

# The Ilkeston and District Local History Society

Established 1966. Patron: His Grace The Duke Of Rutland



Photo: John James Borebank.

**April/May 2010**  
**No. 3**

## From West Hallam to Canada... and a Titanic victim!

Born in 1842 in West Hallam, James Borebank was the son of Benjamin Borebank, farmer and his wife Elizabeth. He had two sisters, Ann and Frances who married a pair of brothers who lived literally next door, the sons of Francis Martin, licensee of the Punch Bowl Inn West Hallam.

James married on Boxing Day 1866 but sadly his wife Caroline died 13 days later on 08 January 1867. James married again 18 June 1868 to Sarah Milnes of Ockbrook. James and Sarah had seven children born between 1870 and 1881 of which three died in infancy.

In 1870 on the death of his father James succeeded to the tenancy of the farm. The 1871 census shows James as farming 96 acres but by 1881 this was down to 9 acres. Giving up farming the family moved to Ilkeston taking on the tenancy of the "Prince of Wales" inn on Bath St. (pg 16 "From Bottom to Top of Town" published by the Society shows the "Prince of Wales" inn: the site is now occupied by Heron Frozen foods.)

Sarah died in 1884.

Some time between 1885 and 1887 James migrated to Toronto Canada taking 3 children (Frederick, Annie and Hannah) with him but not his eldest son John James who stayed in Ilkeston. James worked for the Toronto Brewing and Malting Company and by 1890 was a brewer. In 1888, James married again to Margaret Ann Leech and had another three children.

Remaining in Ilkeston, John James (also known as Jack) was apprenticed to Joe Wright (see The Herald No 2). Leaving Liverpool on the "Polynesian" Jack followed his father to Canada arriving in Quebec on 5 July 1887: Jack moved to Winnipeg in 1896 and was prosperous in the timber business as well as real estate. Moving back to Toronto in 1910 he lived on Jameson Avenue and worked out of the Quebec Bank building on King St Toronto. In 1911 he undertook the holiday of a lifetime back to Europe with his wife Isobel and daughter Eileen.

Eileen was placed in a boarding school in Bucks. Leaving his wife and daughter over here Jack set off back to Canada on his own- probably to attend to business affairs. However he was destined not to arrive having boarded the "Titanic" (ticket number 110489, £26 11s, cabin D-22).

A newspaper report at the time, besides reporting the fact that Jack had been lost on the "Titanic", also reported that "when motoring through Ilkeston some time ago he called at the old shop in the Market Place where he received a hearty welcome from his old friend and employer" (Joe Wright).

His father James and a brother and sister, residing at their grocery store at 285 Euclid Avenue, Toronto received news of his death four days after the first news of the sinking.

His body if recovered was never identified. James Borebank died in May 1916, leaving his wife Margaret to live on to the age of 88.

Above report compiled from information supplied by Jack Hartley and also from [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk)

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## **Society Notices**

**Reminder to all** –subscriptions for the year 2010 are now overdue. Please make your payment as soon as possible to the Membership Secretary. Payment is £10.00 for single membership and £15.00 for a couple.

### January's meeting

As you are aware the meeting for January was cancelled at short notice due to the weather: please accept the Committee's apologies if you made it on the night only to be sent home. It is hoped that the talk will be re-arranged for another time.

### Future Meetings

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2010- AGM followed by change to programme "Strelley Hall" by Malcolm Burrows at The Arena.

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2010-"The Friargate Line"- walk by Keith Blood. Meet at Friargate Bridge, Derby.

Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2010- Erewash Museum change to programme Victorian Life not Georgian Life.

Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2010- Visit to Ilkeston Fire Station. If anyone has any old photographs regarding the fire service, please bring along to share.

All meetings commence at 7.15p.m.

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## ***The Canary Girls of Chilwell***

This was the title of a talk given by Maureen Rushton at the Society's November meeting.

Her story begins in the year 1915: the war in the Western Front and elsewhere was not progressing well for the Allies, a number of offensives having failed or stalled with little real progress. One major factor was Britain's output of high-explosive shells which was far surpassed by Germany. In May of that year the crisis was revealed by *The Times* and the *Daily Mail* newspapers, and the subsequent scandal was later to bring down the government of the day.

The crisis also spurred a major reorganisation of munitions production, with entirely new facilities being established throughout Britain and its Empire. The

newly-appointed Minister of Munitions, Lloyd George realised that meaningful increases in output necessitated a fundamental new approach to production. One of his appointees to the task was the industrialist Viscount Chetwynd, a Director of Armstrong Whitworth armaments company. Chetwynd was autocratic but efficient, and quickly set about seeking a site for a major new shell-filling factory.

The site which best met his criteria of good railway links and an available workforce was located at Chilwell near Nottingham, and building work on what was to become Shell Filling Factory Number 6 was started in September. Chetwynd's 'get-it-done' approach rapidly led to the establishment of a huge shell filling facility in Chilwell. The site was equipped with nine locomotives operating over fifteen miles of internal railway lines, and underground tunnels for storing explosive powders.

Chetwynd had visited Woolwich Arsenal (Number One Shell Filling Factory), where he observed the 'cake' method of filling shells being used. This was the French 'Dry Powder Method', the explosive concerned being amatol: an 80/20 mixture of TNT and ammonium nitrate. Mixing the powders correctly was critical, with a need to keep the mixture dry. To effect this hot air blowers were used, mixing being achieved by bakery-type dough mixers. By March 1916 this method had been successfully adopted, at Chilwell with 7000 shells per week being produced.

This output was still deemed to be insufficient for the demand, manpower shortages being the limiting factor. In response increasing numbers of women were employed, albeit somewhat reluctantly. Before long, women comprised one third of the 6000 workforce. Working conditions were hazardous, deaths by poisoning being covered up to some extent. Accidental explosion was an ever-present danger, with flammable contraband having to be given up on entry to the site. Breaches of this rule were punishable by a fine for a first offence, with instant dismissal for a second.

In an attempt to improve the health of the workers dust masks were introduced, along with attention to diets, drinks and the introduction of bathing facilities. Age restrictions on workers were also introduced, with a limit of 12 consecutive weeks exposure within the production facility being specified. Sports and leisure groups were actively encouraged. Despite these efforts exposure to the chemicals turned the skin of the workers bright yellow, giving the *Canary Girls* their distinctive name. And notwithstanding the safety precautions some seventeen accidental explosions occurred before the start of July 1918. No doubt the workers were being particularly careful on the visit of George V in December 1916.

July 1<sup>st</sup> 1918 was unseasonably warm, and it was reported that the explosive powders were overheating and sticking. Shortly after the evening shift commenced several tons of TNT exploded with devastating results. One hundred and thirty-four workers were killed and 250 were injured. Only thirty-two of the dead were identified. Much of the plant was flattened by the explosion, with every means of transport available employed to carry the

injured to hospital. The explosion was heard as far away as the Vale of Belvoir: most people who heard it immediately knew what had happened.

The official report into the incident was inconclusive regarding the cause. Sabotage had been suspected, but it is more likely that the instability of the mixture coupled with lax safety standards were to blame. The only significant recommendation was to 'change the layout of the factory'. The Second Battle of the Somme was imminent and there was no respite in the efforts to meet production targets. Despite the devastation production recommenced the following day. Body parts had been flung well beyond the site boundaries, and after being placed in coffins, were interred in a mass grave in Attenborough churchyard. At the same time efforts were made to suppress the true extent of the disaster.

In 1919 a memorial was erected on the site: as well as bearing the names of all of those who had died it quoted the production statistics of the factory. These included the more than 19 million shells filled during the course of the war. The memorial is now a listed building, but access is currently restricted due to site security concerns.

*Gary Henshaw.*

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## **Quiz**

1. What and where were the pearly gates?
2. Why was the "Seven Oaks" pub at Stanton so named?
3. Ilkeston had a windmill at one time, where was it?
4. A very famous person stayed at the Dewdrop Inn (Middleton Hotel) at Ilkeston Junction during WW2: who was it?
5. What was the airship that came over Ilkeston in 1929 and what was its fate?

Answers on page 7.

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## **Ilkeston from the papers: Ilkeston Advertiser Friday, January 14, 1910**

### **SUDBURY MEMORIAL**

The Sudbury Memorial Committee during the past year under the chairmanship of the present Deputy Mayor, has had a number of meetings, and with the kind assistance of Mr. H. Tatham Sudbury, who has prepared several sets of plans free of charge, has finally decided to erect three almshouses on a site at the corner of Park-road and Park-avenue, generously given for the purpose by the family of the late Alderman F. Sudbury. At a

meeting of the Committee held in the Town Hall on Wednesday night tenders were laid before the Committee and that of Mr. David Roberts was accepted for the erection of the almshouses. It was found necessary to make a further appeal for funds to carry out this modified scheme, as another £100 is needed to complete the work. It is hoped that now something definite is decided, and the work will soon be in hand, that people who have hitherto waited on the turn of events before promising a subscription will come forwards and that the confidence of the Committee in being able to raise the required amount will be shown to have not been misplaced.



Sudbury  
Memorial  
Homes

## **Are you local?**

Not just a line from BBC TV comedy series but also a question you can now perhaps answer via the internet. The 'National Trust Names' website hosts the findings of a University College of London study of the distribution of surnames in Great Britain.

Users can now search their database for historical and geographical information on their family names. The database has been created from census returns and other sources, and illustrates the geographical spread of specific surnames in the years 1881 and 1998. It also shows the changes which have occurred between these dates.

Well in excess of a hundred surnames have been identified as 'local' to the Derby and Nottingham area, and an even greater number to the East Midlands in general. Listed below are examples of some of these family surnames, many of which will be immediately recognisable to Ilkestonians.

<b>SURNAME</b>	<b>GB TOP AREA</b> (1881 or 1998)	<b>GB TOP POSTAL TOWN</b>
Allsopp	Derby	Heanor
Beardsley	Derby	Ilkeston
Bestwick	Derby	Ripley

Birkin	Derby	Nottingham
Brentnall	Derby	Ripley
Burton	Nottingham	Nottingham
Buxton	Derby	Heanor
Chambers	Nottingham	Nottingham
Daykin	Nottingham	Nottingham
Flinders	Nottingham	Nottingham
Fretwell	Derby	Sheffield
Gadsby	Derby	Ashbourne
Gregory	Derby	Matlock
Hallam	Nottingham	Nottingham
Henshaw	Derby	Ilkeston
Henson	Nottingham	Nottingham
Kirk	Nottingham	Nottingham
Maltby	Nottingham	Nottingham
Meakin	Derby	Heanor
Mellors	Nottingham	Nottingham
Morley	Nottingham	Mansfield
Severn	Nottingham	Nottingham
Slack	Derby	Matlock
Smedley	Derby	Ilkeston
Spencer	Derby	Matlock
Spendlove	Derby	Belper
Statham	Derby	Swadlincote
Syson	Derby	Ilkeston
Toplis	Derby	Ilkeston
Truswell	Nottingham	Nottingham
Wheatley	Derby	Ilkeston

The website can be found at <http://www.nationaltrustnames.org.uk> and the wealth of information it contains makes it well worth a visit.

Gary Henshaw.

## **Quiz answers**

1. They were a set of white gates positioned at the top of Richmond Avenue in Cotmanhay which was a private road at the time- believed to have been removed during 1920s.
2. The landowners', the Stanhopes, country seat was at Chevening Manor near Seven Oaks in Kent. There were actually seven oak trees at Seven Oaks: they were destroyed in the 1987 gales that swept Britain.
3. Situated on the edge of what is now Kniveton Park/ Peewit golf course near to Derby Road, it belonged to the Eaton family and was thought to have been destroyed by fire during the 1920s although by then it was disused as a mill.

4. Barnes Wallis stayed there whilst visiting the nearby Rolls Royce factory. There is a plaque installed at the inn to commemorate his visits. A short account follows these questions.
5. The government sponsored airship was the R101: a report of its crash is in this magazine.

Questions and answers provided by Danny Corns.

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## **Sir Barnes Neville Wallis by Danny Corns**

The plaque installed at the Dewdrop Inn was unveiled on 17<sup>th</sup> March 1999 by Cliff Lear of Ilkeston who flew Lancasters as a flight engineer with the 625 squadron during WW2. The plaque was bought by the Royal Marines Association who were present at the ceremony.

Barnes Wallis was born on Butterley Hill at Ripley in 1887. He was responsible for many inventions apart from the dam busting bouncing bomb including the Wellington bomber, the earth quake bombs that sunk the German battleship "Tirpitz" and helped to destroy the V2 rocket sites. He also invented the R100 airship and the swing wing aircraft. What a great man! Makes you wonder if he visited the bomb plant at Stanton...

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## **Marks and Spencer**

It was late in 2006 that news came through the grapevine that Marks and Spencer were going to open a store in the town. After some speculation by Ilkestonians over the location, eventually, in late spring 2007, a food store opened on Waterside Retail Park off Station Road. It was in a unit previously occupied by Somerfields Supermarket that had started life as Kwik Save.

Many of us remember that Marks and Spencer had a much earlier presence in the town. The original store was on Bath St, between Station Rd and Chapel St and was built for them in a simple Art Deco style. It was three stories in height and had a frontage of 40ft. (12m) and had a depth of 120ft. (36m). [The present store has about three times the retail space of the original one.] A single storey false front came forward to the building line of the older properties on either side. At the relevant time this would be removed to enable Bath St to be widened. The store opened on 24 August 1934 at 10.00a.m.

Initially, Marks and Spencer sold drapery, ladies and children's wear, men's wear, fancy goods, toiletries, household goods, lighting, footwear, sweets, fruit, canned food, toys and ice cream, at prices (according to the advertisement) from 1p to 5s. (less than 1 new penny and 25 pence). It also boasted that 90% of the goods were British made. The company employed 40 "young local ladies" and provided dining, cloak and rest room facilities for staff who could also benefit from lunch for 6d. Surprisingly a 48 hour working week was in operation.

In early 1988, Marks and Spencer decided to close its Ilkeston store. Petitions were raised. The MP and the local council applied pressure to try and persuade the company to remain in town. All this was to no avail and the store



finally closed in August 1988. The premises are now a night spot going under the name of “The Factory”.

Alan Edwards

## **R101 by Danny Corns**

The R101, a government sponsored airship, crashed in France on its first flight to India resulting in 48 deaths including government officials on 5th October 1930. This ended British interest in airships.

The following is an extract from the Advertiser 25/10/1929:

*“We wonder how many people in this district caught sight of the wonderful R101 airship as it sailed serenely overhead on its way from Derby to Nottingham about noon on Friday last? A good many, we feel sure, and probably a bigger number who were engaged indoors in their various daily tasks knew nothing about it until the airship had passed out of sight. It was a fine picture in the heavens if but a momentary one, as the R101 sailed along at about fifty or sixty miles an hour, and it was difficult to realize that one was looking at the biggest airship in the world today, larger than the “Graf Zeppelin” about which so much was heard a few months ago. Its huge size deceived one to the extent of making it appear to be sailing much lower down than it was actually doing. As it passed over the lower end of Heanor-road, almost exactly over the “Advertiser” office, it did not seem to be at any great height, and the lettering on the huge vessel was very easily discernible, but the tiny aspect of the gondolas underneath the airship proved that the height was much greater than it appeared to the eye. It was by the merest fluke that our own attention was drawn to the flight and we realize that we were extremely fortunate to be numbered amongst those who saw with their own eyes this latest product of our own country in the world of aeronautics. Needless to say, the trip created quite a sensation all over the Midland area along which it travelled.”*



R101 passing over  
Inglefield Rd,  
Ilkeston on 18  
October 1929

Photo courtesy of  
picture the past:  
photo ref:  
DCER000487

## **Pub Crawl anyone?**

Now that has got your attention, we have all seen on the television and read in the newspapers about local pubs closing down; many being either converted into flats, shops or being knocked down and I was wondering if anyone was interested in joining me in recording our local hostelrys both the existing ones and those that have already gone. If you are interested please contact Beverley Kilby by 30 April 2010- contact details at the bottom of page 12. Also if anyone has any old photographs I could scan I would be much obliged.

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## **Train-spotting... A boys story.**

I vividly remember the first time I was aware of steam trains. My Mother used to take me to Awsworth Station to meet my Father who worked at Stanley Colliery, and as he was an office worker his working hours never varied so it was easy for him to catch the same trains to and from work.

My Mother tells me I was 3 years old, and a bit of a handful, so she took me to the station in a pushchair so I didn't run off.

I remember a steam train pounding up from the Ilkeston direction over Bennerley Viaduct and the noise was incredible. I remember being almost terrified, but excited as well. It's funny but if I go out to see a steam hauled train on the main line now I feel exactly the same 60 years later. I do believe that first baptism of steam has been responsible for my lifelong love of anything to do with railways.

My dear wife is amazed when I tell her vividly of my early days of my interest in railways, because I cannot remember what she has sent me to Tesco for these days, but can still remember every engine I used to see at Awsworth.

As I got a little older I used to go into the field at the back of the station and take the numbers down of the passing engines. My train spotting had begun!

When I was about 8 or 9, one of the older boys who I used to trainspot with, said they went to Ilkeston Junction on a Saturday morning, and reports of wondrous sights were repeated to me. Green engines with names on them, and long coal trains pulled by massive engines called Beyer- Garratts with an amazing amount of wheels. All this just a couple of miles away, but would my mother let me see these wonders?

I asked if I could go but was told no. After threatening to leave home, a compromise was reached because my Mother and Father went shopping into Ilkeston every Saturday along with most of the population of the surrounding area, it seemed to me. They said I could go with the older boys, but was given a time of a bus I had to get on coming home. This of course was the one they would be on.

Come the Saturday, and all the Midland General buses that went through Awsworth seemed to be bursting at the seams. I think it was the C8 that came from Kimberley. I felt sure I was never going to get to this shrine, for that is what I had convinced myself it was. When I eventually got off the bus and sat myself on the slope of the bridge abutment where the road bridge goes over the track, it seemed a lifetime before a train came. I couldn't believe the speed it travelled past me. I didn't even see the number, but fortunately someone else did, and to this day I remember it was a Jubilee class 4-6-0 No. 45611 "HONG KONG". I was to see that engine many more times; I would love the chance of seeing it on a daily basis now.

Even at that early age I found myself, between trains, looking at the bridges and the buildings, and wondering to myself, "Where does that line go?" I used to look at the carriage boards that fitted onto the roofline of the carriages. These usually said something along the lines of "London to Leeds", or "London to Glasgow" I never dreamed I would ever visit places like London or Leeds or Glasgow.

I remember seeing the line that went off from the main line at Ilkeston Junction that went to Ilkeston Town Station, this station was situated roughly where Tesco is now, and certainly had a better architect than the one who designed the supermarket.

When I was 12 my parents moved house, and we left Awsworth and went to live at Shipley, I could look out of the back window and see trains running at the bottom of the field. I knew this was the same line that went through Ilkeston Junction so every minute possible was spent down by the line near Shipley Boat.

I also moved school and went to Bennerley, which was at Cotmanhay. What a great school. It had the Midland main line at the bottom of the school field, and the old Great Northern over Bennerley Viaduct to the right of the school field. Now that's a fabulous school as far as I was concerned.

I met like minded people at school and we spent hours by the lineside. Some of these people are still my closest friends 50 years later.

I met a wonderful Geography teacher at Bennerley called Mr. Nottingham. He was just as interested in railways as his pupils, and he taught me to look beyond the rails and take in all of the structures and earthworks as well. I still see him, but not as often as I should do.

I would spend lots of my time looking at bridges and buildings, by this time I usually had a girl on my arm as well, I don't really know what they thought about a date with me. I know it was different to say the least. I still see a few of them about, and they don't do a detour when they see me so I don't suppose they thought I was that weird.

I remember as if it were yesterday riding on the line from Ilkeston to Derby Friargate, and the other way to Nottingham Victoria. What a tragedy that these lines closed. Going over Bennerley Viaduct was an incredible experience; I am sure some who read this will agree with me that it was like flying. I think it should be a matter of urgency that we keep structures like this, but I am afraid I feel that it may well disappear from the landscape because it must need work doing to it, and I don't believe it will get it done. The last I read it was considered to be an "At risk structure"

I still spend a lot of time trying to find relics and remnants of old railways, and my daughter who lives, and works in Cardiff, tells me about old railways she finds on her travels in Wales. She told me about a series of bridges up the valleys near Crumlin, so I went to find it. Lo and behold I did find it; the problem was it was a series of road bridges. Bless her she had tried for her dad.

I am an avid model railway enthusiast as well and was involved for a while with a local group building an oo gauge model of Kimberley Station which was just 2 stations up from Ilkeston North on the way to Nottingham Victoria. I did a lot of the research for the group and I believe this layout will be finished within the next 12 months, and it will be really worth seeing.

I started by saying I have had a life long passion for railways, and whatever came along and diverted me from my railways I have always come back to them. My generation was so lucky that we saw the railways as they were, because without a doubt they are more efficient now, and serve the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but we saw the romance of the railways. The railways we had in this country were the finest in the world. In fact we gave the railways to the world. I don't think our railways have been served well by politicians of any of the major parties, nor do they continue to be served well by them.

I hope you have enjoyed "Train spotting. A boy's story." I do hope it has turned the clock back for some of you.

Paul Miller

## **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: [KLBY.BVLY@NTLWORLD.COM](mailto:KLBY.BVLY@NTLWORLD.COM)