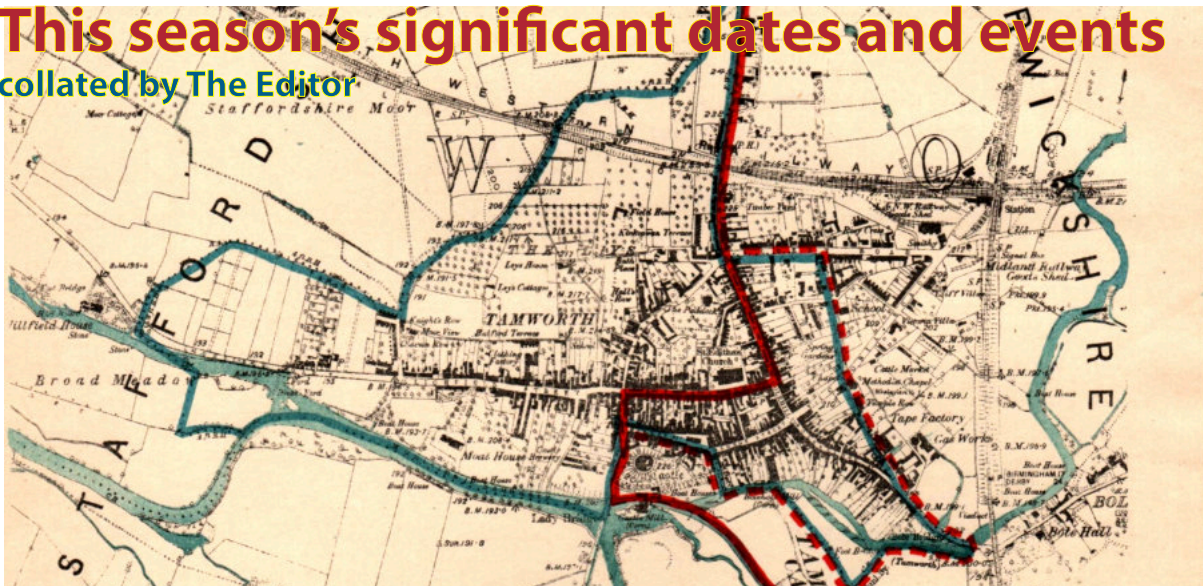


Last Issues Doorway:
The door in the Buttery under the Town Hall

Photo © Jamedia

This season's significant dates and events

collated by The Editor



1 April 1889 - Tamworth now placed in Staffordshire. The Warwickshire boundary was moved east. The border had run from the river up the the Holloway to Silver Street.

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

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

29 April 1933 The original letter was published in the Herald to start the current Tamworth FC to compete in senior circles of the game.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

26 May 1963 - Twycross Zoo opens, previously the collection had been at Hints. Does anyone know where this was? Any Photos?

27 May 1811 - Census records population of the town as 2,991 and of the parish 5,994.

8 June 1973 Margaret Thatcher opens the new Tamworth Central Library

12 June - death of Aethelflaed

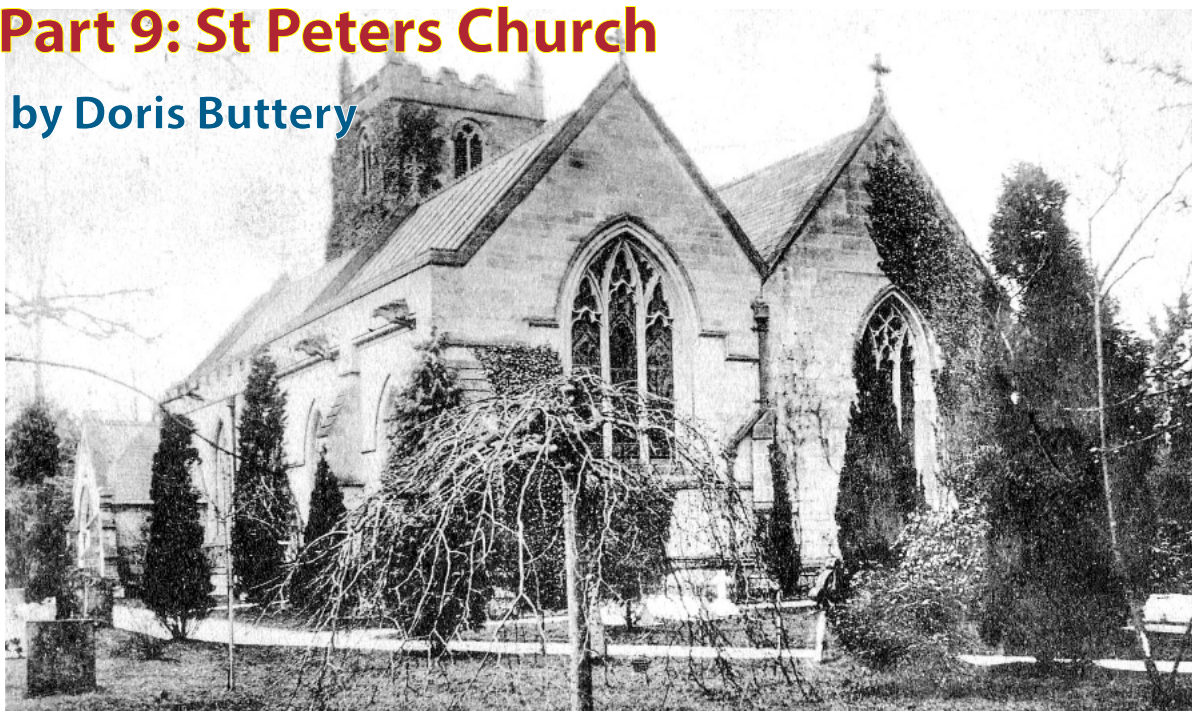
23 June 1959 - The Old Bell Inn called time for the last time.



An Elford Childhood 1920-1933

Part 9: St Peters Church

by Doris Buttery



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

Part 9: St Peters Church

The village church in Elford played an important part in the life of the community. It was a beautiful little church with a square tower. Dedicated to St Peter, it had the Squire as its patron, and his family had their own special part of the church, rather than a separate chapel, with tombs and memorials to their ancestors.

The pulpit was made of wood and beautifully carved, and the font had a magnificently carved dark oak cover, almost like a steeple.

It was always warm in winter; the heating supplied by a boiler in the basement - I don't think anyone called it a crypt. The warmth came up through ornamental gratings in the aisles. Enormous chandeliers provided the lighting, although these were not the usual glittering crystal affairs one usually associates with that word. They were, in fact, rather like tiered iron cartwheels, containing cups for hundreds of

candles. Unfortunately, if you were directly beneath one of them, you might come away with candle grease on your shoulders but, otherwise, the lighting was soft and quite adequate. Strangers to the village found this form of illumination fascinating as most village churches were lit by oil lamps in those days. A mourner at a funeral was heard to remark after the service that he hadn't heard a word the rector had said as he had spent his time endeavouring to count the candles.

The rector (Rev. Bridson – Ed.) was a man in his mid-thirties and, like many country parsons of the time, had a private income, so the upkeep of the huge rectory and garden presented him with no real problems. He had been a padre in the Great War, was wounded, and married the young V.A.D. who had nursed him. Elford was his first post-war living. They had two small children and employed a governess to teach them.

Mrs Prince, who was the sister of the rector's wife, lived at the rectory. She was an elegant and gracious lady and took over a good deal of parish visiting. Her husband, a brilliant veterinary surgeon, was in a mental home. He had been showing violent tendencies for a long time, but she had coped reasonably well, until one evening when he attempted to shoot her

with his old army service revolver. Fortunately, his aim had been wild, and he had been overpowered by the butler and another manservant. This time, doctors insisted that, for his own and everyone else's safety, Mr Prince must be put in a mental institution.

Mrs Prince was extremely popular in the village and made herself as much at home in the tiny, bare kitchen of the poorest cottager as in the most prosperous farmer's sitting room. If she knew of a household where a mother or a child was sick, she would often take a little delicacy to tempt a poor appetite, but there was none of the patronage so often attached to such acts of kindness in those days. She came as a friend and was accepted as such.

No woman caught in the middle of a dirty job felt any embarrassment about inviting her into their home. In fact, she had been known to lend a hand on more than one occasion. Mrs Prince had the knack of being able to do such things without losing any of the respect villagers felt for the rector and his family.

The rector was popular with everyone as he had a modern outlook towards religion, believing it should be a joyful way of living, and that to be a good Christian one did not have to be miserable. He was particularly interested in the younger people. He marked out a tennis court on the rectory lawn and taught them to play tennis, lending them racquets and balls from his own collection. He taught the boys to play cricket too.

The rectory was bordered on one side by the river, so the rector had a punt, and we youngsters enjoyed many a happy ride on fine summer afternoons during school holidays.

During winter evenings, the rector formed a group called the King's Messengers. I am not sure if such an organisation exists today, and I am certainly not at all clear on the exact purpose of it (*The King's Messengers was the children's branch of the aforementioned S.P.G. and had been formed in 1891. Following a name change to Adventurers, it was eventually disbanded, probably during the 1960s – Ed.*)

We used to meet one evening a week in the winter months, from six until seven o'clock. These meetings were held in a room in the servants' quarters of the (Elford) Hall, and we were usually under the care of the rectory governess, although, once in a while, the rector himself took us in hand. We used to hear stories of the 'heathens' in darkest Africa and how the missionaries were helping them to become aware of the word of God, so that they didn't eat each other anymore!

There was great excitement one evening because the rector had received a letter from one of these missionaries that concerned him deeply. We had made a patchwork quilt and sent it to this man, who had been delighted with it. He was even more grateful a few months later, when the settlement in which he lived was raided by fierce-looking 'savage tribesmen', who grabbed



Elford Church
© Tamworth Digital archive



The dray dressed for May Queen celebrations May 1 1932
© Ann Nibbs



him and demanded gifts. The only thing he could offer of any worth was his patchwork quilt. He handed it over, and the leader of the raiding party was so delighted that he draped it round his shoulders and wore it as a cloak. The missionary assured us that our patchwork quilt had saved his life!

There was one point with which a few parishioners—Mother amongst them—disagreed with the rector. He was inclined towards Anglo-Catholicism and introduced incense. One of the stalwarts of his choir was William Williams, a carpenter in the village.

Mayday Maypole Celebrations 1932
© Ann Nibbs





New Village Hall , June 1931 © Ann Nibbs

Mother said, very crossly, after the choir had processed round the church during the Harvest Festival service, that she was sure he gave the censer an extra swing when he got near her, just because he knew she didn't like it. Indeed, there were so many protests that this 'High Church' practice had to be abandoned. It was emptying the pews rapidly.

Believing sincerely that 'Confession is good for the soul', the rector also attempted to introduce the Confessional. There was, however, an even greater storm of protest over this, so he decided to confine it to people who were being prepared for Confirmation. My brother, Frank, was one of them, and Mother forbade him to go to Confession. A few young people did go, but reduced it to such a farce that this too was discontinued,

I have happy memories of both Sunday School as an infant and Catechism in church as an older child. The rector himself was in charge of the latter, and we always began with the hymn, 'Our Blessed Redeemer' which, even today, remains my favourite hymn (Note from AN: This was sung at Doris's funeral in 2018, as she requested.). Every Sunday School pupil had a card and each week we were given a stamp to stick on it. The picture on the stamp was relevant to the particular period in the church calendar. If, through illness or holiday, a child was unable to attend, they would receive an 'Unavoidably Absent' stamp. I was often fortunate in that I used to go with my cousin, Kathleen, to her Sunday School when we were staying with her family in Tibberton, and sometimes they had the

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

© Ann Nibbs



same issue of stamps, so I was able to dispense with the uninteresting 'Unavoidably Absent'. The boys and girls with the greatest number of stamps on their cards received a prize at the end of each year.

A good number of children also attended Matins at eleven o'clock and we had our own special pews, as did the grown-ups.

The maids from Elford Hall sat on the south aisle, with two elderly retired retainers immediately behind them.

The rector's wife and children, together with their governess and the rector's sister-in-law occupied a pew at the front near the pulpit.

But the most jealously guarded pews were those the children occupied. Most of us sat on the north aisle. Those were days when children were seen and not heard. Little ones learned from a very early age to be quiet in church. They learned the hard way. A cuff from an older child is far more effective than any rebuke from a parent. Our favourite occupation during the sermon was to construct a rabbit from our handkerchiefs. I tried to do that recently, but it was hopeless, and, after a dozen attempts, I gave up, yet I doubt if any churchgoing child in Elford found any difficulty—at any rate in my day.

It was soon after the disagreement over the Village Hall that the rector left Elford. No one wanted him to go but he felt, rightly or wrongly, that he had lost the trust of his parishioners, and moved to the south of England. The new rector was a very different type. He came from the Coventry diocese and had no private income. His wife dressed far more shabbily than anyone else in the village and the rector himself looked ill-cared for and untidy. They found the heating at the rectory quite beyond their means, so shivered throughout the winter in the large rooms.

From being a comfortable family home, the rectory degenerated into a neglected, forlorn house. Only the former servants' quarters were occupied because the rector's wife said that, as the cooking stove was there, they might as well live there and save fuel. They never used the central heating boiler, and they employed no domestic outdoor help. The garden quickly became a wilderness, and the rector fought a losing battle with the once-velvety lawns.

The churchyard suffered too. This had always been mown regularly by the former rector, but poor Mr Tuff, the new incumbent, was a much older man and just could not cope.

As in most villages, the parish sat back and took its time to decide if it approved of their new rector. They decided he, 'wasn't a patch on the last one', and only the most dedicated continued to go regularly to church. Mr Tuff possessed a monotonous voice and his sermons lacked interest. He was, in fact, quite out of tune with rural life, having always lived in an industrial city.

He spent a lot of time telling everyone in Elford who would listen, how fortunate they were to live in such surroundings and that the people of his last parish were far poorer. As most of our people were themselves living simply, they did not take kindly to such remarks. In any case, most of them having lived in Elford all their lives, as had their parents and grandparents before them, felt they had little need of advice from a stranger on how to appreciate their own village.

What really set the cat among the pigeons though was when Mrs Tuff, discovering that the Mothers' Union Fund had a healthy credit balance, decided to use some of the money to buy material which she cut up into garments and handed out to members to sew. This was not unusual. The mothers had done this sort of thing in the past and the garments had then been sold at the annual sale of the S.P.G., so it came as a shock, therefore, when they learned that, this time, the finished garments would be sent to the parish the Tuffs had just left.

There was resentment among the members, many of whom could themselves have made good use of some of the things. Eventually, Mrs Senlow, a railway man's wife and never one to pull her punches, voiced the feelings of them all in no uncertain manner. She said it was time Mrs Tuff concentrated on the needy of Elford and left the people of her last parish to their present vicar's wife. In fact, if she, Mrs Senlow, was that lady she would not take too kindly to interference from Mrs Tuff.

When Mrs Tuff had recovered from her shock, she was, to say the least, very 'put out' and said so. Several of the mothers then collected their belongings and marched out. After a little while, the embarrassed remainder sheepishly followed,

leaving Mrs Tuff to wonder what on earth she had done.

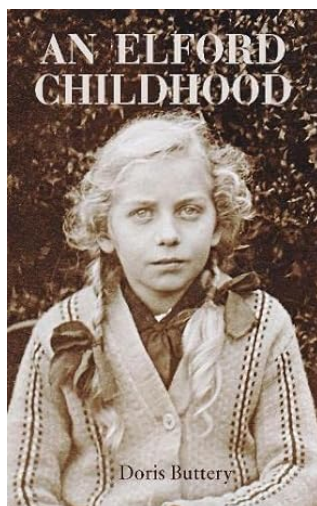
Much to her chagrin, Mother missed that particular meeting, being in bed with pleurisy at the time. She received a full report from my godmother who had been there.

There were doubts that the Mothers' Union could survive such a fracas. However, the following month, more members than usual turned up, but there no sewing was handed out and nothing more was heard of the 'poor of the last parish'.

It transpired that someone had dropped a word in the ear of the Squire's lady and she, tactful woman that she was, had 'had a talk' with Mrs Tuff.

No one could really understand how it was that the Rev. Tuff had been appointed to the living of Elford. After all, the Squire, as patron, had a great say in who should be rector. Perhaps the old man felt sorry for Mr Tuff. Whatever the reason, the Tuffs stayed for ten or more years, and the village learned to live with them, though they never really took to them as they had to their predecessors.

When the couple did eventually leave, it was to go into retirement in a house in the Cathedral Close, Lichfield.



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

This is the end of my mother's main account of her childhood in Elford. The family moved to Tamworth in 1934 following a year living in a Birmingham suburb where her mother and brother, Frank, ran a small shop. I believe the move from Elford may have been precipitated by my grandfather's health. It was around this time that Jack Buttery became seriously ill from perforated gastric ulcers and required a major operation to remove a significant portion of his stomach. Naturally, he was incapacitated for some considerable time, and they were living in a tied cottage so would not have been able to stay there. Perhaps understandably, my mother chose never to write about these difficult times and, indeed, rarely mentioned them when I was growing up. Ann.

INQUEST HELD AT THE CORONERS COURT, VICTORIA COURTS, BIRMINGHAM 1920

By Elaine Chattaway



Amington Colliery 1905
© Tamworth Digital archive

This article is about a mining accident in 1920 at Amington pit. Some 10 years after the photo above so some of the witnesses to this inquest might be in the photo. Being an inquest it is for a death but despite the injuries in the mine, they didn't directly kill the victim...

Sadly this is a typical industrial accident of the period. In fact we had an almost identical cause of death, above ground in [Vol 1 Issue 2 Spring 2023](#) the accident was in 1901.

Do remember when reading this article that this accident is probably within your grandparents, or great grandparents, life time. My own Grandparents could have been working in a mine at this time.

In this case Ernest Genders aged 16 of 49, Thomas Street, Glascote, Nr Tamworth was working underground with Ernest Cart aged 15 of 6 Dog Lane, Amington.

Ernest Cart's Statement reads: "I am a [horse] driver in the Amington Pit, but on Sat 7th Aug [1919] last was working in the wire turn-over. The deceased and I started work together at 7.45 am. He was bringing down the full tubs from the pass-by

and I was putting them on the wire," Think about that for a moment, a 15 and 16 year old working on their own underground for 8-12 hour shifts.

The Witness statement by Richard Bexton of Glascote Cottages, Glascote, Manager of the Amington and Glascote Colliery Co Ltd near Tamworth explains: *The method of bringing the coal to the surface is with tubs travelling on rails. (He will produce plan.) When the tubs are filled at the stalls, one driver, with a horse takes six tubs from the stalls to a pass-by. He leaves them there and returns with six empty tubs. A second driver takes the full tubs from the pass-by, to the wire turn-over, to which the tubs are attached. He then returns to the pass-by with six empty tubs, from the wire turn-over.*

So effectively Ernest Genders was working alone, underground with a horse moving six full tubs from the pass-by to Ernest Cart at the wire and taking 6 empty tubs back to the pass-by.

Ernest Cart's statement Continues: "He made many journeys, the last about 9.50 am. At 10am I saw the horse run out of the level, alone and go to the corn box. I thought something was wrong and went back along the level for about a hundred yards.



Coal Miners at the face
© Tamworth Digital archive

I then found the deceased lying on his back in the centre of the rails. He was in front of the loaded tubs, length-ways, his feet against the tubs.

I asked him what was wrong but he only told me to fetch a stretcher quick. I fetched Archer (next witness) and then hear the deceased say his legs were hurt. I noticed that the crank on the first tub had gone round to the right front of the tub.

The cotter pin was lying outside the track on the left side and opposite the first tub. Decease usually walked in front of his horse. The horse is very quiet"

Witness statement by Thomas Archer of 5 Temple Row, Tamworth states: "I saw the deceased several times during the early morning Of Sat 7th Aug last. About 10 am I was called by last witness [Ernest Cart] and saw the deceased lying on his face between the rails."

"His feet were about 3ft from the first tub, I asked him what happened and he said 'The cotter came out and I've just been under the tubs. It was in tight when they started'. He said his legs ached and then said he had no feeling in them."

"I got assistance and a stretcher and assisted them to get the deceased to the top. I saw the crank in position described by last witness. The horse is old and quiet."

Amington Colliery 1920s
© Tamworth Digital archive



We now turn to the Witness statement by Ernest Genders Snr. Father to Ernest Genders who suffered the accident, who stated "The deceased was my son. He was in good health prior to Sat 7th Aug last. He was employed by the Amington Colliery Co Ltd, near Tamworth and left home at 6.30am on that date to go to work. I saw him at the pit-head at 7am, he was as usual then. I did not see him again until 10.20am. At that time I was called to a point near the wire, which carries tubs to the bottom of the pit."

"When I arrived near the wire I saw him lying on a stretcher. He was conscious and I asked him what had happened and he said "The cotter pin came out".

"I knew he meant by that, that the pin connecting the crank from the tubs to the tackle on the horse, had come out. He said he had no feeling in his legs."

Tamworth Hospital
© Tamworth Digital archive



He was taken to the surface and taken by ambulance to Tamworth Hospital. It was then found out that he had a fractured spine.

Ernest Genders Snr. Continued: *"He once told me in Tamworth Hospital "that when the cotter pin came out, he was knocked on to his back and pushed along."*

"It is a common practice for the driver to ride on the crank although there are rules against it."

"If the deceased was riding on the crank and the pin came out, he would fall on the track. He never blamed anyone for the occurrence. He would put the cotter pin in himself when attaching the horse to the tubs."

"Only one driver should be in front or behind. I offer no suggestion about how accident occurred. I know it is a common practice for men to ride on crank. The Deceased never told me whether he was riding or not. I do not think he was."

"He [Ernest Junior] said "I have been thinking I must have been on my back with my knees in my chest, and trucks shoved me along in that position because my trousers (only fastened by string) were placed over my hips"

Ernest Genders Junior remained at Tamworth Hospital until Tues 5th October when he was removed to the Queens Hospital for an operation. He had the operation on Sat 9th October, he improved after that for a few hours,

Tamworth Hospital
© Tamworth Digital archive





Queens Hospital
© Tamworth Digital archive

but afterwards got weaker. He never rallied and died at 10.20 pm Thurs 14th. This is some 8 weeks after the accident.

This is where we turn to the medical reports in the inquest. They illuminate much.

The Queens Hospital, Birmingham.

October 15th 1920,

Post mortem report on:- Ernest Genders age 16

Cadava - well developed, thin

Obvious wasting of leg and thighs

Laminectomy wound over lumbar region

- septic Sacral bed sore

Fracture - dislocation Of 3rd & 4th lumbar vertebrae

Brain - well marked, septic meningitis of base

Spleen - swollen and soft

Liver - cloudy

Cause of death

1. Fractured spine
2. Septic meningitis

signed John Taylor MB Queens Hospital

What struck me was the “septic Sacral bed sore” and the second cause of death “Septic meningitis”. The lumbar laminectomy is the surgical removal of parts of the spine bones in the lower back and was the operation he had. However, the septic bedsores and the septic meningitis at base of brain which would have been there prior to the operation indicate that he wasn’t doing well in hospital. It is unlikely now that he would have been operated on in that state. Either the operation would have been

done immediately he came in 8 weeks prior or they would have alleviated the sores and infection to aid the body in recovery before the operation.

This is why I said initially that the injury at the mine wasn’t, despite the inquest finding, the direct cause of death. It was the septic bedsores and septic meningitis that so weakened his body that according to his father after the operation *“he improved after that for a few hours, but afterwards got weaker. He never rallied and died”* so he came round from the operation but rather than mend the body was too weak to recover.

This was 120 years ago: within the life time of my grandparents. Both mining and nursing have improved out of all recognition since then, well in developed nations, but not all the world. Things we use in the UK *today* come from similar mines (and medical facilities) to those we had 120 years ago.



Book Review

Victorian Tamworth: The life of Thomas Argyle

Peter Argyle

Published: Peter Argyle Publishing

www.peterargyle.com

ISBN 978-0-0369-1202-4

Softcover 562 pages

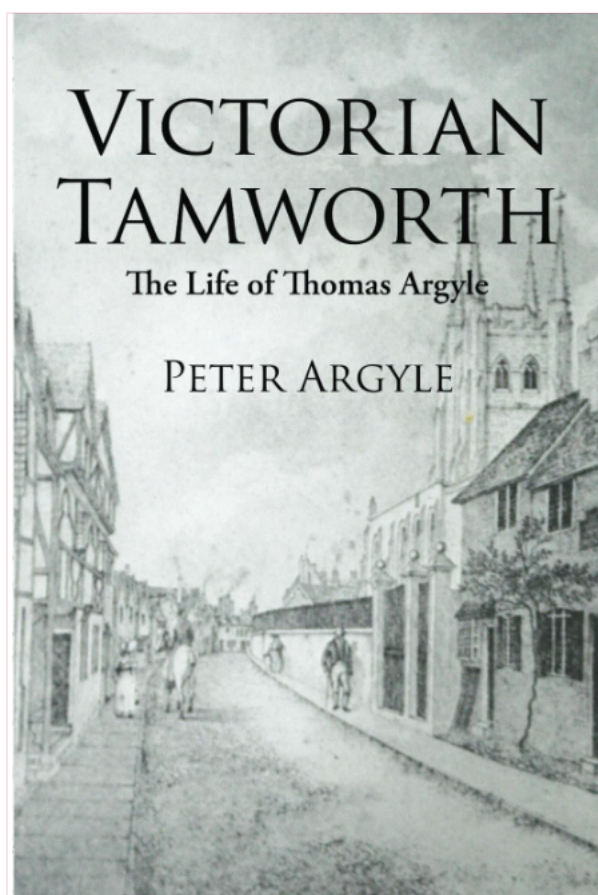
15.2cm by 22.8cm

This is a weighty book being over 560 pages, and few pictures. However the author is a trained journalist with a lot of experience therefore this is not only well researched but written in a readable style rather than that of an academic treatise.

This book has a somewhat misleading title as the first 50 pages cover everything but the Victorian history. Though it does start with "...on Monday 30th June 1834 a young man arrived in Tamworth perched on the outside of a stage coach...." and having explained, briefly, who the young man is and says Tamworth is an ancient town, the next paragraph starts: *At the time the Romans arrived....* The next 49 pages are a brief history of Tamworth from 43AD to 1834. That said the following 500 pages are all Victorian Tamworth.

Peter Argyle does like to set the context and full picture. Yes the author is directly related to Thomas Argyle, so has access to all the family archive including the scandal in the 1970's, though that is not covered in this book. Hopefully in a later volume.

However the rest of it is Thomas Argyles' life in the round from 1834 to 1898. That is effective Victorian Tamworth and as a solicitor, Town Clerk, member of the School Board, an active Methodist, and involved in many of the Towns charities, Thomas interacted with many people at all levels in the town.



This is why this book is over 500 pages, because all the side stories are explored and explained to give context, and the reasons why Thomas did what he did, fully justifying the books title of Victorian Tamworth.

The only thing missing in this book is an index. Though the contents page lists not only the chapters, but the 7-10 subjects covered in the chapter which does help somewhat to find particular events or. This also highlights that this is a book on Victorian Tamworth (with an emphasis on Thomas Argyle).

The good news is that this book is part of a trilogy. The second issue is out now (Spring 2026): **Victorian Tamworth; The Next Generation** which we will review in a future issue, also the Magazine will be serialising the first chapter of this book, *The Argyle History of Tamworth, from 43CE to 1834* in 3 or 4 parts starting with the next issue.

This book should definitely be on the shelves of anyone with any interest in the history and heritage of Tamworth. **Highly Recommended!**

Book Review

Patterns in Local History

Published: The Lichfield Press

ISBN 978-1-7396-237-5-3

Softcover 108 pages

14cm by 21.5cm

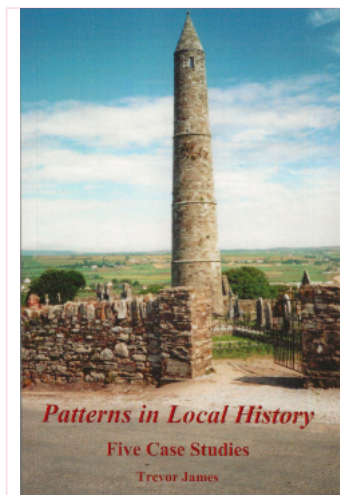
RRP £5

Trevor James' latest book is, like his earlier volumes, a distillation of his knowledge and wisdom acquired over 60 years of interest in local history; begun when a schoolboy it was further inspired by Professor W.E. Hoskins while Trevor was a student at Leicester University. Studying local and regional landscapes, he argues that local history is 'an activity that can be shared by everyone.' The development of his ideas illustrates this clearly and gives us insights into the lives of ordinary people.

His five case studies for patterns to be discerned involve local, regional and national examinations of different themes using a variety of sources for evidence. There is an Irish village with a strong religious tradition, followed by the dead boards found in churchyards in many south-east counties of England, and then what can be gleaned from shrines and church dedications in the wide midland region of the Trent valley. The last two chapters widen out nationally to show what we can learn historically from inn names and the economic significance of the variety of town fairs.

In analysing the southern Irish village of Ardmore he illustrates that attention to visual evidence can partly make up for lack of written records and shows how the comparatively little-known early fifth century St Declan exercised considerable influence in the area. The author points to the continuing local celebration of Declan on his feast day and goes on to urge us all to look for signs of ancient religious traditions and activities in our own communities, a theme he will maintain for the rest of the book.

Trevor James first spotted dead boards – or grave boards – as a schoolboy in Croydon where they were found in his local parish church. He examines the reasons for using them (rather than the conventional tombstone), location, materials, and attempts at conservation of these revealing



memorials. While individual examples are fascinating it is the overall analysis which is of particular value with a careful examination of the specifications of the boards revealing the type of wood used.

In his chapter concerning the saintly landscape of the Trent valley, he looks at the shrines of St Chad, St Editha and others and then how church dedications to a particular saint can give clues as to possible medieval pilgrim routes; how Saxon tribes on the move brought their preferred saints' dedications with them and how some dedications are linked to economic activity.

When examining inn names all over the country the author says this was difficult to research because of changes of name, function and status of inns over the last few hundred years with 'linguistic distortions' and 'widely adopted nicknames'. But he is able to show that his approach of looking at the origins of inn names rather than their design can yield historically significant results.

In the final chapter with its nationwide analysis of fairs, both commodity (cheese, walnuts, cherries and many others) and livestock (including pigs and geese) he has shown how we can learn more about their economic significance to a particular area until 19th Century transport improvements rendered many redundant.

Trevor James has not merely given us an interesting and wide-ranging description of local history phenomena but has shown us how in many cases that by adopting his overall approach we can all find meaning and significance in the evidence of local history dotted all around us. **Review by David Paterson**

Book Review

Top Secret West Midlands

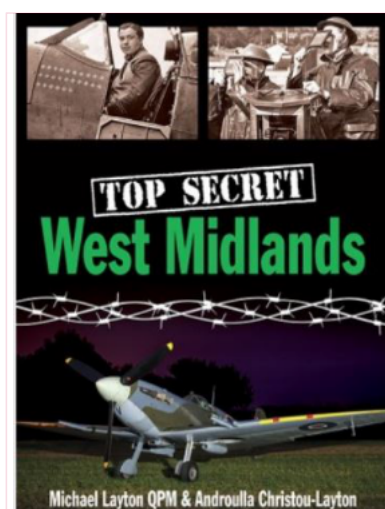
Michael Layton & Androulla Christou-Layton

Published: [Brewin Books](#)

ISBN 978-1-8585-8789-9

Softcover 304 pages

17cm by 24cm



This is a fascinating book. OK the “Top Secret” seems like click bait as most people will have already seen many of the things in this book. However seeing a pill box in your area that has been there forever or that “everyone knows” where RAF Pershore is; it doesn’t mean people know why they are there or what the history actually was and what was actually done there?

The thing is many are no longer there for example RAF Lichfield! Yes, an airfield in Lichfield. There are 41 RAF stations mentioned including one I served on (it’s still there) and one that is now home to the Pilgrims. Most of the RAF stations are long gone, some are now housing estates or industrial parks, others farmers’ fields with a couple of strange out buildings.

Of course the Prisoner of War camps have also gone now, many have no idea they were even in the midlands.

Pill boxes... these were part of Stop Lines. Not just isolated things dropped around randomly. Then there are the Y Stations that were very secret until long after the war. So many have no idea they were even there or only know the “cover story” of a requisitioned house in WW2. E.g. “logistics planning”.

Then there are the WW2 decoys for bombing set in the countryside, unless you know what you are looking for they are invisible now.

There are comments on K sites and Q sites that you have never heard of that start to put things in to perspective.

Having flicked through the book I thought, this is *something and nothing*, places covered in a couple of sentences. This is true but this 300 page book would be 300,000 pages if it covered all of it in detail.

People write multiple books on Royal Ordnance Factory and the English Electric Company, both mentioned in this book, along with any of the nearly 100 military and other installations...

In fact most things in mentioned in just a paragraph in this book warrant several books and a documentary.

That the authors are former Police officers with a connection to the military and intelligence based policing shows in the way this book is put together. It is the preliminary investigation you need for anything connected to WW2 and onward. It also puts things into context. It is one of those books that will be the start point for your interest in a particular place or event.

Also you will see thumbnails of the region and time frame you are interested in that will point to other things you didn’t know about that impact what you are looking for.

The more I look at this book I realised that if you are looking at the midlands from WW2 through to the Cold War it will be a start point and save a lot of hours of research. This is an essential book.

Volunteers wanted: THM needs you!



Volunteers wanted: THM needs you!

Tamworth Heritage Magazine has many on going projects. Our only problem is time. We could cut corners as others have done but the team wants do to things properly. This involves research, cross checking and often chasing red herrings down rabbit holes!

We are looking for volunteers to help with the video team, the [digital] archive team, web team, general research, photography, web team, magazine, book and cover design. Despite most of our work being on-line, sometimes actually going to look at something in the wild outdoors is essential. 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 60s. Basic 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, 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 Editor.

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

Contact Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk

Come and Join the Team!



Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

In the last issue you mentioned the Mercian Regiment's link to Sherlock Holmes. However, the Mercian's predecessor regiment has a greater claim!

As we know, from all the Bond films, the head of MI6 was M initially played by Bernard Lee and based on Rear Admiral John Geoffrey. This is because Geoffrey was Lt. Ian Fleming's boss at Naval Intelligence in WW2. However the actual first head of MI6 was Captain Sir Mansfield Smith-Cumming from 1909 to 1923. He was known as "C" and used green ink to write.

Ever since then MI6 and from 1920 as SIS the head has been called C and still uses green ink! It should be noted that addressing C as M won't help your promotion.

However we have to go back to the start of the Secret Service Bureau founded in 1909 with Cummings and a young Captain Kell. They split the organisation into the Home Section and Foreign Section. Cummings taking the Foreign section and Knell the Home Section.

Later this was reorganised into MI5 (home) and MI6 (foreign) There were at least nineteen Military Intelligence sections up to the end of WW2. Many were dissolved and some effectively still exist under other names. In the case of MI18 no one is really sure what it did or if it actually existed.

At the outbreak of WW1 Captain Kell had 16 staff including the caretaker! (see [the establishment of the secret service bureau](#)) However Kell was multi-lingual, he had served in China during the Boxer rebellion so, like James Bond, spoke Chinese.



**Sir Vernon George Waldegrave Kell KBE,
CB 1973-1042**

Kell was a very good organiser and was able to run MI5 on a shoestring. He was called K but this didn't stick after he retired in 1940 as a Major General.

Whilst C (and M) were Royal Navy, Captain Vernon George Waldegrave Kell was Army! In fact Kell was from the South Staffordshire Regiment.

So I leave it to you to decide if a Mercian introducing Watson to Holmes or a South Stafford starting MI5 is the more significant event.

Regards
Kathleen Pettigrew

Editor: Many thanks for that information Kathleen. I can see that some will think the Sherlock connection is more significant and others that the Staffords were responsible for the start of MI5.

Of course thanks to Ian Fleming MI6 is the glamorous sister and MI5 far less so, but no less essential. More of a Chess Master than a playboy.

Dear Editor

I have discovered an interesting Tamworth fact relating to Prudential. Instead of finding the Prudential office in Tamworth, I've found a bit of Tamworth in what was, until 1990, Prudential's Chief Office.

A Tamworth business made a significant contribution to the building of Prudential's chief office which it occupied from 1878. It is in the basement of this building where the archives reside.

The building used to be known colloquially in the Pru as the red-brick due to the terracotta extensively used across its exterior.

This terracotta was supplied by Gibbs and Canning of Tamworth, the architect of the building was Alfred Waterhouse who also designed the Natural History Museum and took inspiration from terracotta used in the construction of the Albert Hall - all 3 buildings used materials supplied by Gibbs and Canning.

Here are a couple of links to articles about the building:

[Holborn Bars - Wikipedia](#)

[Prudential Building and Furnival's Inn - A London Inheritance](#)

There is of course much more in the archives although its in a book about Waterhouse's buildings that I've found numerous references to Gibbs and Canning.

Regards
Andrew
Prudential PLC Archives

Editor: Thank you for your assistance with the Pru key to Mayor Godfrey in 1922 in the last issue. The whole of Tamworth knows the front of the Natural History Museum is Gibbs and Canning. Some know their involvement with the Albert Hall but as far as we are aware no one had any idea they did the Holborn Bars for the Pru! Though there is some similarity with the Natural History Museum. We hope to have some more Gibbs and Canning in future issues.

The "Man from the Pru" was a national institution in the UK at one time when he would call round



weekly for a penny (or more) payment for the assurance policy.

See [this article](#) for the difference between assurance and insurance.

For many working class families it was the safety net before the Welfare State and NHS.

Dear Editor

Here is some information on one of our newest titles: [Saga Trees: The Sutton-Dudley Family History from 1066-1899](#) by Staffordshire author, Glenny Fletcher.

Saga Trees is a family history that traverses hundreds of years and many historical events, such as the Norman Conquest, the Battle of the Roses, and the English Civil War. This significant time span begins with ghastly executions and imprisonments and ends in a time of progress, with skilled iron masters and newly-developing infrastructure.

During the Covid-19 lock-down, the author decided that a project was needed to while away the time. Having recently amassed a box of un-examined sources dating from 1066 to 1899 from family members, she began to investigate them in earnest and soon discovered that her grandmother, Ann Evans (affectionately known as Grandma Annie) was a canal girl who, astonishingly, descended from a rather prestigious family – the Sutton Dudleys.

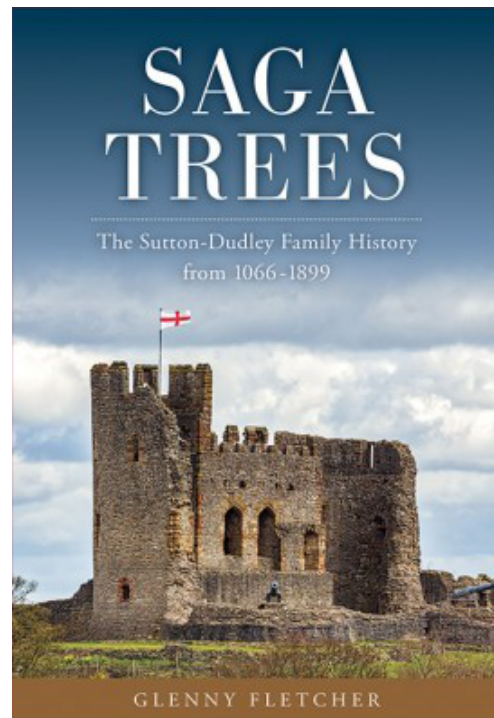
Uncovering a few hidden gems along the way, Saga Trees will appeal to anyone with a passion for genealogy, history, and heritage.

Best wishes
Alistair Brewin
www.brewinbooks.com

Editor: Thank you for the information. Readers should note the Magazine team have not seen or reviewed this book. But it looks like it might appeal to our readers for some summer reading.

Dear Editor
Here is the photo of the shako helmet that needs dating, apparently it was issued for the year they were on guard duty at Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle, although that needs confirming.
Cheers,
Roger

EDITOR: Well this opened up a can of worms! So we did some research and chased red herrings down rabbit holes. We have an answer, but we are not sure without a lot more time and research. We scoured the interweb and asked our friends at the [Staffordshire Regiment Museum](#) (thanks Matt) Read on....



The badge says “Kings Own 2nd Staffordshire Regiment” It has what appears to be the main tower at Windsor Castle in the centre with the Stafford knot and a horn below.

We were rescued by Matt at the [Staffords Museum](#) who identified the hat as an Albert Shako that is missing a worsted wool tuft (like a pom-pom at the top front) and the chin strap. Matt also mentioned that these shakos were only issued to the British army between 1844 and 1855. So that narrows it down to 11 years.

Why “Albert”? Prince Albert proposed the design of the hat as part of modernising the military from the many varied and less practical uniforms they had. It replaced the bell top shako of the line infantry, light dragoons and others.

That was the easy part. It was a bit more difficult working out which unit the shako belongs to. The problem is the “Kings Own” and “Regiment”. There wasn't one!

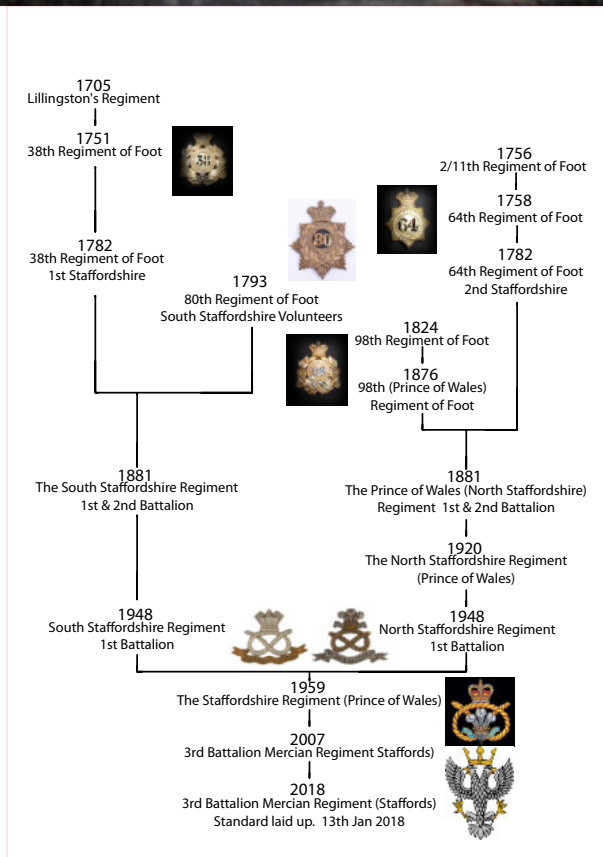
There is the King's Own (2nd Staffordshire) *Light Infantry Militia* formed 1853 and 1872 it was attached to the 64th (2nd Staffordshire) *Regiment of Foot* (no “Kings Own”). This also included the 98th (The Prince of Wales's) *Regiment of Foot* which is where the Staffords *Prince of Wales* title comes from.

Clearly we are going to have to do a lot more research on this! The Staffordshire Regimental Museum has come down on this being a *King's Own (2nd Staffordshire) Light Infantry Militia* hat but it clearly says “Regiment”! Local commanders had more latitude in those days;

Also some more research is needed on who actually did guard duties at Windsor and Buckingham Palace (and other Royal places) and when this was done.

As you can see from the Regimental family tree to the right, the history is complex and that doesn't include the militia's, other odd units and TA units that were part of the family. The full tree is going to need a considerably larger piece of paper...

We will be revisiting this topic shortly.



Next Edition

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Publication Date: 1st July

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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 June

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

Please send in article/letters in text, RTF, MS doc or docx, 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**

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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 4 Issue 3 and we hope to be a little more organised with what is in these issues than we were for volume 3.

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 4 Issue 3 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

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Preserving the Past, Recording the Present
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