



Chaddesden Historical Group

Newsletter 63

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Changes at the Wyvern

Users of the Meadow Lane footbridge and anyone who has tried to use eastbound A52 Brian Clough Way at night will be aware of the roadworks at the junction with Wyvern Way. When the work is completed, Wyvern Way will be a dual carriageway from the A52 to the the bridge carrying Derwent Parade over the river. The slender concrete footbridge, built in 1979 and pictured below, will be demolished and replaced by a new bridge further east that will span both the A52 and Wyvern Way. The replacement bridge is described as an arch with cable hung deck (bow string). It will have a span of 76 metres (250 feet) which is longer than the span of the new bridge carrying London Road over the railway. Detailed plans can be seen on Derby City Council's web site at <https://eplanning.derby.gov.uk/online-applications/> using the planning reference 01/16/00087.



Less well known, possibly due to a lack of site notices, is another application to demolish the remains of the Midland Railway wagon repair workshop, which is clearly visible from the end of Meadow Lane now that the shrubbery has been removed. It is proposed to build an M&S Simply Food, Nando's Restaurant and Starbucks on the site. The Development Control Archaeologist, Derbyshire County Council has criticised this application for its lack of a Heritage Statement. We await with interest the appearance of a Heritage Statement to see how the developer justifies the demolition of the last surviving Victorian industrial building in Chaddesden. The planning reference is 12/17/01643.



FOR BETTER, FOR WORSE?

The new year of 1780 was only a few days old when William Green, then aged 23, together with his friends and relatives left Chaddesden, probably all riding together in a suitably decorated horse-drawn wagon, in order to travel the nine or so miles to St. Giles' Church at Sandiacre for his wedding. As William's bride, Millicent Sampson, was just under 21 parental consent was required, and so a marriage licence had been obtained from the bishop as proof of her parents' approval to the union. Both bride and groom were most likely wearing their Sunday-best clothes as the cost of special wedding attire would then have been beyond the reach of most ordinary folk. As the church service progressed perhaps these two young people were thinking of their future married life together, where they would live, how many children they might have, and so on. Once the ceremony had drawn to a close, the minister or his clerk completed the necessary paperwork, and *Phillimore's Derbyshire Parish Registers (Marriages)* provides us with a concise summary in the following form: "William Green, of Chadson [Chaddesden], & Millicent Sampson, (lic), 6 Jan 1780 (vol.1, p.41).

If the marriage had got off to a promising start, things went downhill very quickly, so much so that less than six months later William found it necessary to place this advertisement in the pages of the local paper, stating that his wife had been absent from home for some time and expressly declaring that he would no longer be responsible for paying any debts Millicent might incur:

WHEREAS MELICENT GREEN, Wife of
WILLIAM GREEN, of Chaddesden near Derby
hath been absent from her Husband some Time; now this
is to give NOTICE to all Persons whom it may concern, that
I will not pay any Debts she may contract; and I do hereby
discharge all Persons from harbouring the said MELICENT
GREEN, on Pain of being prosecuted as the Law directs,
by me WILLIAM GREEN.

N.B. If the said MELICENT GREEN will return to her
Husband in 10 Days from the Date hereof, she will be kindly
received.

JUNE 8th, 1780

Facsimile of advertisement in the *Derby Mercury* of 2 - 9 June 1780.
Note the use of the long or descending "s" ("ſ") which was used until
the early 19th century wherever lower-case "s" occurred at the start
or in the middle of a word.

A look at the nearly contemporaneous 1765 edition of Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (Vol. 1, p.439) helpfully explains just why William Green felt it was necessary to place such an advertisement in his local newspaper. On the topic of marriage, Blackstone notes that "the husband and wife are one person in law", and adds, "The husband is bound to provide his wife with necessaries by law, as much as himself; and if she contracts debts for them, he is obliged to pay them: but for any thing besides necessaries, he is not chargeable. Also if a wife elopes, and lives with another man, the husband is not chargeable even for necessaries; at least if the person, who furnishes them, is sufficiently apprized of her elopement." Green probably believed that Millicent was now living with another man and was therefore publicly advertising the fact that he would no longer be responsible for his wife's future debts.

Of course, well over two centuries later we have no idea what caused the breakdown in their marriage. Was one party entirely to blame or were they simply incompatible? After all, aficionados of Jane Austen's novels may recall one of her characters saying, "Happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance" (*Pride & Prejudice*, 1813, Chapter 6). Neither do we know for certain whether or not William and Millicent Green were eventually reconciled. I am tempted to think that they were not, simply because I can find no further trace of them in the Chaddesden parish registers or elsewhere. If the couple did not reunite then subsequent years must have been problematic for both of them, for at this period in time divorce was well beyond the reach of most people because it needed to be sanctioned by a costly private act of Parliament.

The Origin of Roe Farm Estate

Derby's first council houses were the "Homes for Heroes" on the appropriately named Victory Road. Like many local authorities, Derby Corporation was encouraged by the 1919 Housing Act which offered subsidies to local authorities that provided houses for rent.

The first council houses were three-bedroom, semi-detached and plain in style. Within a few years standard houses in a distinctive style were being built. They featured steeply pitched roofs with front gables, rendering over the upper storey brickwork and they were placed on generously sized plots at a density of eight to the acre. Over 400 houses of this type were built at Osmaston, Allenton, Alvaston and the Cowsley estate on the boundary with Chaddesden.

Frank Edwin Porter (1869 - 1947)

One man who played a part in the council's Provision of Houses Committee and setting up a Building and Maintenance Department which built these early council houses was Frank Porter. Porter was the representative for Pear Tree Ward on Derby Board of Guardians from 1913 and elected a councillor for Castle Ward in November 1919.

For those who are familiar with the history of Derby's road haulage industry, this was the Frank Porter who started in business as a furniture remover in 1890. He was a keen supporter of social housing although reports in the Derby Daily Telegraph suggest that he was a controversial figure at council meetings. He was to play an unusual part in the origin of the Roe Farm council estate.

Roe Farm

Roe Farm was a large farm occupying the north west corner of Chaddesden Parish and accounting for nearly 10% of the area of the parish. The farmer, Everard Walker Johnson, appears to have bought the freehold when the Chaddesden Estate was sold in 1919. A few years later, Johnson divided the holding, creating a new farm – Hill Crest Farm – in the process. The Johnson family moved to Hill Crest Farm and the smaller Roe Farm was let to Harold Ford.

Hill Crest Farm and most of Roe Farm were taken into the Borough of Derby by the 1928 boundary extension as described in Newsletter 57. At the time, the built-up area comprised a new road, Park Road, which headed in a north easterly direction from Nottingham Road into green fields. Off this road were estate roads, Mayfield Road, Northwood Avenue and Madison Avenue. There were fewer than 100 houses, most of them bungalows, in the area.

The attraction to Derby Town Council was not the extra rateable income from the houses brought into the Borough, but the potential for house building on the undeveloped land. At the time, the Cowsley Estate was nearing completion, there were still over 1000 people on the council house waiting list but there was nowhere to build a large estate.

In the Derby Daily Telegraph of 5 June 1930 it was reported that Roe Farm had been purchased by Alderman Porter, who had placed £1,300 of his own money as a deposit. If such a thing was done today there would most likely be criticism in the local media about the councillor's personal financial involvement, no matter how good the intention.

One suspects that eyebrows were raised but a special meeting of the Building and Stores Committee recommended the purchase and it was approved at a special meeting of the Council on 18 June. The price agreed for the 140 acre farm was £95 an acre and Alderman Porter was reimbursed the sum that he had paid. It was noted that the council would have done well if they had paid £150 an acre for such a site. Presumably farmer Johnson was equally satisfied with the amount that he received for agricultural land.

Peter Barnes

Events

Thursday 1 March
Canary Girls of Chilwell
Speaker Maureen Rushton

Thursday 5 April
Annual General Meeting
followed by Votes for Women (Suffragettes)
Speaker Rowena Edlin White

Thursday 12 April
James Brindley watermill, Leek
followed by afternoon tea
12 noon departure from the Jubilee Club

Thursday 3 May
Subscriptions due
Servants to Staff at Chatsworth
Speaker Fiona Clapperton

Thursday 7 June
Lace Slums & Occasional Riots
Speaker Chris Weir

Chaddesden Hospital Carnival

The 7th Annual Report of the Chaddesden Branch of the Co-operative Women's Guild in April 1940 showed that they catered for the Carnival and appeared to be very active in the area.

“The Guild are pleased to place on record that members successfully catered for the Chaddesden Hospital Carnival and were able to show a profit of over £4, which was the first profit ever made and given to the Fund.”

The Co-op subscribed to the Infirmary so they could nominate Co-op members for admission for treatment. Was Chaddesden Hospital Committee able to nominate people?

We're fortunate to have the NHS now.

Jean Moss

The wall between St Mary's church and Chaddesden Park as seen on 5 December 2017. The bricks from the demolished section were being cleaned for re-use. The entire wall on the south side of the churchyard has now been rebuilt and should last well into the 22nd century.



Disclaimer

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