

Tamworth

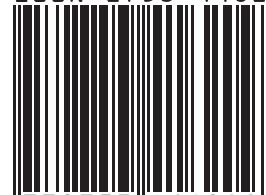
# HERITAGE

Magazine

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Preserving the Past, Recording the Present  
Safeguarding the Future

# Tamworth Heritage Magazine

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



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

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**Cover Image:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn (The Staffords) The Mercian Regiment , 2012, Castle Grounds © JAMedia

**Back Image:** NMA Memorial to South, North Staffords and the Staffordshire Reg. © JAMedia

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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](http://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

## Time Marches on...

Our cover is of the 3rd Bn (The Staffords), Mercian Regiment. Formerly the Staffordshire Regiment who were formed from the North Stafford's and South Stafford's who were formed from.... and so it goes all the way back to the 1600s. Sadly the 3rd Battalion no longer exists. After more than 300 years (longer than the USA has been a country) there is no Regiment or Battalion associated with Staffordshire.

In the same way the building that stood by the old gate way to the Castle (George Mason Grocers see photo above) that was replaced in the 1960s by the concrete National Westminster Bank, how many of you remember that? Later it became the Nationwide Bank (actually a Building Society owned by its members) which in turn has now gone. At least building, the Nationwide has crossed the road just to a new building, as the Nat-West did. We lose so much history because no one records it, or more often, no one takes care of it.

Note that the building the Nationwide is now in is a rebuild of one that was effectively destroyed by the "modernisation" to the fabric of the building in the 1950s and 60s.

This issue has a predominantly military feel as

we have the 80th anniversaries of VE and VJ Days, 81st Anniversary of D-Day and Armed Forces Day over the summer. The WW2 veterans will be at least 100. They are disappearing from living memory. Just as I remember the WW1 veterans from *The War to End All Wars* disappearing at the end of the last century. As they say "*Lest we forget*" though, the world keeps forgetting and going to war, again and again.

However we also have the serialisation of "*An Elford Childhood*". Not about a war but contemporaneous memories from 100 years ago, with pictures, of ordinary people and village life. The village and most of the buildings are still there, but not as they were, also the people die or move on, other people from other places move in and memories fade or disappear. Capturing the local people is important (see the letters page) and we have several projects to do this on the go.

Tamworth Heritage Magazine, as its strapline says is trying to not only preserve the past but also *record the present* as next year it will be the past, lest we forget. [For that we need help, see page 42...](#)



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## The Staffords. by Tamworth Heritage Magazine



On the 5th July 2012 The Ministry of Defence announced that the 3rd Battalion Mercian Regiment (The Staffords) would be removed from ORBAT by 2020. That is removed from the ORDER of BATTLE or disbanded. The men from 3Bn Mercian (The Staffords) were merged into the Mercian 1st and 2nd battalions in October 2014 thus ending a unique era in the British Army.

3<sup>rd</sup> Bn (The Staffords) Mercian Regiment at the memorial in the Castle Grounds June 2012

© JMedia

THM will be producing a special issue on The Staffords; this article is cut down from that as well as an article on the Staffordshire 3.

The Staffords had an amazing and diversified history that is unique in that they served across most of the world for over 300 years from India to the West Indies and UK to Africa via Europe, the Middle East and Afghanistan whilst having the longest continuous history with a single county, and also the longest single overseas posting. It also has to be said, the longest relationship in the British Army with a single pub, which has outlasted the regiment!



The Staffordshire Regiment born in the 31st of January 1959 in Minden Germany, The Prince of Wales's sobriquet came with the North Staffords from the 98th Regiment of Foot (raised 1824) who gained the title in 1876. Though, the Staffordshire Regiment (The Prince of Wales) is commonly known as "The Staffords".

The Staffords first overseas posting was six months to Kenya for an exercise to shake down the new regiment. Then after a year in Colchester it was back to Kenya on a full two-year posting (1962-64) where regiment had to deal with a mutiny by the Ugandan Army. This was the last posting of any British military unit in East Africa.

After a tour in the UK (Dover, 1964-68) they went to Berlin (1968-70) followed by tours in Bahrain, 1971, and Sharah in the Persian Gulf also 1971, where the Regiment was again the last unit to serve prior to British withdrawal.

The regiment completed five tours of Northern Ireland between 1972 and 1984: 72 in Armagh, 74 Londonderry, 76 Belfast, 79 Londonderry again and Armagh again in 84. The rest of 80's was spent mainly in Germany and mainland UK. However there were detachments and operations in Belize, Australia, Kenya, Gibraltar, Gambia, Canada and Seattle.

In 1985 the Regiment moved to Saxon WAPC and 432 tracked APC's but by 1988 it re-equipped with Warrior AFVs in its role as an Armoured Infantry Battalion.

April 1989 saw HM The Queen appoint HRH The Duke of York as Colonel in Chief of the Regiment. This was a particular distinction at the time as HRH Prince Andrew is a Royal with combat experience (Helicopters in the Falklands)

The next active service was for the 1990/91 Gulf War where the regiment went to Saudi Arabia as part of 7 armoured Brigade (Desert Rats). They were working with a company of Grenadier Guards and the 1st Battalion Prince of Wales Own Regiment of Yorkshire. The Regiment were in fierce fighting from start to finish covering

some 180 miles in 100 hours (about 4 days), a somewhat rapid advance even by modern standards.

In the Iraq War the regiment deployed to Iraq in 2005, and again 2006-7. Sadly the Regiment had three fatalities 2nd Lt Shearer, PTE Hewett and Pte Spicer, 16th July 2005 in [Al Amarah on OP Telic 6](#). We will have a full article on this on the 21st Anniversary next year.

During OP Telic 9 Pte Johnathan Dany Wysoczan became the Staffordshire Regiment's final fatality on [3rd March 2007 in Basra](#).

On the 1st September 2007 the Staffordshire Regiment became 3rd Battalion (The Staffords) the Mercian Regiment. Thus ended over 300 years of a *regiment*, that started with Lillingston in the Kings Head pub just down the road in Lichfield in 1702.

The Staffords lived on as a Battalion of a regiment named for the Saxon kingdom of Mercia, of which Tamworth was the Capital town thus keeping a strong link to Tamworth.

1<sup>st</sup>Bn The Staffordshire Regiment (the Prince of Wales), Task Force Maysaan Op Telic 6 somewhere near Al Amaarh, Iraq 2005

© The Staffordshire Regiment



## The Staffords History: from the South

The Staffords have the longest continuous history with a single country of any British Regiment. More to the point the roots start less than 8 miles from Tamworth castle.

The regiment started in 1705, some 320 years ago, as Lillingston's Regiment of Foot (infantry) in the Kings Head, Bird Street, Lichfield with men from Lichfield, Tamworth and the villages in its number. Though there are claims of heritage back to 1688... (This will be expanded upon in a future THM Special Issue) From there it went to Ireland.

Two years later in 1707, Lillingston's Regiment was sent to Antigua, in the West Indies, remaining there until 1764.

Those 57 years are the longest overseas posting recorded in the British Army. Resupply shortages forced the men to wear the local sugar sacking 'Holland cloth', commemorated by the Holland Patch worn as part of the Staffordshire Regiment cap badge and survived past the regiment as part of the Mercian Regiment's arm badge.

The authors cap badge with Holland patch



It should be noted that Colonel Lillingston did not accompany his regiment to the West Indies as he had done with his previous regiment in 1694. In 1708 his second in command took over the regiment and it became James Jones's Regiment of Foot. A name it kept until 1751.



During the 57 years in the West Indies the regiment fought the French, Dutch, Spanish, also Pirates and Privateers. Defended the Leeward Islands and provided detachments to Royal Navy Ships.

In 1751 the Army decided to number all the regiments. Previously regiments been known by their Colonels name and those names often changed causing an administrative nightmare. So Lillingston's/ James Jones Regiment became the 38th Regiment of Foot. This solved and administrative nightmare but did cause some anomalies in the Order of Precedence.

In 1759 the 38th gained its first battle honours at Guadalupe. This was shared with 64th foot who were later to become 2nd Staffordshire and subsequently the North Staffords.



The second battle honour was gained at Martinique in 1762 prior to leaving the West Indies in 1764. By 1774 the 38th was in the American Colonies fighting at Bunker Hill and Lexington before moving to New York in 1776.

In 1782 in order to link the regiments with the places they drew their recruits from the 38th Regiment gained the additional title (1st Staffordshire). This was partly to help flagging recruitment, as the American wars were not popular in the UK.

In 1794-5 the 38th saw action in Flanders and the Netherlands with the 80th Foot (Staffordshire Volunteers) formed the year before mainly from the Staffordshire Militia. They then parted ways for many years.

Lord William Paget whose father commanded the Staffordshire Militia raised the 80th Foot. After Flanders the 80th went to Ceylon by way of South Africa. In Ceylon the regiment lost 400 men in 4 years to sickness rather than fighting. It had a brief change; in 1801 fighting in Egypt where it gained its first battle honour, which is where the Sphinx comes from on the Staffords colours. The 80th then returned to India.

Meanwhile the 38th went back to Ireland before fighting in South Africa, on to South America and spending many years in Spain in the Napoleonic wars. (See the Sharpe series on TV) from 1804 to 1814 there was a 2nd battalion of the 38th, which also served in Spain.

For the next 40 years 38th and the 80th continued to be posted around the Empire in various skirmishes and fights. 1824-6 the 38th took part in the First Burmese War.



38<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot  
circa 1740

The 80th went to Australia in 1836 to guard convicts but during their nine years there managed to Annex New Zealand for the Queen.

The 80th went on to take part in the Sikh War of 1845-6 distinguishing itself in several battles.. Followed by the 2nd Burmese War in 1852-3

By 1845 the Crimean War had started: The 38th fought at Alma, Inkerman and Sevastopol. The 38th also received 15 DCMs (Distinguished Conduct Medal) that had been recently introduced.

During the 1857/8 Indian Mutiny the 38th (along with the 64th, 2nd Staffordshire) they took part in the recapture of Lucknow, whilst the 80th was involved in the Central Indian Campaign.

The 80th moved on to the last action taken by a forerunner of a Staffordshire Regiment. This was the Zulu War of 1879 where the regiment won two Victoria Crosses.

By 1881, under the Cardwell reforms, the 38th (1st Staffordshire) had merged with the 80th Foot (Staffordshire Volunteers) to form The South Staffordshire Regiment.

The 38th (1st Staffordshire) became the first Battalion and the 80th (2nd Staffordshire) the second Battalion with a permanent base at Lichfield. The Kings Own Staffordshire Militia provided the 3rd and 4th Volunteer Battalions.

This started the tradition of linking Militia or volunteers with their regular army counterparts. This was the forerunner of the Territorial Army that came into being in 1908.

However the South Staffordshire Regiment had no time to relax as in 1882 there was a revolt in Egypt. The 1st South Staffords took part in the Nile Campaign and this was the last time the South Staffords carried their Colours into battle. They also took part in the rescue force for General Gordon at Khartoum. Unfortunately the force arrived too late.

The following year in 1883 the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the South Staffords met in Egypt when they exchanged home and overseas roles.

By 1899 the 2nd Battalion was in India from where it dispatched a detachment to join the 1st Battalion. Present for the first time outside the UK were the Volunteer Battalion. The Militia Battalions were also there and saw action for the first time. This was also the last action before the Great War.

WW1 (1914-18) saw a huge increase in numbers of men and the battalions they served in. There were 17 Infantry Battalions badged South Staffordshire. Whilst both the 1st and 2nd battalions were in France at the initial phase it was the 2nd that saw action first at Mons. They were on the Western Front for most of the war. The 1st moved on to the Italian Front.

The South Staffords won three posthumous VCs in the Great War. Though, it should be noted that the majority of the 10,000 casualties from the North and South Staffordshire Regiments were Territorials, both conscripts and those who volunteered for the war. Though as they made up 31 of the 35 battalions this is not unexpected.

OFFICERS OF THE 4th BATTALION SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE REGIMENT.



Top Row : Second-Lieuts. A. de Havel, T. W. P. Evans, L. L. Hasell, C. H. Kinnaird, G. A. D. Lewis, C. M. D. Cade, R. P. Phipps, A. M. Hewat, D. M. Williams, Lieut. A. V. Whitehead.  
Second Row : Second-Lieuts. V. H. Reynon, R. L. Hensy, S. W. H. S. Douglas-Willas, R. A. Toller, Capt. E. J. Morris, Capt. L. E. Middleton, Second-Lieuts. C. E. W. Charrington, G. H. Pollock, C. E. H.  
Third Row : Lieut. F. Whitley, R.A.M.C., Capt. F. J. Kinnaird, Capt. and Adj. J. J. Collas, Major D. T. Seckham, Lieut-Col. E. A. Bulwer, Major (Hon. Colonel) B. T. Seckham, D.S.O., Major H. G. Wood.  
Bottom Row : Major G. A. S. Williams, Capt. S. M. Arnold, Capt. H. H. Sabben.  
Second-Lieut. J. W. Wollaston, Lieut. W. F. P. Thomas, Second-Lieuts. W. Hall, R. Hall, and G. L. S. Hawk.  
The following officers were not present, having proceeded on Service with the Expeditionary Force—Capt. H. W. Inglis, Capt. and Hon. Major D. W. A. Campbell, Capt. W. F. Holman.

After WW1 the 2nd battalion saw action of a different type in Ireland in 1922, followed by Palestine in 1929. By the 1930's it had moved on to India and the 1st Battalion was in Palestine.

When the Second World War arrived the South Staffordshire Regiment raised an additional 11 battalions. However many of these were training battalions or some were converted into other roles.

The 1st Bn South Staffords went to Egypt, fighting the Italians, and then on to India to fight as part of the Chindits. This, behind the lines, work in Burma was gruelling and of the 600 men sent in only 77 were still fit at the end. Lt. Cairns won a VC, sadly posthumously on the 12th March 1944 during the attack on "pagoda Hill".

The 2nd Bn South Staffords returned from India and converted to a glider-borne unit and therefore a non-parachuting Airborne Unit. As part of the 1st Airborne Division it took part in the attack on Sicily in July 1943. This was the first major glider airborne assault in the British Army. They progressed from Sicily to Italy.



NOTE in WW2 "airborne", as opposed to parachute troops, was all glider, later progressing to helicopters but the badge remains a glider. This is the Authors badge from the 90s when it was all helicopters.

Then in September 1944 the 2nd South Staffords were part of the glider borne assault on Arnhem. Of the 765 who went in only 139 returned. During the encounter Major Cain and Lance Sargent Baskyefield were awarded VCs. This was the only occasion in WW2 where 2 VCs were awarded to the same unit for the same battle.

After Arnhem the 2nd Battalion South Staffords was replenished it remained as Airborne and took part in the liberation of Norway in May 1945.

The TA battalions of the South Staffords also had a busy time. The 1st/6th fought back to Dunkirk. The 5th, 1st/6th, 2nd/6th and 7th all took part in the battle of Normandy moving from Cean to Falaise.

After WW2 when the Army shrank back to it's pre war size, also withdrawing from India in 1947 the both the South Staffords and North Staffords were reduced to 1 regular and one TA battalion.

In 1948 the 1st Battalion went to Hong Kong when it was thought the Chinese may try to take it back, then on to Germany and a spell in the Canal Zone in Egypt before going to Cyprus during the troubles there.

The 1st South Staffords returned to Minden in Germany where on the 31st January 1959 they were merged with the North Staffordshire Regiment to form The Staffordshire Regiment. (The Prince of Wales's)



## The Staffords History: from the North

The North Staffordshire Regiment can trace its history from the 2/11th Foot. The regiment was raised in 1756 (in Southampton) due to the Seven Years War. The numbering came about as it was decided to raise a second battalion of some regiments. However, in 1758 this was abandoned and they were renamed the 64th Regiment of Foot.

In 1759 they were in the West Indies at Guadeloupe where they won a Battle honour jointly with the 38th (later the South Staffords). Like the 38th they also went to the Americas: Boston in 1773 and the New York Campaign in 1776.

Then on to Battle of Brandywine, in 1777, and Charlestown in 1780, where they garrisoned the town. The 64th were also at the Battle of Eutaw Springs and the Battle of the Combahee River.

In 1782 the 64th returned to the West Indies it became the 64th Regiment of Foot (2nd Staffordshire) to the 38th's 1st Staffordshire. This was due to recruitment problems and the American wars.

At the start of the Napoleonic Wars the 64th was still in the West Indies where it had to recapture Martinique and Guadeloupe (again) as it had been returned to France by treaty.

The 64th then spent five years in Gibraltar before returning to the West Indies in 1801. The 64th



stayed there for the Duration of the Napoleonic wars capturing Swedish, Danish and Dutch positions.

In 1843 the 64th went back to England after time in Gibraltar and Nova Scotia and a fifth tour in the West Indies. From England it went to India but the 64th saw no active service until 1856 despite being mobilised in 1852 as part of a reserve force.

In 1856 the 64th was in action in the Anglo-Persian war taking part in battles in Reshire and Bushire. Moving inland in 1857 the 64th and defeated the Persian Army in the field at Koosh-ab though the action only took three months the



64<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot  
circa 1780



64th gained battle honours of Reshire, Bushire, Koosh-Ab and Persia. The 64th was the only British Regiment to be awarded all four.

The 64th returned to India (1857) arriving as the Indian Mutiny started. There were various skirmishes and fights. The significant battle was the second at Cawnpore where Drummer Thomas Flinn won the Victoria Cross, the first won by a Staffordshire Regiment. The Regiment gained the Battle Honour for Lucknow. Jointly with the 38th Foot (1st Staffords)

After this the 64th returned to England in 1861 for six years before moving to Malta in 1867, and Ireland in 1872. In 1874 line infantry Battalions were linked in pairs. The 64th was linked to the 98th Foot (Prince of Wales) with a depot in Limerick. The Depot was moved to Lichfield in 1880. Though the 98th was at Templemore in Tipperary on the 1st July 1881 when it was formerly merged with the 98th to become the Prince of Wales (North Staffordshire) Regiment.

Winding back to 1824 and the end of the Napoleonic wars The Army realised that the Empire was expanding and it needed more regiments. Among them was the 98th Foot. This was the sixth 98th Foot Regiment. The first two came and went the third was Highlanders and became the 91st the fourth was renumbered the 97th the fifth was the Prince of Wales's Tipperary regiment of Foot (1811-1816)

Our 98th Regiment of Foot was raised in Chichester in 1824 by Lt. Colonel Mildmay Fane. It then spent 13 years in South Africa with no



active service. However on its return to England in 1837 it spent 2 years doing "police" duties quelling the unrest caused by the Chartists movement.

In 1841 the 98th went to Ireland then on to China for the 1st Opium War. There were few battle casualties in this war but many from sickness, principally cholera. However the regiment gained its first Battle Honour (China). The 98th then moved back to Hong Kong there it continued to be beset by disease.

In 1846 the 98th moved to India where, whilst not directly involved in the Second Anglo-Sikh War did gain a second Battle Honour "Punjab". At this point the Regiment was one of the first regiments to get directly involved in a move to the North-West Frontier for two years.

By 1851, after 9 years abroad it had suffered over 1100 deaths and 200 invalided home, the main cause being sickness rather than battle. The regiment spent 3 years in Calcutta and a further three in England before returning to the North West Frontier thus missing the Indian Mutiny.

In 1867 the 98th returned to the UK before heading off to the West Indies in 1873 and then to Malta in 1875. It was in Malta that the 98th was presented with its Colours, the last it was to have, by HRH the Prince of Wales, thus on the 27th October 1876 the 98th became the 98th (Prince of Wales) Regiment of Foot.

War broke out in Afghanistan and in 98th went 1880 in India. In 1881 it amalgamated with the 64th Foot to become the Prince of Wales (North Staffordshire) Regiment.



2Bn North Staffords Officers Multan Indian 1908

The North Staffords also included the 3rd and 4th battalions from the Kings Own (2nd Staffs) Light infantry based in Stafford and (3rd Staffs) Rifles Militia based in Newcastle-under-Lyme, Also 2 Volunteer Battalions 2nd Staffs (Rangers) Rifle Volunteer Corps based in Stoke-upon-Trent and 5th Staffs Rifle Volunteer Corps based in Lichfield. The reserve battalions later became the TA parts of the Regiment in 1908

By 1884 the 2nd North Staffords (98th) was back in the North West Frontier and was the first battalion of the North Staffords to see action. By 1899 via England and Ireland, it was in Africa for the 2nd Boer War. Though mainly based in Johannesburg it saw little action. In 1900 Lord Roberts, commander of the British Forces in South Africa ordered every infantry Battalion to create a Mounted Infantry Battalion for speed of deployment and mobility. The Militia and Volunteer battalions also saw action in South Africa. The Regiment gaining a battle honour of "South Africa"

The 1st Battalion served in India from 1897 to 1903 where the 1st and 2nd battalion met for the first time and there was some redistribution of men between the two. The 1st returned to Lichfield for 9 years before moving to Ireland in 1912.

For the First World War was expanded to 18 battalions, largely territorial. The 1st battalion spent the duration in France and Flanders where they suffered heavy losses. The 2nd battalion stayed in India for the duration

The North Staffords gained four VCs and a variety of other medals in WW1 After WW1 (1920) the regiment was reformed its name to be

the North Staffordshire Regiment (The Prince of Wales)

The 1st Battalion moved to Ireland being involved in the Irish War of Independence until 1922 it then went to Thrace, via Gibraltar, to keep the Turks and Greeks apart. In 1923 it moved to the Far East where it remained until 1948

The 2nd Battalion was in India in 1919 and took part in the Third Anglo Afghan War. In 1922 the Battalion returned to England via Egypt, Sudan, and Ireland. It stayed in Lichfield until 1939.

During WW2 six additional Battalions were raised but only the Regular and TA saw action. The 1st was in India for the duration apart from a spell in Burma in 1943. The 2nd went to France and the withdrawal at Dunkirk. It then went to North Africa and Italy. Taking part in heavy fighting at Anzio and was withdrawn to recuperate. It then took heavy casualties again in Northern Italy on the Carl Gustav line. In 1945 they moved to Palestine and then to the Canal Zone (Egypt) in 1948. The 2nd was joined by the smaller first and merged into one battalion.

In 1950 the Regiment moved to Lichfield for a year before moving to Trieste. In 1953 it was posted to the conflict in Korea. It's first UN role. In 1956 it celebrated its 200th anniversary in Hong Kong.

Due to the review in 1957 on the 31st January 1959 The North Staffords merged with the South Staffords at Minden in Germany to become the Staffordshire Regiment (The Prince of Wales), part of the Mercian Brigade.

### 3rd Battalion Mercian Regiment: The Staffords

The Staffords as a regiment continued until 2007 when they merged with the Cheshire Regiment, the Worcester and Sherwood Foresters Regiment and West Midlands TA regiments to become the Mercian Regiment. The Staffords being the 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn An armoured infantry Battalion, part of 7th Armoured Brigade, (the Desert Rats) based in Bad Fallingbommel, Germany.

Since its formation the 3rd Battalion has served with distinction in Afghanistan where it suffered two fatalities [Private Gareth Leslie William Bellingham](#) on 18 June 2011 and [WO2 Ian Fisher](#), on 5th November 2013

In 2012 it was announced that we would lose our County Battalion. By 2014 the Staffords men were merged into the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn (Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters) and 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn (Cheshire). These merged in 2022 into one battalion, the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn. There is also a 4<sup>th</sup> Bn TA.

In 2025 The Staffords still live on in the memory and tradition: the Mercian airborne arm badge being the Stafford knot and the Holland cloth from the Staffordshire Regiment and Lillingston's Foot.  
Ich Dien.



NOTE This article is an abridged version of a [THM Special issue](#) in preparation for 2026.

### The Staffordshire Regiment Museum

The Staffordshire Regiment Museum tells the story of the Staffordshire Regiment and all its antecedents from its formation in Lichfield in 1705 to becoming the Mercian Regiment in 2014

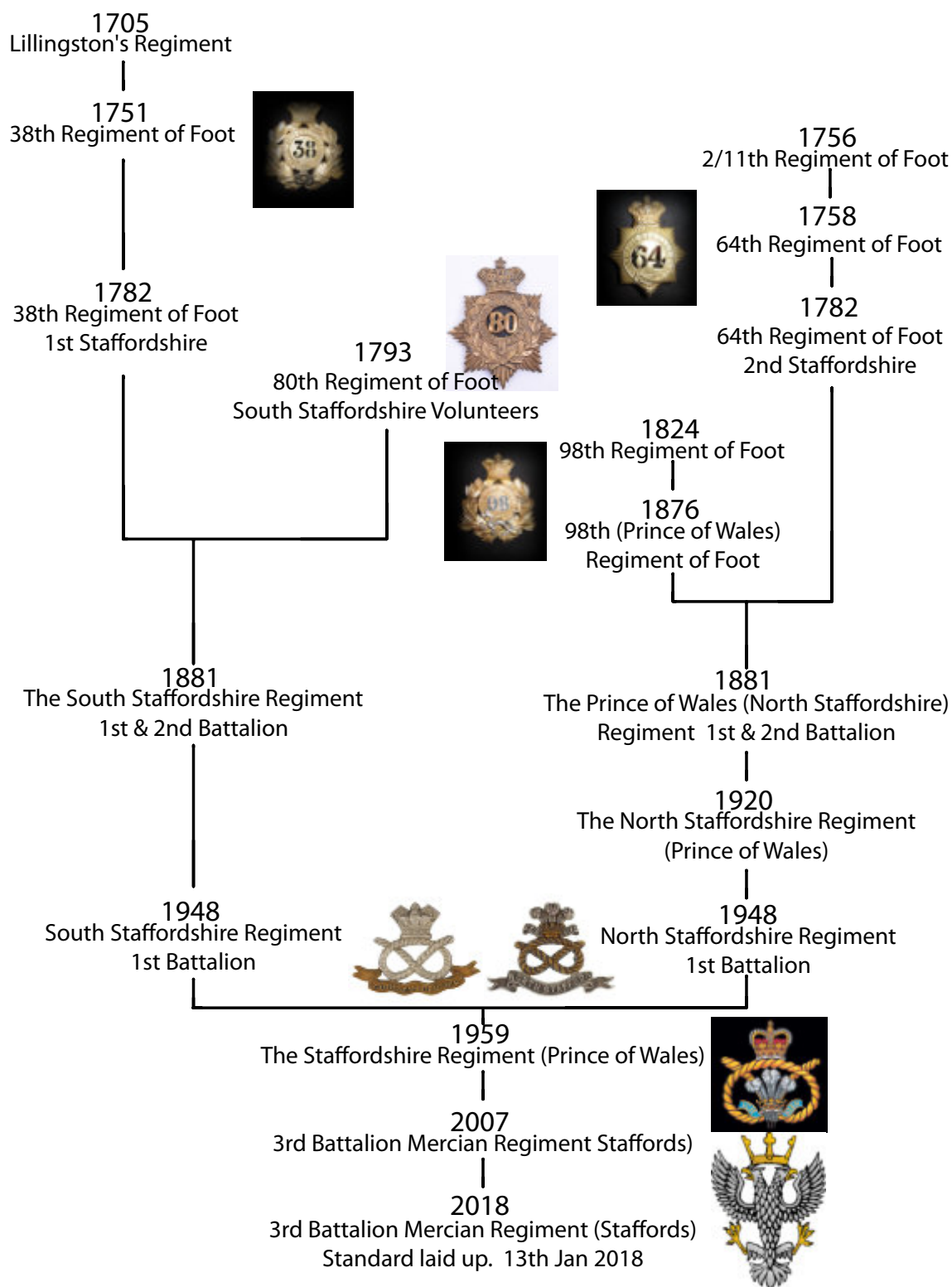
The Museum is situated alongside Whittington Barracks near Lichfield, the historical home of the Regiment, and houses a collection of around 11,000 items including armoured vehicles. The collection now includes items from the Mercian Regiment.

The Museum has a trench system that is a reconstruction of a 100 meter section of British front line trench from the First World War. It is named after Lance Corporal William Coltman VC Other features of the trench are named after the six additional Regimental winners of the Victoria Cross in World War One.

The Staffordshire Regiment Museum  
Whittington, Lichfield WS14 9PY  
<http://staffordshireregimentmuseum.com>



The full article will additionally have Lillingston's previous regiments and how they came from Sir Johns Regiment of Foot in 1688 making the Staffords older than then any claim the Cheshire have from 1689 as the Duke of Norfolk's Foot. Whilst noting Norfolk isn't Cheshire!



# This season's significant dates and events

collated by The Editor



**This is one of our more interactive pages with web links on almost every name.**

**4 July 1645** - Scots army are said to come to Tamworth

**5 July 2009** - the first items of the [Staffordshire Hoard](#) are unearthed at Hammerwich. Some of the Hoard are on display at Tamworth Castle.

**13 July 1649** - Oliver Cromwell's Council of State orders Tamworth Castle be dismantled. You may have noticed: it wasn't!

**16 July 1934** - Fire at Pooley Hall Colliery, two fatalities

**18 July 1861** - the transmitting mast at Hints, all 1,006 feet of it, began operations.

**19 July 1907** - death of [William Gordon Bagnall](#), mechanical engineer born at Cliff House in Tamworth and founder of [W. G. Bagnall Ltd. locomotive builders.](#)

**20 July 1702** - First meeting in the new Town Hall of the Bayliffes and Capital Burgesses of Tamworth.

**23 July 1852** - Matthew Noble's Peel statue unveiled in front of the Town Hall

**26 July 1629** - birth of [John Ferrers](#), son of [Sir Humphrey Ferrers](#) of Tamworth Castle.

**27 July 1930** - death of [Alfred Edden](#) politician, trade union organiser, and coal miner in New South Wales, Australia. Alfred was born in Tamworth, son of a miner who died in a mining accident shortly before his birth. Alfred worked

as a miner himself from the age of ten, emigrating to Australia in 1879.

**29 July 796** - death of [King Offa](#)

**4 August 1839** - on completion of the nineteen arches viaduct the Birmingham to Derby railway is complete and George Stephenson is at the controls as the first engine, appropriately named Tamworth, crosses the biggest man-made structure in the town.

**20 August 1930** - birth of [Henry John Roby](#), son of a Tamworth solicitor he went on to become an English classical scholar and writer on Roman law, a Liberal MP, and a [Cambridge Apostle.](#)

**1 September 1967** - Friends of Tamworth Castle and Museum are officially constituted.

**4 September 1964** - Pop Bar, a page devoted entirely to popular music, makes its debut in the Tamworth Herald.

**5 September 1949** - birth of [David 'Clem' Clemson](#) rock guitarist best known for his work with [Humble Pie.](#)

**17 September 1875** - birth of Harriet Alice Dumolo, eldest daughter of John Thomas Dumolo, colliery owner. Emigrating to Australia in 1881, in 1897 she was one of the first five to be awarded a Kindergarten Teacher's Certificate by the Teachers' Association of New South Wales.

**28 September 1686** - death of [John Rawlet](#), one of Tamworth's most famous residents.

# When Brum brutally cleared its slums

by Jon Neale

[Birmingham Dispatch](#)



A typical court of back-to-back houses in Ladywood, which Canon Norman Power said was left standing for years after the heart of the district was cleared.

## Foreword

You may be wondering why Tamworth Heritage Magazine has a story about Birmingham from [Birmingham Dispatch](#), a local newspaper that publishes quality reporting about Birmingham and the wider West Midlands. This is the story of what happened in Birmingham to cause the great expansion of Tamworth with the influx of Brummies' in the 1960s and the complete, irrevocable, change in character of Tamworth. To understand where you (the town) are, you need to know where you came from, even those who didn't come from Brum in the great move. *Editor.*

**In just 25 years, in Birmingham, 50,000 homes were demolished and 150,000 people were displaced. What were the consequences? In 1952, Norman Power, a young, idealistic vicar, took up a position in Ladywood.**

It was a desperately poor place, full of back-to-back slums organised around unsanitary 'courts', all mingled with workshops and small factories. But it also had streets featuring better quality housing, home to a small, integrated middle class. Most of all, 1950s Ladywood possessed a strong sense of community.

Power had grown up in Birmingham before going to public school and then Oxford. Coming back to his home city, he was keenly aware of the terrible state of housing in many parts of his parish, and initially supported Birmingham Council's plans to redevelop it, along with vast

swathes of the rest of the inner city. After all, wasn't Birmingham suffering the worst postwar housing crisis in England after Liverpool?

Overcrowding, death, disease and infant mortality in Victorian Birmingham, while dire, had never been quite as bad as some other cities, like Manchester. This meant it was late to regulate building and late to begin clearing slums. It was late to build council houses too; and although when it got going it famously built more than anywhere else, they were in cottage estates like Kingstanding rather than in the old heart of the city.

This meant that the warren of tiny houses built during the industrial revolution, packed cheek-by-jowl into courts accessed through tunnels from larger street-facing homes, had survived

relatively intact into the 20th century. Despite scattered improvements, many lacked basic amenities, were dark and airless, suffered from damp and pest infestation, or were simply utterly filthy.

Since the introduction of building by-laws in 1876, people had been leaving these areas and moving out to new, more spacious terraces in areas like Sparkbrook. This process continued with the cottage estates and garden suburbs. But in the early 20th century, Birmingham's economy boomed and its population soared. Unlike other industrial cities, the decrepit inner city stopped losing people; in some places it was even gaining them. Birmingham's housing problem was getting worse.

After WWII, the council set about improving things. The inner city — an area containing around 30,000 homes and perhaps 100,000 people — was earmarked to be razed to the ground and redeveloped in a more humane way. The idea was to build modern houses with gardens and green space. There would be separate residential, industrial and retail zones — no more polluting industry randomly set



## The Dispatch

The [Birmingham Dispatch](#), is a local newspaper that publishes quality reporting about Birmingham and the wider West Midlands.

You will find that The Dispatch is a new kind of on-line local newspaper — focusing on quality rather than quantity and giving you the context you need to understand what is really going on. And you can read our stories without wading through any irritating pop-up ads or mindless articles about celebrities.

Every week we pick a few stories about local politics, culture, business and social affairs that we think really matter, and then dig into them properly, writing an in-depth piece.

Some of the better houses, terraces with gardens, that Canon Power argued were bafflingly demolished before the slums. "The heart of old Ladywood", as he said.



among the slums. And no more private slum landlords; new residents would all rent from the council. Ladywood was one area deemed ripe for the revolution.

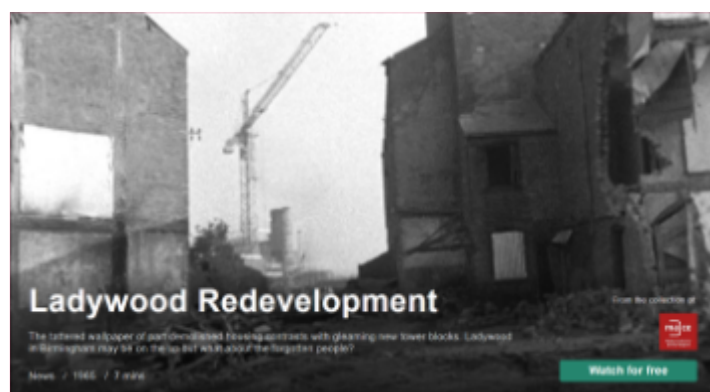
The ultimate architect of these plans was Herbert Manzoni, City Engineer and the only person in the whole country to control a council's planning, architecture and engineering functions. Manzoni was determined to clear the city of its slums — particularly, it seems, if they stood in the way of his road plans.

But as it turns out, knocking things down is much easier, and quicker, than building them — although it does make it simpler to erect dual carriageways. Ladywood became pockmarked by half-demolished derelict houses, all awaiting the slower process of rebuilding. Shops shuttered as their customers moved out.

Meanwhile, Norman Power became increasingly angry about the complete destruction of the physical and social fabric of the area.

In his 1965 book about his parish, *The Forgotten People*, Canon Power christened these rubble-strewn areas 'the waste land', arguing they were leading to a collapse in local pride and an increase in antisocial behaviour.

Click image or [click here](#) to hear Canon Power



He was also baffled by the council's priorities; the best properties — larger houses with gardens, not back-to-backs — were demolished first, while some of the worst slums were left standing well into the 1960s. Power highlighted the west side of Monument Road, where there

were "tiny, damp, huddled dwellings [that] are unfit for habitation. In the Anderton Street area is some of the worst property I have ever seen... These houses remain!"

Even finished, Ladywood, and areas like it, would house far fewer people, particularly as the new dual carriageways, widened streets like Summer Row and Bristol Street would also take up space once occupied by homes. A large section of the population would be forced to move out as a result, to designated over spill towns such as Tamworth, Redditch, Daventry and Worcester, or to new estates within the city



or on the outskirts. There was no public consultation but there is evidence that many wanted to stay in their communities.

The effect was to erode Ladywood's social glue, breaking up bonds of family that had existed for decades, if not longer. This was not just about links between working class families — some better-off families, including local doctors and teachers, had once lived in the more spacious terraces and the larger Georgian houses. But the new homes would all be council-owned and designed for workers.

Ladywood had always been an overwhelmingly working-class area, but after the slum clearances it would become exclusively so. Power was supportive of social housing, but he wanted some private homes alongside them, sustaining a more mixed community.

He was also increasingly sceptical of the high-rise flats that arose in the early 1960s, arguing that they were totally unsuitable for many of his

parishioners, especially families and older people who were increasingly isolated from their support networks. He was remarkably prescient; within a decade or two, these tower blocks would be regarded as a new form of urban slum.

What Power described was occurring simultaneously almost everywhere else in the inner city, with dramatic effects not just on people and communities but, given the scale of dereliction and abandonment, on a more general pride in Birmingham and a sense of civic identity.

It is not as if what replaced the slums was of a particularly high quality — the council preferred to work with large engineering contractors rather than house builders or independent architects and the early designs were basic rows of houses. .

## A new vision

Enter Alwyn Sheppard Fidler. In 1952, he became the first City Architect of Birmingham who was supposed to change tack.

Sheppard Fidler was a talented and thoughtful architect, genuinely interested in urban design, although his plans were very much of their time. The Lyndhurst Estate in Erdington and the Primrose Hill estate in King's Norton were his most acclaimed work, but his influence can also be seen in much of the rebuilt inner city.

His preference for 'Radburn' layouts – separating pedestrian and vehicle routes, concentrating once scattered local shops in neighbourhood centres – turned out to be perfect for antisocial behaviour. The lack of enclosed streets, and the plentiful space between buildings, created a windswept feel.

Despite clashing with Manzoni frequently — the City Engineer felt Sheppard Fidler cared too much about architecture at the expense of sheer housing numbers — his designs meshed well with his colleague's road plans. The result, in the inner city, was a scattering of inward-looking housing developments separated by barrier-like dual carriageways.

The shift to high rise flats began as part of Sheppard Fidler's credo of 'mixed development', but it was mainly a response to a simple fact: the city was running out of land. By the early 1960s,

there was little remaining within the city boundaries.

A programme of tower blocks was supported nationally by the Conservative government at the time, who were keen to boast about housing numbers but concerned about irritating their rural voting bloc by allowing cities to expand.

[Click here](#) or on image to see Dispatch article on **The forgotten post-war decree that deliberately strangled Birmingham**



New subsidies were introduced. Keith Joseph, the then-Housing Minister and later a close ally of Margaret Thatcher, was an enthusiastic proponent of pre-fabricated buildings that would allow high-rises to be constructed much more rapidly.

Birmingham, a metropolis of vital national economic importance, and with one of the gravest housing shortages in Britain, would be the test bed for these ideas; the city council was keen to rise to the challenge.

Pre-fabs and tower blocks would allow it to jump ahead of its peers in delivery, particularly if they made use of their existing contacts with contractors. Birmingham's leaders took the message to heart — a scandal followed, which saw Sheppard Fidler resign in protest. In 1975 one of his successors, Alan Maudsley, appeared in court to plead guilty to corruption in his dealings with Bryant, the contractor appointed to carry out much of the construction work on the new blocks.

## The last of the slums?

Meanwhile, Birmingham was already beginning to take a different approach to urban renewal. After a community backlash, plans to level and redevelop areas such as Balsall Heath — considered better quality than the slums of Ladywood — were shelved. The emphasis moved to refurbishment and restoration, often of privately-owned property. The era of comprehensive redevelopment and tower blocks was over.

During little more than two and a half decades, up to 50,000 homes had been demolished and around 150,000 people, perhaps 15% of the city's population, displaced. Every back-to-back vanished, except isolated examples now owned by the National Trust on Hurst Street.

However, an estimated half of all homes in the inner ring were standard street terraces with gardens or yards, but that did not stop the vast majority of them being swept away too. The picture below, for example, shows the area around long-gone Prescott Street in Hockley just after the war. The top half is covered in back to backs, but 'through' terraces dominate the bottom half.



No other city in England did such a thorough job of erasing its Victorian inner city over such a short time period — although Manchester perhaps comes close. Certainly, no other was rebuilt with such haste and, at times, with so little concern for quality. No other city forcefully moved so many people out to its outskirts. But then again, no other city was growing as fast as Birmingham or had such pressing housing shortages.

The combination of such vast demolition and the design ideas of the post-war period created a rather empty-feeling bleak and windswept inner city. It was redeveloped at a time when the Victorian city, and the very idea of urban density, was regarded with horror.

In a different era or place, the better-through terraces would have survived, and perhaps even some of the improved back-to-backs. The old street plan, often replaced by cul-de-sacs and curving roads, might have been kept and new, modern rows of houses built into it. More people would have been able to stay with their family and friends, and the inner city might be more diverse and lively as a result.

Instead, alongside the notorious social problems of a lot of inner city Brum, the relative lack of people in inner wards compared to most European cities affected the vibrancy and economic vitality of the city centre, as fewer people lived within commuting (or shop or nightlife) distance of the core. Public transport is also harder to justify.

The fact that older, denser housing survived in the middle ring has produced a strange dynamic, where many of the neighbourhoods a couple of miles further out can feel more vibrant and urban than the area just outside the city centre.

Area around Prescott Street in Hockley. The back to backs and courts can clearly be seen in the top half of the photo – but on the other side of the street, houses with gardens, as well as 'through' terraces on the bottom half. All would be swept away regardless.

As well as the problems of the inner city, the rapid outward growth of Birmingham in the 1920s and 1930s — faster than anywhere else outside London — meant the over-spill estates beyond suburbia were simply too far from people's old communities in the inner city and too far from employment, particularly as transport links were often limited and/or slow. They often lacked much in the way of shops or other facilities.

Of course, the impact wasn't all negative. The housing conditions of hundreds of thousands of people were dramatically improved during that period. My grandparents were two such Brummies. Like all my maternal family, dating back to the 1700s, they'd both grown up in overcrowded court housing on the west side of the city.

My grandfather was born in a court called 'The Limes' (possibly a so-called 'Nettlefold Court' where houses on the end of the terrace had been demolished to let in light and air) on Irving Street in Ladywood, once part of Norman Power's parish. The Limes was pulled down as part of the 'clearances'; the neighbourhood was re-christened with the rural-sounding name of 'Lee Bank'. Bucolic it is not; today Lee Bank is a mishmash of suburban-looking housing, windswept green space and budget hotels.

### **The other side of the Coin: Tamworth: Report of Survey, County Development Plan**

The Dispatch article was the view from Birmingham. At about the same time there were great plans afoot for modernising the UK post WW2. In THM Vol 1 Issue 4 we reviewed the 1965 Tamworth Council Report of the Town Planners Survey that clearly was one of many that were circulated at a government level. It laid out all the information on infrastructure and people along with the plans for several new residential areas and roads. We didn't get the roads as the M42 and new A5 Bypass plans came up before the other roads were built. There is a full review of the report he

Having met my grandmother, who was brought up in similar court housing around Lionel Street, on the edge of the Jewellery Quarter, the couple moved to the by-law terraces around Edgbaston Reservoir, before settling in a council house in Bartley Green. Their daughter, my mother, married and moved back to a terrace off the Hagley Road, followed by a semi-detached house in distant Shirley. I grew up knowing first-hand the changes such council housing made to the lives of those who'd come from the courts.

But the question remains: was the cost of such improvements — the bloody-mindedness, the corruption, and the social problems created by the slum clearances — really a fair price for Birmingham to pay?

[Go to Birmingham Dispatch](#) to join in with the discussion at the end of this article. Or just to sign up for the free Dispatch news updates.



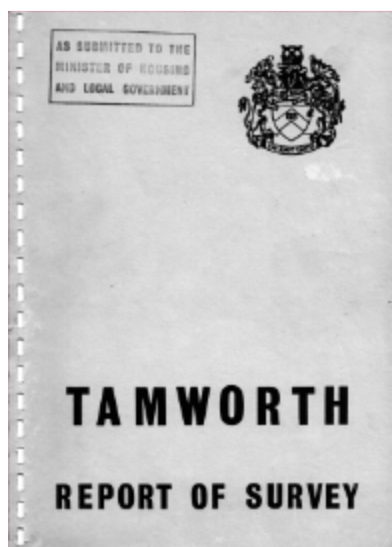
The report shows all the projections for [new] people coming in Tamworth with their requirements for schools, shops, doctors, hospitals and retail units. It was all looked at including traffic flows etc. However 1965 is 60 years ago and the world changed in ways no one

could predict.

The new concrete in the town centre was seen as progress and new. Indeed HM Queen opened Ankerside shopping centre.

So before people complain remember most can't accurately predict the winner of the next horse race in 20 minutes time, let alone a town 60 years later. re (and a video).

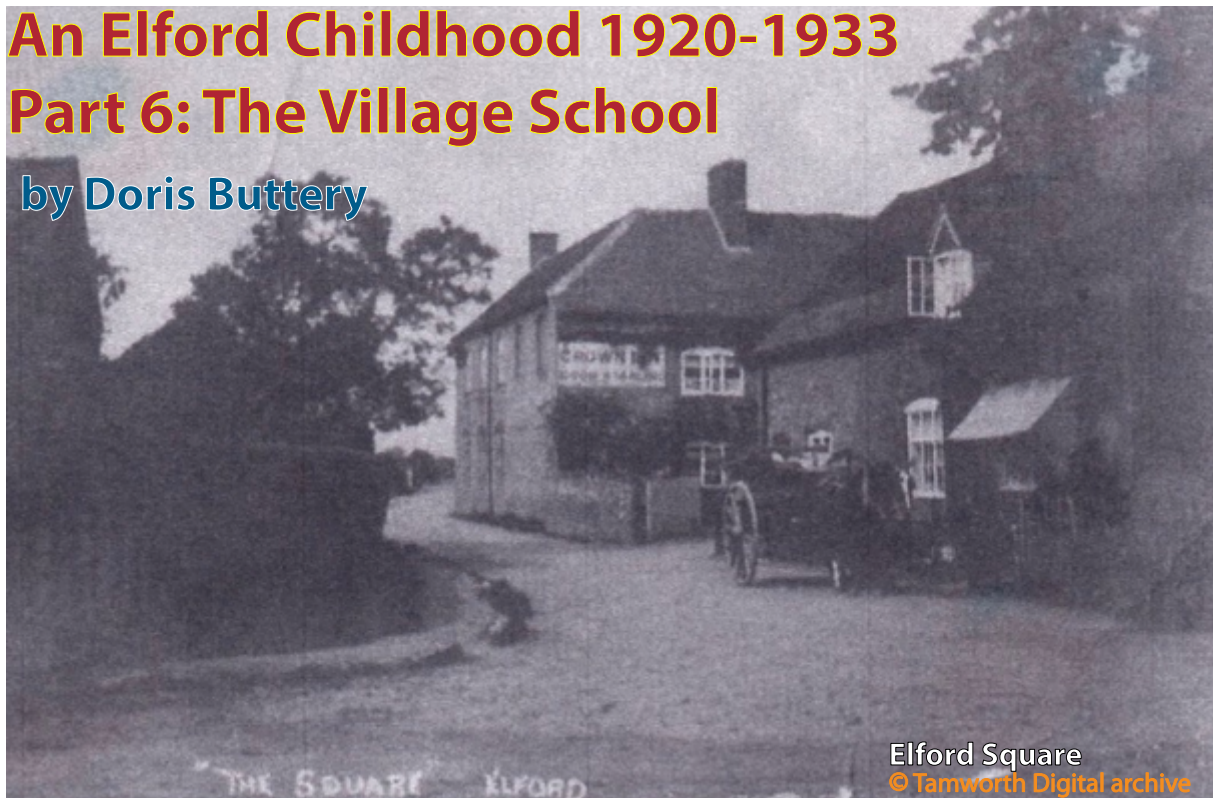
[Email the Editor if you want to see the report.](#)



# An Elford Childhood 1920-1933

## Part 6: The Village School

by Doris Buttery



Elford Square  
© 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.

### Part 6: The Village School

The school was the focal point of secular interest in any village and Elford was no exception. It was built by the Squire in the middle of the nineteenth century (It was actually founded by family member, Mary Howard – Ed.) and had changed little over the years. The lavatories were in the yard and consisted of the original earth closets. The cloakrooms had wooden pegs for coats and hats and there was an enamel basin beside which stood a large enamel jug of water. A high roller towel, which was changed once a week, hung on a wall. Boys and girls had separate entrances and separate playgrounds.

There were three classrooms - infants, middle, and older children. The infants went into the middle class at the age of six or seven, depending on how quickly they learned to read and write, whilst standards two and three went up from the middle to the big class, containing standards four to seven, at about nine or ten - again depending on ability and achievement.



Doris in her May Queen regalia, May 1, 1932 (dirty knees courtesy of an ill-timed tree-climbing expedition)

© Ann Nibbs

School leaving age was fourteen, and, once you had achieved that birthday, there was no waiting for the end of term. We had three teachers - two of whom were qualified. The teacher of the middle class was un-certificated. There were approximately seventy children in the school, some of whom had to walk three miles to get there. There were no school dinners, so children who could not get home brought sandwiches for lunch.

In winter, the headmistress made cocoa in a huge enamel jug and each child was able to have a hot drink. It was made with considerably more water than milk but, on a wintry day, it was better than the cold water which was the midday drink in Summer. Lighting, when needed, was provided by oil lamps, suspended from the ceiling, and the school was heated by huge black stoves which, while generally efficient, smoked badly on occasion.

Most boys went from the village school at fourteen to work on farms and the girls went into domestic service. Their schoolwork was geared to this end. Mornings were always devoted to book work, and we were taught in the well-trying method which stuck. Before decimalisation, I frequently used the old jingles like, 'twenty pence are one and eight, forty pence are three and four...' and so on.

Similarly, I find that having been taught multiplication tables parrot fashion has stood me in good stead on many occasions. Spelling was

something else on which our teachers were very keen. 'I before E, except after C, their = people, there = place'. Alright, maybe it's old-fashioned, but no child left that school unable to read, write and spell properly, or do simple arithmetic. We did a little history and geography too, and, of course, we learned how to draw and paint.

The rector came to school once a week to instruct the middle class in their catechism, and on the first Wednesday of each month, we all attended a service in church. It was unthinkable for any female to attend church in those days without wearing a hat, so we all had to remember to take one on that day. If any girl forgot...well, there was a supply of rather ancient woolly hats kept at school for just such an emergency. Be sure, few girls forgot more than once. The horror of the borrowed hat was sufficient warning.

There was no such thing as P.E., but once a week, we all filed into the Boys' playground for Drill. This consisted mainly of such exercises as, 'Heels raise, arms stretch....and lower...', knee bending, running on the spot, and jumping, feet astride and together, and so forth.

On two afternoons a week, the middle and big classes joined forces. The girls learned to sew, knit and embroider, whilst the boys did woodwork in winter and on wet summer days, and gardening in spring and summer. On Friday afternoons, we had Community Singing, when we sang the old folk songs like, 'Cherry Ripe', 'Some Folks Do', and sea shanties such as, 'What



Elford1930s  
© Tamworth Digital archive

Shall We Do With The Drunken Sailor?', 'Rio Grande', and many more.

A good part of the Christmas term was spent in preparation for the musical play that was put on for the benefit of the school and the village. These were always very gay, tuneful affairs. One year it was 'The Pied Piper', another year, 'Beauty and the Beast', One year, we presented an original called 'Princess Chrysanthemum' which was set in Japan, and we were all set to work to tie small pieces of pink crepe paper onto twigs and branches to resemble cherry blossom. The plays were performed three times. Once in an afternoon for the schoolchildren, and on two evenings for parents and friends.

The stage was built by placing planks of wood on top of desks and covering the whole with a rather elderly green carpet. The footlights were candles with the reflectors being made from cocoa tins.

I don't remember where all the 'props' were stored for the rest of the year, but I suppose it must have been in the Institute which stood near the school. This building, older than the school, had been erected by the parish for use as a meeting place and commemorated the relief of a famine in the 18th century. It was small but came in useful as a sort of overflow for the school. For instance, the boys did their woodwork there. Funny, but I don't recall who taught them to use tools, but someone must have done. Possibly the rector.

In the spring term, the school voted for a May Queen, and on each May 1st, every child arrived at school bearing a maypole. This consisted of a stick or stave often as tall as the child, on which flowers had been tied or wired. There was a competition for the best decorated one.

On the night before May Day, a draw would be made in the boys' playground, and the staff and some of the older children would decorate the winning maypole with cherry blossom and whatever greenery was available. Lovely, fresh, green beech was always included. A farmer lent the dray and, on May Day itself, one of his sons, who was also a pupil, would arrive at school leading the smartly turned-out horse, brasses gleaming, and mane and tail beribboned.

A chair would be placed on the dray and, at 10 a.m., the retiring May Queen, wearing her crown of real flowers, would be seated on the chair, surrounded by her four maids. Behind her would sit the new May Queen and her four maids. All would be dressed in white, and each would have a decorated maypole. When all were properly settled, the procession would set off to tour the village. All the schoolchildren followed behind the May Queens and their attendants

The first stop was near the Hall where the Squire's lady and his sister would come out to greet us all. Then all the children would gather

*Mayday Maypole Celebrations 193*  
2© Ann Nibbs



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



round to sing a May song. All traditional, old English tunes such as, 'Joan To The Maypole', 'Now is the Month of Maying' and 'Come Ye Young Men,' We trilled them all so merrily. The procession would wend its way on through the village, and, at various points, would stop for another song to be sung whilst villagers came to see and to listen.

The afternoon's activities took place on the Rectory lawn. First of all, the new May Queen, followed by her attendants, would advance to where the retiring Queen sat on her 'throne'. There she would kneel whilst the 'old' Queen removed the crown from her own head and placed it on the head of her successor. Everyone would clap as the new Queen was raised and took her place on the 'throne'. Then, after the singing of a song for the occasion, the dancing began.

First of all, the infants danced round the maypole to the tune, 'Come Lasses and Lads' played on a rather wheezy gramophone. Then it was the turn of the older children to dance the old country dances – 'Gathering Peascods', 'Ruffy Tufty', 'Sellers Round', 'Black Nag', 'If All The World Were Paper', 'Haste to the Wedding', and others, interspersed with dancing round the maypole.

Whenever I see the national dances from the Ukraine and other European countries, performed by groups in this country, I feel sad that our own country dances appear to have been largely forgotten.

We had a tall maypole which was none too firm, so four boys had to sit on the base to stop it being pulled over by the weaving in and out of the dancers.

If the day happened to be wet, the procession was cancelled, and the crowning ceremony took place in the school. The two larger classrooms were made into one sizeable room by folding back the dividing doors. Of necessity, activities were rather restricted indoors, but there were, in fact, very few wet May Days as far as I remember. If May 1st occurred on Saturday or Sunday, the festival was held on Monday.

The revival of the old May Festival was the brainchild of Miss Frank who was headmistress from the early 1920s. She was a traditionalist and sought to preserve and revive as many of the old ways of the countryside as practicable. She had an uncertain temper, however, and was not altogether popular.



Approaching Elford  
© Tamworth Digital archive

Years later we learned that she had a great liking for the national drink of Scotland, so perhaps that was partly the cause of the trouble.

There can be no doubt, however that she cared very deeply about the children and was particularly concerned about the poorer ones. One large family of siblings had a walk of three miles morning and night and as often happens with children, occasionally forgot their sandwiches for lunch. When that happened, they were usually given some bread and jam to eat. I suspect the head paid for that herself. It sounds little enough to do, but there were six of those children in school and at least they were not allowed to go hungry. In any case, the food they brought from home also usually consisted of bread and jam.

Their mother must have been very hard-pressed, raising ten children on a farm worker's wage,

even with a tied cottage and free milk and potatoes. The children's clothes came from the jumble sales held twice a year in the village school, and I remember being severely scolded by my mother after complaining to her that another girl had told Phyllis that the dress she was wearing had once been hers when I knew it was mine and told Phyllis so. I did not realize, of course, how hurtful such arguments must have been to poor Phyllis until Mother pointed it out to me. Children can be very cruel to one another.

Few people in the village had money to spare, yet they made the most of what they had, and, on the whole, children were sent to school neat and tidy. Boots and shoes were well-cleaned and, if dresses or trousers were darned or patched, they were neatly done and usually clean. Often, in the case of a younger child, a handkerchief would be secured to their front with a safety pin. Just in case.

Concerned that a number of children in the school had never seen the sea, Miss Frank organised a charabanc trip to New Brighton where a good time was had by all. It was so successful, that the following year we all went to Llandudno for the day.

When Miss Frank left, her place was taken by a teacher from Birmingham who brought more up-to-date methods with her.

She replaced the Christmas musicals with excerpts from Shakespearean plays, which few of the audience understood, but they applauded with enthusiasm. More emphasis was placed on academic subjects, but some of the old traditions were maintained.

No child had succeeded in gaining a scholarship to the Tamworth High School, so she concentrated on remedying this with the result that another girl and I were given special tuition. The other girl, who was called Freda, was considered to have the best chance of a scholarship but I was with her 'for company'. To everyone's amazement, not least my own, Freda failed, and I passed. The result came on the day I was voted May Queen and I was rather dazed by the double event, but I still had to pass an oral

exam so there was not too much backslapping. I had to wait a further month before I knew for certain that I would be going to the High School. Then there was great rejoicing.

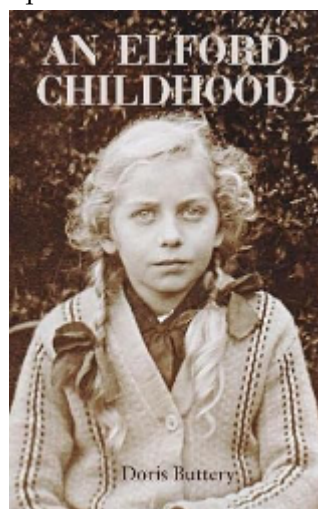
The Head told the school that I was the first, but she expected there would be others. What I had done, others could do, and so on... My popularity was assured when she announced an extra half-day holiday to celebrate the occasion.

There were no half-term holidays in our school, but we were given the afternoon off on Pancake Day (Shrove Tuesday). The Pancake Bell would be rung at the church at noon, and we would all hurry home to eat our pancakes with lemon and sugar.

On May 24th, we celebrated Empire Day. If the weather was fine, we would all stand in the Boys' playground and sing, 'Men of Harlech', 'Loch Lomond', 'Killarney', 'Land of Hope and Glory' and 'Three Cheers for the Red, White and Blue'. It was only many years later that I even began to wonder why we sang 'Killarney' when it was no longer part of Great Britain

The Union Jack would flutter from the flagpole, and it was a serious, solemn occasion. If it rained, we sang out songs in the schoolroom, but we always sang with great gusto.

**Next time:** Elford Hall and The Village Squire



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



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](mailto:Ann.nibbs@gmail.com).



## Found 30 years on! The “trade Union Banners” that weren’t by Michael Green

This is an accidental follow up to the authors article “Temperance and the Band of Hope in Tamworth – A short outline by Michael Green” ([THM V2i4 Autumn 2024](#)). Why accidental? Well that will become clear as you read on...

It was February 2025 that your Editor heard from Richard Barnes who is writing an article for the THM on the Boat House at Fazeley which he owned together with the former Methodist Church situated on Watling Street which had closed in 1991 with the final service held on 22<sup>nd</sup> September.

Richard told the Editor he had a box containing what he had thought were trade union banners from [Jarrow Marches of the 1930s](#).

So arrangements were made to visit Packington Hall where he lived with Dr Simon Peaple, an historian on the THM board, whose specialism is the working class 1900-1939.

The box was stored in an outbuilding at Packington Hall. Somewhat dark and dusty as there were no lights or glass in the few small windows. We needed our own lights.



The storage box with the banners as found. © Jamedia The first time out of the box in 25 years © Jamedia

The opening of the box and very careful removal and unrolling of the two banners revealed that the banners were not trade union ones but of the **Fazeley United Methodist Church Band of Hope** depicting Joseph Dent, the well-loved founder, and **The Sunday School**.

How the banners arrived at Packington Hall prompted an investigation which led to the discovery that, in 1995, Joe Hunter, a former member of Fazeley Methodist Church but then a member of Central Methodist Church Tamworth noticed that, during conversion of the former church into a factory unit for the production of carbon fibre tail fins for racing cars, the banners had been discovered and destined for a rubbish skip.

Joe Hunter was a life long resident of Fazeley and somewhat of an expert in its history. Later, in 2008, at the grand old age of 88 he put pen to paper and wrote



*My Memories of Fazeley and The Peels of Drayton Manor. [If anyone has a copy of this please [contact the Editor](#) ]*

Joe Hunter knew the importance of the banners and arranged for them to be loaned and put on display at Central Methodist Church for the celebration of 225 years since Samuel and Ann Watton had welcomed Methodist local preachers into there home to conduct services in 1771 and the publication of "A Charge to Keep", a short history of Methodism written by Rev David Juliano, a pastor in the United Methodist Church of America and Central's then Minister.

HERALD, Friday, October 27, 1995 19

# Victorian banners were destined for bins

**TWO FORGOTTEN** standards of a by-gone age have been uncovered as work to convert Fazeley's former Methodist Church into a new industrial use nears completion.

The Victorian banners were destined for a rubbish skip when spotted by local worshipper Joe Hunter who rescued them as workmen replaced floorboards at the 19th century church in Lichfield Street.

**Racing cars**  
The building is cur-

**Worshipper saves historic standards as work starts on church conversion**

By **John Harper**

when Sir Robert Peel (son of the famous Prime Minister) became a parson of the movement.

**Banners**

"The Temperance Society, or Band of Hope as it became known, spread to Tamworth, Glascoat, Williams and Houson."

Although not a total

● Saved from the skip... Local worshipper Joe Hunter, right, and businessman Paul Chappell, who is converting Fazeley's former Methodist Church, rescue sober reminders of the town's boozy past.



The celebration was over the weekend of 24<sup>th</sup>/25<sup>th</sup> November 1995 and the banners were displayed in the upper schoolroom and photographed with a third being the Sunday School banner from Grendon Methodist Church which had been borrowed.



In 2000 items from the former church were taken by Richard Barnes to Packington Hall, and placed in an outbuilding there. There they stayed untouched until a chance discussion between the THM Editor and Richard in 2024 about the boathouse and the "Jarrow flags" that he understood to be in a box "somewhere in the barn"

Following the opening of the box, and subsequent identification Richard kindly agreed to the donation of the banners to Tamworth Castle Museum and Archive who have proper storage and renovation facilities. These are not things that amateurs can tackle. The fortunate part is having been tightly wrapped and stored in the dark none of the colours had faded. Other than the outer layer most of the cloth was not in bad condition for their age.

On 28<sup>th</sup> March 2025, 30 years after they were last seen, the banners were collected by the Editor and Mrs Sarah Williams, the Museum's Collections and Archives Officer to join other Temperance and Sunday School banners: Tamworth and District Band of Hope and Total Abstinence Union, Tamworth Baptist Church, Hurley Wesleyan Sunday School and Independent Order of Templars "Ark



of Safety" Juvenile Temple. (This has no connection to the Masonic Templar Orders.)

Following the closure of Grendon Methodist Church in 2016, the Sunday School banner was displayed on the stair case at Central Methodist Church and, following the closure of that church in 2022, it was brought to St Andrew's Methodist Church where it awaits transfer to Tamworth Castle Museum who will now hold the full set of all the known Methodist banners for Tamworth. If you know different [contact the Editor](#).

## Doorway to Tamworth

Where is this doorway in Tamworth? Each issue will feature a door in Tamworth town Centre. Some will be well known, some historic, some vaguely familiar, many will have seen this door, though it is a recent change.



Last Issues Doorway:  
Main door to Masonic Rooms

Photo © Jamedia

# How Tamworth Remembers those who served at War.

by Bill Walton



WW1 Veterans Parade in Tamworth  
© Tamworth Digital archive

This nation has historically awarded its service men and women with medals as a token of their service for their country. This has been the practice since the earliest part of the nineteenth century and the medals so awarded are well documented.

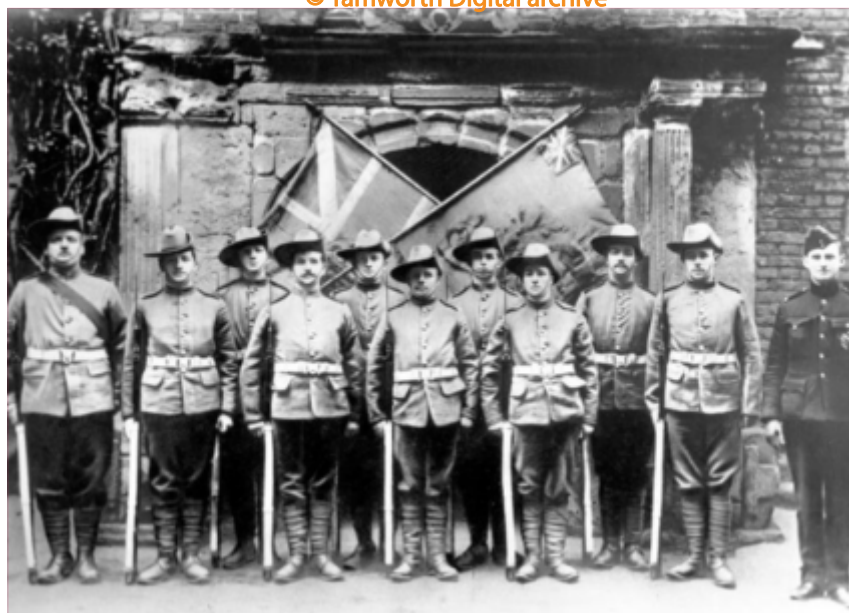
What might not be so well known is that on occasions the town of Tamworth has taken its own action to acknowledge those who have served their country. This article looks at the actions taken to remember local men and women who served their country during three of the major conflicts of the twentieth century.

## The Boer War 1899 to 1902

During the Boer War of 1899 to 1902, considerable demands were placed on the regular army resulting in a large number of additional soldiers being needed to fight the enemy.

The Tamworth Company of the 2nd Volunteer Battalion of the North Staffordshire Regiment was amongst those asked to provide volunteers for overseas service. This resulted in a total 21 men of the Tamworth Company volunteering for service overseas, with two parties being sent out for active service in South Africa.

## 2nd Volunteer Bn North Staffords © Tamworth Digital archive



In March 1900 the first party of local men under the command of Captain George Robert Shaw left Tamworth arriving in Cape Town on about 24 March. This company of men served with other volunteers from Staffordshire towns in the Active Service Company of the North Staffordshire Regiment.

As they went out when the war was at its most fiercest it was a relief when all the Tamworth men returned safely to England in 1901.



The tables were decorated with flowers and foliage while on the wall at the back of the stage was suspended the motto "Welcome Home" in white lettering on a red groundwork above the Union Jack.

Eight of the ten Tamworth volunteers were presented with silver beakers as a memento for volunteering for active service, and as two men, Privates Pearson and Harper were still serving in South Africa their beakers were forwarded to their relatives.

The beakers, which were made by Henry Wilkinson of Sheffield were four and three quarter inches in height and were inscribed with the fleur-de-lys coat of arms of Tamworth over the words "Presented by the inhabitants of Tamworth to (name of soldier) on his return from voluntary service in the South Africa War 1900-01."

Volunteers welcome at Burton upon Trent (left)

the beaker (below)  
© Bill Walton

On their return the Volunteers were given a hearty welcome at Whittington Barracks on Friday 17 May 1901 before attending a thanksgiving service at Lichfield cathedral two days later before receiving an enthusiastic welcome the next day at Burton upon Trent, which was the headquarters of the battalion.

The Tamworth volunteers returned to their home town the same day and were treated to a welcome home dinner which took place on Wednesday 22 May 1901 at the Assembly Rooms with an attendance of about 250.





At the dinner a specially inscribed beaker was presented to the family of Private Herbert Johnson, a member of the second company of volunteers, who died of enteric fever shortly after arriving in South Africa.

This was the first memorial of the twentieth century to a man from Tamworth and district who died in the service of his country. It was the first of many such memorials that would over the years appear in this area.

The second company of volunteers went out to South Africa on 1 March 1901 returning to Tamworth after the conclusion of the war in May 1902.

The recipients of the beakers were:

#### First Volunteer Company 1900-1901

Sergeant Frank Bird, Tamworth  
Corporal John King, Wilnecote  
Corporal Ernest Titterton, Tamworth  
Lance Corporal George Henry Keen, Tamworth  
Private Thomas Harper, Amington  
Private Thomas Parker, Wilnecote  
Private Richard Nash Pearson, Tamworth  
Private James Spooner, Amington  
Private Samuel Vanes, Tamworth  
Private George Watts, Tamworth

Unfortunately Private Johnson died on 15 May 1901 with it being reported that: "he was a good soldier, but was too plucky. It was his pluck that would not allow him to go to hospital when he ought to have gone, and that was the cause of his death". Private Johnson is remembered on a memorial plaque in St Editha's Church, Tamworth.

#### Second Volunteer Company 1901-1902

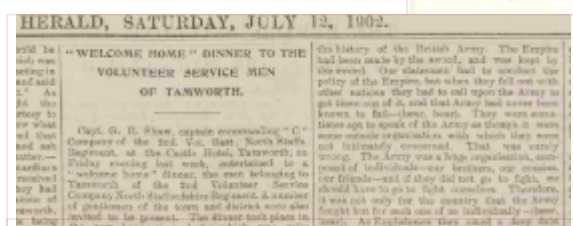
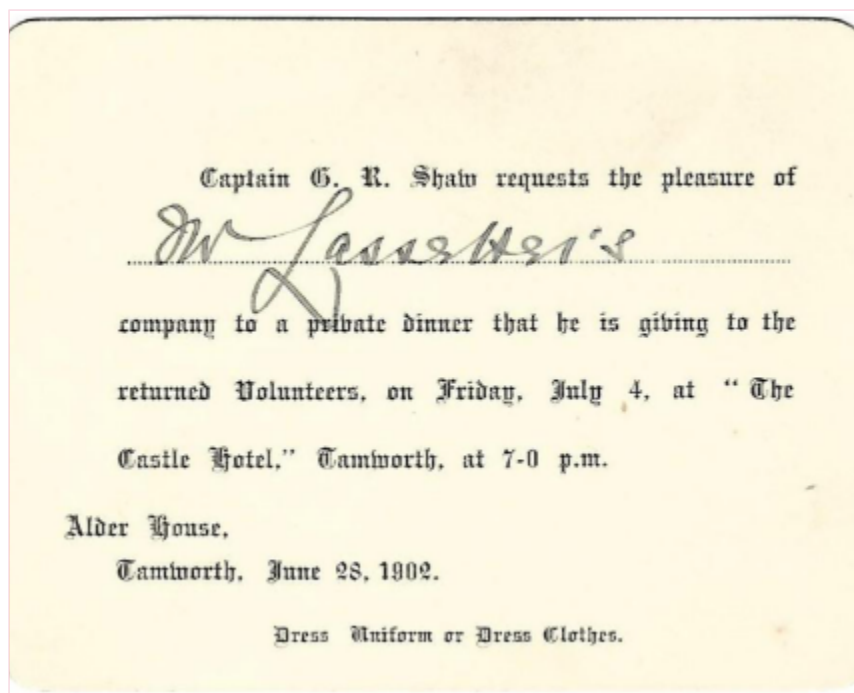
Colour Sergeant Samuel Pownell, Tamworth  
Private Alfred Claridge, Tamworth  
Private John Dickinson, Tamworth  
Private William Frank Harvey, Polesworth  
Private George William Hinchliffe, Tamworth  
Private Herbert Edwin Johnson, Tamworth  
Private Caleb George Norton, Tamworth  
Private Albert Roberts, Tamworth  
Private Charles William Storer, Tamworth  
Private Albert Henry Weale, Tamworth



On return of the second volunteer company to Tamworth the men were again treated as local heroes. The Tamworth Herald of July 1902 reported two welcome home dinners to the men.

A copy of the menu for each dinner is held by the author, and inside the menu as well as a toast list and programme of music for the event there is a pencil entry of each drink that was taken with each course, indicating that a good time would have been had by all.

The first dinner held on Friday 4 July 1902 was a private one given by Captain Shaw with a formal





dinner being held on 23 July 1902 at the banqueting hall of the Castle Hotel.

At the second dinner the men returning from South Africa were each presented with a silver beaker bearing the fleur-de-lys coat of arms of Tamworth and containing the inscription:

"Presented by the inhabitants of Tamworth to (name of soldier) on his return from voluntary service in the South African War 1901-02". The beakers were supplied by Mr G Griffin, jeweller of George Street. One of the beakers was issued to Private Albert Henry Weale who later became a well-known photographer in the area.



## The Great War 1914 to 1918



The South Staffs at Trench 38, hill 60, Ypres,

During the Great War 1914 to 1919, thousands of men from Tamworth and district served their country in the struggle against Germany and her allies. On the conclusion of the war, over 600 men from the district were recorded as losing their lives and were commemorated on the war memorial at the old hospital. The losses affected all areas of the town and more than 40 memorials were erected throughout the district to commemorate those who lost their lives.

To recognise their military service, the village of Wilnecote was unique in this area, as a decision was made that each man from the village who served his country should be presented with a medallion. In some cases, where for example men had not seen service overseas, this was the only recognition they would receive for their war service. The silver medallions, one and a quarter inch in diameter, were made in Birmingham by [Vaughtons Limited](#) (founded in 1819 who still exist in 2025) and showed on one side a representation of a flag, rifle and crown with the inscription: "European War 1914-1918". On the other side was the inscription: "Presented to (name and regiment) by the inhabitants of Wilnecote."

The medals were presented at an award ceremony which took place on 12 June 1920 in a large marquee erected in the grounds of Wilnecote Hall, with music being provided by the 3rd South Staffordshire Regiment.

### Notice in Tamworth Herald 12<sup>th</sup> June 1920





At the event over 300 men from the village who had served their country during the war were provided with a meal, as well as cigarettes and tobacco. On conclusion of the meal a presentation ceremony took place, when Major General Sir Reginald Hoskins handed each man a silver medallion, enclosed in a plush-lined case. About 60 medallions were also distributed by the vicar to the next of kin of those who had fallen during the war.

On conclusion of the presentation ceremony, all the guests *were photographed in three groups by Mr Weale of Tamworth*, the same man who had been issued with a silver beaker in 1902 on his return from the Boer War.

**Editor:** *Should any one have any of those three photos, or know where there is a copy, or any other photos taken at the time, please contact the Editor as both the Editor and Author would love to see them. It would also help to complete the story. Please contact:*

[Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk](mailto:Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk)

Right: The silver medal in its presentation box

Below left: front face with name of recipient, Lance Sargent T E Dixon

Below right: obverse Note "European War" and it is from "the inhabitants of Wilnecote." Note the silver hall mark the anchor denoting Birmingham Assay Office.



## The Second World War 1939 to 1945



Members of South Staffords who survived Arnhem

The number of local people, who served in the Second World War-1945, was perhaps not as large as the number who served in the war of 1914-1918. One look at the war memorials of the district shows that the number killed was considerably less than the earlier conflict.

However this could be due to the different nature of the fighting in WW2 compared to WW1. There were few mass infantry charges at trenches. In WW2 infantry were more likely to advance behind tanks.

Nevertheless, on conclusion of the Second World War the majority of the war memorials erected after the end of the Great War were adapted to also include the names of those who had died during this later conflict.

In addition to any national recognition of service in the war that might occur, the people of Tamworth took action to commemorate those who returned from the war.

In June 1945, before the war with Japan concluded, the mayor of Tamworth started a "Welcome Home" fund. The aim was to present each of the local men and women who served in the war with a suitably inscribed wallet containing Treasury notes, as an appreciation of their war service. It was hoped that the minimum value of notes would be five pounds

(2024 equivalent £181.09), but unfortunately the total raised by the fund did not allow this sum to be donated. As a result it is thought that when the wallets were issued they contained only one pound (2024 equivalent £36.22).

Over 1,300 local men and women qualified for the presentation, which due to the numbers involved was made on the evenings of 14 and 15 October 1946 at the Assembly Rooms in Tamworth. The leather wallets that were issued bore the gilt crest of the borough and were inscribed: "*Borough of Tamworth. In appreciation of your services to the country 1939-1945*".

Each wallet also contained a card upon which below the borough seal was printed: "*On behalf of the inhabitants of the borough we extend to you a cordial welcome upon your return to civilian life. We desire to express to you our sincere thanks for the services you have rendered to the country and to convey to you our best wishes for your future happiness (signed) GH Smith Mayor 1945-46; Milo Turner Mayor 1944-45, Chairman of Welcome Home Fund Committee*".

It is expected that many families of those who were presented with a wallet nearly 80 years ago

still have them. I have in my possession two examples of the wallets issued, one of which was presented to my father Sergeant James Russell "Jim" Walton of the Royal Engineers.

As both examples I hold differ in design it is evident that there was not one unique version of the wallet presented by the town. However, it is not known how many different variants may be out there.

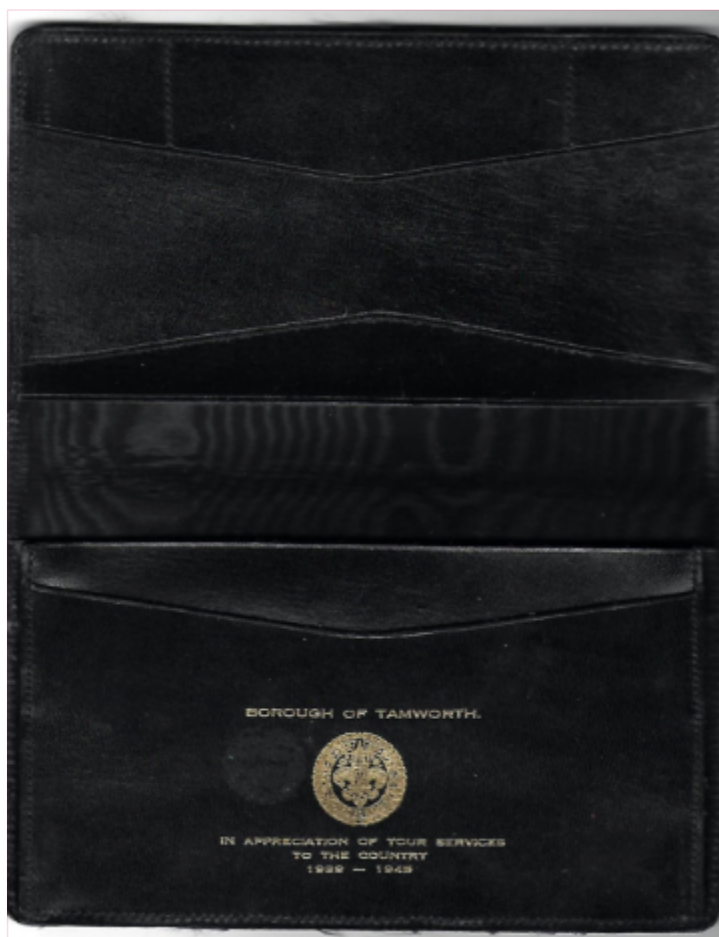
**Editor:** *Should any one have any other design of wallet or indeed one like these of the silver medals please contact the editor. It would also help to complete the story. Please contact:*

[Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk](mailto:Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk)

As far as we know Tamworth has not done any similar tokens of thanks since 1946 despite the British military being on active service somewhere in the world every year since 1947.

The main memorial at the NMA, Alrewas, commemorates those who have been killed in action since 1945.

[The number is over 7,000.](#) Though that is for "operations in Medal earning theatres" not any minor or special operations. Since WW2 with the use of body armour and advances in medicines



the fatalities are lower whilst those surviving with disestablishes are much higher. They too should be remembered.



# Volunteers wanted: THM needs you!



## Volunteers wanted: THM needs you!

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

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

The current team ranges from their 20s to 60s. Basic skills needed are being computer literate. We are happy to utilise whatever skills you can offer. We can also provide training sessions and we have access to half day courses, which we encourage team members to take. New skills are often learned on the job.

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

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

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

Contact [Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk](mailto:Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk)

### Come and Join the Team!



## Book Review

### Aethelstan, The First King of England

**Sarah Foot**

**Published** Yale University Press 2012

**ISBN** 978-0-300-18771-7

**Softcover** 283 pages

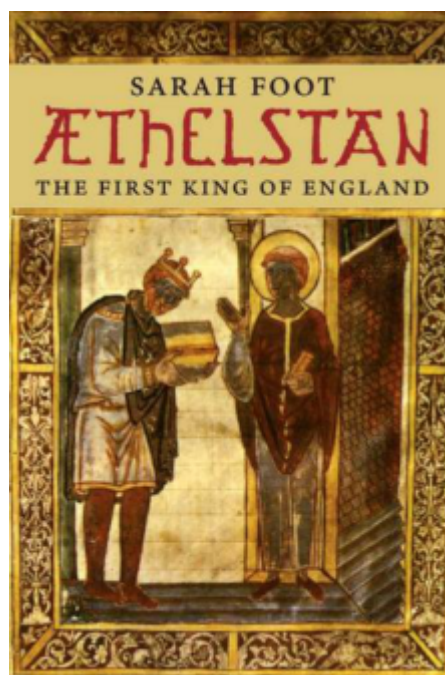
**12.5cm by 23.5cm**

If you are seriously researching Aethelstan then this is *the* book. That's it. OK, some more information. Athelstan took Mercia and Wessex and merged them, again, to be King of the Saxons. He went on to become king of everything south of Scotland to be the first King of the English (and Welsh). Actually he went in to some of Scotland too making him arguably the first King of Britain. However he also did so much more and this book covers the "so much more".

The late Frankie Howard would like this book it has a prologue, and an epilogue. This is what makes this book so useful: it is not just the story of Athelstan but sets him in context of what was there before and what came after. It sets Athelstan in to a picture of Saxon Britain. Hence an essential book for all Saxon scholars.

I say scholars, make no mistake this is not a story book, or a lightweight skim though history. This is a solid very well researched academic book. There are 19 plates, 2 family trees and 4 maps along with footnotes on almost every page and 10 pages of primary and secondary sources. It is all there. Not for the fainthearted but if you want to know about Athelstan it is all in there. Well, in the book, and the many primary sources it points to.

If you want something light and readable, but is historically accurate, the fictional [King Alfred's Daughter by David Stokes](#), in which Athelstan appears as a side character, is a great read. However, as soon as you want to dig deeper, Sarah's book on Athelstan the King has all the answers. Well the ones that can be answered. In some cases there is more than one theory and the author lays them all out, giving her reasons why one is favoured over others but you are free to make your own mind up with all the evidence presented.



One interesting section is the prologue. It is actually chapter 1 that sets the scene of Saxon Britain, whereas the prologue talks about how you approach writing about Saxon England. This helps immensely in understanding how the history comes about when you have to connect historians writing 150 years after events and documents from the time they are referencing. There is also a list of things mentioning Athelstan that cannot be accurately dated. Indeed most of them had a 10 years range. Indeed there are comments on what is not actually known but might be inferred and there is brutal honesty about how little can be positively confirmed.

The man did so much, at least, so much was achieved in his reign which was 1/3 of his life with 2/3 virtually unknown except by the marks left behind that others comment on. I don't want to dam with faint praise but this book is the best you will get, or rather, it has uncovered all there is to uncover, at the current time\*, and has been looked at in a rational and level way. You won't find anything better. Though you might find lighter works that skim and are more digestible if that is all you need.

\*This and other recent books on the Saxon era have noted that a vast amount more has been learnt about the period due to advances in science and technology over the last 25 or so years. Things like DNA testing, ground penetrating radar, LIDAR etc. Not only becoming available but comparatively inexpensive and available to all.

# Letters to the Editor

The Peel School  
(one of three)  
© Joan Bennett



Dear Editor

On another matter, it would seem that nobody came up with an answer to "Doorway to Tamworth" in Volume 2 issue 4 of the Magazine. I'd soon loose count of the number of times I walked up and down the steps of 10 Colehill whilst working at Dewes & Son, Solicitors now the Sheriff of Tamworth.

Regards,  
Michael

**Editor:** *Yes, you are correct. It was the Sheriff, when the photo was taken. That is the thing with Tamworth, most of the buildings have been something else at some time in the last 500 years. Which can make tracking things difficult.*

Dear Editor

I have actually been in the Peel School for a quick glance around when one of the workman invited me to take a look. I mentioned that I once worked there. Also the original developer at school with my son. Now it's changed to a different developer and I don't know what's going on anymore apart from the pigeons of course who were getting through the top of a door until that was sealed. I know that they have removed the mezzanine and covered the fireplace and uncovered connecting door to the Coven pub.

Which may not have been part of the original design. I also believe they have not yet discovered the entrance to the cellar. When the place was used to sell white goods I am fairly certain that there was one but I wouldn't go down it because it terrified me.

It was used to sell white goods, but not for very long the mid 1980s. That was when they removed the big window at the bottom. I don't know how they ever got permission to do it but they did but anyway. As far as I know they never got any kickback from it.

I take it that people have read [Patrick Comberfords's comments on it](#)? It never was a chapel but there is apparently some talk of a ruin underneath it. Sometime back I asked at various places about the previous history of this building.

It's highly illogical that the original building was moved lock stock and barrel to its present situation for shop if the building was originally part of the moat house which it's believed to be. I don't think it was moved because the Moat House originally owned a lot of that land and it's a on record that there was a great deal of selling off done in the Townshend era.

So a lot of the Moathouse land is now used for something else. A few years back there was a noticeable large area of land that began to collapse outside the houses on Sunset Close. This got my attention since it was outside my house. A neighbour mentioned it to me that she thought she had the original well for the Moathouse stables in her garden. That has been mentioned as a possibility. In fact this is shown on the map from the 1800s. There is more research to do.

Regards  
Joan

**Editor:** *Yes we will need to do some more research into number 17. It was one of there schools peel had in Tamworth (only 2 remain).*

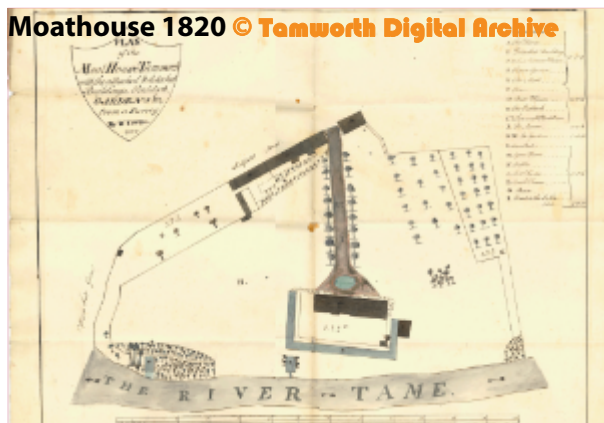
Dear Editor

I have written some books on Staffordshire including *The Families That Built Tamworth's Backbone: Ordinary Names, Extraordinary* [review of this book is coming in a future issue. Editor]

Walk down any street in Tamworth and you'll pass names carved into stone, etched into war memorials, or buried in the corners of old graveyards. But the real stories — the everyday stories — rarely make it past the front gate. And yet it's these ordinary families, not the town mayors or the factory bosses, who've built Tamworth from the ground up.

When I started researching *The Families That Shaped Tamworth*, I wasn't looking for the big headlines. I was looking for the names no one had written about. The people who laid bricks, scrubbed hospital floors, delivered milk in the snow, or raised five kids on a miner's wage. The people whose stories are fading from memory — and shouldn't be.

Take the Durose family, for example. You'll still find the name dotted around town, often linked with pit work, council labour, or service in the First World War. Generations of Durose men and women served in quiet, consistent roles — in public works, local shops, and volunteer services — rarely famous, never forgotten (at least not by those who knew them). When I tracked their line through the 1800s, they'd come from agricultural stock, labouring through harsh seasons, some living seven to a room in Wilnecote. By 1950, one had become a local postmaster. That's a legacy built on grit.



Another name that cropped up over and over was Hancox. From canal boatmen to garage owners, the Hancox name echoed across industries as Tamworth shifted from market town to modern suburb. They moved with the town, and their story is the town — adapting, grinding on, showing up.

And that's the point really. While history books love a lord or a politician, the truth is, it's the consistency of the working families that shaped the rhythms of Tamworth. The ones who turned up to work in freezing sheds. Who manned the busses. Who nursed neighbours before we had "care services." These are the names that made Tamworth strong.

We're at real risk of losing these stories. And I honestly believe that when people see their own surname in print, when they spot a street their nan lived on or a job their granddad did, they reconnect with the place in a deeper way. Not through nostalgia — but through inheritance. And we need more of that, not less.

Tamworth has changed fast over the last 60 years. But if we can help families reconnect with their roots, even in small ways, we keep the human side of history alive. And that matters more than ever.

Regards  
Mark Prime

**Editor:** *This is exactly what we at Tamworth Heritage Magazine are trying to do and hopefully Mark will be working with us to uncover more of the lost social history of the people who made Tamworth. This puts meat on the bones of the Lords, Lady's and factory owners who are well researched and recorded. Perhaps YOU would like to join the THM team to help research Tamworth History? Contact the [Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk](mailto:Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk)*

# Next Edition

## Autumn 2025

**Publication Date: 1st October**

**Copy Date: 16th September**

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](mailto:Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk)

**Copy Date (to in send article) 16<sup>th</sup> September**

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](mailto: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](mailto:Editor@TamworthHeritage.org.uk)



## In the Next issue

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

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

### **Volume 4 Issue 1 A Fascinating Article!**

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

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

Tamworth

# HERITAGE

Magazine



Preserving the Past, Recording the Present  
Safeguarding the Future