

The Ilkeston and District Local History Society

Established 1966. Patron: His Grace The Duke of Rutland



*The
Herald*



February/March 2010
No. 2

West Hallam visit by Gary Henshaw

On a sunny September afternoon a number of Society members joined a visit to West Hallam village, led by Roger Wood, as part of the annual *Autumn Footprints* walking festival.

The visit began with an exploration of the interior of St Wilfrid's Church (built around 1275 by the Cromwell family), with Roger providing a very comprehensive description of the significant structures and artefacts. These included:-

- The Henry Checkland window (Henry's family started the Mapperley Colliery in 1870),
- The St James the Less window (one of a pair originally from Dale Abbey),
- The John Scargill window (former rector, and founder of the West Hallam schools),
- John Scargill's tomb
- the impressive and ornately carved Powtrell Family tomb.

Returning into the sunshine outside, a contrasting view from the churchyard revealed the West Hallam Storage Depot just a short distance to the south. Roger revealed that this was originally built as a relief depot for Chilwell in 1941, but quickly developed into an independent operational military depot. It specialised in the preparation of vehicles and spare parts for the D-Day landings during the Second World War. It had one million square feet of storage space within 112 Romney sheds, and was served by its own railway station, with three and a half miles of standard gauge, and ten miles of 60cm gauge internal railways. It was decommissioned in 1959, being sold off for its present use as a commercial storage and distribution facility.

Just a few yards from the church are located not one, but two war memorials. The very fine principal memorial of stone and marble was erected in August 1921, and lists the names of both those who served, and those who fell during the First World War.

Immediately adjacent is a second memorial, this being dedicated to the 66 men of the Mapperley Colliery Company who fell in the First World War. This is of stone and glazed tiles, the latter being intentionally reminiscent of the glazed tiles which adorned the interior of many of the colliery engine houses in the area. The memorial was originally located at the Jubilee Club on Station Road, being re-dedicated after the move to its present position.

(The relatively high losses suffered by the miners were largely due to their deployment in tunnelling beneath enemy positions in order to place explosive mines. Both sides engaged in this type of warfare, and it escalated to become a war of attrition between miners from each side.)

Crossing the road, John Scargill's 'first' endowed school once stood on the opposite corner to the memorial, at the top of St Wilfrid's Road. The

Punchbowl public house has a 1754 date stone below one chimney, and was originally established as a farmhouse. One of the many 'Newdigate' houses erected within the immediate area included a Post Office, whilst another served as the local Police Station.

Re-crossing the road a little further along, Scargill's second ('Boys') school is found, bearing its 1832 date stone. It also incorporates the 1758 plaque relocated from his first school. A subsequent Education Act introduced formal schooling for girls, and so the third village school was established nearby, proudly displaying its 1852 foundation in the pattern of its brickwork. This building now serves as the Village Hall and pre-school.

With such a high concentration of local history within the village centre, the two hours allotted for the visit passed well before the final site was reached: the 1833-built Cinder House on Station Road. Erected on behalf of Francis Newdigate, this very unusual property was constructed of experimental 'bricks' of irregularly-shaped pieces of burnt clay. The material proved unpopular with builders, but nevertheless has withstood the test of time and the property was Listed as worthy of Grade II status in November 1986.



Both War Memorials.

Quiz

- 1 When Corporation Road was opened in the early 1890s it was known by another name before its official opening, what was this name?
- 2 A well known late Victorian cricketer is buried in Stanton Rd cemetery. What is his name and what does his headstone show?
- 3 A large store stood on the site where Woolworth's was built- what was the name of the store and what did they sell?
- 4 There was at one time a workhouse in Ilkeston: where was it?
- 5 Houses have been built on the site of the former Charnos factory. How did Charnos get its name and what were its products?
- 6 When did the Ilkeston tram system open and where was the tram depot?
- 7 There was an inn situated alongside the Erewash Canal near to the Awsworth Road canal bridge: what was it called?
- 8 Spring Farm at Kirk Hallam was the home of the Rice family- what was the name of the famous authoress who stayed there?
- 9 The White Cow pub on Nottingham Road, now a Tesco, was unusual in one respect- what was that?
- 10 Jane Smit, the recently retired England cricket wicket keeper, has strong connections with Ilkeston, what are they?

Answers on page 11.

Christmas Buffet 2009: Stanton Wartime Films by Danny Corns

Stephen Flinders in his usual explosive way provided members with an evening to remember. He has made this particular talk his own to such an extent that I doubt there is anyone around that knows more about the process of bomb manufacture during WW2. What I found remarkable was that H.A. Brassert, a U.S. steel company, had during 1937 lent their experience to the German rearmament programme. (Big business doesn't change).

H. A. Brassert and Dorman Long Engineering turned 25 acres of farmland into the most up-to-date bomb making plant in the world all between October 1940 and September 1941 and as a 6 year old I watched it being built! The German connection also reminds me that the air extraction units used in Stanton-made air-raid shelters were made in Germany. I doubt spare parts would be available for awhile!

Stanton was an ironworks with no experience in steel making. Workers were sent to Sheffield to learn the process and eventually the workers employed at Stanton Gate foundry came from all walks of life i.e. shop and office workers, factory workers even from Llanelli in Wales and even soldiers with foundry experience were fetched back from military duty. Of the 2000 workers over 40% were women, many only 18 years of age.

The process of producing 500lb bomb casings by using 100% steel scrap was new and innovative. The scrap went through a number of processes before the bomb rolled off the gantry including being loaded into 4 giant cupolas mixed with tons of coke and limestone to reduce the scrap to liquid steel. It

was then heated to 1500 degrees centigrade in 2 rotary furnaces to burn off the remaining impurities before finally entering the moulds and cores which formed the shape of the bombs.

The cores, which would form the space that the explosive charge would occupy, were a blend of specially selected sands, water, linseed oil and a binding agent that was basically baking powder. The cores, in the main, were made by women working shifts in teams of 8. The core making machines produced 100 casings an hour the record being 120 on one occasion. Two moulds were locked together with the cores loaded on to them. Travelling slowly by conveyor belt the moulds were fed by molten steel, each mould producing 2 bomb cases which were only ½ inch thick. Precision was everything even though after leaving the Lancaster they would be in a 1000 pieces making shrapnel.

Many accidents occurred at the plant including at least one death kept very quiet at the time. Lavatory breaks required reliefs as conveyor belts cannot be stopped. Good canteen facilities existed and wages at around £12 per week were roughly 4 x more than outside. The women incidentally received much less than the men and even then it was good pay but hard earned.

Once the bomb casings had cooled they were broken out of their moulds and the pairs of casings separated. After cutting and grinding, they were then dispatched to the newly converted Dale Plant for annealing and grinding, internal and external. The lugs which held the bombs in the bomb bays of aircraft, one for the British and two for the American bombers were welded to the bombs by women.

Other processes took place and the explosive substance would be installed elsewhere, but it must be remembered that Stanton produced over 873,000 bomb casings, 80% of which were dispatched to British and American airbases, the rest being stockpiled.

After D-Day the plant produced 250lb bombs to be used by fighter bombers. Bomb production ceased in 1945, with the workforce being dismissed with most of the woman returning to normal life, the men being re-trained and found other jobs at Stanton.

Stephen showed other aspects of these remarkable films, including the machine shops at work. Bomb making on this scale had never happened before. The non-existent health and safety safeguards were pretty obvious throughout but would Stanton have produced nearly 900,000 bomb casings if health and safety had today's control. Surely H+S is about commonsense – food for thought!

Well done Stephen you fused these films together brilliantly and blitzed the audience with a unique insight into our local contribution to the war effort. A small exhibition of industrial memorabilia and local plans linked to the recent publication contributed to a very enjoyable evening.

AN UNEXPECTED VISIT BY THE LORD OF THE MANOR By Mike Jobling

Trawling around recently on the British Library's 19th Century Newspapers website (accessible by members of Derbyshire Libraries, via their webpage) has yielded numerous tidbits, including the following episode, reported in the 'DERBY MERCURY' of Thursday, 13th August, 1812:

His Grace the Duke of Rutland visited his estates in the parish of Ilkeston, on Monday se'nnight, when his arrival was announced by the ringing of bells. His Grace's visit was so entirely unexpected on the part of his tenantry, that they were prevented receiving him with those marks of respect which it was their desire to have done. -His Grace generously rewarded the ringers with £5 and left £20, to be distributed amongst the poor of the parish.

That 'se'nnight' presumably referring to Monday of the previous week, i.e. the 3rd August.

The number of poor in the parish at the time is unknown; though this was a period of rapid population growth nationally, and of industrialisation – and resistance thereto, in the form of so-called 'Luddism'. We may therefore wonder whether the bell-ringers did better, per capita, than the poor.

The Duke in question was John Henry Manners (1778-1857), the 5th Duke, who had succeeded his father Charles (1754-1787), the short-lived 4th Duke, at the tender age of 9; and would serve as duke for nearly 69 years and 4 months; far outlasting his predecessors and successors in the role.

John Henry Manners, 5th Duke of Rutland, KG was born at Knightsbridge, 4th January 1778 and would die on 20th January 1857, at Belvoir Castle. He was styled Lord Roos from 1778 until 1779 and Marquess of Granby from 1779 until 1787.

He married Elizabeth Howard, daughter of Frederick Howard, 5th Earl of Carlisle, on 22 April 1799. They had ten children, of whom 2 sons and 3 daughters predeceased the 5th Duke. He would be succeeded by his 3rd son, Charles Manners (1815-1888).

Very little is known of the 5th Duke's direct involvement with Ilkeston. His coming of age, on the 4th January 1799 was commemorated locally with celebrations which included bonfires, an ox roast, balls and illuminations. In 1819, following a deputation from the town, and subsequent visit by his agent, His Grace agreed to fund the employment of a number of framework knitters put out of work during a slump in trade. According to Waterhouse's 'Ilkeston Two Hundred Years ago', the summer of 1833 saw a dispute between the Ilkeston vestry and the Duke's agent, regarding a demand made by the latter for the payment of rent arrears.

It was most probably the 5th Duke who was faced with the 'deputation' to Belvoir Castle of Thomas 'Giant' Sisson and his fellow colliers, recounted in TRUEMAN and MARSTON's 1899 'History of Ilkeston'. As with other legendary incidents in the town's history, the date of this event is not recorded; although the portrait of the 'Giant' suggests the early-mid 19th Century. We can only hope that future research will uncover incontrovertible evidence.

A statue of the Fifth Duke of Rutland, by Edward Davis, stands in the Market Place, Leicester, outside the Corn Exchange. It was the first public statue to be erected in Leicester, and was unveiled by Sir Frederick Gustavus Fowke, Provincial Grand Master of Freemasons for the Province of Leicestershire, on 28th April 1852. It commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Duke's lord-lieutenancy of Leicestershire, and had previously been exhibited at the Great Exhibition of 1851.



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[Interesting websites....](#)

With thanks to Esther Collington for the website below:
www.friendsofstantonroadcemetery.btik.com

Apology...

A sharp eyed member spotted a slip up in the previous "Herald": the Francis Sudbury buried in Stanton Rd cemetery is the father of Francis Sudbury, the former mayor. The Mayor Francis Sudbury died on April 6 1908 and was buried April 10. The funeral was a big affair attended by all local dignitaries at the Congregation Church on Wharncliffe Road.

Would any member wish to research the Sudbury family for a future Herald article.

Danny Corns

THE FASTEST BARBER IN TOWN? Joe Wright of Ilkeston, 1861-1942 **By Grant Shaw**

Ilkeston at the turn of the 20th Century seems to have been packed full of larger than life characters. One of these was my great-grandfather, Joseph 'Joe' Wright who for most of his working life claimed to be the 'fastest barber in town'.

Joe was born on Christmas Eve, 1861, on the site of what is now the HSBC Bank on Bath Street, Ilkeston. His parents were John Wright, a bricklayer's labourer, and Selina Wright (née Skeavington). His obituary in the 'Pioneer' states that he started work stone picking at a local colliery at nine years old and later worked as a wagoner in the Oakwell colliery until there was a large explosion, apparently due to working with naked lights, which resulted in him being badly burned on the back and neck. His mother refused to let him go 'down the pit' again and this forced Joe into a career move. He took up the job which had been bringing in a little money in his spare time - hairdressing.

Still aged only sixteen, he went to Nottingham to find work. After trying three or four barbers' shops, he was taken on by a barber on Alfreton Road. He "lived in" and was paid two shillings a week for working from 5am to 9pm during the week, 5am to 11.30pm on Saturdays and a half day on Sunday mornings. After moving from shop to shop, he returned to Ilkeston and the employment of a Mr. Hithersay, who owned a shop on South Street opposite what, is now the library. In 1883 Mr. Hithersay died and Joe – only 21 years old – took over the business.

On Christmas Day 1884 at Holy Trinity Church, Kimberley, Joe married 21 year-old Martha Ann Fernie, whose father John Bingham Fernie was Manager of the Nottingham Corporation's Chemical Works at Giltbrook. In terms of social status it was a step up for the young barber. One year later, when they had set up house above the shop, Martha gave birth to their first child - a daughter called Ellen. She died in infancy, but over the next few years Martha gave birth to twelve children, five boys and seven girls, one of whom (George Arthur Wright) was

Mayor of Ilkeston in 1950-51. The second son, John Thomas Wright, was gassed in the Great War and died of its effects in 1925.

The prospering Ilkeston Co-operative Society bought Joe's original shop, but fortunately he was able to obtain other premises further up the Market Place. Wharncliffe Road did not exist at this time, and on construction of this new road shortly afterwards Joe's shop (adjoining the old Post Office) became the corner of the road's junction with the Market Place. Joe took the opportunity to extend the building up to and around the corner opposite the Town Hall to fit his ever-expanding family living 'above the shop'. The extension made a new shop on the corner of Wharncliffe Road and this was run for many years as the "Bon-bon shop" by his daughter, Lily. On construction of the Police Station on Wharncliffe Road Joe's young family made lifelong friends with the Inspector's daughter, Violet Holmes, who lived in the Police Station itself and whose garden adjoined theirs. Vi was my mother's God-mother and some members may still remember her as a keen supporter of Erewash Museum in its early days.

Joe's business did well, and he invested in bricks and mortar, eventually owning several houses on Gladstone Street. Having such a large family with so many daughters to marry off was obviously a worry for Joe. When his second-youngest Beryl married Les Williams in the 1920's he said he could not afford to close the shop and instead stood in his doorway, waving his apron when the happy couple emerged from St. Mary's.

Joe was a keen fisherman and his advertisements describe his shop as 'the noted shop for all kinds of reliable fishing tackle'. He also sold tobacco, cigars and cigarettes – the cigarettes were often kept in large drums and sold individually. This came in handy when his many sons needed a bit of extra cash and they became popular selling whole or half cigarettes at school, apparently without Joe's knowledge. Joe also sold postcards and views of Ilkeston marked 'Joe Wright's Series' can still be found today.

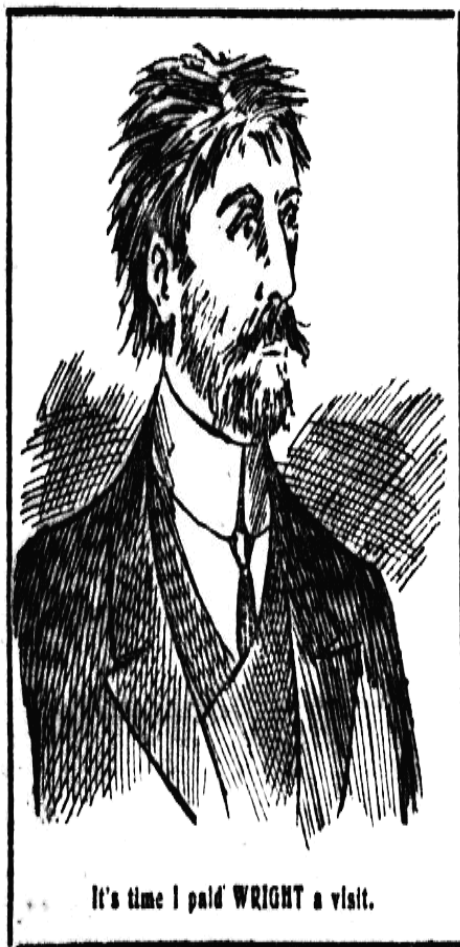
He was also a dedicated gardener and an accomplished cyclist, who several times cycled to Skegness and back in a day. Like most of his contemporaries he enjoyed his beer and his pipe and (so his obituary says) only had one half-day's enforced holiday during his time as a self-employed barber. Business was brisk and he would spend much of his time shaving customers in an age when few did it for themselves. His shop became a meeting place for the men of the town, and Joe became a well known local character. I have heard it said that he would lather a face and could shave it (with three broad strokes of a cut-throat razor) while giving his opinion that "Derby will win". One of his customers was the late former Mayor of Erewash Richard Heathcote, who told me he was often teased by Joe for being 'not old enough to shave properly' – ironic as Dick maintained a beard for most of his later life.

Joe retired in 1935, not long after celebrating his Golden Wedding with Martha, and sold his two shops to the flourishing Ilkeston Co-op. The building remained derelict before being demolished four years later and part of the site was used in road widening. The remainder forms the large corner part of the present Co-op department store. Joe and Martha moved to a splendid new detached house

which they had built on Oakwell Crescent, only a few hundred yards away, where Joe enjoyed his garden. Often hard and sometimes fierce with his own children, Joe loved his many grandchildren and enjoyed playing with them on their frequent welcome visits.

Joe had only seven years of retirement and died in 1942, aged 80. Martha, always unwell and frequently bedridden in later years, sent a single rose from Joe's much loved garden with which he was buried. Too ill to attend the funeral, her own health quickly deteriorated and within nine days she too was dead.

They are buried together in Kirk Hallam Churchyard.



It's time I paid WRIGHT a visit.

TRUST YOUR HAIR TO JOE WRIGHT'S CARE!

**J. WRIGHT,
HAIRDRESSER.**



GOOD!

I've been to Wright's & his hairdressing is alright.

Wholesale & Retail CIGAR & TOBACCO FACTOR,

1 MARKET PLACE,

(Next to Post Office),

Established 1881.

ILKESTON.

The Noted Shop for all kinds of Reliable Fishing Tackle.

Quiz Answers

- 1 It was called "New Road" and appears on maps by this name.
- 2 James Tilson. His headstone shows cricket bat, bails, ball, gloves and stumps carved in stone.
- 3 Wolliscrofts was the store name; it was opened in 1867 and was a draper and tailors and reputedly the largest store between Nottingham and Chesterfield.
- 4 The workhouse was situated roughly where the new police station is sited. That section of Heanor Road was known then as Workhouse Hill.
- 5 Charnos is a derivative of its founder's name Charles Noskwith. Its products being fully fashioned nylons, stockings and lingerie.
(Does any member have a photograph of the 1947 fire? See Danny Corns)
- 6 It opened on May 15 1903 with the tram depot being on Park Road opposite where Moorley's publishers are sited.
- 7 The Jolly Boatman. Boatman's Close nearby is probably named after it.
- 8 Mary Ann Evans, otherwise known as George Eliot.
- 9 It was the only pub called the White Cow in the country. If anyone finds another please let me know-Danny.
- 10 She is the daughter of Fric Smit and the niece of Wim Smit, the former Liberal councillor; the owners of Andriesse Ltd. Wim learnt Greek so he could sell their products in Greece! During the last war, Andriesse was taken over by Coventry Gauge Tool Co Ltd.
As the factory is being demolished, would any member wish to research and write an article for the Herald. There is information in Ilkeston reference library.

Forthcoming Meetings

9/02/2010 "Ilkeston Children in 1891" by Ruth Gordon.

09/03/2010 "The Story of John Scargill" by Roger Wood. (David Harrison Memorial Lecture)

20/04/2010 Annual General Meeting followed by "Jim's Lens revisited" by Pat Campbell

All meetings commence at 7.15 and are at the Ilkeston Arena.

Committee meeting: 1/03/2010 10 a.m. Ilkeston Fire Station.

Ilkeston from the newspapers... "The Ilkeston Pioneer" 6 January 1859

SERIOUS ASSAULT UPON A CONSTABLE- At the County Hall, Derby, on Friday last, Thomas Farnsworth was charged with assaulting police-constable John Hall, at Ilkeston, on the 26th of Nov.-On the day in question the constable was attacked and beaten by several persons. He seized prisoner, who was one of his assailants, but being hit in the eye was obliged to let him go. The

officer was laid up for some time in consequence of the injuries which he received, and the prisoner absconded, and did not return into the neighbourhood until a few days ago. – Committed for trial at the sessions.

(The Sessions show that James Beardsley, Jacob Bednall, George Eaton, Isaac Bednall and Thomas Farnsworth were all found “not guilty” of assaulting a constable).

Source Citation: Class: HO 27; Piece: 122; Page: 97.**Source Information:** Ancestry.com. *England & Wales, Criminal Registers, 1791-1892*

“The Smith Murder”

From 9 May 1861 until 22 August 1861, the Ilkeston Pioneer contained a series of articles and reports on the murder of Joseph Smith of Ilkeston. His son, George, was found guilty of the crime and subsequently hanged in front of Derby gaol, the event being witnessed by a crowd of 50,000. The body was buried fully clothed in quicklime within the precincts of the gaol.

Whilst the body lay on the scaffold, a plaster cast was taken of the head and face by a Mr Barton, which was to have been placed in Mr Sims’ museum in Derby.

The plaster cast, upon which some of the above details had been carved, eventually came into the possession of the late Nelson Bestwick, who allowed the writer of this piece the opportunity of inspecting same.

After Nelson’s death, the plaster cast was destroyed and placed in a council tip.

Malcolm Burrows.

Final Word... This is YOUR Herald!

If any of the articles have stimulated, annoyed or if you have anything to add please get in touch. Also, any suggestions you may have as to what you would like to see included in further issues please contact any Committee member or see below.

All contributors are responsible for ensuring that their contribution is factually accurate.

Any views or opinions expressed in this document are solely those of their authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Society or the Committee, and as such the Society and Committee will not accept any liability.

Please send your contributions of any size and any topic to: Beverley Kilby, 38 Ilkeston Rd, Trowell, Nottingham NG9 3PX or by email to

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