

Tamworth

HERITAGE

Magazine
V3 i1 Winter 2025



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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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.

Preserving the Past, Recording the Present
Safeguarding the Future

Welcome from the Editor

Volume 3! We got there!



Volume 3! It is one thing in theory but actually getting there in practise is something else all together. This year we will see some major changes, all good, and some new projects.

I know I said that last time however due to problems with cars, boilers, houses, travel, etc. and many of the team having families things to deal with progress on the new projects has taken longer to solidify. Also, for some reason, the last few months have seemed to be depressing for a lot of people. Combined it has made this issue somewhat late. We will try and get back on track with the next one. In fact I will be starting on it as soon as this issue is uploaded.

I have to give a lot of thanks to all those who supported and encouraged the Magazine in the past year for Volume 2 and my personal thanks to the Editorial Board, and the others working behind the scenes, who gave their time and effort to make the magazine what it has become. We have many professionals who gave advice on way forward, which has directed our course for the coming years. I am looking forward to this and the next two volumes. I always intended to do 5 Volumes and hand over to a new Editor so I can get on with other aspects of THM. I am looking at the Magazine really taking off in Volume 3 with some new features and projects.

Some of the projects we want to do are interviews with local residents on their history in Tamworth. We have plans to set these up. The

thing to note is these take time. Last year we recorded two video interviews and these threw up so many questions the research has got quite involved and time consuming. We are still working on who the skeletons, yes real ones, are and why they are there. However getting the interviews recorded is very important. So if any of you have relatives with stories to tell of Tamworth from the last millennium let us know. Email Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk

As the picture above shows Tamworth is changing fast, too fast for some and not fast enough for others. We are trying to record it before it goes: *recording the present to safeguard the future* as our strap-line says. Once it is gone it is gone for good. However these things need recording properly so the magazine works to professional standards as much as we can. This will preserve things for a long time.

With that, Happy New Year! and I have to start Vol3 Issue 2 which will be out on time!



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John Blount a story from WW1 to 2024.

by Jill Gadsby and Dr S People



The Young's, TBC Archivist Sarah Williams and Jill Gadsby donating the Widows Plaque to Tamworth Castle Archive © Tamworth digital Archive

Last year, 2024, our History Group was contacted by Kayleigh Young. Her family had come across a Widow's Plaque and 2 Certificates for a WWI soldier who had been killed in 1916. His name was John Blount. These had been found in a suitcase when clearing the loft of their grandfather's property. They were surprised with the find as there was no one by the name of Blount in their family and so the search began.

This is John's Story:

John's parents were John Blount and Norah Dolan. John Snr. was born in Warton in 1865 the son of William Blount (aka Blunt) and Sarah Parker. They married in 1850. He was the 7th of their 12 children. Norah was born Burton On Trent in 1873 to Michael Dolan and Catherine Giblin. Norah was the 8th of their 10 children.

Prior to his marriage to Norah, John Snr. was issued a summons for an assault on him by Patrick Morrisroe. The assault took place in

ASSAULT.—Patrick Morrisroe, labourer, Mill Lane, was summoned by John Blount, miner, of 41-42 Church Street, for an assault on August 12.—Complainant stated that about a quarter past six on a dark night he had a quarrel with a man named Ware in Church Street. They had a fight, and Ware fell on the ground.—The Magistrate (Gibb), then asked how far it was from the door?—Complainant: I expect I knocked him there.—(Laughter). Continuing, complainant said he stood on the side of the footpath when the defendant roused out of Morrisroe's nest, and struck him a severe blow on the eye. He then ran back up the entry. Complainant could not say what he was struck with, but he was quite sure it was not defendant's fist. He fell on to the floor and became unconscious. Fully two hours elapsed before he came to his senses. He was severely hurt, and he had to have the wound dressed by a surgeon on the following morning. He denied having given defendant any possession.—In reply to the Clerk complainant said Ware and himself were now good friends.—Mr. Gyles said complainant had a terrible face when he came to take the witness stand. It was a wonder he was not blinded.—Defendant: Didn't you come to me and say that you would fight any Warwickshire man there was there, and that you would lose the last drop of your heart's blood for any?—Complainant: No.—Kate Dadd, married, residing in Mill's yard, stated that whilst she and her husband were having supper, she heard a noise in the street at the bottom of the entry. She went down and saw two men—Blount and Ware—strapped in the roadway. She saw Blount knock Ware over the gutter by hitting him with his head. Blount stood on one side waiting for Ware to get up, when the defendant came running out of Morrisroe's court and struck him. He fell on the pavement, and was subsequently taken into witness's house. He was stunned; he did not regain consciousness until nearly two o'clock on the following morning.—In reply to the Bench, witness said she did not notice what defendant had in his hand. He did not speak but returned into the yard immediately.—Defendant said he was talking to Mr. and Mrs. Ware, when the complainant struck them and then attempted to strike him. He asked him, and he (defendant) struck complainant in self-defence.—Maggie Ware, married, residing in Morrisroe's court, said whilst she was talking with her husband and the defendant, complainant touched and abused them, and said he was prepared "to drain the last drop of his heart's blood for any of the"—standing there. Complainant hit her husband in the stomach and knocked him into the road, and also struck witness upon the left shoulder. He attempted to strike Morrisroe, and the latter therefore struck Blount, knocking him on the forehead. The latter was very drunk, and was bleeding from the eye. He was taken into Dadd's house.—Inspector Dadd said defendant was a very troublesome man, and added that he was often talking about committing suicide.—The Bench fined defendant 5/- and 14/6 costs; in default of payment 14 days imprisonment. They remarked that he must consider himself extremely lucky.—Time for payment was not allowed.

REMARKABLE RESCUE.—Charles Davison, tailor

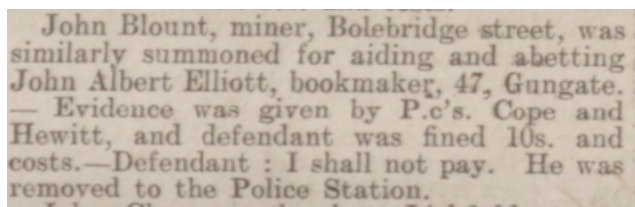
Church Street following John being in an altercation with a man named Ware. John, who was reported to be drunk at the time, had been struck by Morrisroe which had knocked him on to the curb stone and caused bleeding to his eye. Morrisroe was described by police to be a troublesome man. He was fined 5/- and 14/6 costs. The Judge remarked that he must consider himself extremely lucky. He was not allowed any time for payment.

John Snr. married Norah Dolan on the 23 December 1893. Norah's name on the marriage record is given as Honora although her birth was registered as Norah. John Jnr. born in 1894 was the first of 8 children born to the couple. Sadly 4 of his siblings died in childhood. William, James, Margaret and Harry all died within the first year of the lives. His siblings Winifred Mary born in 1902, Thomas in 1904 and Catherine in 1907 along with John where the only ones that

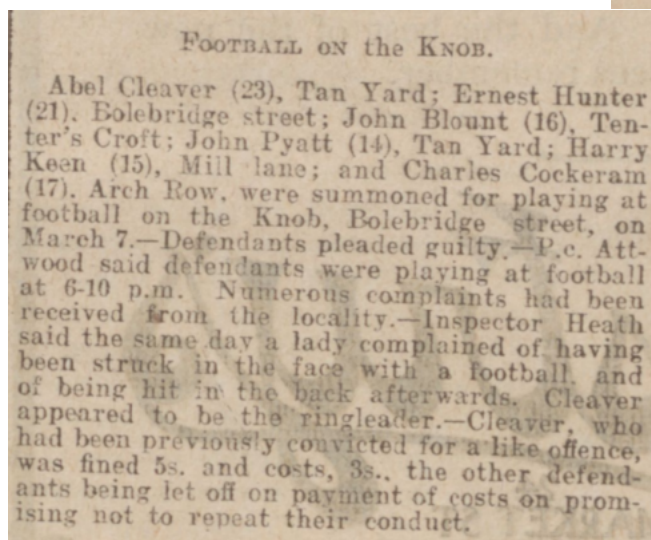
survived into adulthood. The children were baptised at St John the Baptist Church in Tamworth.

John Jnr. first appeared on the Census records in 1901 with his parents. He was aged 7. They were living at Court 2, House 2, Bolebridge Street, Tamworth. John Snr. occupation was given as Coal Hewer, Miner, Tamworth. Looking at the Census Records it would appear that Court 2, House 2, Bolebridge Street was in the Yard known as Tenter's Croft. By 1901 John had already lost 3 of his siblings as babies.

It was reported in the Tamworth Herald on the 18 June 1904 that John Blount, a miner, living in Bolebridge Street was summoned for aiding and abetting John Albert Elliott, bookmaker of 47 Gungate. Evidence was given by PC's Cope and Hewitt and Blount was fined 10/- plus costs. John Blount said that he would not pay and was removed to the Police Station.

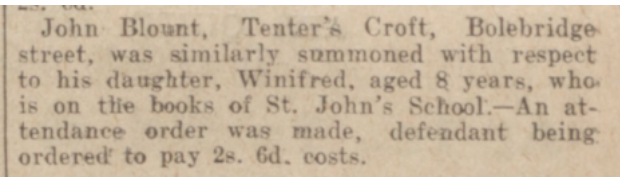


Sometime later, John Jnr along with others were summoned for playing football on "The Knob". Police had received numerous complaints from residents. One lady had complained that she had been struck in the face with football and in the back afterwards. One of the defendants was ordered to pay a fine of 5/- and 3/- costs as he had previously been convicted of a similar offence. The other defendants including John



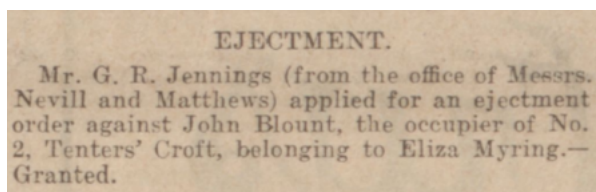
Blount were let off on payment of costs and a promise not to repeat the offence. The report appeared in the Tamworth Herald on the 19 March 1910

A few months later in the Tamworth Herald dated 25 June 1910 it was reported that John Blount Snr. had been summoned in respect of his daughter Winifred, then aged 8, for not neglecting to send her to school. She was a pupil at St John's School. An attendance order was made and he was fined 2/6 costs.



The family were still living at 2 Tenter's Croft, Bolebridge Street in 1911. John Jnr. had been joined over the last 10 years by his siblings Winifred Mary, Thomas and Catherine Sarah. His occupation was given as Collier (above ground). His father John Snr was employed as a Stall Man (Colliery Hewer). In 1910 John and Norah had another son Harry who sadly did not survive to appear on the 1911 Census.

The Tamworth Herald of the 28 February 1914 carried a report that G R Jennings of Messrs. Nevill and Matthews, Solicitors had applied for an ejection order against John Blount, the occupier of 2 Tenter's Croft.



The property belonged to Eliza Myring. The order was granted. This must have been the time that the family moved to Freeman's Yard.

In another Tamworth Herald report dated 9 May 1914, John Blount of Freeman's Yard was summoned for being drunk in Victoria Road on 23 April 1914. John Blount pleaded guilty and was order to pay costs by the Judge. Whether this was John Snr. or John Jnr. it is not possible to say.

DRUNKENNESS.
 John Blount, labourer, Freeman's yard, was summoned for being drunk in Victoria road, on April 23. — Defendant pleaded guilty. — P.c. Mayer said defendant was drunk. When he asked him where he was going he said he did not know. He locked him up for his own safety. —Inspector Hall said defendant did not know where he was for the time being.—The Mayor: You should be a teetotaler, you would know where you were then.—Defendant: Somebody has got to drink ale, sir.—(laughter).—The Mayor said he did not agree.—To pay the costs.
 Angelo Petterio

2 January 1915 saw John Jnr. enlist in the Kings Royal Rifles where he was to serve 7 years with the Colours and 5 years in Reserve, 12 years of service in total. His Service Number was 12208. His Attestation Record records John Blount of Tamworth was a British Subject aged 20 years 11 months and his occupation was given as a Miner.

It confirms that he was still living at home and that he had never been apprenticed, never married, did not belong to any other military organisation and had never previously served with one. John's height was given as 5 feet 4 inches. His weight 130 pounds. Chest measurement 36 inches with a range of 3 inches expansion. His complexion was fresh, eyes grey and hair brown. His religion was given as

Army Form
To be used for recruits enlisting direct into the Regular Army only. Army Form B. 178* to be used for Special Reserve recruits and Special Reservists enlisting into the Regular Army.
MEDICAL HISTORY of

Surname Blount Christian Name John

TABLE I—GENERAL TABLE.

Birthplace — Parish St. Andrew's County Stafford

Examined — on 2nd day of January 1915
 at Tamworth

Declared Age — 20 years 11 months 11 days

Trade or Occupation — Miner

Height — 5 feet 4 inches

Weight — 130 lbs.

Chest Measurement (with and fully expanded) 36 inches.
 (fully expanded) 3 inches.

Physical Development — Good

Vaccination Marks (Arm right left) — 1 1

When Vaccinated ...

Vision — (R.E.—V—6)
 (L.E.—V—6)

(a) Marks indicating congenital peculiarities or previous disease ...

(b) Slight defects but not sufficient to cause rejection ...

Approved by ... (Signature) Michael Taylor M.D.
 (Rank) _____ Medical Officer.

Enlisted — at Tamworth
 on 2nd day of January 1915

Joined on Enlistment — R.R.R. Coy. 12208 Regt No.

Transferred to —

Became non-effective by —

on _____ day of _____ 1915

(Signature) _____ M. Colonel
 (Rank) _____ Officer in Charge Records

(1915) WASH—513 10,000 1914 G. P. & Co. Ltd. P.T.O.

SHORT SERVICE. (All Arms.)
 7 years with the Colours, and 5 years in the Reserve, or, if the man completes his 7 years with the Colours while beyond the seas, then for a further period, not exceeding one year, with the Colours, and the remainder of the 12 years in the Reserve.)

No. 2228 Name John Blount Attestation of Corps Kings R Rifles

Questions to be put to the Recruit before Enlistment.

1. What is your Name? John Blount
2. In or near what Parish or Town were you born? St. Andrew's
3. Are you a British Subject? Yes
4. What is your Age? 20
5. What is your Trade or Calling? Miner
6. Have you resided out of your Father's house for three years or more? No
7. What is your Trade or Calling? Miner
8. Are you Married? No
9. Have you ever been sentenced to imprisonment for any offence? No
10. Have you ever served in the Royal Navy, the Army, the Militia, the Special Reserve, the Territorial Force, the Army Reserve, or any Naval Reserve Force? No
11. Have you ever served in the Royal Navy, the Army, the Militia, the Special Reserve, the Territorial Force, the Army Reserve, or any Naval Reserve Force? No
12. Have you truly stated the whole, if any, of your previous service? Yes
13. Have you ever been rejected as unfit for the Military or Naval Service of the Crown? No
14. Are you willing to be vaccinated or re-vaccinated? Yes
15. For what Corps are you willing to be enlisted, or any you willing to be selected for Special Service? Kings R Rifles
16. Do you understand that although every endeavour will be made to put you in the regiment which you have selected, you will be liable to be sent to any other regiment of the Corps at any time? Yes
17. Do you understand that, notwithstanding you enlist for a particular Corps, you are liable to be treated and engaged in such manner as may be required? Yes
18. Did you receive a Notice, and do you understand its meaning and what you are to do? Yes
19. Are you willing to serve upon the following conditions provided His Majesty should so long require your services? Yes

(a) For the term of twelve years, for the first seven years in Army Service and for the remaining five years in the Army Reserve. If at the expiration of each period of Army Service you are serving beyond the seas, then for a further period in Army Service of not more than one year, and for a further period of not more than 12 years in the Army Reserve.

(b) If, at the expiration of the above-mentioned term of Army Service a state of War exists, then for the duration of the War, to serve in Army Service for a further period not exceeding 12 months.

(c) If, at the expiration of the above-mentioned term of Army Service, you are engaged by a Commission from His Majesty in some of the most important duties of the Army, then to serve in Army Service for a further period not exceeding 12 months.

(d) If the above-mentioned term of 12 years expires while you are on service with the Special Force—(1) beyond the seas, or (2) within a state of war with a Foreign Power, or (3) while you are on service with the Special Force, then you are to continue in that service, and you, in accordance with such provisions, have continued upon Army Service, then to serve for a further period not exceeding 12 months.

I, _____ do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and that I am willing to fulfil the engagements made.

SIGNATURE OF RECRUIT. _____

SIGNATURE OF WITNESS. _____

OATH TO BE TAKEN BY RECRUIT ON ATTESTATION.

I, _____ do solemnly declare that I will be faithful and true to the Majesty King George the Fifth, His Heirs, and Successors, and that I will, on duty, honour, loyalty, and obedience, to the Majesty, His Heirs, and Successors, and of the Officers and Soldiers of the Army, do my duty to the best of my power.

CERTIFICATE OF MAGISTRATE OR ATTESTING OFFICER.

The Recruit above named has been duly examined and found to be fit for enlistment as provided in the Army Act.

The above questions were then read to the Recruit in my presence.

I have taken care that he understands each question, and that he answers in each question as being fully entered or replied to, and the answers are true, and I have taken care that he understands the meaning and what he is to do.

SIGNATURE OF THE JUSTICE. _____

If any alteration is required on this page of the Attestation, a Justice of the Peace should be required to make it and return the Attestation with a return to the effect that he has made the alteration.

The Recruit should, if he requires, receive a copy of the Attestation on Army Form B. 178.

Roman Catholic. He joined his Regiment in Winchester on the 4 January 1915.

John remained in the UK for training between 2 January 1915 and 11 August 1915. John's Regimental Conduct Sheet for this period reveals that he was deprived of 8 days pay for being "absent off pass from the morning of 23 July 1915 until 8 p.m. on 27 July 1915 whilst in SCALES, ? He was posted to France with the British Expeditionary Force on the 12 August 1915 where he served for 47 days. He returned home from France on the 27 September 1915.

He remained on home soil until the 28th December 1915, a total of 92 days but was then returned to France on the 29 December 1915.

The 22 June 1916 John's army records show him in trouble again. He was awarded 14 days Field Punishment for "Insolence to an NCO".

John had served 267 days in France before being wounded in the Battle of the Somme at Ypres on the 15 September 1916. John had received multiple gunshot wounds to his leg and hand. He died from his wounds on the 21 September 1916.

By 1916 John Snr. and Norah had moved from Tenter's Croft to 15 Freeman's Yard, Mill Lane, Tamworth. This is the address given for them in the report of John's death in the Tamworth Herald dated 21 October 1916. It also reveals that John Jr. had been a Miner at Kingsbury Colliery prior to his enlistment in the army. His personal effects were returned to his mother Norah on 5 March 1917. They are listed as the following:-

- 1 Metal Mirror
- 1 Disc
- 1 Celluloid Ring
- 1 packet of letters and post cards (photos)
- 1 Pipe
- 1 Waist Belt
- 1 Cigarette Case
- 2 Knives
- 1 Rosary

His Service records hold a Statement of Name and Addresses of all Relatives of the

(S 1 9) W1925-7:52 50,000 5/16 HWV(P484/9) H16744
 9485-12229 50,000 10/16

Effects—Form 118A.

MEMORANDUM FOR
 The Officer in charge of Rifle Records, C5736
Winchester

Any further communication on this subject should be addressed to:—
 The Secretary,
 War Office,
 Park Buildings,
 St. James's Park,
 London, S.W.,
 and the following number quoted.

WAR OFFICE,
 PARK BUILDINGS,
 ST. JAMES'S PARK,
 LONDON, S.W.,
 22nd February 1917.

E. 1254490 11 (Accounts 4.)

Will you please note that any articles of personal property now in your possession or subsequently received by you belonging to the late Plt. 12208 Private John Blount, 7th Bn. Kings Royal Rifle Corps. should be despatched to:—
Mr. Norah Blount
15 Freeman's Yard
Mill Lane
Tamworth

Any medals granted to the deceased that are now in your possession or that may hereafter reach you should be forwarded to:—
the above named person

1 M. Mirror
 1 Disc
 1 Celluloid Ring
 1 Packet Letters & P. Cards
 1 Pipe
 1 Waist Belt
 1 Cigarette Case
 2 Knives
 1 Rosary
 Awarded 5 ³/₁₇

Assistant Financial Secretary.

Description of John Blount on Enlistment.

Apparent Age 30 years 11 months.
 Height 5 feet 4 inches.
 Weight 130 lbs.
 Chest meas. (with arms fully extended) 36 inches.
 Range of expansion 3 inches.
 Complexion Russet
 Eyes Blue
 Hair Dark

Church of England
 Presbyterian
 Wesleyan
 Baptist or Congregationalist
 Other Protestants (specify to be added)
 Roman Catholic
 Jewish

Certificate of Medical Examination.
 I have examined the above-named recruit and find that he does not present any of the causes of rejection specified in the Regulations for the Army Medical Services.
 He can see at the required distance with either eye; his heart and lungs are healthy; he has the free use of his joints and limbs, and he declares that he is not subject to fits of any description.
 I consider him Fit for the Army.
 Date 21 January 1915
 Place Tamworth
 Medical Officer.

Certificate of Primary Military Examination.
 I hereby certify that the above-named recruit was inspected by me, and I consider him Fit for service in the R.R.C. and that due care has been exercised in his enlistment.
 Date 3 JAN 1915
 Place LICHFIELD
 Recruiting Officer.

Certificate of Approving Officer.
 I certify that this attestation of the above-named recruit is correct, and properly filled up, and that the required forms appear to have been supplied with. I accordingly approve, and appoint him to the R.R.C.
 If enlisted by special authority, Army Form B, 203 (or other authority for the enlistment) will be attached to the original attestation.
 Date 3 JAN 1915
 Place LICHFIELD
 Approving Officer.

deceased soldier dated 30 June 1919. These show that his mother Norah was deceased. She died on the 28 November 1918. It confirms his father's address as 15 Freeman's Yard. His full blood siblings are named as Thomas aged 15, Winifred aged 16 and Catherine aged 11. John Snr. received £7 10/- War Gratuity.

John was awarded the 1914-15 Star for his service to his country. His father was named as the nominated recipient of John's medal which was forwarded to him in 1930

John Blount is remembered on the La Neuville British Cemetery, Corbie, France. FR66 II.F.13.

The next record available for the family is the 1921 Census which shows John Snr. still living at 15 Freeman's Yard, Mill Lane with Winifred, Thomas and Catherine. They also have a visitor by the name of Maggie George aged 10, possibly a friend of Catherine's. John and



KRR Corps memorial certificate for John Blount
© Tamworth Digital Archive

When the research into John Blount was completed the connection between the two families became clear.

Minnie Smith who married Reginald Morrall was the mother-in-law of Arthur Young. Hence, she was the connection between the Young and the Blount families.

Minnie and her family lived at 12 Arched Row, Bolebridge Street, Tamworth. The Blounts lived in Tenant's Row, Bolebridge Street before moving to Freeman's Yard, Bolebridge Street. Both of these were some of the old yards that ran off Bolebridge Street.

John Blount's brother Thomas was a friend of Minnie and her brother Thomas. Thomas Blount visited the family even after the Young and Morrall families moved to West Street, Kettlebrook.

In his later years Thomas Blount was moved to a nursing home in Tamworth and Minnie visited him there before his death in 1985. It is believed this is how John Blount's memorial pieces came to be in the possession of the Young family.

Thomas' occupations are recorded as Miners but a note on the Census Return records that they are "Out of Work, On Strike".

John Blount Snr. died on the 24 August 1933 and was buried in Wigginton Cemetery.

The 1939 Register taken before the start of WWII for the purposes of issuing ration books and identity cards give the address for Winifred, Thomas and Catherine as 72 Manor Road, Bolehall. All of the three siblings are single and living together. Thomas' occupation was a Colliery Screen Hand (Heavywork), Winifred, unpaid domestic duties (housewife) and Catherine was a Finisher in Manufacture of Tapes and Textiles.

Winifred and Catherine both died young. Winifred on the 2 April 1945 aged 43 and Catherine on the 4 September 1946 aged 39. Thomas outlived his sisters by another 40 years. He passed away on the 22 March 1985.

All of the family members are buried in Wigginton Cemetery.

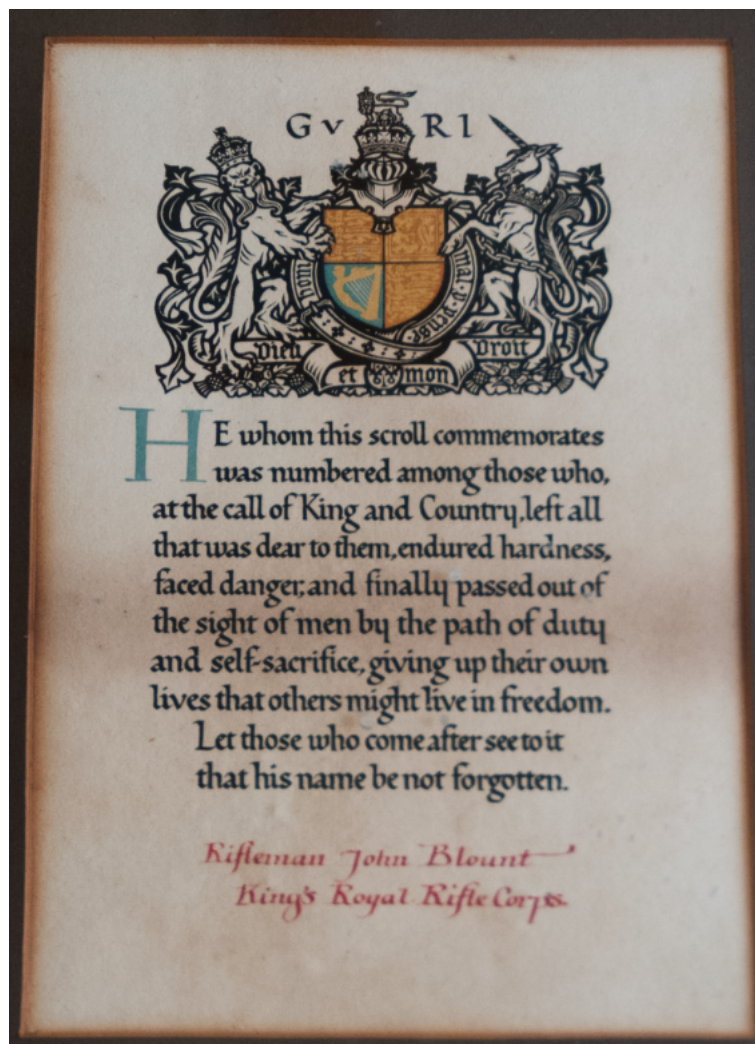


Minnie and Thomas
at the nursing home
© Young Family Archive



Above: Badge of the Kings Royal Rifle Corps

Above Left : John Blount's Memorial Plaque (Widows Penny). Each is individual and has the name of the person it commemorates on the front face. As his mother had died when it was issued, just after the end of WW1, it went to his father then passed on to his elder brother, Tommy.



Left: is the Scroll that accompanied each memorial plaque.

There is a fill article on the story of the Memorial Plaques and their manufacture in [Volume 1 Issue 1 of the Magazine](#)

Widows Plaque and scroll
© Tamworth Digital Archive

John Blount, the military and the Battle of the Somme

John Blount was a soldier in the 7th (Service) Battalion of the Kings Royal Rifle Corps. Most regiments had no more than 4 battalions in peacetime and the 7th Battalion was one of those extra battalions created to absorb the "Kitchener Volunteers" in 1914.

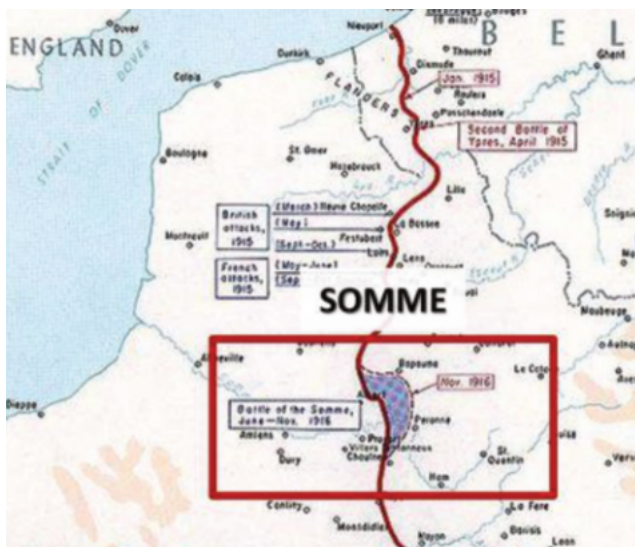


They were labelled service battalions because men were initially enlisted for the duration of the war or three years.

A battalion, at full strength consisted of 30 officers and 999 men, but in practice the number would vary hugely as battalions became depleted by casualties and illness but were then refilled with replacements. John had not joined until 2 January 1915.

The battalion was divided into 4 companies of approximately 240 men each, the balance being the Headquarters company. Blount's company, commanded by a Captain, would itself have been divided into 4 Platoons of approximately 60 men. The platoon was usually led by a Lieutenant but often, in wartime, this could be a 2nd Lieutenant, the most junior rank of commissioned officer in the British Army. These young men were straight out of officer training and at this stage in the war were often simply tasked with leading the men forward. Therefore, it is not surprising that 2nd Lieutenants suffered the highest proportion of casualties of any rank.

Therefore, when the battalion went into action,



Location of Somme battlefield in Europe

command of a platoon often devolved upon the Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs). These men were usually soldiers who might be pre-war regular soldiers but often they were those who had survived the early battles and had been promoted to Sergeant / Corporal or Lance Corporal. Their authority was therefore fundamental to the performance of the battalion in battle.

So, when John Blount decided to be "insolent towards an NCO" he was challenging the bedrock of military discipline. Therefore, on 22 July he was paraded before his commanding officer. Found guilty, Blount was sentenced to 14 days Field Punishment.

REGIMENTAL CONDUCT SHEET. Army Form B. 120.

Number of sheets (in words) One
 Signature of O.P. Adjutant
 Regiment of 7th K.R. RIFLES

Regimental Number and Name 12208 J. Blount
 Attested 2-1-15 1915
 Joined 1-1-15 1915

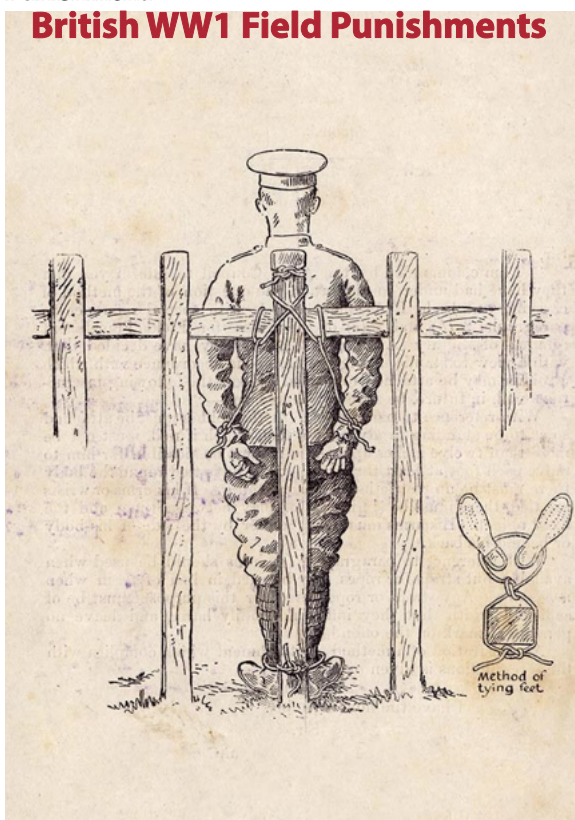
Place	Date of Offence	Rank	OFFENCE	Names of Witnesses	PUNISHMENT awarded	Date of offence	By whom	Date of execution	REMARKS
Cherbourg	23rd July	2nd Lt	Absent off post from 7th to 23rd July with 8pm	Sgt Booth Sgt Enfield	deprived of 8 days pay & 6 days pay	28th July 1915	By Lt. Col. G. G. G. G.	28th July 1915	See remarks on page 2

To be carried over

The army understood that if offenders had an easy way to get out of combat by being locked up, it could become an attractive option. Therefore, Blount's punishment was served with his battalion, usually doing fetching and carrying and extra guard duties. Also his pay would be deducted for 14 days. If a soldier had dependants who were receiving an allowance, that too was stopped.

When Blount's battalion next had a spell out of the line, they would be paraded before the Field Cashier and receive their pay. Blount would receive his pay less the 14 days spent on Field Punishment.

British WW1 Field Punishments



WW1 Field punishments were not as harsh as they once were. Flogging was no longer used. However Field Punishment 1 involved shackling the man to a fixed object, usually a post or a wheel of a gun carriage. So he would be immobile for up to two hours a day, for three days in 4 during the punishment. Field Punishment 2 was being shackled but not to a fixed object. In WW1 there were 60,210 sentences of FP1 and 27,000 sentences of FP2.

FP1 had random effects, it would depend if you were in direct hot sun or a down pour or rain, or snow for two hours. Most men had problems with lice. Imagine not being able to scratch an itch for two hours. There are stories of some on

As is well known, the allied offensive, which became known as the Battle of the Somme opened on 1 July 1916. The mixed results achieved that day meant that the offensive became a series of battles to achieve more limited objectives than had been the aim on 1 July. One such battle was the Battle of Flers-Courcelette. This battle was to be famous because it saw the introduction of tanks into the conflict. See maps to the left.

Photo of troops & Mk1 Tank at the Somme 1916



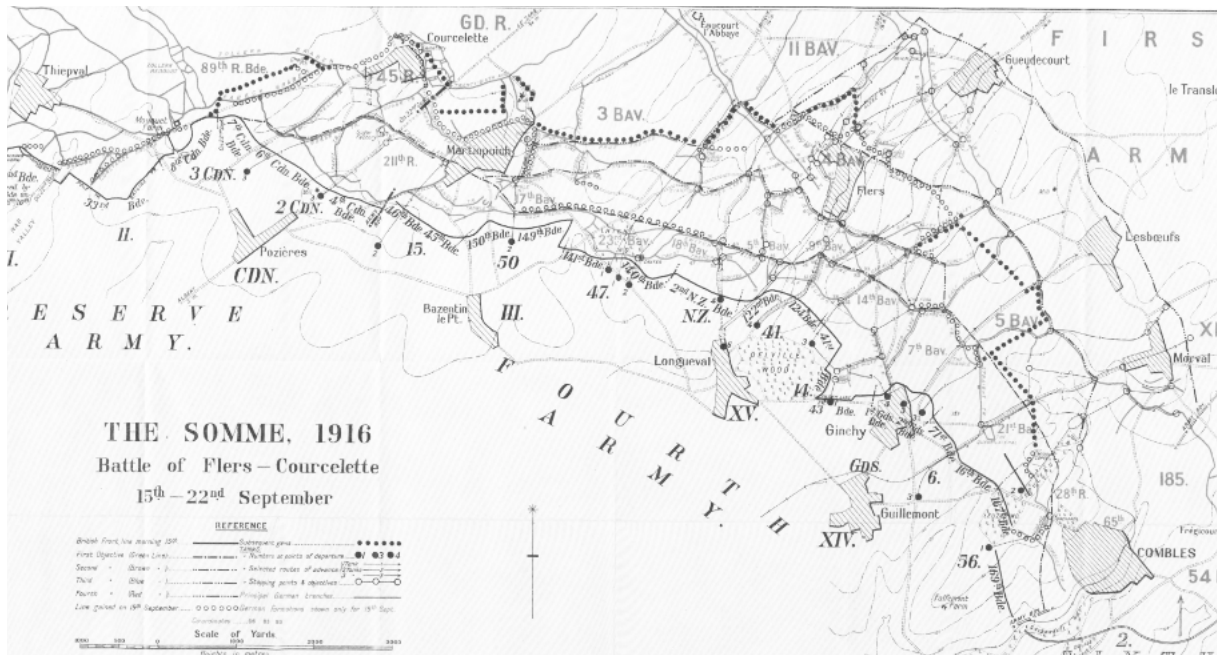
Battalions like 7th Battalion KRRC were grouped together to form the large fighting units which the plans of the general were based upon.

Blount's battalion was grouped with three other battalions to form a Brigade, commanded by a Brigadier-General. Then three brigades were grouped together to form a Division commanded by a Major-General.

FP1 being placed facing the enemy, out of range of the enemy small arms. Though there are some stories of some in range but these are hard to clarify.

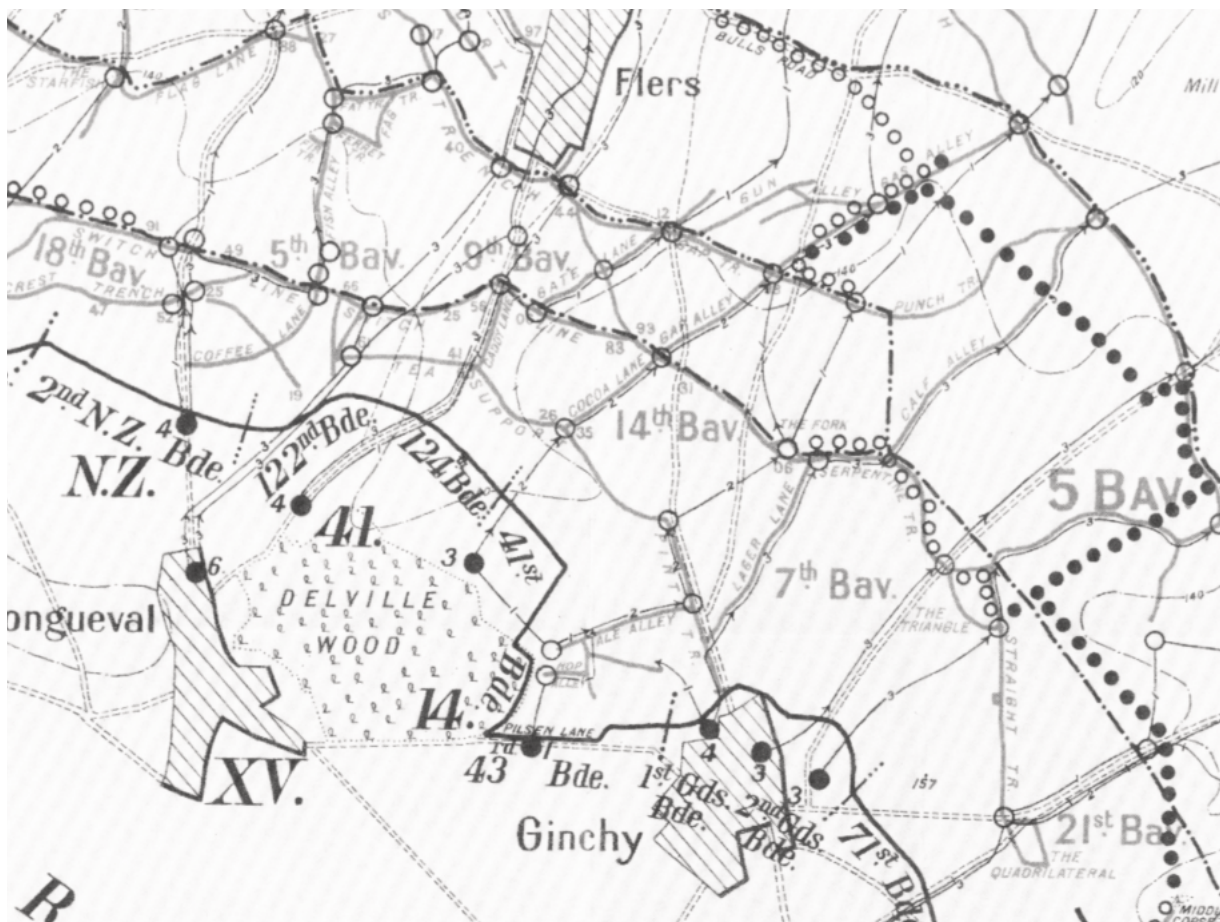
However most of the punishment was extra duties doing the less pleasant work that needed doing. E.g. sorting latrines, moving bodies etc.

Though the more serious penalty would have been the loss of pay as that meant the wives at home, often with children also had an immediate loss of income, in Blount's case for 2 weeks. So the wife *and those in her community* knew John had done something wrong.



These units were fixed so Blount's battalion formed part of 41st Brigade, which was part of 14th Division. On 15 September 1916, 14th Division was to attack the slopes of the ridge to the south-east of Flers. That day the initial assault was led by the 8th Rifle Brigade and the 8th KRRC.

On 15 September, the 7th KRRC, including Blount, were the left battalion of the second part of the assault. They emerged from the eastern edge of **Delville Wood** (see below) at 6.30am, and immediately came under German artillery fire.



The 7th KRRC passed through the trenches captured by the initial assault.

Due to the heavy artillery fire, the battalion was late reaching the start point for the planned assault on Gap trench. Nevertheless, they were successful in capturing Gap Trench. The defenders were members of the 9th Bavarian Infantry Regiment. To their right they could see the tanks attacking towards Flers.



British troops advancing in Battle of Morval approx 3000 yards east of Delville Wood, 25-28 September 1916 the week after Blount's action in Flers

On 16 September, the 7th KRRC continued to hold the positions around Green Street. The Germans sought to block any further advance by shelling the British positions and using machine guns on the flanks. To 14th Division's left was 41st Division. They had not quite maintained direction during their assault and there was therefore no link up between their right and 7th KRRC forming the left flank of 14th Division. This meant that the German machine guns in front of 41st Division's right continued to be able to fire upon 7th KRRC.

His records show that John Blount suffered multiple gunshot wounds so it is quite likely that he was wounded by a burst of machine gun fire. Badly wounded in the leg and hand, he would probably have been helped by a colleague to the Regimental Aid Post. This was usually sited to the rear of the front-line trenches.

9242 - W6190/1135 - 2000/000 - J. J. K. & Co., Ltd. - Forms B. 103/1. Army Form B. 103.

Casualty Form - Active Service. 231

Regiment or Corps KING'S ROYAL RIFLES

Regimental No. 12205 Rank Rifle Name John Blount

Enlisted (a) 2-1-15 Terms of Service (a) 5 Years Service reckons from (a) 2-1-15

Date of promotion to present rank } Date of appointment to lance rank } Numerical position on roll of N.C.O.s }

Extended } Re-engaged } Qualification (b) }

Report		Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, etc., during active service, as reported on Army Form B. 211, Army Form A. 35, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.	Place	Date	Remarks taken from Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or other official documents.
Date	From whom received				
			EMBARKED	20.12.15	
			JOINED 7 BN	7.1.16	
<u>22nd</u>	<u>G. B. An</u>	<u>Awd. 14 days S.P. 'Innocence to' N.C.O.</u>		<u>22.7.16</u>	<u>152069</u>
<u>23rd</u>	<u>G. B. An</u>	<u>Died of Wounds, (in 41 21 CCS)</u>		<u>21.9.16</u>	<u>GR 116.</u>
<u>16th</u>	<u>14 CCS</u>	<u>Adm Multiple Wounds</u>		<u>15.9.16</u>	<u>ED 8775</u>
<u>21st</u>	<u>CCS</u>	<u>Adm 'L.S.' leg & hand</u>		<u>16.9.16</u>	<u>" 3415</u>

H. Bay
LT FOR MAJOR
1/C BPG. INF. REG. NO. 2
G. B. C. 3 ED' MURKLOW

(a) In the case of a man who has re-engaged for, or enlisted into Section D. Army Reserve, particulars of such re-engagement or enlistment will be entered.
(b) S.A., Signaller, Shooting Smith, etc., etc., also special qualifications in technical Corps duties. P.T.O.

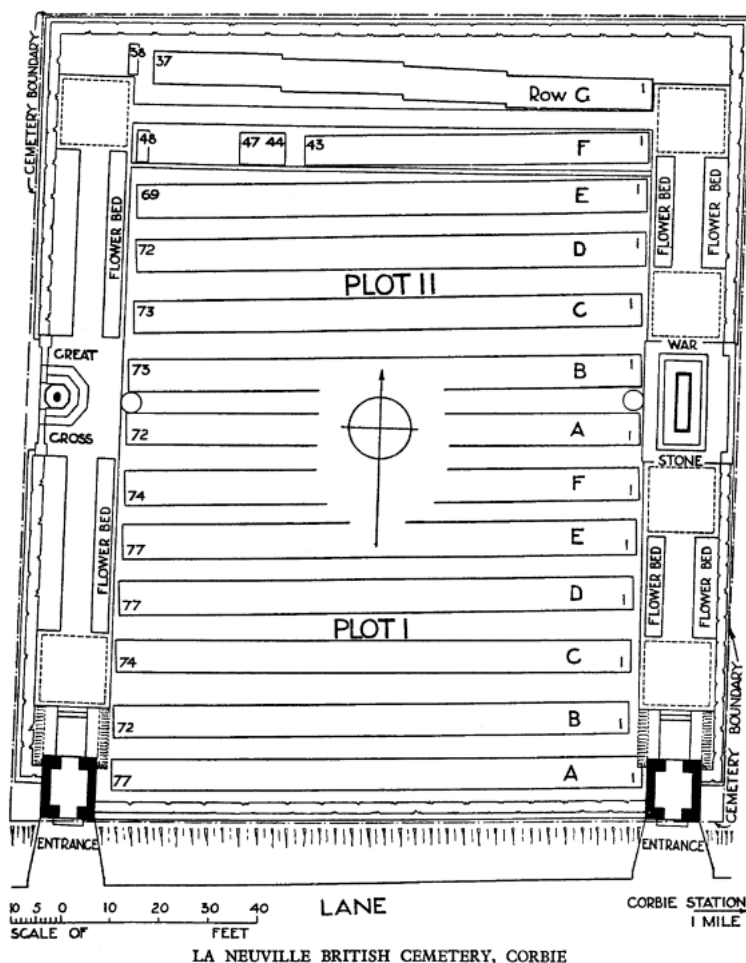
Here was the base for the battalion Medical Officer, Captain W Morrison. Captain Morrison was also wounded on 16 September so we do not know if he was still available when Blount was brought in to the aid post.

At this stage, fortified by a shot of morphine and having had field dressings applied, Blount would have been evacuated by stretcher bearers. There were strict one-way rules with a "down line" marked out for the evacuation of the wounded. Blount would have been carried past the cordon of Military Police stationed to deter soldiers from leaving the combat zone.

Each brigade had a Field Ambulance section attached to them. These units had wagons to move the stretcher cases to the Casualty Clearing Stations. It was known that there would always be casualties so the divisional medical officer was responsible for organising an overall plan for the division to evacuate casualties.

It is likely that Blount was wounded early on 16 September as he passed through the divisional medical services on 16 September and reached 21st Casualty Clearing Station the same day. However, John Blount's condition clearly deteriorated and he remained there for a week until he died of his wounds on 23rd September 1916.

He had been one of 189 Other Ranks wounded on 15-16 September in 7th KRRC, which represents about 25% of its strength going into the battle. In addition, 12 Other Ranks were killed and 120 were posted "Missing".



Rifleman John Blount's grave lies in La Neuville British Cemetery, Corbie. See plan above

**At the going down of the Sun,
And in the morning,
We will remember them**

Sources

- Miles, History of the Great War – Military Operations, France and Belgium 1916, Volume 2 (1938)
- WO 95 – 1896 – War Diary of 7th Battalion, King's Royal Rifle Corps
- WO95 – 1867 – War Dary of 14th Infantry Division.

BLOUNT, Rfn. J., 12208. 7th Bn. King's Royal Rifle Corps. Killed in action 21st Sept., 1916. Age 22. Son of J. and Norah Blount, of 14, Freeman's Yard, Mile Lane, Tamworth, Staffs. II. F. 13.

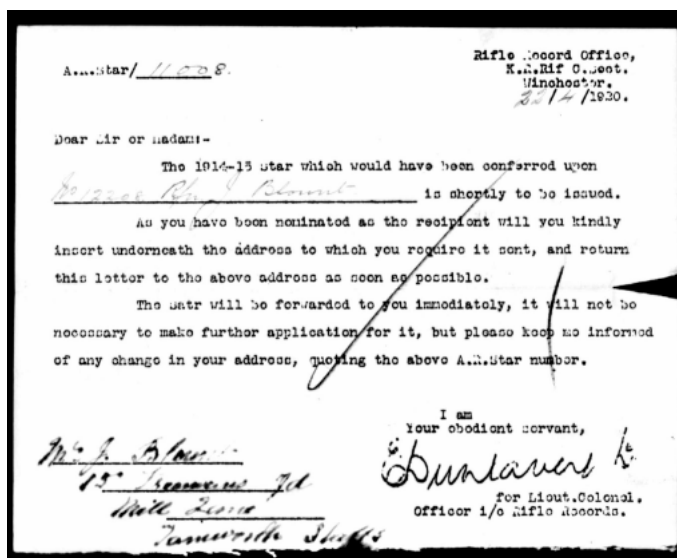
Entry in Commonwealth War Graves Commission register of all War Graves. Note many thousands are still "missing presumed dead"

GAVE HIS LIFE TO SAVE HIS COUNTRY
 Remembered with Honour
 LA NEUVILLE BRITISH CEMETERY, CORBIE
 II. F. 13.



COMMONWEALTH
 WAR GRAVES

The letter sent to John Blount's next of kin, his father, in 1930 regarding the issue of his 1914-15 Star medal. It seems too little too late but due to the numbers involved it took a long while to issue the medals. Indeed the last of the widows penny's were not issued until 1932.



The Battle of the Somme: Eye witnesses speak and film of the battle



Emmet Dalton of The 7th Royal Dublin Fusiliers, 16th Irish Division talks about his experiences at the Battle of the Somme. This was recorded in 1976

Dalton, who won a military cross at the Battle of the Somme, tells Cathal O'Shannon about the use of creeping barrages to advance and the loss of over eight hundred men in a twenty four hour period. Click on picture or [click here to view video](#)



Battle of the Somme - Real Footage Over 92 years on - A video in memory of all those who gave their lives during First World War.

Features real footage from the Somme, including quotes and figures

Click on picture or [click here to view video](#)

Survivors' Accounts Of The Brutal Reality Of The Somme | The Last Voices of World War One
In the summer of 1916 there were high hopes of a big push, a breakthrough that would end the war. But the Battle of the Somme ended in stalemate and tragedy. By November 1916 150,000 troops had lost their lives on the Western Front. Click on picture or [click here to watch video](#)



World War One memories: The trench experience in one soldier's own words by ITV News

Harry Patch from Combe Down in Bath died in 2009 at the age of 112. A veteran of the battle of Passchendale, he became known as the last fighting Tommy. Before his death he spoke to ITV News about his World War One memories of the trenches, and the soldier he would never forget.

Click on picture or [click here to view video](#)



Doorway to Tamworth

Where is this doorway in Tamworth? Each issue will feature a door in Tamworth town Centre. Some will be well known, some historic, some quirky, like this unmarked door. It is in a main street in the town centre. But do you know where? It does need a clean up and coat of paint.

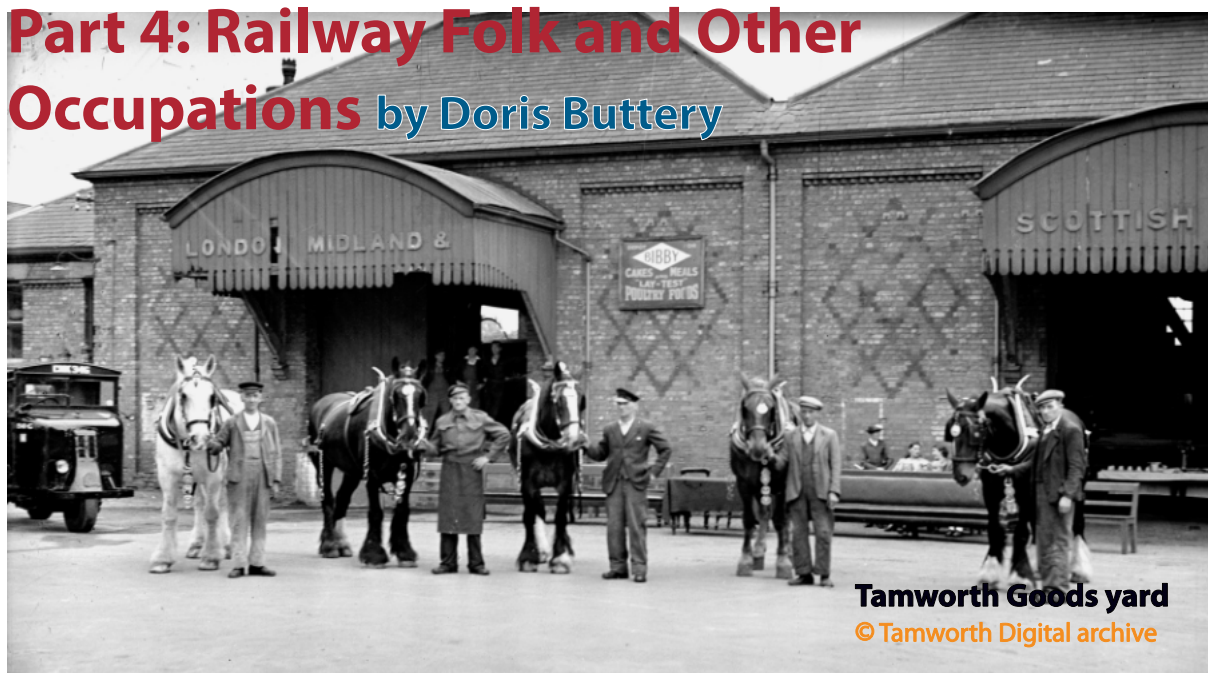


Last Issues Doorway:
The door between the Nat West and HSBC banks in Market Street.

Photo © Jamedia

An Elford Childhood 1920-1933

Part 4: Railway Folk and Other Occupations by Doris Buttery



Tamworth Goods yard
© Tamworth Digital archive

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.

were a number of railwaymen, most of whom were employed on maintenance of the permanent way, although as we boasted a tiny station, where eight trains stopped daily, we had a stationmaster, a porter and a signaller living in the village.

Part Four: Railway Folk and Other Occupations

Although a good half of the menfolk of Elford were agricultural workers, the other half followed a wide variety of occupations. There

The station was three-quarters of a mile from the centre, and the stationmaster—whose house was part of the station buildings—and his family took little or no part in village life. In fact, the whole family were, for some obscure reason,



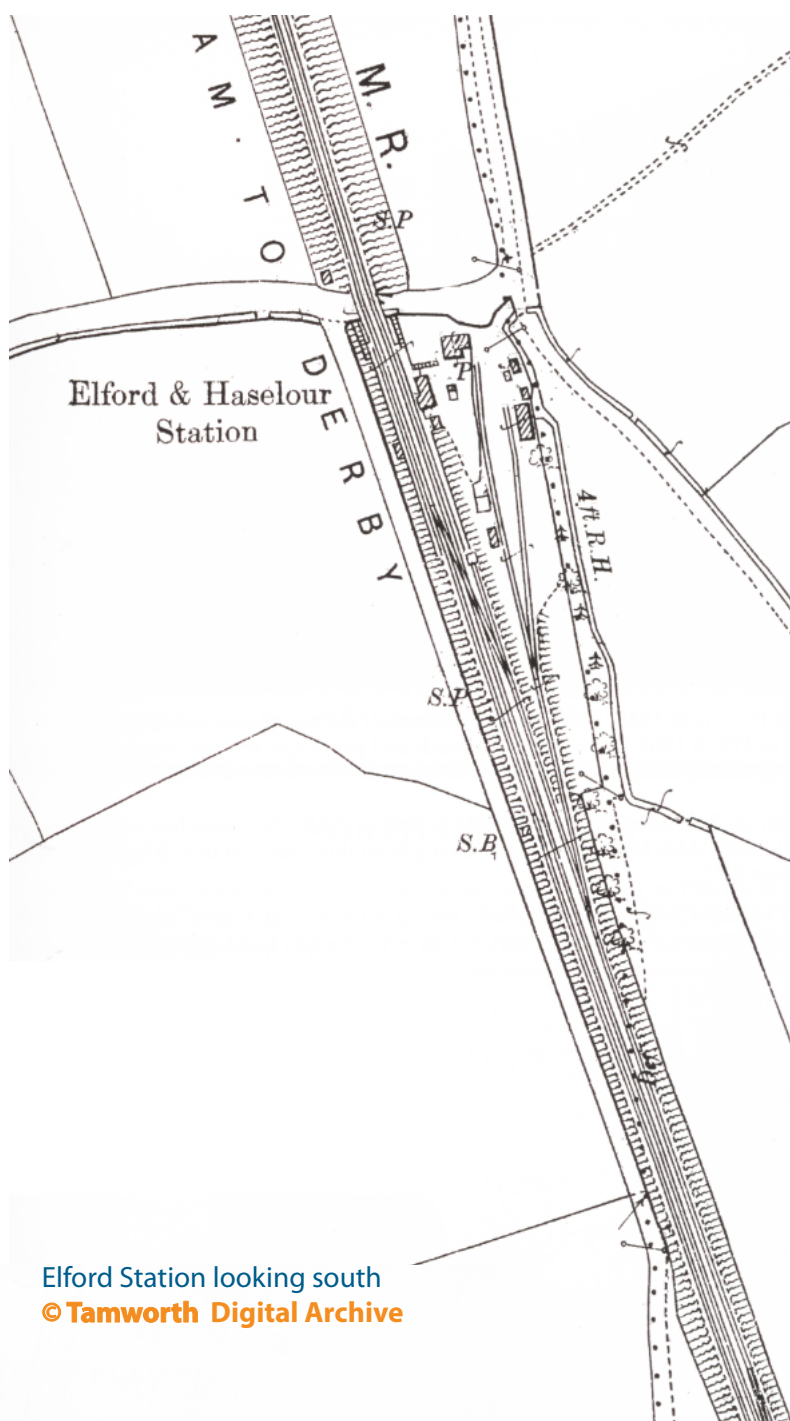
The lorry Jack Buttery drove while working for Staffordshire Farmers c1920s © Buttery Family Archive

aloof from the rest of us, and appeared to consider the social life of Elford beneath them. At least, that was the impression they gave, but I have since wondered if it was rather that they could not afford to join in.

The son, who was a little older than my brother Frank, went to the same Business School (Lawrence's College) in Birmingham as he did but whereas Frank went on there from the village school at fourteen, Harry had been there from the age of ten.

There were three daughters and the elder two were sent to Tamworth High School at eleven years of age. The younger girl, who was thought to be rather 'delicate', remained at the village school because her parents thought her health was so uncertain that she would probably be unable to earn her own living. They felt that sending her to the High School would be a waste of money. On point of fact, when the war came in 1939, she obtained a job in a bank and did well there.

The station-master's wife must have led a rather lonely and dreary sort of life. The only people she met outside the family



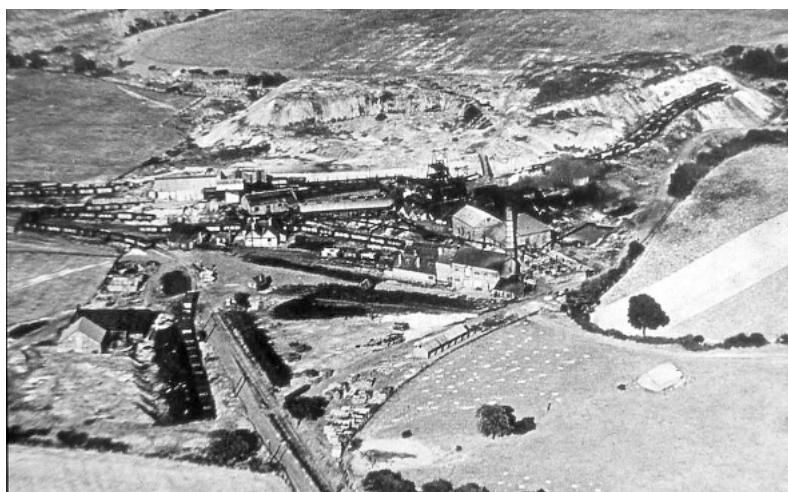
Elford Station looking south
© Tamworth Digital Archive



were railway passengers when she went to Tamworth to do her shopping.

The stationmaster was always pleasantly civil to the travelling public, but I never saw him in any clothes other than his uniform.

I did not know Mildred, the elder daughter, because she was already at Tamworth High when I started at the village school and by the time I went to the High School, she had already left. An older friend, who remembered her from High School days, told me that she was a frightful snob, but viewing the situation from this distance of time, I wonder if that too was part of a defence mechanism. On the few occasions when I did see her, she always appeared to be smartly dressed but it could be that there was no money to spare for extramural activities, so she pretended to be bored by them.



Stoneware Works Dosthill
© Tamworth Digital Archive

The second daughter, Evelyn, was a down-to-earth sort of person, quiet and friendly at school, but she too took no active part in anything that involved extra money. The difference between Mildred and Evelyn seems to have been that Evelyn showed interest, but did not become involved, except perhaps to help with the sewing of costumes for a school play or listen to members of the cast rehearsing their lines.

Some of the railwaymen lived in farm cottages for which they paid a small rent. In addition, their wives were expected to mend sacks and help with potato picking. The women were not paid for mending sacks, but they were not in a position to refuse. If they did, the farmer would threaten them with eviction. I remember Mother telling Dad about this in scandalised tones.

A woman used to come to help with the washing every Monday. This was a big, heavy job in those pre-washing machine days and Mother's health was such that she was not able to do it by herself. This one Monday, the woman, who was married to a railway linesman, told Mother that she had a huge pile of sacks to mend when she got home that day.

This was a regular routine. The farmer would deliver the sacks one day and they had to be mended and ready for collection three days later. Both my parents were country folk, but this was something new to them and they disapproved very strongly of such exploitation.

Potato picking, on the other hand, was paid for, and many of the older children were able to join

the pickers on Saturdays. It was a back-breaking job, but the money was badly needed in most of the cottages. Frank often went, but he was allowed to keep what he earned.

Aside from agriculture and the railway, quite a number of men bicycled the seven miles to a brick-works on the other side of Tamworth. It was a tiring journey in all weathers, but no one thought anything of it. They were too thankful to be in regular employment at a time when there were so many unemployed all over the country.

The husband of the (un-certified) teacher at the village school worked at the brick-works and he was able to provide some earthenware vases for the school. These were rejects from the factory adjoining the brick-works. They certainly brightened the place up though.

Stoneware advert 1933
© Stoneware ltd





The Buttery home, Mill Cottages, Elford c1930
 © Buttery Family Archive

The Strong Arm of the Law

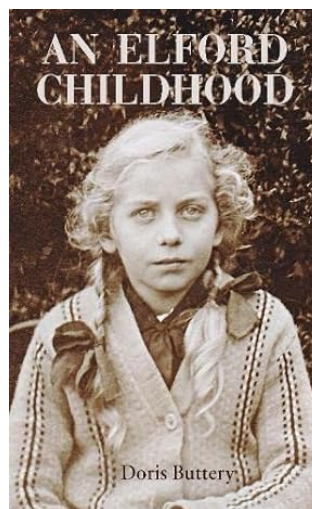
Elford shared its village 'bobby' with the nearby village of Harlaston. There cannot have been very much for him to do because I don't remember any crimes more serious than 'scrumping' or riding a bike without a light. The latter was an all-too common offence. In those days most bicycles were equipped with acetylene lamps, and a thoroughgoing nuisance they were too. A gust of wind, or a pothole in the road, and out would go the light.

It became quite a regular thing on a Saturday night for the village constable from Wigginton to lie in wait for the young folk cycling back after visiting the cinema in Tamworth. If he missed any of the no-light brigade, there was always a chance they'd be caught a couple of miles further on by the representative of the law in Elford. The policemen were on bikes too though, so it was a case of who could pedal fastest. Both my brothers were caught on different occasions and hauled up before Tamworth Magistrates. In each case they were let off with a small fine, which was nothing compared to the ticking-off they received from Dad.

The policemen in those days had to be present at the dipping of sheep, and to see that the pub closed on time, but I wonder if the latter was such a chore. During the Second World War, I visited that same pub, in company with a crowd of other servicemen and girls. It was well past closing time but one of our party had been there before. He knocked several times on the back

door which was soon opened. We all sidled into the kitchen, and there, seated at the table, jacket undone, was the local arm of the law. We were all made most welcome and no one saw any need for us to leave until it became quite clear that, if we were to meet the deadline of being back in Barracks by 23:59 hours, we had better be on our way. I am certainly not suggesting country policemen are lax - far from it - but I think they had a knack of building up confidence amongst the community they served and protected. We knew they were there to enforce the law, but they were by no means the pompous nitwits projected in some farces of the period.

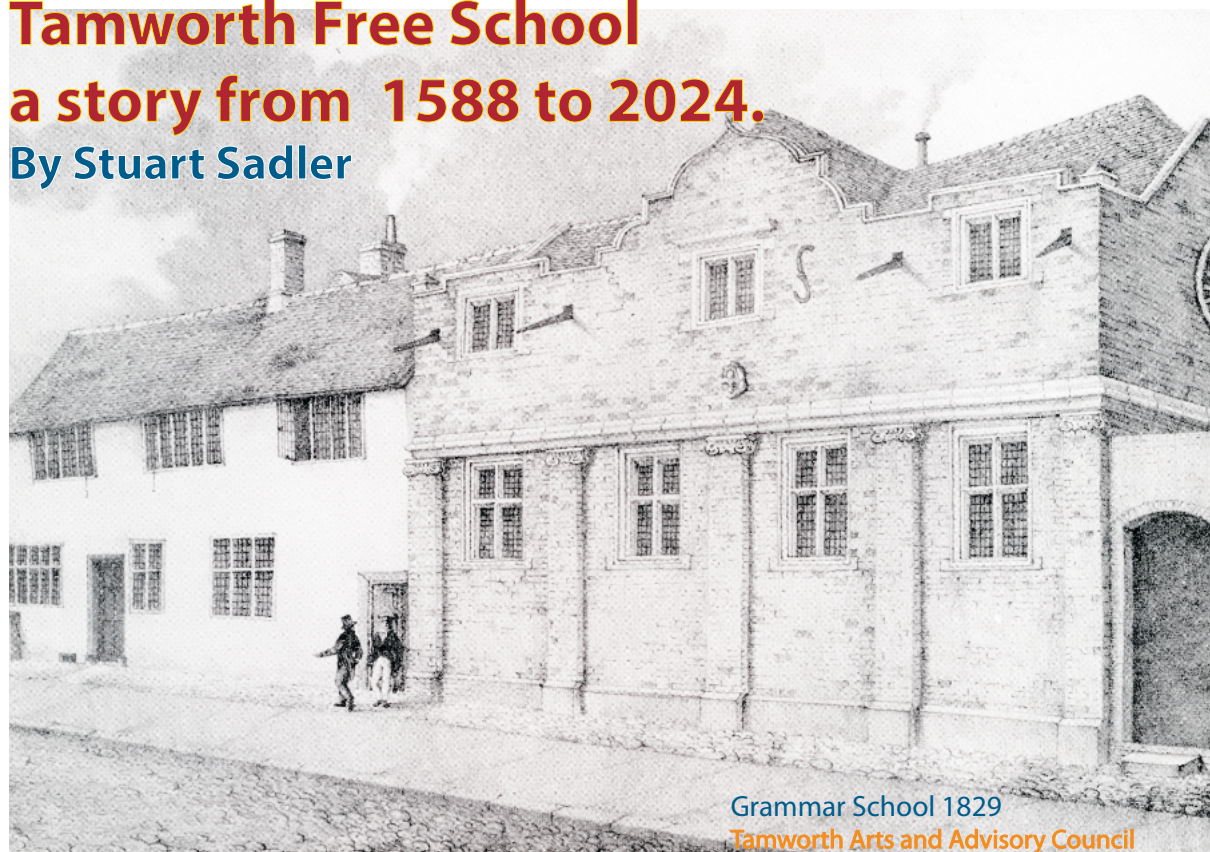
Next time: A postmistress with a secret



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.

Tamworth Free School a story from 1588 to 2024.

By Stuart Sadler



Grammar School 1829
Tamworth Arts and Advisory Council

Sometime in the early 1980s, the business my family owns was started in Bolebridge Mews. It was the first shop to open, in the road facing Church Lane.

Then called 'Rainbow clothes alterations', Chan, the owner, was a Chinese fellow in a wheelchair. The shop was too small for the amount of business, and problematic for being in a wheelchair. So he moved into the shop we trade from today – and lived upstairs in the 2 floor house above the shop.

Once Chan passed away, at quite a young age, the business was taken on by Francis Chubb, who then sold to us when she retired. The business that I used to take my school trousers and blazer to in the 1980s was now run by me!

We had to rename, Rainbow by now was a business name which was used by numerous Chinese takeaways and numerous play schools. So *Seams and Dreams* came into being.

It's our belief that after Wylde's sweet shop, and Jenks optician, our shop is the 3rd longest independent trader in Tamworth. Unless you know different!

We are directly opposite Spinning School Lane, which recently had an article in this magazine. The building you look at today may seem unremarkable, but has a rich and interesting story.

Many older Tamworth generations know of QEMS as **Queen Elizabeth Mercian School** or 'The Grammar School'. It was built in 1867.

Have you ever considered exactly which Queen Elizabeth it was? Or did you assume it was Queen Elizabeth II – who wasn't even born when the Grammar School was built?!



© Tamworth Digital Archive



Rear of Grammar School
© Tamworth Digital Archive

Before the current QEMs school was built, the school stood a lot closer to the centre of Tamworth. In fact, exactly where the building which Seams and Dreams is in stands today.

Let's look back even further.

It is widely believed that it was Edgar the Peaceful, great-grandson of Alfred the Great, who founded the first school in Tamworth, at the same time as he built the church, around 960AD.

In 1384 there is reference to a Schoolmasters Lane and, presumably, this would indicate that some form of school was by then well established as it must have afforded accommodation to the schoolmasters, hence the name of the street.

Documentation exists to prove that there was a grammar school at the time of Edward VI, who reigned from 1547 until 1553. This was financed by the Crown, through Stafford County, pretty much how today's education is funded.

Queen Elizabeth I granted Tamworth a charter in 1560 confirming the town's existing rights and privileges, and incorporating it as a unified borough with a single municipal corporation. Prior to this there had been separate corporations for the Warwickshire and Staffordshire sides of the town. The charter enabled Tamworth to elect a representative to Parliament.

In 1588, the same year the English navy trounced the Spanish Armada, Queen Elizabeth I granted her second charter to Tamworth, further consolidating the town's rights of self-government. Part of this charter ordained that there should be a grammar school in the town, to be known as 'The Free Grammar School of Elizabeth, Queen of England in Tamworth', to serve local boys.

The school at that time was situated in Lower Gungate, exactly where our building is.

By the mid 1800s, a larger site was needed as population grew.



The new building after the school left
© Tamworth Digital Archive

With many people having vested interests as to where the new location should be, an almighty row erupted, culminating in questions being asked in the House of Commons by Robert Peel, the 3rd Baronet and MP for Tamworth.

Many people were to have their noses put out of joint, but a solution had to be found. Upper Gungate was known in those days as Stony Lane and the Fountain Junction was called 'The Hand'.

On the eastern side of the junction was a field known as 'The Swan's Nest', the site that was finally agreed upon. It was completed and opened in 1868; and so began a new era in Tamworth's education for boys.

The original school was then demolished. However, part of it remains and is incorporated in the light coloured building you see today.

On the original building you can see pillars on the front. The upper section of these pillars, narrow plaster bricks, together with a plaster emblem, were included in the replacement building.

Look at Seams and Dreams, then slightly to the left, at the level of the first floor window sill. You will see the school emblem. The others then become obvious at the same level.



Tamworth Around the World:

Tamworth, Virginia, USA

by Chris Hills



We have had a good response from the other Tamworth's around the world.

Well three of the four: *New Hampshire USA*, *Ontario Canada* and *NSW Australia* have all sent in some wonderful, illustrated articles. This is despite the fact they don't actually have any people with a connection to Tamworth UK!

They were named at a time Sir Robert Peel, Baronet, MP or Prime Minister was "someone" the town founders wanted to influence. For Tamworth New Hampshire it was named for the British Admiral Washington Shirley, Viscount Tamworth (AKA 2nd Earl Ferrers) with whom they were trying to curry favour. Yes, the naming of things was as shallow then as it is now.

However Tamworth Virginia USA didn't reply to any of our calls or emails. We emailed everyone: the high school including head, admin and history department, the local library, the post office and the local council. We had one reply from a councillor saying another councillor was responsible for the area with Tamworth in it, but that is it. We even contacted the local newspaper but their emails system is somewhat screwed up!

Last year I wrote a piece on Tamworth VA to fill the gap but a year on with 2 years of no response from anyone in or around Tamworth VA I have given up. Rather than a blank page (I was tempted, but I think it would fall on deaf ears) or nothing at all I thought I would explain the situation.

However it has occurred to me that people from Tamworth have done great things abroad, e.g the Vicar of St Editha who became the Bishop of Trinidad we had in a past issue. Others who have gone to London, or like Rawlett lived mostly somewhere else but have had a great affect on the town.

So if anyone has any interesting stories about people from Tamworth doing things around the world please let the Editor know. No, I don't mean what you did on your holiday!

In the meantime the other three Tamworth in the world you might like to visit are:

Tamworth, New South Wales, Australia This Tamworth has a Family History Group that is active with over 160 members and a History centre. [For their web site click here](#)

Tamworth, Ontario, Canada Originally settled in 1826, Tamworth received its name in 1848 the year of the great potato famine in Ireland. The area was settled by many Irish immigrants and by 1865 the population of the area was 500. [See their web site](#)

Tamworth, New Hampshire, USA This is an active group with a fantastic history and heritage centre [See their web site.](#)

Despite being far smaller than Tamworth UK all have done far more with local heritage/history centers. Which is a credit to them and something Tamworth should ponder on.

Bog to Bloom: The transformation of Tamworth Castle Grounds

By Rebecca Jewkes



Opening of Castle Grounds 1931
© Tamworth Digital Archive

The Tamworth Castle Grounds that we know today were opened on Wednesday 23rd September 1931.

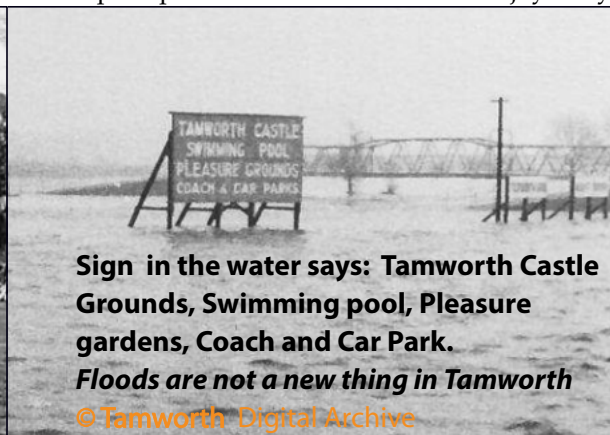
It was first suggested that the area be developed a few years prior as around the time of the bandstand being built in 1900, the land beyond the top lawns was 'largely bog land' as it was below flood level. Some of the area had however been used to play sports such as cricket and football for a number of years. Councillors first began to develop the area in 1906 when they started to acquire strips of land alongside the south of the River Anker to expand on the land which had been owned by the public for centuries. These acquisitions continued over the next 25 years.

In 1929 the Ministry of Health gave the development of Mill Meadow the go ahead and work started in the following March. The scheme to develop the Castle Grounds was estimated to cost £23,000, which according to the Bank of England would be around £1.26million today. However, on completion it came to £16,700 or around £914,000 in 2024. The Committee was able to raise funds from the Unemployment Grants Committee as the development created work for thirty-five local men, The Warwickshire Miners' District Welfare Committee and the Staffordshire Playing Fields Association.

The donation from the Miners Welfare Committee came with the understanding that the open space and fresh air could be enjoyed by

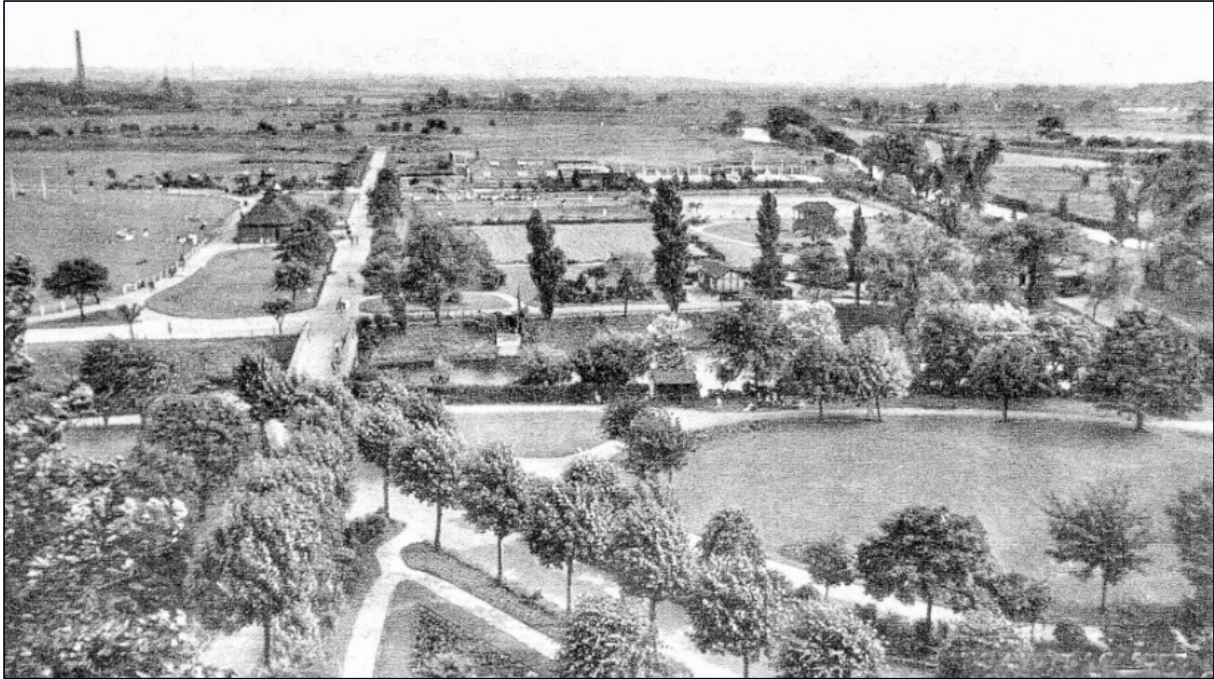


Cricket, before 1930's rebuild
© Tamworth Digital Archive



Sign in the water says: Tamworth Castle Grounds, Swimming pool, Pleasure gardens, Coach and Car Park.

Floods are not a new thing in Tamworth
© Tamworth Digital Archive



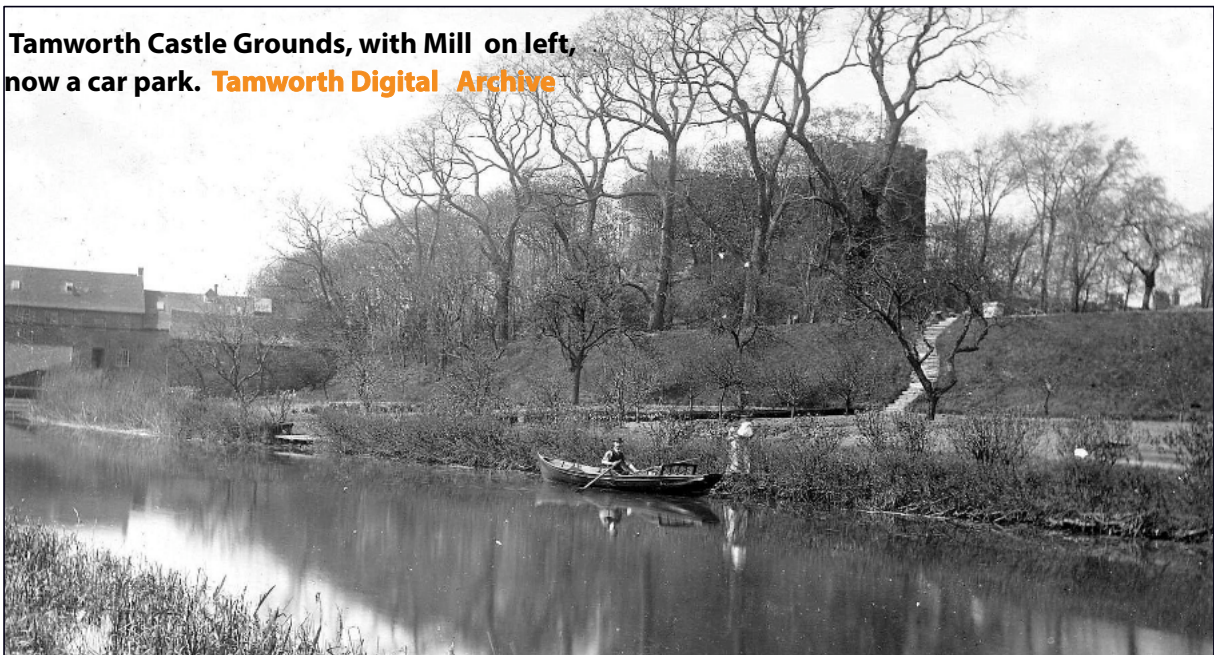
the pit workers who were having breathing difficulties from working in the mines. The development encompassed over thirty acres which included the former pleasure grounds, Mill Meadow and the refuse tip to the Kettlebrook ditch.

A contract had been awarded to Hodsons Ltd. of Nottingham to lay out the site and for the filling and formation work to raise a portion of the meadow to be above flood level which ended up being nine feet. This area measured approximately thirteen acres with local pits providing almost forty thousand cubic yards of slag refuse.

Tamworth Castle Grounds in 1920s
[Tamworth Digital Archive](#)

The newly developed grounds featured six tennis courts, a children's play park, rockeries and steps, a Cumberland turf bowling green and ornamental gardens with the planting of many flowers and trees. Extensive river cleaning work was carried out alongside the building of a new concrete reinforced bridge over the River Anker that spanned fifty feet and replaced an old wooden one.

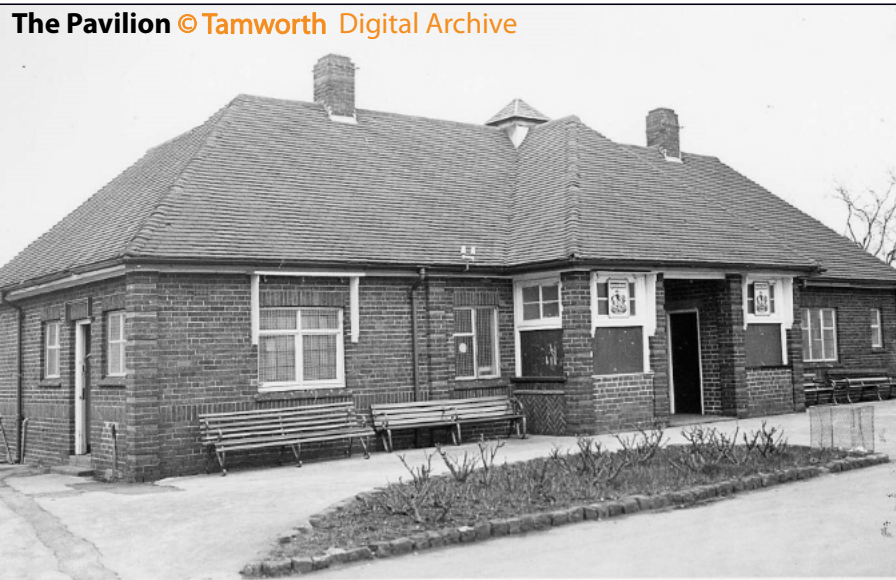
Tamworth Castle Grounds, with Mill on left, now a car park. [Tamworth Digital Archive](#)





Castle Grounds boathouse.
© Tamworth Digital Archive

Watton and Sons from the town were contracted to erect a new pavilion which contained a central hall, a kitchen and changing rooms. This is still in place today as a café. They also built public toilets and removed and rebuilt the old pavilion to become a boathouse and shelters in the ornamental gardens. Two miles of paths and drives were laid through the Grounds which were made of asphalt that was treated with a limescale finish to give it the white appearance as shown in photographs.



The Pavilion © Tamworth Digital Archive

During his speech at the opening of the Castle Grounds, the Chairman of the Pleasure Grounds Committee, Cllr G. H. Jones reflected that many people in the town criticised the development as 'throwing the ratepayers' money away on that scheme'. He also stated that some of the town's people called it 'Mr Jones' circus' (Harper, 2017).¹ While this would be disheartening to the committee who were redeveloping the area for

¹ Harper, John (2017) The day Tamworth got its glorious pleasure grounds. Historic Tamworth. Tamworth Herald. Pages 6-7. 22nd June 2017.

THE HERALD, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1931.

ADVERTISERS.

WORKING MEN'S CLUB.
— Estimates Required for EXHIBITE WALL for the Men's Club. Particulars in the Undersigned. sent by Tuesday, September 29th.
J. M. BENTLEY,
1 Walling street, Wilneote.

at Waving. 20/-

r & Beauty
cialist.

KENDRICK.
46 (Phone 256), and
48 (Phone 63), Tamworth.

TAMWORTH CASTLE PLEASURE GROUNDS.
EARL OF HARROWBY PERFORMS OPENING CEREMONY.

The official opening of the new pleasure grounds at Tamworth Castle by the Earl of Harrowby, who was accompanied by the Countess of Harrowby, on Wednesday afternoon, formed a fitting send-off for the Carnival. The Mayor (Councillor W. E. Blyler, J.P.) invited members of the Corporation, the officials and their wives, with other representatives of the religious, professional and official life of the town, as well as officials of the Carnival Committee to the ceremony. The party met at the Town Hall, where the Mayor and the Town Clerk (Mr. H. Wood) received the Earl and the Countess of Harrowby and later with the

swings to the boat house, right behind had been filled up with dirt from pit mounds of the Glascoke Colliery Company and Messrs. George Skay and Company, and the laying out of the grounds had been the planning of Mr. Marshall, the Borough Surveyor. The cost to the town would be less than if they had gone on in a piecemeal way. The making of the roads, paths, fences and all those things outside the contracts had been done by direct labour, on which he thought they had spent nearly £2,500.

The Future.
As to the future, Mr. Jones said he knew

the benefit of the town, that point of view is understandable when you consider the socio-economics of the town at that point in history as it was right in the middle of high unemployment and low wages of the depression era of the late 1920s and early 1930s. Over the coming years more roses and shrubs were planted, much to the enjoyment of the town. Then, in 1937, the open-air baths at the Lido were opened where many children learnt to swim.



Above : Swimming pool during construction

If you venture up from the lower Castle Grounds, past the bandstand and its beautiful, terraced flowerbeds and turn left you will come to the Holloway Lodge. It was built in 1810 by the second marquess Townshend. It was later bought by the Borough Council and was the Castle's main entrance for many years. The lodge was not an extensive dwelling, as, as some photographs show, prior to being bought by the council it was a single storey, two roomed lodge that was separated by the arched gateway. Even after they bought it, it still only had a living space downstairs with the kitchen and two small bedrooms upstairs off a narrow staircase. It was not until the 1960s that the building was extended to how it is now.



Below: Holloway Lodge before extension © Tamworth Digital Archive

This building would become the home of one of the many gardeners who tended to the Grounds over the years. John 'Tom' Hughes lived there for many years and was first recorded as such in the 1939 Register. He was a forty-nine-year-old widower and he was listed as being a 'labourer stoking'. He was shown as living with the Castle Custodian, William Allsopp and his family. It is hard to imagine how there was room for a family with two children and another adult man to live in the Lodge.

As the years passed, John became the gardener as shown on his wedding certificate in 1950 when he married his second wife, Hannah Charlotte Vyse. They were living at the lodge at

John 'Tom' Hughes, the gardener, and his wife, the author's great grandma, Hannah Charlotte. **Jewkes family archive**



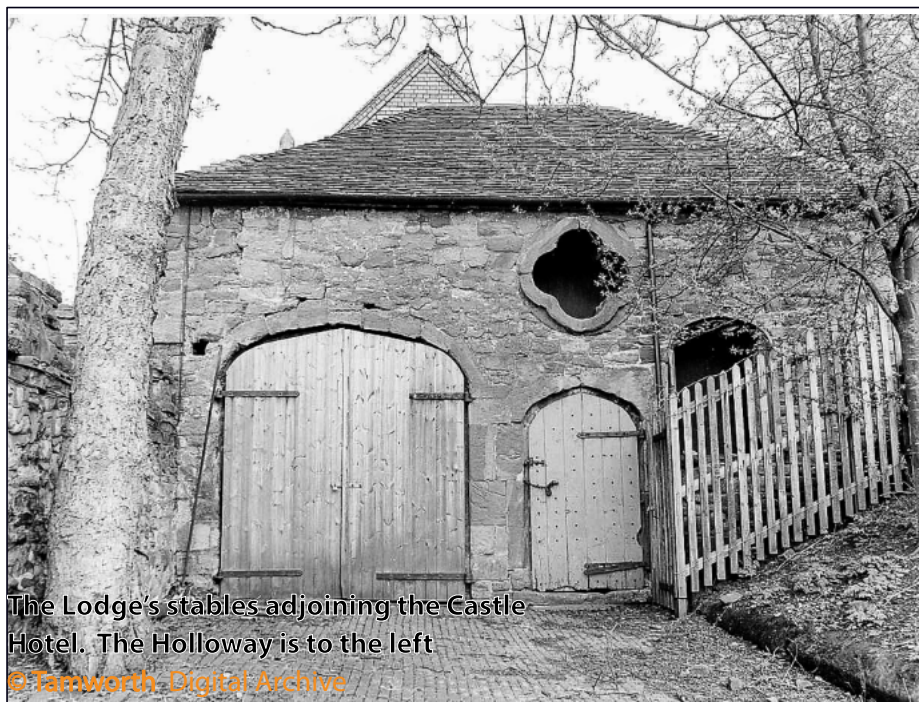


Plans for the new swimming pool
© Tamworth Digital Archive

this time after having met Hannah when she worked at the Castle Hotel next door. Hannah's son from her previous marriage, Cyril also lived at the Lodge for a time as he is shown to be living there at the time of his own wedding in 1953.

John was remembered as being really hardworking and would meticulously tend to the gardens, Grounds and greenhouses. He kept

his equipment and lawn mowers in what were called the stables next to the lodge. It is worth noting that he was working in the Grounds well past what would be considered retirement age today as he finally retired at age 73. He and Hannah moved from the Lodge in the early 1960s, but he did not slow down as he worked part-time mowing the grass for the Tamworth Cricket Club up until he passed away in late 1972, aged 83.



The Lodge's stables adjoining the Castle Hotel. The Holloway is to the left

© Tamworth Digital Archive

For this reason, I am sure many people in Tamworth will remember John, although they would remember him as Tom as he virtually never used his first name. Even his step-grandson: Cyril's son, knew him as Granddad Tom.

[EDITOR: If any reader has any stories of Tom/John please send them in to [The Editor](#)]



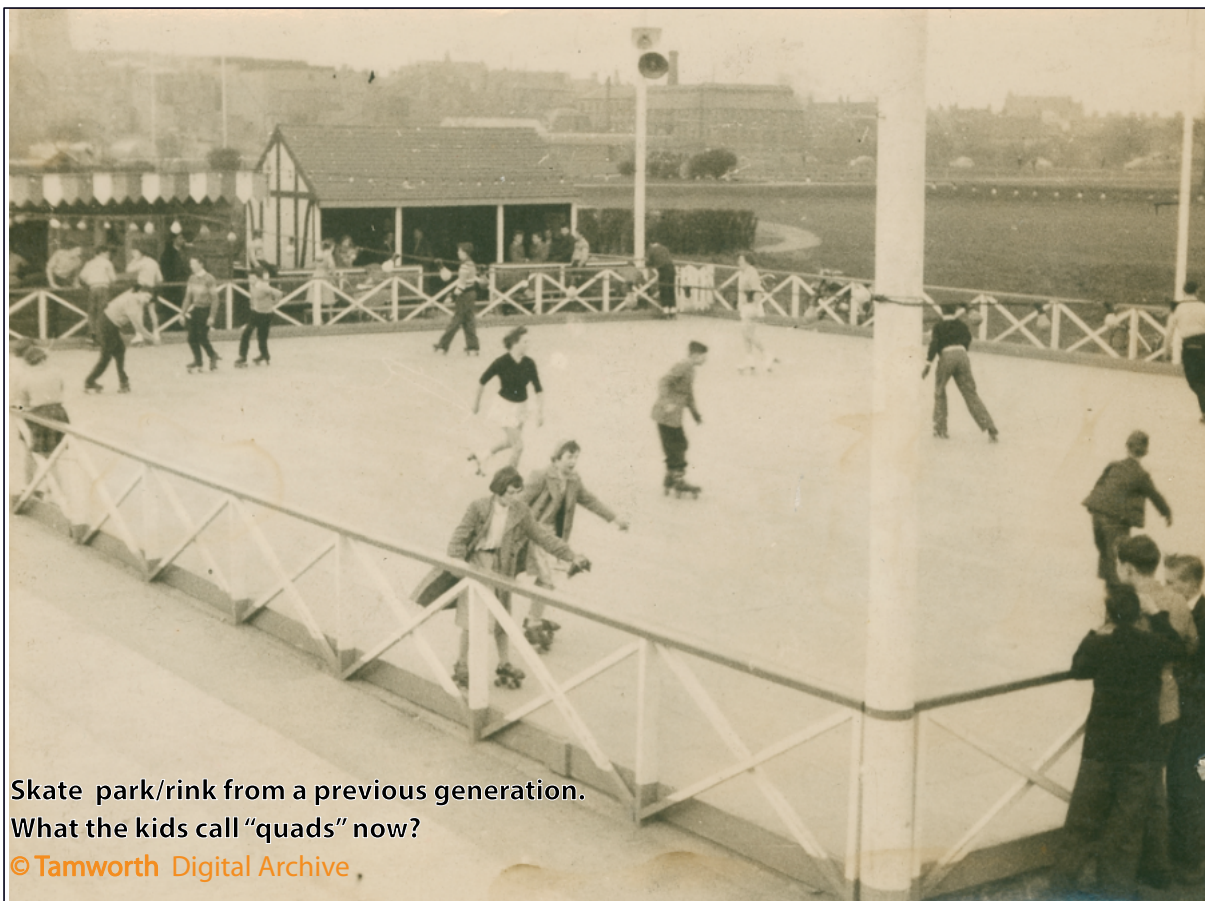
Agricultural Show 1950s
 © Tamworth Digital Archive

The Castle Grounds was a thoroughfare and play space for many school children through the years. During the late 1940s and 1950s many children from the surrounding areas such as Glascote would stop off at the playing fields on their way back from school in the town. Anthony Hastilow, who went to school between 1945 and 1954 and lived in Thomas Street recalled *"We used to take our hat and blazer off to use as goal posts. We'd have to shake them off afterwards, so we didn't get the belt we we got home"*.

He also remembers going to the outdoor baths with school, his class having been marched down by their teachers. He enjoyed it but especially remembers the rivalry that existed when they would see the coaches of the schools from Birmingham who would also use the pool. Paul Jewkes, who went to the Mercian but almost 20 years later also remembers walking through the Grounds to the Lido for school swimming lessons.



Miner's Gala, in castle Grounds 1951
 © Tamworth Digital Archive



Skate park/rink from a previous generation.
What the kids call “quads” now?

© Tamworth Digital Archive

The Castle Grounds were more than just a place to go swimming or stop off after school though. They were also a place to enjoy the weekends. Jeannie Jewkes who was born in the town but would sometimes live elsewhere due to her father’s service, would come back to the town to visit family. She recalls seeing peacocks in front of the Castle, although maybe she witnessed

escaped birds from a local collection as no one else seems to remember them.

Jeannie also remembers visiting the Castle Grounds with her cousin in the early 1980s. As many are aware there had been boat rides on the river for many years. She recalled, *“Me and my cousin rented a rowing boat. It was from the boat house over the river. It wasn’t very expensive. We could only go under the bridge, but we couldn’t go near the weir. We could go as far as Bolehall, near where Lidl is today”.*

With all the investment and happy memories in the Castle Grounds, in 1975, just forty-four



[EDITOR: If any reader can identify, or is indeed, one of these people please contact [The Editor](#) So we can put names and stores to the faces. Even an approximate date would be great!]

Redirecting River

© Tamworth Digital Archive



years after the extensive development, the Grounds began to get smaller as the River Tame was rerouted to allow for the building of Ankerside and its car park

This 'redevelopment' of the area, and the town in general continued into the 1980s when the Bolebridge 'egg' traffic scheme was built, cutting the Grounds in two. Further land was sold off to be built into leisure complexes such as the Snowdome and Strykers bowling alley. These developments were met with much criticism, much like the original redevelopment of the Grounds, with some still feeling like the Council ruined the town.

As a child of the late 1990s I can't remember a time before the Snowdome, and the Castle Grounds have remained virtually unchanged from when I would run around them each

Author's sisters on Castle cannons.

© Jewkes Family Archive



weekend. I can remember enjoying following the Solar System trail around the Castle Grounds and slightly further afield to find all the planets which were on plinths and had information boards.

If I remember rightly, they were more or less spaced out relative to the real planets distance from the Sun. I would then follow the trail back to the Sun statue by the park on the lower lawns of the Grounds. I also have fond memories of



Castle Grounds before Car park

© Tamworth Digital Archive

stomping over the bridges in the Grounds, looking down at the ruins by the Castle and feeding the ducks on the river. Me and my sisters would also play on the canons by the bandstand and would look up at the Castle and its ancient walls.

Many families still visit and enjoy the Grounds and I'm sure many families have photos of their children sat atop the canons, just like my parents have of us. I'm also sure that many families enjoy the newly developed park and enjoy that the children of Tamworth have somewhere fun and safe to play.

Redevelopment is sometimes necessary, ready for the next generations but I hope that, ninety-three years after the Castle Grounds grand opening and beyond, the Council continue to see the worth in investing in the history of the area, rather than the worth in selling the land to developers, for the sake of the memories of the people of Tamworth, the groups that put funds towards to initial redevelopment, the men and women, like John 'Tom' Hughes who spent hours maintaining the Grounds in the past and the Council workers who still do today.



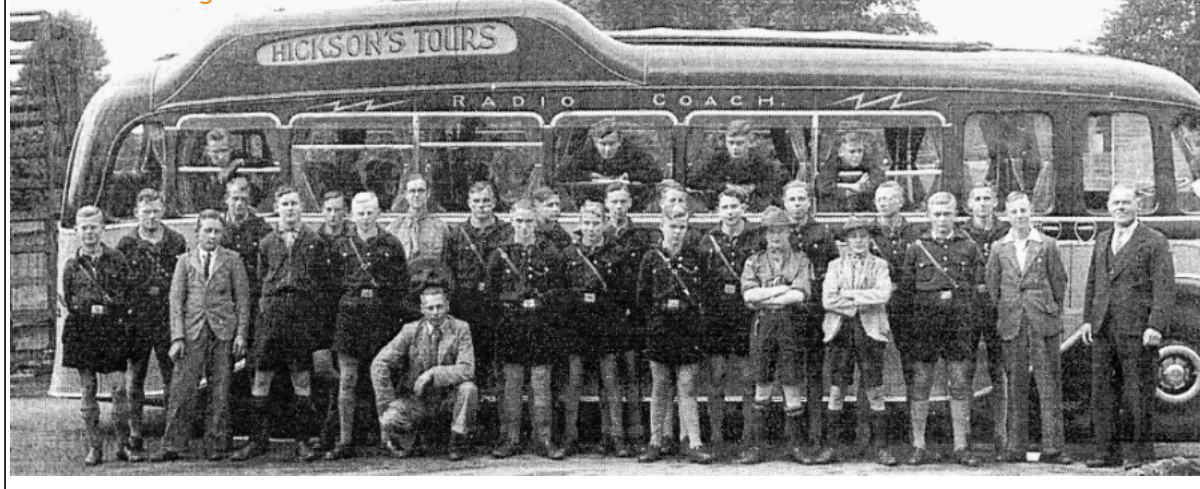
Author and mother on Castle entrance off Market Street, a few years ago...

© Jewkes Family Archive

The Editor is looking to do an expanded version of this article. If anyone has any stories of the Castle grounds, preferably with a snap or two **let the Editor know.** In particular the Miners Gala's , the Agricultural shows, the people at the skating rink.

Busses of children: The Hitler Youth visiting Tamworth castle grounds in the 1930s We need to learn from history. Hence this magazine

© Tamworth Digital Archive



This season's significant dates and events

collated by The Editor



7th January 1725 - Thomas Guy buried

7th January 1839 - storm blew down the top of the southeast pinnacle and battlements of St Editha's Church Tower

14th January 1916 - earthquake shook the area causing damage to Polesworth Church

20th January 1989 - death of Beatrice Lillie, wife of Sir Robert Peel, 5th Baronet, and former actress, born in Canada on 1894.

30th January 926 - Marriage of Athelstan's only full sister to Sihtric king of Northumberland, a viking, in Tamworth. He converted to Christianity for the wedding and after the wedding converted back!

1st February 1963 - The Beatles play Tamworth Assembly Rooms. As a treat here is a video of the Fab four comparing Ready, Steady...Go! a few weeks after they were in Tamworth <https://youtu.be/14pxCghhPcc>

5th February 1788 - birth of Sir Robert Peel, MP for Tamworth and future prime minister

21st February 1868 - birth of Major General Sir Charles Vere Ferrers Townshend, who purchased Tamworth Castle in 1833

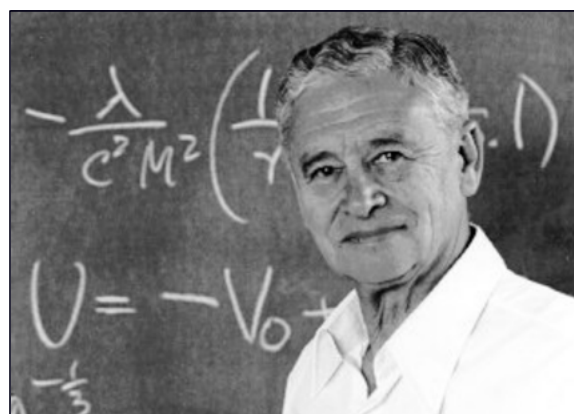
24th February 1914 - fifty years before the Beatles the Tamworth Town Council met for the first time in the Great Hall of Tamworth Castle. February in the Great Hall... I bet that was cold!

26th February 1726 - 240 years before the Beatles: the first known postmark featuring the town of Tamworth. Rumour has it some letters still haven't been delivered.

26th February 1937 - death of Rev William MacGregor

28th February 1724 - birth of Field Marshal George Townshend, 1st Marquess Townshend, who owned Tamworth Castle from 1751

4th March 1916 - birth of Ernest Titterton The mathematician on the Manhattan Project



10th March 1801 - first census records 2,768 in the Borough of Tamworth (1,154 in Staffordshire and 1,632 in Warwickshire) in a total of 545 houses.

11th March 1326 - King Edward II visits Tamworth Castle. One of many Royal visits over the centuries.

12th 1938 - the first four-cylinder Reliant vehicle was produced. Four cylinders but how many wheels?

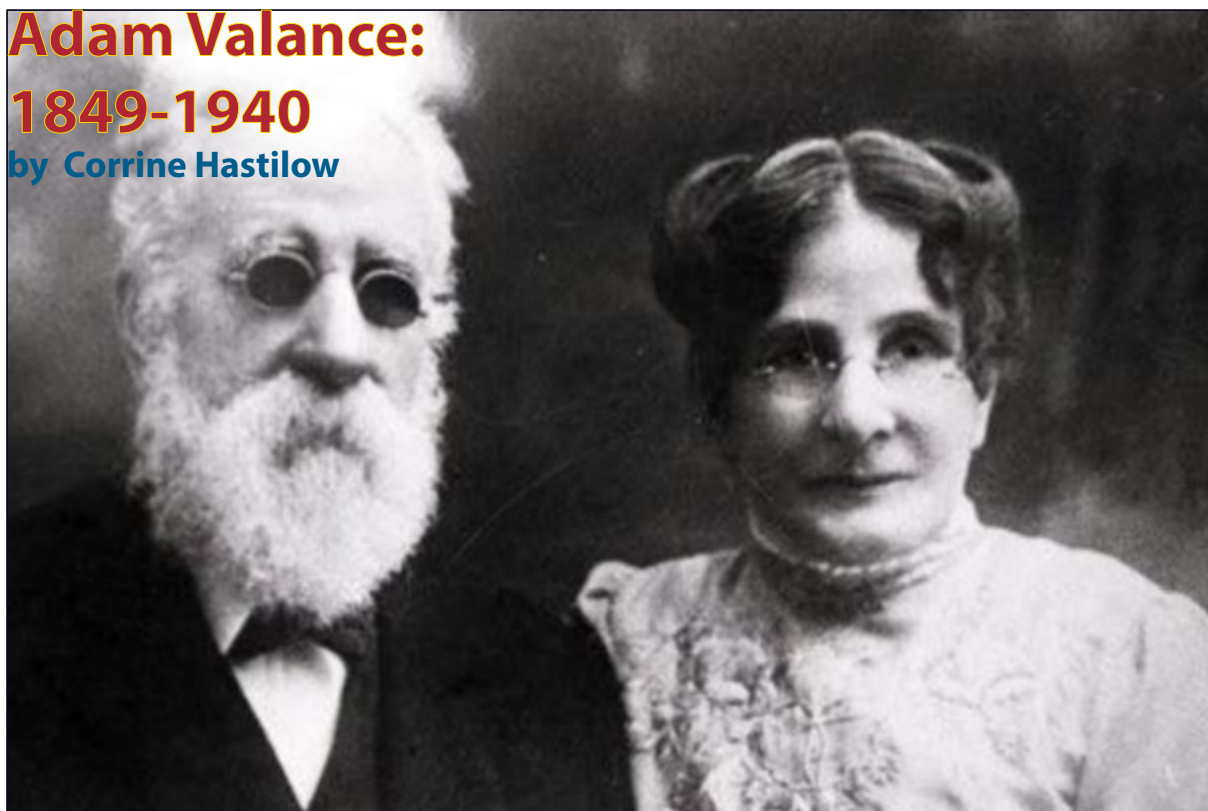
15th March 1887 - Tamworth Industrial Co-operative Society Limited legally incorporated.

27th March 1642 - birth of John Rawlett We have an article about John Rawlett coming in a future issue

Adam Vallance:

1849-1940

by Corrine Hastilow



The first thing that drew my attention to the life of Adam Vallance was a family notice in the Tamworth Herald. I was searching the Newspaper collection in *FindMyPast* looking at an entry for someone else when my eye was drawn to the notice that followed.

Sarah Jane Vallance had died on 23rd November 1872 at the tender age of just 11 weeks, a not uncommon occurrence in Victorian times, but it was not every family that placed a notice in the local paper, however painful their loss. The surname was one I was researching and as this branch of my ex-husband's family was living in Wilnecote, Tamworth, which is where I live, I couldn't resist exploring further.

Having established from the usual online sources that Adam was the second of the ten children of William and Ann Vallance, I located his parents' gravestone in the old Wilnecote graveyard using the Midland Ancestors Monumental Inscriptions CDs. Adam was born on 1st November 1849 and baptised 4 weeks later in Wilnecote church. His father gave two occupations on the 1851 census: farmer and brick and tile maker employing 6 men and 12 boys. This combination of occupations was commonplace in an area where there were many coal mines and clay workings being opened providing new opportunities. William's



business took on work for well-known local firm, George Skey and Company, which was established in 1860 in Wilnecote and became well known for ceramics and terracotta decoration.

Adam married Mary Blower in the Independent chapel of the nearby parish of Baddesley Ensor on 3rd August 1869 just a few months short of his twentieth birthday. Mary was from Polesworth and was a few years older than he was. Her father, Joseph, was a grocer and carrier there. Adam and Mary set up home in Watling Street, Wilnecote, close to the abode of his parents. By the time of the 1871 census, their first child, a daughter, Catherine Annie, had been born. His wife's occupation was given as 'draper and haberdasher', whilst Adam was working as a sanitary pipe burner. However, at some point in the next 10 years he left that line of work and went into business with his uncle, Thomas Vallance, in his grocery store in Wilnecote. After his uncle's retirement and removal to Sutton Coldfield, Adam carried on the business alone and he and Mary went on to have another 4 children, of whom the 3 sons survived. By 1881, Adam was doing well as a grocer and draper: his young brother-in-law was working as his assistant and his household consisted not only of his immediate family, but also his widowed mother-in-law and a 14 year old domestic servant, a local girl, Mary Fairfield.

During this period, he made quite a name for himself in the community. According to later newspaper reports, Adam 'always took a prominent part in local public affairs' holding the offices of Vice-chairman of the local School Board and District Highway Surveyor.

However, despite this apparently comfortable life, the decision was made for the family to leave everything and everyone they knew and to start a new life on the other side of the world. In preparation for this, various advertisements were placed in the Tamworth Herald in 1883 for the sale by private treaty of the

business of draper, grocer and provision dealer along with the house, shop etc. in the occupation of Adam Vallance. The advert stated the reason for the sale was that Mr Vallance was going abroad.

Even though the advert stressed that the property was 'to be SOLD cheap', a private sale was not negotiated and luckily for the modern-day researcher, on 1st September notification of the forthcoming auction of the property and its contents was placed in the local paper. The detail it contained demonstrates just how well Adam had done in his business. The many individual items up for grabs included an 'excellent'

DEBRETT—ADVERTISEMENTS. 3

LONDON, VIENNA.

BRADFORD'S PATENT
"VOWEL"
Washing Machinery.

1862. 1873.

The "Vowel" Washing Machine has always been sent out upon trial before payment and now, although its value is universally known, we shall continue to do so, that intending purchasers may satisfy themselves of its superior value.
No Family, where the washing is done at home, should be without a suitable sized "Vowel" Machine.



"Vowel" E, combining Washing, Wringing, and Mangling, 49s.



"PREMIER" BOX MANGLE.
5 ft., £12 10s. The most perfect Box Mangle that is made. For Steam Power extra.

For further particulars and larger sizes, Hand Power and Steam Power, see General Illustrated Catalogue, sent on application free by post.



No. 1 Wringer and Mangling Machine, £4 5s.



"Acorn" Wringer, to Fit on Tub, 28s., 44s.



"Vowel" A, £3 17s. 6d. With Wringer complete, £5 1s. 6d.

Book of Implements and Machines for the House, Garden, Dairy, Stable, and Laundry, also forwarded free by post on application.

THOMAS BRADFORD & CO.,

PARIS, 140, 142, & 143, HIGH HOLBORN, DUBLIN.

LONDON;
CRESCENT IRON WORKS,
SALFORD, MANCHESTER.

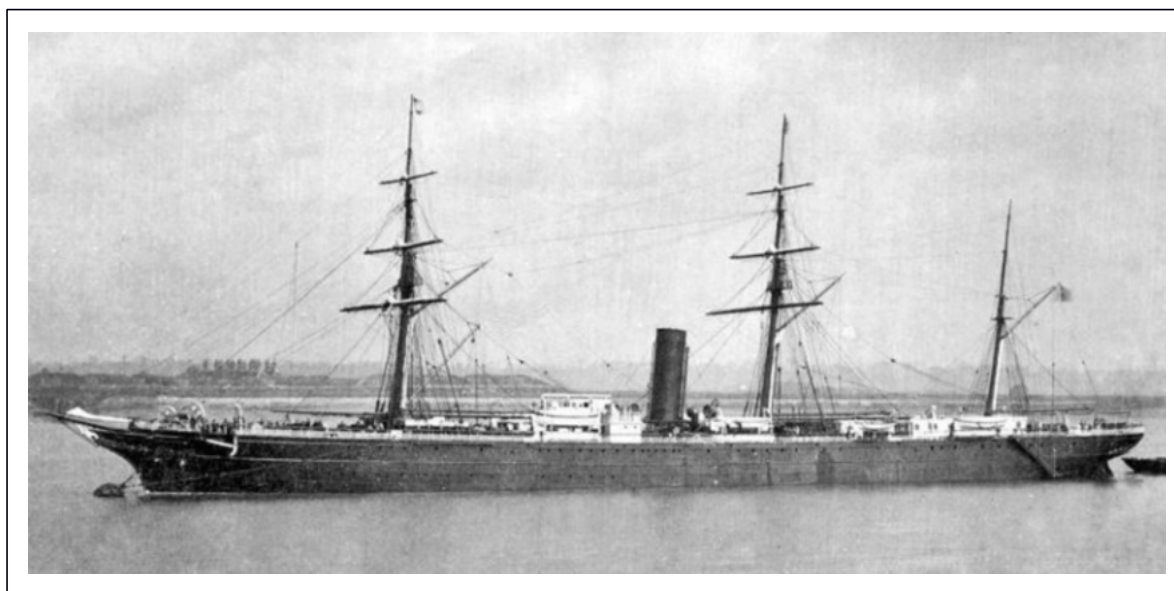
1867. 1865.

Harmonium, a 'very superior' American organ and a musical box, so music must have played a significant part in the recreational life of the Vallance family. There were also some pieces of

mahogany furniture, three antique oak chests and a walnut Davenport (small writing desk) together with some practical household items. These included a Bradford's "Acorn" Wringer and a Bradford's mangle, no doubt like those shown in this advert for such new-fangled aids. This is from the publication Debrett's peerage showing what sort of customer it was aimed at, the cost no doubt being prohibitive for the majority of families.

Sunday 4th November 1883. Adam's life in the antipodes is well documented in newspapers and official records from which we can follow his fortunes.

He set up business as a storekeeper and postmaster in the growing city. Sydney at this time had a population of over 220,000 whereas the population of Tamworth was less than 5,000, so it must have been something of a culture



Towards the end of the month, the family, including one of Adam's younger brothers, George, headed to the port of London and boarded the ship, Sorata. Adam, his wife and 4 children travelled third class with George, aged 20, in steerage. This vessel, built in the Govan shipyard of John Elder & Co., was an iron screw steamer with 3 masts. The voyage to Australia, calling at Victoria on the way, took them to Sydney arriving on

shock for the young Vallance family to settle in such a busy vibrant place. This 1888 map gives some idea of the place they made their new home.



The Australian 1891 census shows the family were living in Liverpool Road in the sub-district of Smithfield. The family had grown by this time with a daughter, Evelyn Mary, born in 1885 and the final addition, a son, Alfred Sydney, born 2 years later. Is it fanciful to think that the choice of his middle name was a reference to the place they had now made their new home?

During the 1890s Adam held various positions in the public life of Smithfield becoming 'a recognised and influential force'. He was a Justice of the Peace, a preacher in the Wesleyan Church, postmaster, registrar of births, marriages and deaths and an electoral registrar.

In 1899, Adam took a trip back to England and spent some 6 months 'in the old country' which was well documented in an extensive newspaper article in the wonderfully named 'Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate'. Not long after he got back to Tamworth, his father died at the age of 78 following a month's illness and Adam must have been glad to have been able to provide support for his widowed mother, Ann. While he was away, his role as Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages for the district of Sherbrooke in Smithfield was taken over temporarily by his eldest son, Thomas Adam, 'during the absence of Mr Adam Vallance on leave'.

We know a fair bit about his trip from details in several Sydney newspaper articles. On his return to Sydney on 13th November 1899, he was given a marvellous welcome. The article provides a vivid description of the occasion: *"The post-office and residence of Mr Vallance was gaily decorated, the exterior with a brave display of bunting and the interior with flowers and foliage"*.

The Argus sent a reporter to interview him on his return and he asked how Adam had found things back in England. Adam replied that he hadn't had much time for sight-seeing, but had visited the Potteries and some of the big manufacturing places in Birmingham and elsewhere; he also spent a few days in London. He was particularly impressed by the improvement

made to the roads which he described as 'simply splendid'. He attributed this to the County Council system which had come into effect on 1st April 1889. He found the building trade to be 'very brisk' and wages good. He didn't come across any unemployed and in fact had an offer of work himself.

He did find time for some recreation attending a cricket match between Australia and England at Trent Bridge and one wonders where his allegiance lay! According to Wikipedia, the First Test was played there from 1st to 3rd June 1899 and saw the final appearance of the legendary W. G. Grace.

The reporter was invited to examine some of the 'many pretty keepsakes' that Adam had brought back with him. These included some pottery from a works in Nottingham where his brother was the manager, 'immense' apples from English orchards which had retained their freshness despite the length of the voyage, laburnum seeds 'to experiment with in Australian soil', perfume



from Gibraltar 'and other delightful articles too numerous to describe'.

The esteem in which Adam was held by the Aldermen of Smithfield was evidenced by the lavish banquet that was held in the Town Hall in honour of his return to their community. In a toast by the Mayor, he said that he was sure everyone 'appreciated Mr Vallance's ability and straight-forward behaviour while he was a member of the Council'. Adam responded by saying he felt in better health with the only downside being the development of an infection in his eyes. He had consulted a Birmingham expert for this problem who had told him to avoid 'fatigue of mind or body or else he might lose his eyesight'. Unfortunately, this was to prove a portentous prediction.

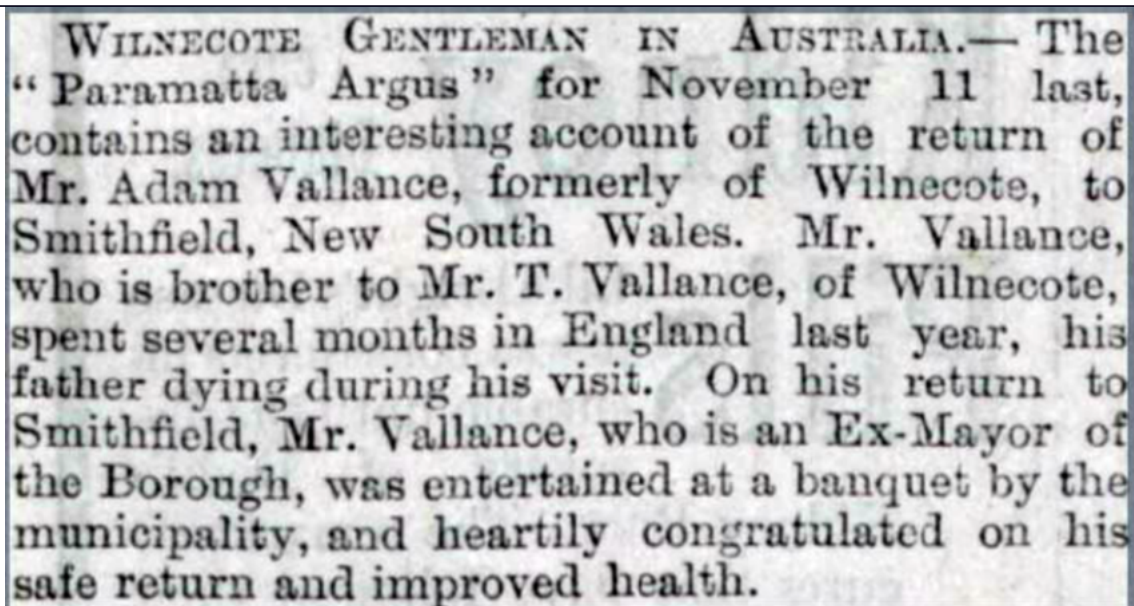
Adam's return warranted a mention in the Tamworth Herald with this article appearing on 6th January 1900:

Despite the welcome back that Adam received and being reunited with his family, he did not stay in Sydney long after his return. Perhaps the offer of employment in England referred to in the newspaper interview was too tempting; he left his family once again and travelled back to the Midlands, leaving his wife to take over the running of their business. This time he stayed away much longer. In the 1901 Census he was living in Stanton Lane, Ellistown, near Coalville, in the civil parish of Ibstock. This part of Leicestershire was a product of the industrial revolution being peppered by mines and associated manufactures. A Colonel Joseph Ellis,

who gave his name to the area, had started a brick and pipe works and a colliery began producing coal in the 1870s from the same site. Adam's father, William, and his family had moved there at some point between 1871 and 1881. In 1891, they too were living in Stanton Lane and William gave his occupation as 'manager sanitary pipe works'. Adam moved back to the family home and took up a position as a brick yard manager. The company Ibstock Brick Leicester Limited is still operating today having been incorporated on 24th December 1909.

Adam left England for the last time on 24th July 1905. Before he departed, his associates presented him with an inscribed gold chronometer 'as a token of their affectionate esteem and regard'. On his journey back to Australia, he stopped off to visit his eldest son, Thomas, who had settled in South Africa to make his own life. During this visit, as he was warned some years before, the problem with his eyes worsened and became so acute that he had to undergo hospital treatment which resulted in the loss of an eye. In 1909, he became totally blind in his remaining eye, but he did not let this stop him living the fullest life he could for another 30 years.

Adam and Mary continued working until 1921 when at the ages of 72 and 75 respectively they started their retirement. Their family was growing and by the time of their 66th wedding anniversary in 1935 which they celebrated with a family reunion, they had 11 grandchildren and 4



WILNECOTE GENTLEMAN IN AUSTRALIA.— The "Paramatta Argus" for November 11 last, contains an interesting account of the return of Mr. Adam Vallance, formerly of Wilnecote, to Smithfield, New South Wales. Mr. Vallance, who is brother to Mr. T. Vallance, of Wilnecote, spent several months in England last year, his father dying during his visit. On his return to Smithfield, Mr. Vallance, who is an Ex-Mayor of the Borough, was entertained at a banquet by the municipality, and heartily congratulated on his safe return and improved health.

He had not handled a carpentering tool until he became blind 30 years ago.

Since then he has made wardrobes, roller-top desks, chairs, ladders, gates, and wheel-barrows. He has also made glory chests for his two grand-daughters.

Mr. Vallance uses his thumbs to measure wood, and is proud that he has never hit his finger with the hammer.

great-grandchildren, with many living in the Sutherland district.

When they attained their 70th wedding anniversary in 1939, a celebratory article was printed in the Sydney Daily Telegraph. This made much of the fact that although Adam had done no carpentry work of any sort before losing his sight, he had since taken this up in a very useful way as described in this article: His latest project was to build some wooden steps leading from the veranda of their home to the backyard as Mary had suffered a fall.

A year later, their wedding anniversary was once again the subject of a newspaper report as this time they had received congratulations in a cable from the King and Queen. Unsurprisingly, this was a matrimonial record for the district. They also received congratulations from the Governor-General, Lord Gowrie, and Lady Gowrie. Mary told the newspaper reporter that Adam was a wonderful husband who had never drunk liquor or smoked.

That was to be their last anniversary, as just a week after the celebrations, Adam became ill and

Mary stayed by his bedside day and night. When he fell out of bed, she attempted to help him, catching a chill in the process which it is believed led to her death on 23rd August. Her husband, weakened by his illness and shocked by his wife's death, followed her to the grave just 4 days later. They were buried beside each other in Woronora Cemetery.

What an amazing life! When Adam Vallance was born, Queen Victoria had only been on the throne for some 12 years, the railway was in its infancy and other ways of getting about were confined to horsepower or 'Shanks's pony'. By the time of his death, not only Victoria, but another 4 monarchs had come and gone, and he could have flown back to England if he had enough money!

His life spanned a time of massive change and he saw more places than some of us experience in our lifetimes even now. Little did I know when I became distracted by the notice of his daughter's early demise what a fascinating story I was to uncover.



Book Review

Tamworth to Derby : featuring the Burton Brewery lines

V. Mitchell and K. Smith

**Publisher: Middleton Press , 2015
ISBN 9781908174765**

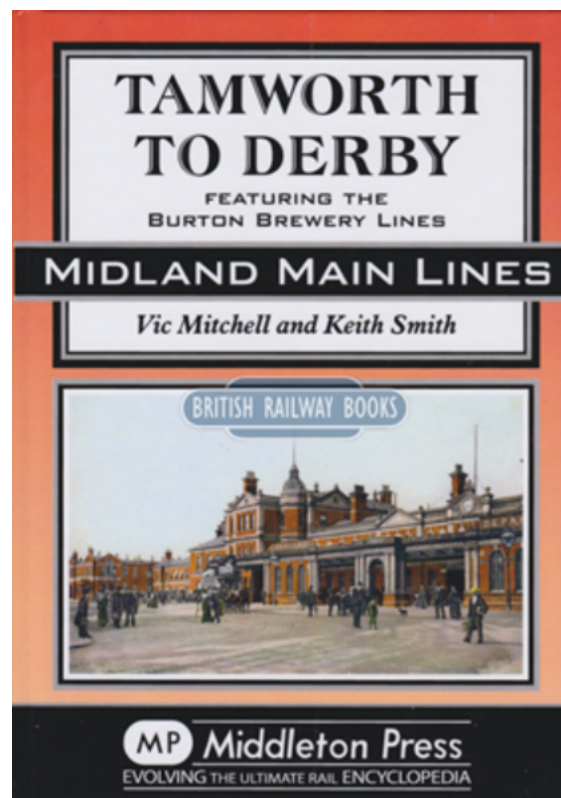
This is one of a series of about 450 books on railway lines. I haven't seen the others but this one is not a history book. It is a photo book of some 120 photos and 17 maps. The history of the line is condensed to 10 sentences on page.... Well the pages are not numbered. However it is the same page that covers the geographical setting in even less space and taking up as much space, is a diagram of the height profile of the line. Though sadly there is no caption to explain the numbers on the diagram, which at first I thought were height above sea level but clearly not, possibly incline rates?

Following this are six passenger timetable charts from 1887, 1897, 1917, 1937, 1941 and 1952 along with a table of the frequency of trains for 1845, 1869, 1899, 1929, 1959, 1998 there are no accompanying notes. Whilst interesting, this patchwork of numbers, is not going to help as you will have to fill in the blanks between the two overlapping sets of data.

However there are 19 very useful maps of stations and junctions, most unaccredited. Also the dates are disjoint so it is a moving picture. Whilst they are helpful you will have to find the sources yourself and probably other maps of the period you are interested in.

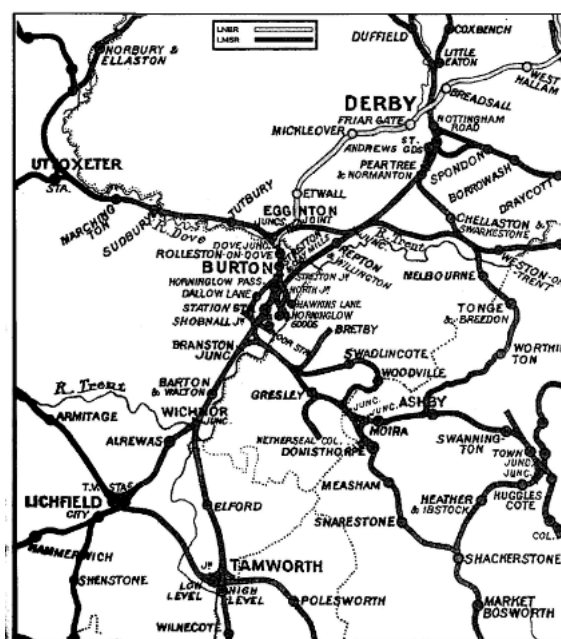
This leaves the 120 photos. All of which have good captions explaining the photo some with dates. The photos are in geographical order from Tamworth to Derby. The problem here is the photos are random, one of the 1960s next to one of the late 1800s. I haven't found any sets where there was an old and new shot of the same location.

Reading the history of the publisher/authors who are one and the same they refer to the books as "albums" and the 120 photos seems to be their yardstick.



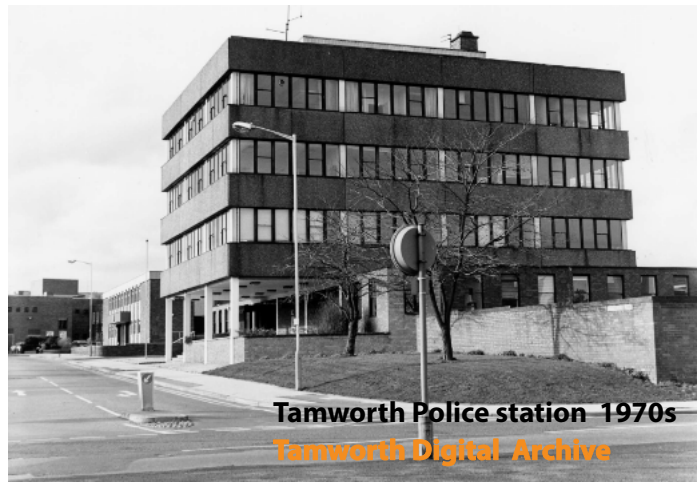
So, it is what it is: a railway photo book. Unless you are a serious railway enthusiast, I would suggest you get this book from the library rather than buying it.

It is useful as a resource for your own research, though without citations and references is nowhere near complete on its own.



Letters to the Editor

PC Plod, possibly not his/her real name, sent in the photo below of the Tamworth Police in the 1970s when they operated out of the soon to be (?) apartment block in Spinning School Lane shown on the left.



Tamworth Police station 1970s
Tamworth Digital Archive

If anyone is in the picture below or knows anyone in it would like to contact the Editor we would love to have an article on Tamworth Police in the 1970s or the 1960's if anyone can still remember.

of stories from this period, 55 years ago, that can be told.

For obvious reasons we can't go into anything current or that could be actionable. So names may need to be removed but there must be a lot

This is important social history. Otherwise all we have to go on is the Sweeney, Minder and Z-cars and we know how accurate they were. So any former Police with some stories to tell, or even just why the photo below was taken please get in touch with the editor.

Rear I to R: H. Finch, E. Saunders, Massy, P. Gray, Poultney, S. Gray, A. Moor, J. Jones, Hicken, R. Finch, Peake,

Rear L to R: DC Howells, Clayton, Sgt Baker, Insp. Alexander, Sgt Wilcock, Wright, Chamberlain



H. FINCH E. SAUNDERS MASSY P. GRAY POULTNEY S. GRAY A. MOOR J. JONES HICKEN R. FINCH PEAKE
DC HOWELLS CLAYTON SGT BAKER INSP ALEXANDER SGT WILCOCK WRIGHT CHAMBERLAIN

TAMWORTH POLICE

Dear Editor

I wonder if you can help at all or give me some advice as to where I can look next?

My Great Grandma Ellen Jackson worked for Sir Robert Peel at Drayton Manor in 1903.

I'm trying to find more details as when she married my Great Granddad Ernest Genders. The story in the family is that my Great Grandma Ellen Jackson was in service with Robert Peel and when she married my Great Granddad in 1903 they were given the beautiful Whitefriars Milliefiori inkwell as a wedding present. She left it to her 1st Great Grandchild (me) and I shall leave it to my 1st Great Grandchild in time.

I've got some census records printed off but I need to spend a lot more time looking. I think I'll search for Drayton Manor in the census records too to see if anyone is there! I've contacted the Peel society but sadly they don't have any records of the staff in those days

I have a photo of Ellen and Ernest with their family too but have more I can dig out. Ernest and his eldest son also Ernest, worked down Amington pit.

Sadly young Ernest was very badly injured when the cotter pin broke on the coal cart and it was detached from the horse he was leading. His spine was damaged, this was in August he was taken to Tamworth hospital but died from his injuries in October aged just 16. I have the inquest papers from Birmingham record office which are very sad to read.

Ernest and Ellen had 4 more children and lived a long and happy life with a large family.

Elaine Chattaway

EDITOR: *We are assisting Elaine in her quest, however should any reader have any information related to this, please contact the Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk*

If you have any queries or ideas for an article just email in. We are always looking for information and ideas



Next Edition

Spring 2025

Publication Date: 1st April

Copy Date: 17th March

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) 17th March

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

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

Any images to be sent separately NOT embedded in the text but please indicate in text approximate placement for each image. Images as high quality as you can manage in PNG, tiff or JPG. We can scan or convert most other formats. **Also any video. We can link in Video**

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

Being a PDF magazine: We can also link-in web site links and video or audio files. **We can also produce video and audio if required.** Just contact the Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk

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



In the Next issue

The Next Issue is Volume 3 Issue 2 and we hope to be a little more organised with what is in these issues than we were for volume 2.

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 3 Issue x A Fascinating Article!

Written by YOU! If no one contributes there will be nothing to read.

If you don't want the **next issue to be the last one** the editors need articles. The Editors, the History, Genealogy, Archive, and Castle groups can all help with research and information. Email the Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk

Tamworth

HERITAGE

Magazine



Preserving the Past, Recording the Present
Safeguarding the Future