



Chaddesden Historical Group

Newsletter 69 August 2019

www.chaddesdenhistorygroup.co.uk/newsletters



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Commemorating the Treaty of Versailles

After the heavy rain of the previous week, it was a relief to have a dry morning on Wednesday 19 June when about fifty members of the Chaddesden Historical Group, local residents and others assembled at the junction of Chaddesden Lane and Maine Drive for the unveiling of the WW1 Commemorative Bench.

Jamie Robinson opened the proceedings by introducing Councillor Rob Cooper who described planned improvements to the area and named a family member, Private Chafer, who was awarded the Victoria Cross in the War. John Crosby spoke on behalf of the Chaddesden Historical Group and then handed over to Deryck Morley, who has played the lead role in the installation of the bench, to describe in more detail how the decision was made to commemorate the end of the First World War and provide something of benefit to the community.

Upper photo: At eleven o'clock precisely, Deryck and John removed the Union Jack to reveal the bench.

Inset: the inscription on the plate.
Right: The bench has its first official users with the rest of the Chaddesden Historical Group committee behind. We are looking at the camera, but not all at the same camera!

The bench was manufactured by David Ogilvie Engineering of Kilmarnock to the order of the Chaddesden Historical Group. Installation was by Derby Homes.

Peter Barnes with additional photos by Fred Moss.



PRESENTED TO OUR COMMUNITY BY
CHADDSDEN HISTORICAL GROUP
TO COMMEMORATE 100 YEARS
SINCE THE SIGNING OF THE
"TREATY OF VERSAILLES"
OFFICIALLY ENDING WW1 ON 28TH JUNE 1919
INSTALLED JUNE 2019



President Tony Bowler

Committee

Chairman John Crosby

Deputy Chair Pam Helm

Secretary Linda Crosby

Treasurer Deryck Morley

Archivist Margaret Poyser

Editor Peter Barnes

Web site Adrian Lawrence

Committee Beryl Lawrence

Members Brian Calladine

Maureen Gregory

Hazel Blackwell

The Construction of Roe Farm Estate continued from Newsletter 67

Five years after Derby Corporation had bought the land, they awarded the contract to build the first houses on the Roe Farm site to their Building Works Department in November 1935.

The contract to build the roads and sewers went to a private contractor who had tendered £24,050 as against the Borough Surveyor's estimate of £41,325. The reasons for the Surveyor's estimate being so much higher was the subject of an enquiry in summer 1935 but nobody thought to ask why the contractor's tender was so low.

Building operations began in December 1935, and 40 houses were up and ready for roofing in January 1936 although rain and severe frost held up work for a time. The building trade was far more dependent on the weather than today as so much of modern houses is factory-made.

By June 1936, still no houses had been let to tenants and questions were being asked as to why progress was so slow. Had the Building Works Committee taken on more work than it could deal with expeditiously?

Councillor H.A. Hind, chairman of the Building Works Committee, was clear where the problem lay – it was entirely due to a hold-up in the road-making due to the failure of a private contractor as described on the next page.

In July 1936 he said, *"You cannot complete houses to hand over until the roads are finished. You cannot get your garden levels and garden-path levels until the pavements have been fixed by the contractor. Now that the Borough Surveyor is doing this work, progress is being resumed. Twelve houses were handed over early this month to the Estates Department, and 14 houses were handed over last week."*

He might have added that it is difficult to get materials on site if there are no roads.



We have no record of which house was the first to be let – there was no ceremonial handing over the key to the first tenants – but it is likely to have been on Wiltshire Road.

◀ This row of six houses with gable ends on each end house in the style of 1920's council houses was probably among the first built.

Already plans were being made to extend the estate. The Borough Architect was instructed to prepare plans for the remainder of the estate which were to include a school, a church, shops, recreation ground and an hotel

(i.e. a public house)

More houses were needed to complete the slum clearance in Derby. A third contract for 191 houses completed the initially planned total of 584, which comprised 167 one-bedroom bungalows, 64 one-bedroom houses, 192 two-bedroom, 96 three-bedroom and 65 four-bedroom houses.

A fourth contract for 130 houses to accommodate the people displaced by the widening of Traffic Street and Normanton Road was awarded to Harris Brothers (Marehay) Ltd in 1937 making a pre-war total of 714 houses on the Roe Farm Estate. That was far less than the 1,000+ originally proposed. The reasons why council house building on Roe Farm, and in the rest of Derby, came to a halt will be explained later.

Peter Barnes

Derby Road Construction Company

The Derby Road Construction Co, with a registered address at 4 Albert Street was founded around 1924 by Harold Turner.

Turner had a coach building business in Canada from 1904 until 1915. Returning to England with the Canadian forces, he carried out work of national importance at Spondon.

After another period in Canada, he returned to the UK to start a business as a public works contractor in Derby. The increasing number of motor vehicles after the World War suggested that road building would be an opportunity in the same way as railway building in the 19th century.

With no experience, Harold Turner relied on an acquaintance, Cecil Edgar Tebbs, whom he appointed as manager. Small contracts for road-laying and sewer construction were obtained although losses were made from time to time. Two local examples of the company's work are widening of a section of Nottingham Road and reconstruction of a footpath between Sitwell Street and Moulton Avenue, Spondon.

In January 1931 the company obtained a contract to build an arterial road at Dunstable, Bedfordshire upon which at least 50 men were employed. By now Turner was in partnership with engineer, John Cecil Colvin, who invested £1,000 in the business and took charge of the Dunstable branch.

A major success was winning the contract for construction of roads and sewers on the Roe Farm Estate in August 1935, for which the company tendered £24,050. A depot was set up on vacant land at the junction of Wiltshire Road and Cumberland Avenue. Nottingham Road Fire Station now occupies the site.

Unfortunately, the manager, Cecil Tebbs, became ill around that time. (Tebbs died in May 1936 at the age of 55 and is buried in Nottingham Road Cemetery.) The start of the Roe Farm contract was delayed until November 1935 and further delayed by bad winter weather. Heavy losses were made and the Derby Road Construction Co became insolvent with liabilities of £5618 2s and a deficiency of £5606 6s 9d.

The contract was suspended in April 1936, when it was about half-finished, and Derby Corporation took over the work in accordance with the terms of the contract.

References: Derby Daily/Evening Telegraph 21 Jan 1931, 2 Aug & 8 Dec 1932, 21 May 1936 & 19 Jan 1937.

Peter Barnes

House Names

Does your house have a name as well as a number? Chaddesden in the 1920s and early 1930s had some long roads on which the houses were identified only by name – Albert Road and Park Road to mention two.

Your editor's house was identified by its builder's plot number – 10 – when it was built in 1927. Some of the houses had names, like Hazeldene, resulting in a jumble of names and numbers in the electoral register, which might or might not be listed in the order that they appear in the street. One wonders how much time was wasted by new postmen in looking for a particular name.

The absurdity was put right when this part of Chaddesden was taken into the Borough of Derby in 1928. By 1933 the houses had been numbered in the conventional way with the odd numbers on the left and the evens on the right in the direction of increasing numbers. Hazeldene had become number 11, although it is one of the few still bearing its original name over 90 years later, and number 10 became 14.

Another example is Parkside Road where the builder, Herbert Cooper, lived at The Laurels in 1935. In 1938 he lived at Wynnip. Did he move house? No, he just changed the name.

In a growing residential area it was unrealistic to expect postmen to memorise the names and locations of hundreds of houses. In November 1935 the Postmaster of Derby recommended that all houses in Chaddesden should be numbered and the parish council instructed their surveyor to implement the recommendation.

It took some years for house numbers to become universal and there was particular resistance to the number 13. There are many streets built in the 1930s where the number sequence runs ... 9, 11, 15, 17...

Herbert Cooper's house became 1 Parkside Road as it still is – but it no longer has a name. Many names are the householder's personal preference so very few have survived changes of ownership. One is 3 Sunny Grove which still carries the name Dalby Cottage that it had when new in 1933.

Peter Barnes

The Significance of Old Documents



Many people will have happy memories of Morley Road School, later to be named Cavendish Close Junior School. The building was reported as being “of a semi-permanent type. It was an attempt to put up something of a more permanent nature, at a cheaper figure than is possible for a solid type of building.” How many of today’s buildings will last over 80 years?

24th APRIL 1933

OPENING OF NEW SCHOOL No 404

The new school was opened by me at 8-55 am to-day. Accommodation 300 (Juniors)

W. Dowling G. Headmaster

B. Bullough Sen. Mistress

F. M. Jones

F. P. Emery

H. M. Hill

J. A. Ullman School Correspondent

School Managers

John H. Buelock, Chairman

Amabel Kerr

L. Toyser

James Barker

Edward Bennett

Edgar J. Hurler

The school was officially opened on 17 May 1933 by Mr. P.G. Feek, Director of Education for Derbyshire with a gold-plated key. However, there appears to have been an unofficial opening. The only record appears to be in this document.

Those who knew Mr Dowling (and Joey his dummy) can well understand why this took place. Mr Dowling was the Headmaster from the 1920s until retiring in 1948.

Before the school opened the children were educated in the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, later to become the Community Centre on Chaddesden Lane.

Details of the proposed school for 200 junior children were advertised in July 1930. A letter held in the National Archives sent by Derbyshire County Council on 20 August 1931 confirms that permission was granted to purchase land for the school.

When details of the land to be acquired were published the site was shown as being 27,471 sq yards on Ilkeston Road,

not Morley Road. The land was owned by Mrs Vernon, The Croft, Church Street, Spondon and purchased at a cost of £1,235 or 10³/₄d (5p) per sq yard. The overall cost was estimated at £6,800; this included £600 for furniture.

When sorting through old papers and documents, it is worth checking if any add to the history of the area. Newspapers and official records don’t always give the full story. Jean Moss

Disclaimer

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