



Chaddesden Historical Group

Newsletter 70 November 2019

www.chaddesdenhistorygroup.co.uk/newsletters



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The Oldest Letter Box in Chaddesden?

This letter box has recently received a coat of shiny red paint, but look carefully – the initials GR, meaning Georgius (V) Rex, King George 5th, indicate that it is over 80 years old.

Before the First World War, the Post Office, opposite the Wilmot Arms, was the only place where a letter could be posted.

The growth of the housing estates after the First World War led to more Post Offices being opened, and the installation of letter boxes and pillar boxes at various places. Most of the letter boxes bear the initials of the current monarch, EIIR, but there may be a few that were installed before 1952. Can you find any?

Where Is It?

Your editor has walked past these retail premises many times, and been a customer on a few occasions. It was a long time before he noticed the roof feature which is assumed to be a ventilator. After taking this photo with a camera on full telephoto setting, the year of construction, 1938, could be seen in what appear to be inset metal numerals.

Where in Chaddesden is it?



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The Construction of Roe Farm Estate ends

At the end of July 1936, six years after Councillor Porter had bought Roe Farm on behalf of Derby Town Council, it was reported that 30 houses were complete with more expected at the rate of eight every week. There had been so much adverse press publicity over delays to the scheme, that it is understandable there was no ceremonial handing over of the keys to the first tenants.

By the beginning of September all 67 bungalows (66 on Hillcrest Road and one at the junction with Wiltshire Road) in the first contract for 191 dwellings were completed and handed over to the Estates Department. The 1937 electoral register shows nearly all of them occupied by married couples in contrast with the present time when most are occupied by single, older people who are living independently for longer.



Autumn leaves from a flowering cherry outside a bungalow on Hillcrest Road. This bungalow is built at 45 degrees to its neighbours – another of the unusual design features found on Roe Farm Estate.

A year after the start of construction, there were still fewer than 100 houses tenanted on the estate. By April 1937 the first 191 houses had been completed, 231 houses were complete by the middle of that month, 271 in May, 299 in June and 341 in July. By the end of the year the total was over 500, 531 in January 1938, 555 in February and the first three contracts for 584 houses had been completed by the end of March 1938.

A contract for another 130 houses for people displaced by the widening of Traffic Street and Burton Road was awarded to Harris Brothers of Marehay in November 1937. All were completed by the end of September 1938 and council house building in Derby ended.

The Council would have liked to build another 500 houses to increase the housing stock as there were several hundred people on the waiting list for council houses but approval was not forthcoming from the Ministry of Health. Re-armament for a war, that some said would not take place, had taken precedence over improving the quality of housing in Derby.

The cost of building materials had risen since the start of construction – timber up in price by 50% between October 1935 and January 1937. Metal had risen in price following the big demand by armament manufacturers.

On the initial contracts for 584 houses, it was reported that the Building Works Department had made a loss of £11,745 on the total contract price of £169,246. A private builder might have reduced the quality to reduce the loss but that was not an option for the Building Works Department as the cost would fall on the Estates Department in increased maintenance bills. It was equally unacceptable to expect a cross-subsidy from another council trading department by increasing electricity prices or bus fares, for example. Derby Town Council decided to apply to the Ministry of Health for a loan to cover the loss and that was when the difficulties began.

Peter Barnes

In the last newsletter it was stated that the initially planned total of 584 houses on the estate included 64 one-bedroom houses.

In case anybody has wondered how the rooms of a one-bedroom dwelling could be arranged over two floors, this explanation came in a conversation with a Mayfield Road resident.

The houses are in blocks of four, with the one-bedroom houses at the ends of the block. The living room, kitchen and bathroom are all downstairs, and the staircase leads to the single bedroom. The other bedroom is part of the house next door which is enlarged from three bedrooms to four as a result.

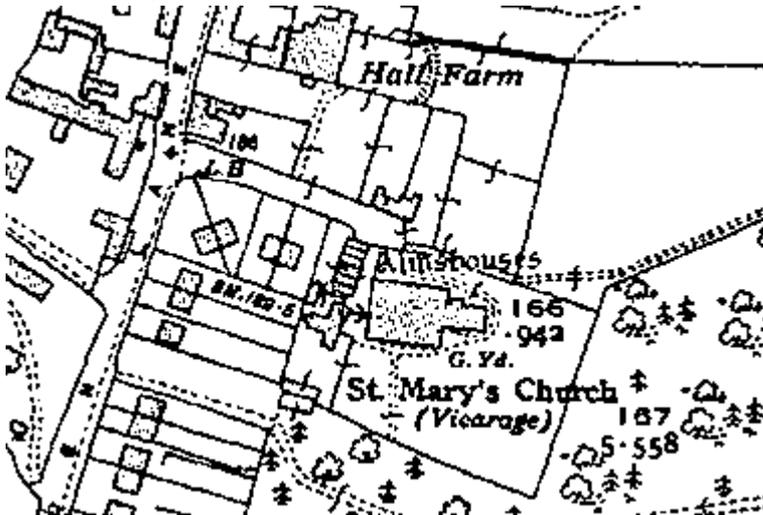
This ingenious design from Mr Aslin, the Borough Architect, used interlocking bedrooms to allow houses to be built to suit families of different sizes.

Christmas Puddings - the Chaddesden Connection



Sitting in the Doctor's waiting room, I came across an article by Peter Seddon on a Chad Lad, Matthew Walwyn Walker, in the December 2018 issue of Derbyshire Life. That is how I learnt that the founder of the oldest Christmas pudding maker in the world grew up in Chaddesden. As someone who enjoys their Christmas pudding, it was interesting to find this connection with Chaddesden. Peter Seddon kindly gave me permission to use his research, this together with my own research and that of Peter Cholerton has been combined to produce this article.

Matthew Walwyn Walker was born in Anslow, Staffordshire in 1869, the third child of Matthew Walker Senior. His father moved to Chaddesden in 1876 to become a tenant of Sir Henry Wilmot of Chaddesden Hall at Hall Farm. Regrettably his father died on 2 May 1880 aged 42. His will shows that he was a prosperous farmer as he left under £4,000. That would be in excess of £300,000 at today's values. His obituary in the Derbyshire Advertiser on 7 May 1880 shows that he "was a prominent member of Derbyshire Agricultural Society and Derbyshire Chamber of Agriculture". He was a very successful pig keeper taking prizes at leading shows in the country.



On his death his widow and four of their children moved to Quarndon. Although most of the family left the village, Matthew remained in Chaddesden. The 1881 census shows that age 11 he was a pupil of John Hollingsworth of Farm House Chaddesden. This was another name for Hall Farm. In the 1910 Field Survey, it was shown as a dairy farm with a yearly rent of £547, with a large 4 bedroomed farm house, one bedroom having been converted to a cheese room. The location of Hall Farm is shown on this 1938 map

At one time both families, the Walkers and the Hollingsworths were on the Duchy of Lancaster's Needwood estate in Staffordshire. It could be that when Matthew senior died in 1880, John Hollingsworth moved to Chaddesden, maybe initially helping Sarah Walker to run the farm in the short term before taking it over in his own right and teaching Matthew how to be a successful farmer. By 1911 the farm was run by Thomas Tomlinson.

The farming life was not for Matthew and while still in his teens he gained employment at Hodgkinson's, the high-class grocers in the Market Place, Derby, a place I remember as always smelling of freshly roasted coffee. Matthew supplied his own products to the shop and went on to go into partnership with Thomas Hodgkinson in 1899. He continued to work in the shop.

On 22 September 1900 he married Kate Lowndes at Kirk Langley parish church. Both had fathers who were farmers and the 1901 census shows that they were living at 226 Uttoxeter New Road, Derby and Matthew was recorded as a grocery assistant. In 1904 the partnership was dissolved and Matthew went solo. The 1911 census shows him as a fruit preserver and employer, having a son John. He expanded rapidly and diversified into plum puddings from his premises in Exeter Street. He had a social conscience and supplied Christmas puddings for the poor children of Derby, 2,000 children were fed in 1914.

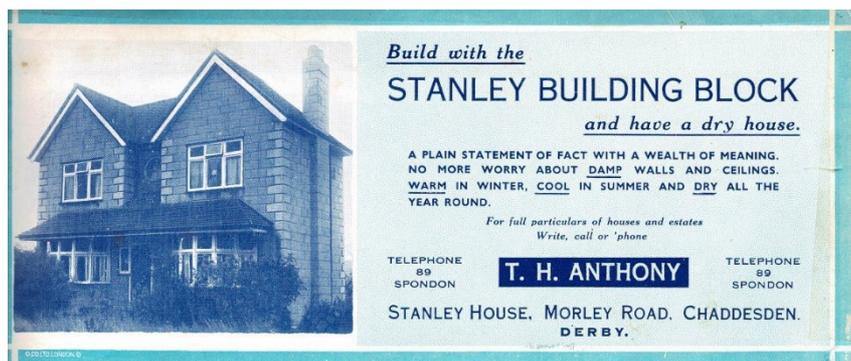
A local man to remember as you sit down to your Christmas pudding.

Jean Moss

Chaddesden People – Thomas Henry Anthony 1888-1980

Thomas Henry Anthony was born and grew up in Derby. He married Sarah Alice Milliard in 1912 at Traffic Street Primitive Methodist Chapel, Derby. He later moved to Northgate, Birmingham, eventually setting up a “business of quarrymen and rubbing stone manufacturer”. On 11 October 1920 Excelsior Rubbing Stone Company Ltd was registered with a capital of £1,000 to take over his factory in Highgate Square, Birmingham and a quarry at Stanley. Mr Anthony was the first permanent director. He returned to Derby and by 1922 was living in Lawrence Street with his wife and the business moved to 86 Siddals Road, Derby.

The quarry produced and sold large blocks of stone which left small pieces that had little commercial value. Mr Anthony didn't like to waste these small pieces of stone and designed the Stanley Building block to use this material. The reason for the name was the quarry which he owned at Stanley. This provided the raw material for his blocks.



He had a house built of Stanley blocks at 76 Morley Road, Chaddesden which was known as Stanley House. Pictures of the house were widely used in advertising his business.

Mr Anthony bought land in Chaddesden, following the sale of the Wilmot Estate. Many houses and bungalows in Chaddesden,

including parts of Stanley Road and Albert Road, were built using these blocks, also the shops on Nottingham Road next to The Crescent. ➤



Mr Anthony is pictured on the left at his quarry during a visit in 1937 by the Central School for Boys.

Looking around Chaddesden you will notice many walls built of the blocks, this helps to date when a house was built. The block is made of natural sandstone. It has a cavity centre and a porous interior, whilst the facing is waterproof. Stanley blocks were widely recognised as an improved building material. Building societies, such as the Leeds Permanent Building Society were prepared to give up to 95% mortgages on the properties built with the blocks.

In the 1930s Rockhouse Road off Boulton Lane was built using Stanley blocks by Excelsior Rubbing Stone Company Ltd.

Purchasers could select the house or bungalow type, fireplaces and interior decorations in advance. A coal house was incorporated in the building; however a gas fire could be installed. All houses had electricity and gas supplied and with a 95% mortgage, the mortgage repayments would be as little as 11 shillings (55p) per week.

As well as providing the blocks, Mr Anthony also produced garden ornaments as can be seen in this picture from the catalogue promoting these houses.



The Excelsior Rubbing Stone Company Ltd was wound up in 1939 and the quarry at Stanley sold. Stanley blocks were no longer used for house building. Production was switched to air raid shelters and other war time requirements.

← After the war Mr Anthony continued inventing new products, as can be seen in this photograph from 1959.

Stanley blocks are a lasting memorial to Mr Anthony. Our grandchildren are aware of him through a game of spotting Stanley



blocks. It started when they asked why were there many front boundary walls like ours, which is built with Stanley blocks as in the photograph on the left.

Walking around Chaddesden you will be surprised how many blocks are found making up the construction of houses and walls. Many are painted different colours.

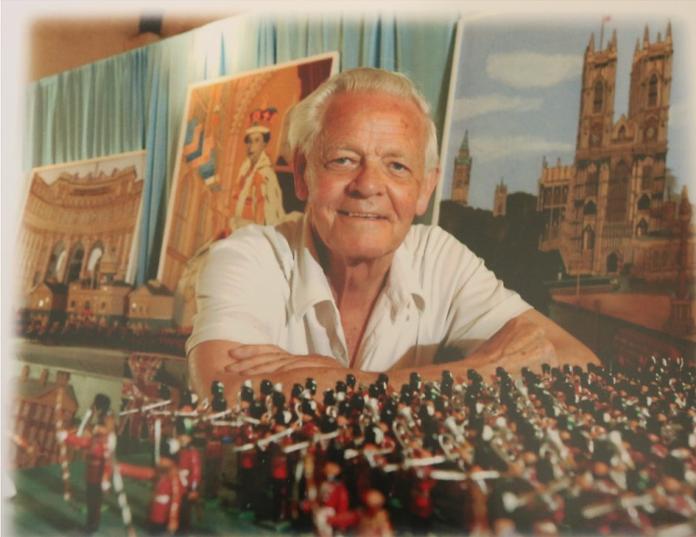
Thank you to all who assisted in the production of this article. Special thanks to Jean Weaver, widow of Thomas Anthony's grandson, Tony Weaver, for the documentation I was able to study and permission to use these historic photographs.

Jean Moss

Disclaimer

The Chaddesden Historical Group does not guarantee the accuracy of items published in this newsletter. While every attempt has been made to trace the original ownership of photographs and maps, we apologise for any acknowledgement that we have failed to make. Our thanks go to our contributors, Derby Local Studies Library and West Park School for printing.

Derek Palmer 23 June 1931 – 17 August 2019



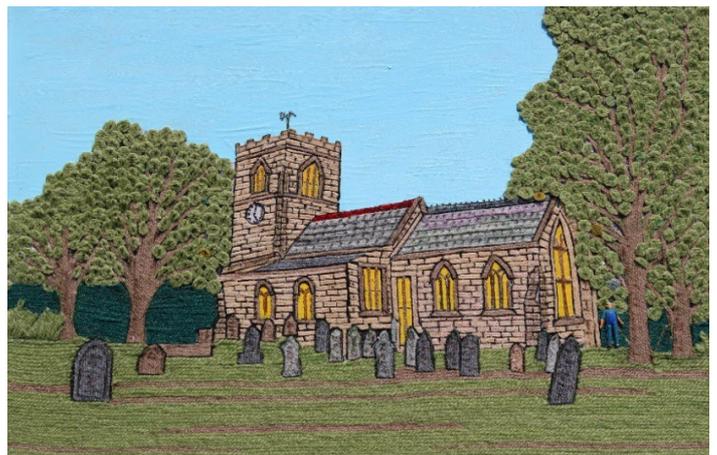
Sadly Derek has died after a short illness. He was a lifetime member of the Chaddesden Historical Group and contributed in many ways to the work of the group. A man with a great sense of humour, who often began his talks by introducing himself as “the man did more damage to Derby than Hitler.” This dates from the time he was working on the demolition of Derby and was far from the truth. Whilst working for Derby Corporation, he saved many parts of Derby. Where this was not possible he photographed the areas prior to demolition. He was a noted local historian, who gave over 100 talks for Radio Derby, contributed to Derby Telegraph articles, gave talks on his experiences and shared his knowledge through his books.

Derek was the son of Fred and Annie Bertha Palmer and grew up in Bath Street in Derby's West End. He lived in a two bedroomed house, with no water in the house, taps in yard and a shared wash house and toilet for the court where he lived. A friendly community which helped each other through difficult times. His mother helped deliver babies and laid out people who had died. He went to Orchard Street School, later known as Lancaster School, at which time he met Jean, his future wife.

In 1931 he caught diphtheria and recovered, after which his mother ensured that the whole family were all immunised. When Derek caught it again in 1941 his attack was not as severe as many. He spent 8 weeks in Ward B at the Isolation Hospital. A time when many died, his mother's foresight protected the family.

On leaving school he began as a painter and decorator, unfortunately he broke his arm on a visit to Fleetwood and lost that job, so tried printing and copying before being called up for his National Service. He became engaged to Jean before starting his National Service and married on his discharge in 1951. He started working for his father who was a foreman with Derby Corporation, eventually becoming Workshop Superintendent and his dad's boss. That gave him a detailed knowledge of Derby.

In 1966 he moved to Chaddesden and continued being active for the rest of his life, building models, making lead soldiers and producing wool pictures. His picture of St Mary's, Chaddesden is seen on the right. His interest in the West End continued. In June 1980, well dressing commenced at Chester Green. The first well dressing board was laid out to a design of Derek's and 'petalled' under his direction. It was set up by the Roman Well on Marcus Street, Chester Green. In 1981 he located a second Roman well in the vicarage gardens, through his water divining skills. Derek's knowledge of well dressing and the art of 'petalling' goes back to his childhood when he helped his father dress St Alkmund's well on Bath Street.



Derek continued giving talks, raising money for the Air Ambulance.

His talk and slide show on “Derby Beneath Your Feet” is available on Youtube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=DtDOrjSB-Kk.

**A Derby man it was a privilege to know and who did a great deal for the City
and his community.**

Jean Moss