Welcome to the first edition of what we hope will be an annual publication. In our first edition we feature not only some of the research work of our members, but also a review of our first proper year of activities.

As a group we’ve been constituted since November 2007, but we met on a more informal basis from September 2006. Not only do we have regular speakers, but we also have a reminiscences group. All members receive a free copy of this annual publication and reduced entry to our talks. To find out more about membership see page two.

We have been particularly lucky to have a very active committee. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their work during our formative year, along with contributors to this first edition.

I hope you’ll agree that our first proper year is rounded off nicely by this publication. Now read on and enjoy!

Doug Spencer
Brimington and Tapton Local History Group

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Treasurers: Frank and Elsie Robinson
Other Committee members: Jean Arthington, Jean Crossley, Joan Graham, Alan Sharp and Stan Wetton.

Our meetings
All our meetings are open to non-members.
The group meets monthly during the year (except June, July and August) on the fourth Thursday of each month, at Brimington Church Hall, Church Street, Brimington, starting at 7:30pm. These meetings usually comprise a talk by a guest speaker or a group member. One outdoor visit, usually a local guided walk, is held in June.
On the fourth Tuesday of every month (except August and December) a ‘reminiscences’ group meets at Brimington Church Hall, starting at 2:00pm.

Our other activities
Our aim is to encourage people to bring along items that help record the history of Brimington and Tapton. If you have any old photographs, documents or a story to tell about the Group’s area and would be willing to share these with us, we’d like to hear from you. Please contact Doug or Marion Spencer (address above) or come along to one of our reminiscences groups.

Membership
Membership of the Group costs £5 per year (there are no reductions). Benefits include reduced admission to the group’s fourth Thursday meetings and free admission to the reminiscences group. In addition the Group actively collects and copies old photographs and information from the Brimington and Tapton area.
Members have free access to this growing resource. All members receive a free copy of the Brimington Miscellany. For further details contact the membership secretary.
The Group is affiliated to the British Association for Local History.

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Comments on articles should be addressed to the individual contributors (where addresses are shown) or via the Chairman, where no address is given. The comments expressed herein are those of the individual contributors. They are not necessarily those of the Brimington and Tapton Local History Group.
We welcome contributions to this publication. For details contact the Chairman or Vice-Chairman.

Front cover illustrations: left to right – detail from an Edwardian postcard showing Church Street; detail of relief on a Kirkham and Hebdige mineral water bottle; detail from C.C. Hollis’s 1920s sketch of the ‘skull and cross-bones’ sign at Tapton.

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OUR YEAR IN VIEW: NOTABLE EVENTS

In this section we take a brief and selective review of the year from September 2007 to roughly the end of August 2008.

Buildings and land

Firstly, there were a number of property demolitions to report in 2007/8. Here we describe some of the more notable ones.

The demolition of the ‘Prince of Wales’ on Manor Road was perhaps the most notable loss, as it involved a public house. The premises had been closed since January 2007 (when it is pictured above), finally succumbing to demolition a year later (inset, taken on 3 February 2008).

The establishment originally opened as a beer house in the 1860s. It has changed names three times. In 1974 it reopened as the Brimington Tavern, after remodelling and extension. In 1976 strip shows and other entertainment at the premises were reported as ‘bringing traffic to a halt’ in the locality, prompting the imposition of parking restrictions. For sale in April 1978 as a free house, with the owner and occupier being Mr G.F. Murfin. At this time it was described as ‘a very busy licensed premises with a large concert room or lounge’.

3 *Chesterfield Advertiser* (CA), 11 April 1974.
4 *Star*, 16 November 1976
5 J.M. Warwick (auctioneers), Brimington Tavern, for sale by auction, 19 April 1978, sale details.
In 1985, after some refurbishment, it was renamed ‘The Warren’, then a Shipstone’s house, with Rodger and Celia Hawkins as licensees. At this time an advertising feature in the *Derbyshire Times* explained that the roof of the old concert room (then described as the lounge) had been raised with A-frame oak ceiling supports inserted ‘…from an old manor house’. A further extension had been added to the lounge. In the old part of the public house there was a separate ‘snug with traditional oak beams and stone walls’. The colour scheme was ‘…sophisticated red and pink…’ Patrons might remember the profusion of pink toy rabbits which accumulated in the rafters of the lounge! The refurbishment had cost Shipstone’s £150,000. This was ‘…part of their planned expansion into the northern part of their trading area’. James Shipstone and Sons were based at the Star Brewery, Nottingham.

In 1988 The Warren was said to be, ‘usually busy on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings when teams compete in local indoor games leagues, while a new innovation is a free-to-enter fun quiz on Thursdays.’ By this time the licensee was Roger Hall with his wife Sally. Shipstone was still the brewery. The public house regained its ‘Prince of Wales’ name in 1990 after further renovation, still with Roger Hall as licensee.

It gained some notoriety in 2005 when the brewery applied for planning permission to knock it down and build houses, whilst the then managers (who apparently knew nothing of the plan) were away on holiday. The brewery relinquished but the writing was on the wall. By November 2006 a new application had been submitted for demolition and replacement with dwellings.

Earlier than its Shipstone Brewery tie the public house had sold Scarsdale Brewery ales. This company was based in St Mary’s Gate, Chesterfield and closed in 1959, at which time the principle owner’s Scarcliffe Trading Co. took control, selling Whitbread products. The pub was eventually sold outright to Whitbreads in 1969. By closure it was selling Barnsley based Oakwell ales.

The history of the property goes further back from the 1860s beer house use. An 1827 rating survey, shows it as owned by a William Holmes, when it comprised ‘House, outbuildings, yard, garden and etc.’ Holmes farmed in the area at this time. Around 1910 this ‘public house and garden’ was owned by Annie E. Holmes and tenanted by F. Mapes. At one time this corner of Cotterhill Lane and Manor Road was known as the ‘Seven Sisters’ after the number of sisters in the Mapes family.

The building must have been of some age, but had been extensively modernised, with little remaining of the original features. During demolition it was possible to see just how extensive alterations over the years had been. The roof was not original, though the ‘pinion tabling’—where the gable end is raised above the roof with stone copings—had survived. Modern windows had been inserted to make a second

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6 *Derbyshire Times (DT)*, 12 July 1985.
7 R. Newcombe (editor) *Campaign for Real Ale guide to Derbyshire*, (1990), p. 131. Greenall Whitley had taken over Shipstone in 1978. According the Camra this ‘…was marked by some heavy-handed tarting up of Shipstone pubs…’
11 Planning application reference CHE/06/00862/OUT. There were further applications which varied the house types and site plan.
12 J. Hirst, *Chesterfield Breweries*, (1991), [no pagination]. The company was set up by Major Philip Birkin. It took control of six former Scarsdale public houses.
14 McIntosh, *Pubs*, p. 23.
15 Plan of the township of Brimington, surveyed by WH Wilson, 1827, Derbyshire Record Office, D177 A/PC 37 and Survey Book, DRO, D636 A/PO1.
17 Information from various Brimington residents, October 2008.
floor. Much of the first floor had been renewed and there was much modern brick throughout, with surprisingly thin walls. Here and there one could see that the building appeared to have been possibly originally built from red bricks.

As drinking tastes change, The Prince of Wales must have been at a disadvantage. It was perhaps slightly too far from the village centre to attract patrons from that area. Neither did it have a particularly large natural catchment area for local drinkers. The decline of the public house is being well publicised. The Prince of Wales is not the first public house to have closed in Brimington and may not be the last. Two pairs of semi detached houses and three bungalows on the site of the Prince of Wales, are (as late October 2008) complete, with mostly only landscape works remaining to be done.

The second demolition of note was that of number 8 Ringwood Road, in the first quarter of 2008, to make way for an extension to Robinson’s Caravans. It is not very often that houses get demolished these days for commercial expansion. Of fairly unremarkable architectural merit, the house (to the centre of this 4 September 2007 photograph) looked like an interwar period development, confirmed by referring to the 1918 and 1938 Ordnance Survey Maps.\(^\text{18}\)

Houses built on vacant land near to Brimington Club, fronting High Street, have been completed during 2008.\(^\text{19}\) This difficult site (on a steep slope) has been nicely developed, with traditional looking houses.

By November 2007 the former betting office at number 1 Cross Street, was being advertised for sale having been converted into a two bed-roomed bungalow.\(^\text{20}\)

On Chesterfield Road a single detached bungalow on Dean’s Close (opposite the Cemetery and illustrated here) was demolished in Autumn 2007. Spire Homes are, as September 2008, in the closing stages of building a small residential development on the site. The whole is being marketed as ‘The Orchards’.

\(^{18}\) OS Map, 25 inch to 1 mile, (1918 and 1938), Derbyshire sheet XVIII.15.

\(^{19}\) Property Today (PT), 22 May 2008.

\(^{20}\) PT, 29 November, 2007.
Just how the housing and credit recession now hitting the country will impact on future construction activity, remains to be seen.

Of some concern to local residents has been the final go-ahead for the new Tesco site and Chesterfield Football Club Stadium at the end of July 2008. In June 2008 Sainsbury’s announced plans to extend their existing store at Rother Way.  

In the same month, there were further moves to complete conversion of agricultural outbuildings at Plover Farm, Tapton, with the advertisement of a further planning application to erect eight new dwellings on the site.  

Ambitious plans to ‘transform’ a 40 acre linear site along the Rother basin were trailed during the early spring of 2008, with a public exhibition of the so-called ‘Waterside’ scheme. According to Chesterfield Borough Council’s civic newspaper *Our Town* this will see a ‘spectacular new urban village of high quality residential office, retail and leisure space in an attractive river and canal-side setting. The focus for activity at the start will be on the infrastructure for a new canal basin located close to the railway station.’ Work was planned to start ‘very soon’ according to the same source. Certainly the plans looked very impressive, with over 1,000 people visiting the exhibition at Chesterfield’s Pavements shopping centre. But this was before the recent property market problems. How soon the ‘very soon’ start will be made may well be questionable. A planning application has, however, been made for the canal basin part of the development. As we went to press in mid October there appeared to be some work being carried out on site, possibly with service diversions.

Made public in March 2008 were the results of a public inquiry to uphold a Chesterfield Borough Council enforcement action on the owners of Tapton Grove nursing home. The appeal had been held in September 2007. According to the *Derbyshire Times*, the owners had reroofed the Grade II* listed property with non-traditional materials (artificial stone slates). This roof has now to be removed with replacement by natural stone slates. Of far more concern must be the listed (Grade II) stone stable block nearby. There is a date stone to one of the doors ‘A.J. 1799’; clearly Avery Jebb and the date of construction. This building, pictured above in August 2008, is in parlous state having been neglected for some years.

Tapton Golf course was leased to Sheffield International Venues from 1 April 2008 for 25 years. There are promised upgrades to facilities. The company will pay an annual rent to the Borough Council.

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22 DT, 19 June 2008.  
23 Our Town, Spring 2008.  
27 Our Town, Spring 2008.
During the second half of 2007 the Parish Church of St Michael & All Angels was closed for a period of six weeks whilst a major re-ordering took place to bring the building firmly into the 21st Century. The majority of the works carried out were as a direct result of the Disability Discrimination Act.

The main entrance porch was ramped for wheelchair access; the doors replaced with new glazed doors and a fine new vestibule built of glazed French oak incorporating a toilet and new kitchenette area – this has certainly cured the problem of cold draughts blowing through the doors!

Internally the font was moved from its old location, which used to cause major bottlenecks on entering and leaving the church. This is now located in the north aisle and visible immediately upon entering the church. The old arrangement is shown left, and the new below (Photos courtesy of Mike Thorpe).

At the same time the rearmost wooden pews in the north aisle were removed creating a much needed ‘open-space’.

The whole of the flooring at the rear of the church was removed and infilled (a job that had been done sometime in the 1960s but sorely needed redoing). The whole is now level and clad in oak floorboards. New chairs were purchased to give additional seating when required. All of the stone slabs leading from the entrance porch into church were lifted and re-laid to give a firm level surface.

The old Choir stalls, which were far too small and uncomfortable, were removed and the flooring renovated. The stalls were replaced with comfortable upholstered chairs and new stalls, made by parishioner Gerald Spencer. He also made the new mobile Hymn Book trolley replacing the storage cupboards which were removed to make way for the new vestibule.

During this period of upheaval the regular services of worship were transferred to the Church Hall. The Church was reopened for use with these new arrangements on Sunday 10th June 2007.

Very much the old order is illustrated here in this postcard which possibly dates from just after dedication of the south aisle war memorial in April 1921. Notice the pulpit, which was removed from the church some twenty odd years ago. The choir stalls are much nearer to the altar than in recent years. To the right is the war memorial, presented by R.F. Mills of Tapton Grove. This is sitting atop its original ‘slender column about 5½ft. in height.’ The sculptor was Charles Sargeant Jagger.

What happened to the column and when was the top section moved to its present position, fixed to the south aisle wall?

During the period under review Network Rail has completed work on stage 1b of a signalling renewal of the Midland line in our area. A new ‘East Midlands Signalling Centre’ (EMSS) has been built at Derby. The Narborough to the Hinckley line and Erewash Valley line has already been resignalled but was not transferred to the new centre straight away.\textsuperscript{29}

The area roughly from Stretton and Coney Green (Clay Cross) to north of Tapton was the first to be actually transferred to the new signalling centre as new signalling was commissioned. This occurred during a series of blockades of all the lines through Chesterfield. Over the weekend of 30/31 August signalling was commissioned from Stretton to Tapton, with remaining Erewash lines from Coney Green to Tapton being fully commissioned to the new EMSS over the weekend of 6/7 September.\textsuperscript{30} Not only has the area been resignalled but some track renewed, speed increased in some locations and new junctions put in. In order to facilitate this Chesterfield station was unable to receive trains over a number of weekends, particularly Sundays, prior to the two weekend blockades.

There is now a Chesterfield south junction (Coney Green junction, Clay Cross being abolished). Tapton Junction remains, with the addition of a Chesterfield North junction, which is just to the north of Chesterfield Station.

Most signalling was controlled from Trent power signal box—signals had a “TT” plate on them denoting this. A few more northerly signals, particularly in the Tapton area, at or about the footbridge and from the north end of the station platforms and controlled from Sheffield, have also been abolished. These are replaced with new LED signals, much brighter than the old, controlled by the EMSS. The old signals had an “S” plate on them. Other signals controlled from Sheffield remain as before.

Our illustration, looking south with Tapton footbridge in the background, shows a diverted tank train from Kingsbury heading towards Lindsey on the evening of 25 August. To the right is a gantry (now removed) with a colour-light signal controlled from Sheffield. Inset is its ‘S16’ plate (i.e. Sheffield power signal box, signal 16). The signal to the far left was S14, also now abolished.

Signals controlled from the new EMSS are plated with the lines they serve. For example ‘DC’ means Derby to Chesterfield. There are further phases of the scheme to come, with ‘South Erewash’ next. The total cost is around £250 million, the Chesterfield phase costing £40 million.

The scheme allows greater flexibility with the platforms in Chesterfield station now signalled so that trains can run each way (called bi-directional signalling). There is also scope for the new third platform at the station, for which a planning application was submitted in May 2008.\textsuperscript{31} The existing signalling dated from 1969 (the Trent signals) and 1972 (roughly speaking, the Sheffield signals)\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{29} Information for the majority of background in this section via personal observation and Modern Railways, June 2008, p.80; especially September 2008, p. 60-61; Today’s Railways UK, August 2007, p. 42-45; Rail, 18-31 July 2007, p. 40-41 and 13-26 August, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{30} Information mainly from Ralph Rawlinson via Derbyshire Railways internet newsgroup, posted 2 September 2008. [On-line to subscribers only at derbysirailWAYS@yahooGroups.com].
\textsuperscript{31} The application’s reference is CHE/08/00367.
\textsuperscript{32} British Rail Eastern Region, Supplementary signalling notice no. 41A, from 12 October 1969, between Horns Bridge and Tapton Junction. Supplementary signalling notice no. 29, from 16 January 1972, Tapton Junction – Dore – Heeley Carriage Sidings.
Due to engineering work there is a complete blockade of Bradway Tunnel, north of Dronfield, which started on Monday 8 September to 12 December. This sees diversions around the ‘old road’ through Barrow Hill, with various service alterations.

Whilst on the subject of railways, it is worth recording that changes have occurred to train operating companies (TOCs). The new Stagecoach owned ‘East Midlands Trains’ TOC commenced on the 11 November 2007. The operation is based on the former Midland Mainline TOC, along with some local services operated by the former Central Trains TOC (including Norwich to Liverpool). Both former TOCs were owned by National Express. They have now disappeared. At the same date the majority of Virgin Trains ‘CrossCountry’ operation was transferred to Arriva, who now operate it and some additional routes under the ‘CrossCountry’ brand. CrossCountry have been fairly quick to apply their new livery to the ‘Voyager’ trains operating through our area, Stagecoach less so to their trains.

Finally, though out of our area, but never-the-less sure to be of interest, is an August 2008 planning application by the county council for the former lock-keeper’s cottage at Hollingwood, This is to be redeveloped for community use, ‘providing offices and multi purpose space.’ Land nearby is to be redeveloped for car parking. The lock house was built when the canal in this area was diverted for the Manchester Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway (MSLR), which ultimately formed a loop off the main line at Staveley to Heath and so dates from about 1890. According to Cuckoo, it is the only surviving example along the Chesterfield Canal and one of only four Great Central Railway (a later name for the MSLR) lock houses in the country. An application was made to the Big Lottery fund for about £380,000 earlier in 2008, which received stage one approval.

People

People wise, we were very sorry to lose a number of well-known residents, or people connected with our area, during the year. It is particularly difficult to single out individuals, so we are necessarily selective.

Bernard Ambler of Westmoor Road, who had formed his estate agent company in 1963, died in June 2008. The death of Mr Norman Booker (aged 93) of Hollingwood, who many will remember as a Brimington Royal British Legion stalwart, was reported in October 2007. Mr R. Crawford, who for some years ran the electrical shop on High Street, Brimington (now sadly closed) died in September 2007.

Two teachers connected with schools taking Brimington children sadly passed away during the period under review. Miss H. Exley of Brimington Common, who until retirement had been a domestic science teacher at Hollingwood Girls’ School, died in February 2008, aged 92. Mr R. Crofts, of Stretton, who for many years taught rural science at Brimington Boys’, died aged 80 in 2007.

Congratulations must go to Geoff Orme, Civilian Instructor of 1082 (Brimington) Squadron Air Training Corps for completion of over 40 years service to the ATC. He had originally joined 1082 Squadron as a cadet in 1946. Apparently the ATC are currently researching their history. We understand that Brimington will feature…

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33 The majority of information in this paragraph is sourced from Today’s Railways UK, August 2007, p. 68; Rail, 4-17 July 2007, p. 6-9; 1-14 August 2007, p. 24-25; 29 August-17 September 2007, p. 15.
35 Cuckoo, (the magazine of the Chesterfield Canal Trust), Summer 2008, p. 7.
36 DT, 5 June 2008.
37 DT, 18 October 2007.
39 DT, 7 February 2008.
40 DT, 6 September 2007.
41 DT, 16 May 2008.
Miscellaneous

In August 2008 the Post Office, announced a review of fifteen branches across north Derbyshire, including Brimington Common. A seven week public consultation period started at the beginning of the month. Closure was confirmed in mid October, at a date to be fixed. This will be the second post office in Brimington to go in recent years. New Brimington succumbed in May 2006 and is now a private house.

One final notable event, in our selective review, was Brimington Common Methodist Church’s celebration of its 140th anniversary with a musical evening in November 2007.

Philip Cousins and Doug Spencer.
Sources are referenced, otherwise remarks are personal observation.
Photographs are by or in the collection of Philip Cousins.

OUR YEAR IN VIEW: GROUP EVENTS

Brimington Village Market

The group staged an exhibition at the Brimington ‘village market’ on Saturday 14 June, 2008. This comprised a number of our newly acquired and fitted up display units. On these were posted a good mixture of old photographs. Two of our members Brian Smith and Elizabeth Pemberton also produced displays on ‘Around Tapton’ and ‘Church Street’, respectively. The exhibition was well received (photograph, top right). Local MP Paul Holmes and Councillor Terry Gilby along with a number of other local councillors, attended and had a good look round. Paul is pictured (bottom right), chatting to our Chairman.

Reminiscences Group

In addition to our evening talk programme we have continued to hold our reminiscence group meetings, which have attracted a fair few people over the year. We see this as an important part of our work and hope to strengthen its appeal and usefulness in the coming year.

42 DT, 7 August 2008.
43 DT, 16 October 2008.
44 Mount Tabor Newsletter, June 2006. With thanks to David Slater for this information.
Talk Programme

Philip Cousins opened our 2007/2008 ‘fourth Thursday evening’ talk season with an exploration of Tapton Grove. This talk was illustrated by a number of slides looking at both the property and the people who lived there. The Jebbs, Meynells, Mills, Shentalls and Short families, along with many others were discussed.

October saw another of our members, Stan Wetton, present ‘History in the Making: part one’. This was an audience participation evening! Half of them recognised themselves on the screen as slides from various activities, particularly in the 1970s, were shown. This produced great frivolity.

In November four members of the Hasland Theatre Company visited us. They talked about the history of the theatre and how they became involved. This was followed by each of them entertaining the audience with monologues and short readings.

December was our members evening when we were treated to short presentations of photographs from the past by our Chairman and Vice-Chairman (Doug Spencer and Philip Cousins), plus a static display of photographs provided by two members – Brian Smith and Alan Sharp. This evening was very popular, with refreshments including mince pies and mulled wine setting the mood for Christmas.

The January programme, presented by Anne Hodson, was preceded by our first AGM. This evening was very well attended as a number of people who had worked at Whittington Hall Hospital (the subject of Anne’s talk) had come along to renew old acquaintances. Even for those of us who had not worked at the Hall, Anne’s talk proved to be very enjoyable. The AGM formally saw the constitution of the group adopted after some debate, with officers elected. We were officially formed from this date.

Our Vice-Chairman presented two more talks for us. In January we learnt about John Knowles, a forgotten 19th century railway contractor, who was a partner in the iron smelters at Furnace Farm and lived at Matlock. The second presentation, in February, was entitled ‘Brimington in the 1970s…’ which mainly examined newspaper reports and advertisements of the time. This was another evening when we did not know who was going to appear on the screen next. Again, lots of audience participation.

In March our guest speaker was Philip Riden, who talked to us about Bess of Hardwick, debunking a few common myths on the way. Mr Riden, from Nottingham University and the County Editor of the Derbyshire Victoria County History, has spent a considerable amount of time researching Bess from original sources. The talk was obviously topical in this (2008) the 400th anniversary of her death.

In May another guest speaker, Peter Hawkins, spoke to us about Markham and Company, from its early origins as the Victoria Foundry to final closure. Many were surprised to find that the company actually produced a wide variety of engineering equipment over the years.

We finished our programme in June with an out-door event – a guided walk around Staveley, with Sandra Struggles. Unfortunately, as last year, we were subjected to an evening of rain. This year it was torrential. At least last year I managed to take some photographs of a rainbow…this year I could not manage one single one. Sandra explained something of the interesting history of Staveley, albeit mainly sheltering in the church or church porch. Our thanks must go to her for bearing with the weather. Fingers crossed for our 2009 out-door event!

I must end by thanking all our speakers for an interesting and worthwhile year. It is particularly gratifying that we have been able to mix ‘home-grown’ speakers with those from outside. My thanks, of course, to our committee and those of you who support us in other ways, be it helping out at events or simply attending them. We hope that these activities make it worthwhile being a member of the Brimington and Tapton Local History Group.

Janet Walmsley.
Photographs are by Philip Cousins.
THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE LITTLE SHOP
David Slater

Foreword

This article originally appeared over two parts in the Brimington Review during 1984.¹ The Brimington Review was a community newsletter appearing about three or four times a year. It ceased publication with issue 14, in December 1987.

Since David Slater wrote his articles there has been further contraction of local shops in the village. In order to preserve David’s original article we have added the locations of these now closed shops, where David referred to them as open, in square brackets and italics, plus some other supplementary information. Footnotes, where these appear, were not original to David’s article. We have also taken the opportunity to add some photographs and contemporary advertisements, none of which appeared in the original account. The footnotes and captions have been added by Philip Cousins.

David’s article does not attempt to give a full history of every shop in the village centre nor does it, for that matter, mention every one of them. What it does do is present a highly readable glimpse of the small shop’s ‘golden age’; in this case in the period from the late 1930s to the late 1950s. This was before the advent of mass supermarket shopping that we all ‘enjoy’ today.

We are extremely grateful to David for giving us permission to use his work.

An Edwardian view of Church Street, Brimington. The ‘Red Lion’ public house is to the left. Hunter’s shop, the present chemists, is out of view, as is Parkin Yard—the passageway from Church Street to Fojambe Road—down which Doughty’s bus garage was situated. David Slater describes how narrow Church Street once was, with Woodhead’s shop jutting out to the right in this postcard view. (Collection P. Cousins)

¹ D. Slater, ‘Golden age of the little shop’, Brimington Review, number 2, p. 8; number 3, p. 8.
Introduction

Before the days of supermarkets, nearly all food was bought in the village. The trip into town for clothes and the few items not to be found in Brimington was a once-a-week special occasion. Some of the small shops have been demolished, many have become ordinary houses. Here are a few memories to stir your imagination.

The Village Centre

Church Street used to be much narrower than it is now. Where the surgery is, a row of terraced houses and shops came right up to the roadside. The main one was Woodheads, with a big coffee machine in the window and a lovely aroma which filled the shop. Opposite, in the building which is now the chemists, was Hunters, with counters facing you on two sides as you went in the corner shop. Biscuit tins lined the front of the counters, and the bacon slicer was in the far left corner. Before the Co-op or Green Shield ever thought of it, they gave dividend stamps on purchases. Between Parkin Yard and the Butchers Arms all the premises were owned by tradespeople. First came Doughty’s Buses, then Bennett’s (sweets and general), Johnny Yeomans and a barber’s shop (now the Chinese Chip Shop) complete with barber’s pole.

Johnny Yeomans sold hardware, but he was famous for his beautiful ice-cream and his ice-cream cart, a curious purpose built horse-drawn small square box on wheels with windows all round, and with Johnny’s considerable weight tipping down the back end. What is now Gina’s Pennywise was Bert Humphry’s cobbler’s shop. Bert’s cheerful personality shone through the stacked boxes of shoes for sale and the piles of shoes awaiting repairs or collection. The Radio and Television Shop was Shentall’s grocers and behind it, on Devonshire Street, stood Mrs. Avery’s wallpaper shop up a few steps. It is now demolished and the land forms the Ark Tavern car park.

2 Hunters, like Woodheads and Shentall’s was not Brimington based. They had shops in other villages.
At the top end of Church Street the corner shop was Mr. and Mrs. Staniforth’s fruit and vegetable shop from 1934 for some 27 years. The shop opposite the Church was Mr. Salmons’ \[now the taxi booking office\], and then a little lower the very old stone built shop with the proud gilt letters ‘T. W. Hinch’ was a delight to go into. The shop may have been cold with mainly tiles and counter slab, but the reception was as warm as the fresh bread they sold. [This possibly 17th century property was unfortunately demolished in the early 1970s]. Back on to the Church side of the road now, and George ‘Clocky’ Brown, a real village character, did watch and clock repairs from the top house in the terraced row.³

Moving on to Ringwood Road, the first building on the left opposite the newsagents \[now the ‘Corner House’\] was Wakefield’s stores. An old stone building with a low, beamed shop which had an aroma all of its own. They sold everything. Mr. Wakefield must have been very old when he kept the shop going in the early fifties. He had a bakehouse on the premises and was involved in the highlight of the Brimington year, the annual Sunday School Union procession when he baked buns for all the children taking part. Once a year he erected a huge sign, ‘Sabbath Schools are the Lord’s nurseries’, in letters of rice.

Further on Ringwood Road, Darkins Fish and Chips will be remembered with affection by all who ever ate them. From 1933 until the mid-sixties, apart from a brief war break, chips were enjoyed from that small shop which stood where the bus stop is now. Further on still, past Michael and Margaret’s (still happily with us) a sweets/general groceries shop. [Michaels’ was a gent’s hairdresser—now Jimmy’s hairdressers. Margaret’s (Webster) was a wool shop. It is now a residence—number 19 Ringwood Road. The sweets and general groceries shop is now a house—number 29 Ringwood Road].

### New Brimington

This part deals mainly with New Brimington starting at the top of Princess Street. The house on the corner of Brockhill used to be a chip shop, first ‘Jacks’ and then Herrings, whose family founded the ‘Ring’ potato crisps firm, an early challenger to Smith’s. Before reverting to a house Mr. Kilroy had his bookies shop here.

³‘Clocky’ Brown also ran a short-lived bus/coach business from the garage on Chesterfield Road, now a car sales plot, near Briar View.
Further down on the same side as the school was Jessop’s cobblers. They have had a business in Brimington since 1911, when John Thomas lived in High street, but had his shop adjoining the then bottom house on King Street, (No. 68). He had the Princess Street shop for many years. His son John joined him in 1947. They kept the middle of the three shops on the left hand side of Ringwood Road before building the shop where John still trades, opposite Jardine’s Garage. [This shop is now demolished. Its site is by the driveway to the south of the modernised stone built Housing Association properties, opposite the filling station—see photograph below. Jardine’s Garage is now the Jet Petrol filling station (a new build), whilst Jardine’s car showrooms were partially reconstructed as the range of shops and small garage].

J.Jessop’s now demolished premises on High Street, pictured in the summer of 1982. This was presumably Jessop’s ‘repairing factory’ mentioned in the 1949 advertisement, but by this time was his sole remaining premise.

(P. Cousins)

A little lower on the other side of Princess Street, was Mrs. Pickard’s shop. She was a lovely lady who ran a ‘club’ to save up for bottom drawer items such as crockery. Miss Drury had the shop after that. It was like walking into a forgotten Victorian age, with an extremely dark wood counter and little railings, and a wide range of goods on sale from paraffin and sticks to sweets and notepaper. A couple of doors below this shop was Herbert’s, latterly Wilton’s paint and wallpaper. Mr. Herbert farmed the fields behind Henry Bradley school before the Coal Board houses were built.¹ Local historian Vernon Brelsford lived in ‘Holly Dene’ on Princess Street when he wrote his history of Brimington.² [Holly Dene is number 62 Princess Street].

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¹This is Devon Drive, Hereford Drive, etc. These houses were erected by the Coal Industries Housing Association, for rent to families engaged in the mining industry.
²V. Brelsford, History of Brimington from the Domesday Survey to 1937, (1937). Brelsford was Clerk to Brimington Parish Council for many years.
The corner of Princess Street and Queen Street was known for many years as Godfrey’s Corner in respect of the long association with T. W. Godfrey as the gilt sign proudly proclaimed. A real grocer’s this, with bacon slicer, Hinch’s fresh bread and meat products. A few doors down on the same side Mr. Swift had his gents’ hairdressing salon in the front room and a little lower still another sell-everything shop kept for many years by Burkitts and Murkins. The chip shop was run by Mr and Mrs Norton whose soft fish-cake recipe was famous, secret and delicious! The beer-off on the corner of Victoria Street was variously kept by Bert Eastwood (later Brimington Common’s postman), Starbucks, Greaves and Orwinds. Halfway down Queen Street, on the opposite side of the road where Wilkins ladies hairdresser was, was Connie Brookes’ pork butchers. The building over the back lane at the back of the house, now a small children’s park, was Connie’s slaughter house. The present post office in New Brimington was kept by the Bradley family for many years. Their name lives on in Bradley Hall. They were followed by Hempsalls. Next to their shop Mr Golding had his one-man taxi in the days when cars were few and far between. [The post office, number 76 Queen Street, closed 19 May 2006. It was the last shop in New Brimington. It is now a house].

The centre of New Brimington is Victoria Street, and Dave’s News started life as Bambers’ wallpaper shop. Post-war memories are of Bob one of the Nash brothers, who kept the shop meticulously and had a curious habit of always humming an unrecognisable tune. Skelhorn’s off-licence was kept over the years by Dick Sharman, George and Arthur Barker and their father ‘Bobby’ Barker who was the Sergeant on Ringwood Road. The bus stop there is still known as ‘Sergeant’s’ [this name is dying out, it refers to the bus stop on Ringwood Road in the vicinity of number 40]. George made his own ice-lollies well before Walls’ brought out those triangular orange lollies. They were 1d or 1½d giant size! [Both Dave’s news and Skelhorn’s off-licence have closed. They are now both in residential use. Skelhorn’s still has a frieze for Stone’s ales on the outside].

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48A, QUEEN STREET, BRIMINGTON
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RAZOR CUTTING, TINTING, PERMANENT WAVING.

Mount Tabor Newsletter, June 2006.
THE CANAL TAVERN
Philip Cousins, 34 John Street, Brimington, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S43 1ER.

Though not in Brimington the existence of a public house, nearly on our doorstep, next to the Chesterfield Canal, might bring a glimmer into the eye of today’s walker in need of refreshment. Unfortunately this public house, situated right on the canal towpath, about half-way between Hollingwood Lock and Mill Green, disappeared in the 1960s.

Jim McIntosh has described a series of public houses near the Chesterfield Canal in InnSpire, the Chesterfield Campaign for Real Ale’s magazine.¹ The article presented here features just one of these drinking houses—the ‘Canal Tavern’.

Until the late 1920s, there were two establishments situated on the canal side stretch from Hollingwood Lock into Staveley. First came the ‘Moulders’ Arms’, at Lees Buildings, situated on the south side of the canal and accessed from a footbridge.

As part of the Finance (1909-1910) Act the Inland Revenue carried out a rating survey valuation, designed to find out the site value of all land in the United Kingdom as on 30 April 1909. The so-called Field Books, which represented the final survey information and are now in The National Archive at Kew, give an insight into property at the time.

The Moulders’ Arms was visited in December 1914 as part of the valuation survey.² The Field Book records that it was owned by the Chesterfield Brewery Company with R. Wood as the occupier. Of ‘blue brick’ with slated roof, its facilities included ‘tap, smoke, snug, best and smoke [?] room’, with kitchen, three bedrooms, two attic rooms and possibly a club room. There was a small yard and whilst it was said that the property was in good repair outside, it was considered ‘poor’ inside. The Moulders’ Arms closed in 1927.³

Canal Row

Next along the canal, towards Staveley, came the Canal Tavern. Though not marked on the 6 inch, 1921 Ordnance Survey map⁴ extract accompanying this article, it was situated at a right angle to ‘Canal Row’, on the north bank of the canal.

Canal Row has an interesting history. Although the 1898 Ordnance Survey map⁵ accompanying this article shows a block of 9 properties, using the valuation Field Books⁶, we see that these were, in fact, a row of 18 back-to-back houses (numbers 1 to 18), each with six rooms, two of these rooms being attics. This row was at a right angle to, but not directly connecting with, the tavern (i.e. running north to south). In addition to this row there were two cottages, which directly abutted the Canal Tavern to its eastern side. These, numbers 19 and 20, had four rooms each. All were owned at the time of the survey by Mrs D.M. Barrow. In 1920 the block of 18, along with the two other cottages, were for auction as part of a much larger sale of Mrs Barrow’s property in the area.⁷ The row and the two cottages were

² The National Archive (TNA), IR 58/21885, property assessment number 242.
³ McIntosh ‘Canal pubs’.
⁴ OS map, 6 inches to 1 mile, (1921), Derbyshire Sheet XVIII SE.
⁵ OS map 25 inches to 1 mile (1898,), Derbyshire sheet XVIII 16
⁶ TNA, IR 58/21903. The plan is attached to property assessment number 1994.
⁷ Auction Sale Catalogue: Estate of Mrs D.M. Barrow, 28 October, 1920. (Chesterfield Local Studies Library)
demolished some time between this date and 1938. In 1963 it was reported that Canal Row was known to some locals as ‘Frog Row’ and that it had included a house selling fish and chips.

The Canal Tavern

The Canal Tavern was originally a beerhouse, established some time before the 1869 Wine and Beerhouse Act. The licence was not a full one. This meant that the tavern could only sell beer and porter, not spirits. A full licence was granted in February 1949. In 1963 the Derbyshire Times claimed that an inn had been on the site for three centuries, but offered no evidence for this, particularly as beerhouse licences were only granted from 1830.

Beerhouses can be difficult to trace in contemporary trade directories, as, unlike public houses, their sign is not usually listed. Never-the-less, we find Mark Waterhouse, Canal Row, as a retailer of beer in Pigot’s directories of 1835 and 1842. Prior to that we find M. Waterhouse listed in White’s directory of 1833, but with no location given. The 1840 one-inch Ordnance Survey map annotates Canal Row, but the tavern is not shown. Sanderson’s map of 1835 also notes ‘Canal Row’.

A Devonshire Estate map of 1783, appearing in Arthur Court’s ‘Staveley: my native town’ shows no trace of buildings in the area. This could be explained if the property was not part of the Devonshire Estate. The Staveley tithe apportionment of 1839 shows William Waterhouse as landowner, with his property described as gardens and houses, of 1 rood and 33 perches. At this date George Hodgkinson Barrow owned Canal Row. Anthony Smith, in his transcription and analysis of the Staveley parish registers, found Canal Row to feature in them from 1828.

Returning to the Canal Tavern, Edward Williamson is listed in White’s directory of 1857, where the premises are described as ‘beerhouse, Canal row’. Later, courtesy of Kelly’s directories, we find Alfred Williamson at the ‘Canal Tavern’ in 1881; Albert Williamson, beer retailer at the ‘Canal side’ in 1888 and again at ‘Canal row’ in 1899 through to 1904. Elisha Jacques is there by 1922.

The Inland Revenue field book lists ownership of the Tavern with Rev. G Bennett, A.G. Cowell and A.H. Marrian. Duncan Gilmour and Company were the occupiers. The tenancy was for 10 years from 24 June 1906. Yearly rent was £64. Gilmours paid all rates and were liable for repairs. Unfortunately the usual description of the property in the field book is not entered – there is a simple note; ‘see card with

8 OS Map, 25 inch to 1 mile, (1938) Derbyshire Sheet, XVIII 16.
9 Derbyshire Times (DT), 8 March 1963.
10 McIntosh ‘Canal pubs’. DT, 10 March 1939.
11 DT, 11 February 1949.
12 DT, 8 March 1963.
13 Hirst, Chesterfield Pubs, p.1.
14 Pigot, Directory of Derbyshire, (1835), p. 76.
16 White, Directory of Sheffield and district, (1833), p. 430.
17 OS map, 1 inch to 1 mile, old series, (1840), sheet 82.
18 G Sanderson, Map of twenty miles round Mansfield, 1835 (reprinted 2001).
19 A. Court Staveley my native town, (1948), as endpapers.
20 Staveley Tithe Apportionment (1839) and Map (1841). Microfilm copy in Chesterfield Local Studies Library.
23 Kelly’s, Directory of Derbyshire, (1881), p.72.
27 TNA, IR 58/21885, property assessment number 241.
file’. Presumably this is now lost. Property descriptions do not appear in the so-called ‘Domesday Books’, which were a first step towards the valuation required by the 1910 Act. In the volume covering the Canal Tavern ownership of the property is given as being with Duncan Gilmour Brewery.\textsuperscript{28} There is a crossed-out reference to ‘Merrians Brewery Co’ as the owners. Returning to the Field Books; the original valuation of the property was increased from £900 to £1,340 in March 1918.\textsuperscript{29}

The tenant of the Canal Tavern in 1939 was William Henry Wright, who it was said, had been licensee for just over three years.\textsuperscript{30} Before that his father-in-law had been there for 27 years.\textsuperscript{31} In 1963 the \textit{Derbyshire Times} caught up with W.H. Wright’s son, Mr J.G. Wright, who was then landlord at the ‘Lord Nelson’ in Stephenson Place, Chesterfield. The younger Wright told the newspaper ‘I was born in the Canal Tavern…My Grandfather Mr Elisha Jacques had it for 30 years; and my father, Mr W.H. Wright, was landlord for about 24 years.’\textsuperscript{32}

Whatever the minor discrepancies it seems, therefore, that the tavern was in operation as a beerhouse before 1835 and was largely in the hands of a succession of families or tenancies. Canal Row and the two cottages next to the Tavern were in the separate ownership of the Barrow family, of Staveley works fame.

Three \textit{Derbyshire Times} articles in 1938, 1939 and 1963 give some further information on the Canal Tavern.\textsuperscript{33}

In 1938 the police had raised an objection at the annual licence meeting. They claimed the premises were structurally unsuitable and that they were not required. Before this objection had been raised, the brewery company had served notice on the Clerk to the magistrates that they were going to place before them a scheme for a new licence, on a different site. This would have seen the Canal Tavern abandoned. The owner of the unspecified new site had, however, insisted that the brewery complete purchase; this on the very last day for serving notice to the Clerk for the new licence scheme. The brewery had declined; ‘they would not be forced in that manner,’ the \textit{Derbyshire Times} reported. Their representative, P.E.G. Mather, stated that the company would do everything in their power to get an alternative site, acceptable to the magistrates, for next year’s licensing session. The police still objected, but the magistrates decided to renew the licence and consider the whole matter at the next year’s licensing sessions.

The position of the brewery, Duncan Gilmour and Company of Sheffield, had changed by the licensing sessions of 1939. There was no scheme for replacement of the tavern.

That year the \textit{Derbyshire Times} reported police claims that there were once 62 houses, with an estimated population of 248, in the ‘immediate neighbourhood’, but that these were now demolished, with the tavern now isolated. The isolated situation is confirmed on the 1938 large scale Ordnance Survey map; as stated earlier Canal Row had disappeared since the 1920 D.M. Barrow property sale.\textsuperscript{34} Though Canal Row, is shown on the 1840 first edition 1 inch Ordnance Survey map\textsuperscript{35}, whether there were the stated houses in the immediate vicinity at that date is doubtful.

\textsuperscript{28} Derbyshire Record Office, DS95R/1/1/23. District Valuation Office ‘Domesday Book’ Staveley 1-1598, f. 30, property assessment reference 241.

\textsuperscript{29} TNA, IR 58/21885, property assessment number 241.

\textsuperscript{30} DT, 10 March 1939.

\textsuperscript{31} DT, 10 March 1939.

\textsuperscript{32} DT, 8 March 1963.

\textsuperscript{33} DT, 11 February 1938; 10 March 1939; 8 March 1963.

\textsuperscript{34} OS Map, 25 inch to 1 mile, (1938) Derbyshire Sheet, XVIII 16.

\textsuperscript{35} OS Map, 1 inch to 1 mile, (1840), sheet 82.
According to the 1939 *Derbyshire Times* report there were differing views about the tavern’s level of patronage. The police (who were still objecting to the licence renewal) stated that on visits undertaken in October, November and December 1937 an average of 19 persons were found on the premises. From January 28 to March 1939 the average was only nine.

Ernest Slater, the brewery’s Chesterfield and district manager, said that the amount of drink sold was an exceptionally good sale for a premise of the tavern’s nature. There had, as an example of his figures, been 110 barrels, of 36 gallons each, sold to the year-end February 1939. Further figures are reproduced in the table. Men from Staveley Works went to the tavern during their lunch hour. During the half-hour summer drinking extension, men from the shift finishing at 10 pm also visited.

The police, represented by Inspector Bramhill, said that the Canal Tavern’s darts team appeared to be boosting sales. The tenant had told the police he was selling about one and a half barrels a week, plus ‘a little bottled stuff’. Later the licensee (W.H. Wright) told the bench that he was ‘doing quite a comfortable trade’. Interestingly the brewers did not deliver to the premises. A carter was employed to fetch beer from the station. Which railway station this was is not recorded.

Though the police claimed the house was not required, with sufficient premises already in the area, the Bench found that the license would be renewed. Whether or not the presence of leading Staveley Company man D.N. Turner as chairman had any bearing on the outcome is not recorded!

Fishing, though still popular today, appeared to be particularly so in the inter-war period. This doubtless increased the popularity of the tavern and the Moulders Arms when, as one resident has recounted to the author, ‘droves’ of Sheffield people caught the train to Staveley Works station for fishing along the canal.  

The Canal Tavern did eventually close—on the 4 April 1963—when the then landlord Alfred Ernest Crane drew the last pint ‘…from the canal-cooled cellar.’ This occasion drew the attention of the *Derbyshire Times* of 8 March.  

Describing the tavern as ‘half forgotten’, the landlord is recorded as stating that most of his trade came from Staveley Work’s employees. ‘They slip across with their sandwiches during breaks. After the hot shops they find that the beer from my usually cool cellar washes down very well.’ These workers would probably be slipping out from the sand-spun pipe plant of Staveley Works, itself now just a memory. By 1962 the Ordnance Survey map shows the works had extended literally right up to the bottom of what, according to the *Derbyshire Times*, ‘…used to be the inn’s fruit-bush laden garden…’

The proximately of the tavern to the canal had resulted in some patrons taking an accidental dip. One time landlord’s son J.G. Wright confirmed stories of the fishing from inside the tavern. He told the *Derbyshire Times* in 1963; ‘Fishing from the window? That’s no angler’s tale, I’ve done it myself’.

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37 Information from Mr L. Knight (New Whittington), May 2006.
38 *DT*, 8 March 1963.
Evidence presented in 1939\textsuperscript{40} by architect J.B. Cutts indicated that the tavern was converted by joining two four-roomed cottages. Cutts estimated it to be more than 70 years old. ‘For an old house it was in an excellent state of repair and was very clean but was badly arranged regarding modern requirements,’ he had commented.

Outwardly the building was of red brick with ridged terracotta tiles. Our illustration from 1953\textsuperscript{41} shows the tavern and house, with evidence of abutting buildings on either side - confirmed by various editions of large scale Ordnance Survey maps.\textsuperscript{42} Shown on both the 1877 and 1898 maps, to the east of the living accommodation were the two adjoining cottages. Abutting to the west was another building, slightly jutting out from the front alignment of the tavern. In 1877 there was a much smaller building almost joined to this building at the north-west corner—larger and joined to the other by 1898. These buildings, probably stabling, wash-houses, or similar, appear to be part of the property and were reduced or rebuilt at some stage.

Our illustration, along with others available, shows that some windows are of differing proportion. There also appears to be a clean brickwork join between the eastern bay section and the rest of the property, and again on the western bay. To the west side was a small ground floor extension. All in all, the sort of constructional muddle one might expect from residential properties converted into a beerhouse.

In 1939 the police claimed the premises, ‘… were cold and draughty and the only accommodation for the licensee on the ground floor was a small kitchen. There was no bathroom.’ In 1963\textsuperscript{43} the premises were described as containing ‘…the smart little best room; the long concert room that was once a shooting gallery and the cellar…’\textsuperscript{44} Living accommodation is not mentioned. The shooting gallery is perhaps explained by the existence of a photograph in David Mathew’s book Around Staveley\textsuperscript{45}, showing the Canal Tavern’s shooting team of 1904. In 1963 it was stated that outside were stables with standings for four horses, by then used as pigsties.\textsuperscript{46} These are probably the buildings to the left of the tavern on our illustration. It was said that the buildings had been used when canal boatmen stayed overnight.\textsuperscript{47}

If anyone remembers the internal layout of the tavern, the author would like to hear from them. It appears, however, that the east part of the building – the section with the lattice design wooden porch on our illustration - formed the living accommodation. This also occupied the whole of the first floor. Customers would enter from a door under the sign, approached by the pathway illustrated. To the west side of the path was situated a ground floor extension, with slate roof; this probably formed a cloakroom area, accessible from inside the tavern. The bar was then inside to the right, with the ‘smart little best room’ to the left. The ‘long concert room’ occupied the rear, served from the same bar. Toilets were outside.\textsuperscript{48}

The ‘concert room’ was indeed used as such. Late in the tavern’s life regular performances from ‘skiffle’\textsuperscript{49} groups were apparently held there.\textsuperscript{50}

\textsuperscript{40} DT, 10 March 1939.
\textsuperscript{41} Ian Cleland’s illustration appears on the front of Staveley News, October 1953. This was the magazine of the Staveley Iron and Chemical Company Limited.
\textsuperscript{42} Information in this paragraph is from OS Maps, 25 inch to 1 mile, (1877, 1898, 1916 and 1938), Derbyshire Sheets, XVIII 16.
\textsuperscript{43} DT, 8 March 1963.
\textsuperscript{44} DT, 10 March 1939.
\textsuperscript{46} DT, 8 March 1963.
\textsuperscript{47} DT, 8 March 1963.
\textsuperscript{48} Information regarding internal layout from Mr B Sherlock and Mr J Middleton, May 2006.
\textsuperscript{49} ‘Skiffle’ is a type of music with various influences. It was usually performed on homemade or improvised instruments, typically washboards, tea chests, fiddles, etc. It became popular in this country in the 1950s and early 1960s.
At closure the brewery would have been Joshua Tetley of Leeds, who had taken over Gilmours in 1954.\(^{51}\)

It is worth quoting a short piece from the 1963 *Derbyshire Times* article, though it conjures up a perhaps romanticised version of the past.

> ‘There was a time, the old folk say, when whole rows of houses adjoined the ancient inn and one of them sold fish and chips. To some the spot is “Frog Row” still. There were sun-warmed days when the roof rang to boatmen’s laughter, and their horses filled the stables; when fishermen thronged the canal banks, and trade was even brisker after closing time in jugs of tea.’

The premises were to be demolished some time after the closure, at an unspecified date.\(^{52}\) Now the tavern is but a distant memory to some, unknown to others. But at least the fish are back, along with the fishermen. Occasional boats too, though not carrying commercial loads, ply a rejuvenated Chesterfield Canal, past the site of the Canal Tavern.

**Acknowledgements**

I am grateful to those who gave personal reminiscences of the Canal Tavern, particularly John Middleton, Brian Sherlock and Lawrence Knight. Thanks to staff at Chesterfield Local Studies Library, Derbyshire Record Office and The National Archive, Kew.

**Illustrations of the Canal Tavern**

There are two illustrations of the Canal Tavern on Picture the Past at [www.picturethepast.co.uk](http://www.picturethepast.co.uk) (DCCD000471 and DCCD000472). Other illustrations appear in David Mathew’s book and in the *InnSpire* article, both cited in the references.

*This article originally appeared in Brimington Parish Church Magazine, July 2006. The whole was then published as a Chesterfield and District Local History Society History Paper (number 35). This article is a fully revised version, with new material and added footnotes.*

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\(^{50}\) Information from Mr B Sherlock, May 2006.

\(^{51}\) Hirst *Chesterfield Pubs*, p. 50.

\(^{52}\) *DT*, 8 March 1963.
The Canal Tavern, as pictured by Ian Cleland on the front of Staveley News, October 1953. The rough finish to the right-hand wall and particularly the roof, indicate where two abutting cottages have been demolished. The left, rendered wall, with the surface carried flue, also perhaps indicates demolition. The single storey slate roofed extension is thought to be a cloakroom area. This hides the entrance to the tavern, which was down the path-way, under the sign. The right hand portion and the first floor contained the living accommodation. Note the proximately of the works in the background. Ian Cleland worked in the Drawing Office at Staveley Works. What happened to the original picture?

An altered scale extract from the 6 inch to 1 mile, 1921 Ordnance Survey Map (Derbyshire Sheet XVIII.16 SE), showing the position of Canal Row. Note the aptly named “Moulder’s Arms” public house accessible via a footbridge over the canal. The Canal Tavern, though not marked, is adjacent to Canal Row. In later years the sand spun pipe plant extended right down to the tavern.
An extract from the 1898 edition of the 25-inch Ordnance Survey map (Derbyshire sheet XVIII.16 – scale enlarged). Canal Row appears to comprise nine cottages, but the Inland Revenue valuation survey Field Book shows that there were 18 properties (i.e. back-to-back, divided down the middle). The Canal Tavern is in the centre of the buildings immediately adjacent to the canal towpath. The two buildings to the right, numbers 19 to 20 Canal Row were later demolished. The W stands for well, the P for pump. The railway lines running to the bottom of the map are of the now closed Great Central Railway’s Chesterfield Loop.
A chance search of the London Gazette, available on-line, plus Brian Smith’s photographs of two mystery mineral water bottles, part of a our history group’s display at the 2008 ‘village market’, has helped bring together the hereto unknown story of Brimington’s own mineral water and jam factories.

The two pop bottles are marked ‘Isaac Clayton, Brimington’ and ‘Kirkham and Hebdige, New Brimington’. The London Gazette references are to the ‘Corona Fruit Preserving Company’.

Of the two bottles the Clayton one still remains a mystery, but the story of Kirkham and Hebdige can now be told. This is particularly due to the co-operation and interest of Alan Parkin, supplemented with research locally and in London.

It was Mr Parkin who saw the two photographs at the village market. He immediately realised that an abstract of title to his house on Coronation Road referred to both the mineral water and jam factory.¹

Kirkham and Hebdige

Very occasionally to be seen at flea markets and the like are bottles simply marked ‘Kirkham and Hebdige, New Brimington’. These light green translucent bottles stand about 215mm tall and have the familiar screw type stopper.

Whilst there was obviously a business of this name, there is no trace in trade directories of either a shop or manufactory in Brimington or New Brimington. Fortunately Mr Parkin’s abstract of title (a deed summarising previous property transactions) of what now comprises houses at 70 and 72 Coronation Road, establishes the business base there. The Abstract mentions a 1903² sale of the parcel of land, on which numbers 70 and 72 now stand, between a George Harold Clark as vendor, with Frederick Hebdige and Reuban Kirkham as purchasers.

In 1919³ the same abstract of title names Reuban Kirkham of Brimington ‘Mineral Water Manufacturer’ as selling the property to a consortium of people, of which more about later. At this date the property is described as ‘factory stable and premises erected upon…land formerly used as a mineral water factory but then used as a jam factory.’ Today we would call ‘mineral water’ carbonated flavoured soft drinks.

The land, of about 1002 square yards, had been owned at one time by the Brimington Freehold Land Society. Interestingly the abstract of title mentions that there was to be a ‘new street or road called or intended to be called Church Street’, to the east. This road was never built. Whether the ‘Church Street’ name was a drafting error or actually intended we may never know.

The embossed ‘New Brimington’ on the Kirkham and Hebdige bottle is still something of a mystery. New Brimington is clearly shown on maps of the period⁴ and certainly does not apply to the area at the northern end of Coronation Road. Perhaps Kirkham and Hebdige had a shop in New Brimington, but, like their actual factory, trade directories of the period do not mention this.

¹ Abstract of Title of Mrs Blanche Mycock to number 70 and 72 Coronation Road Brimington Chesterfield in the County of Derby. Stanton and Walker, Chesterfield, 1960. Original in possession of Mr Alan Parkin, 72 Coronation Road, Brimington. (Hereafter cited as AT)
² AT – Indenture of 21 May 1903.
³ AT – Indenture of 12 April 1919.
⁴ OS Map, 25 inch to 1 mile, (1898 and 1918), Derbyshire sheet XVIII.15.
The Inland Revenue Valuation Records of c.1910 in The National Archive\(^5\) describe ‘Mineral Water Factory’ on Coronation Road, with R. Kirkham as the owner and freeholder. The particulars list ‘B+S [brick and slate]. Mineral water store of 2 storeys one room in each. 4 stall stable of timber and iron and garden.’ All this was valued at £225, with the buildings accounting for £187. The purchase in 1903 had cost £25, with £150 subsequently being spent on the site. This latter figure presumably accounts for the work undertaken on the mineral water factory. Kirkham is also shown as occupying other land in the area—‘Little Close’ off Cowpingle Lane\(^6\) and other land off Bilby Lane.\(^7\) A Fred Hebdige was occupying a house in Heywood Street.\(^8\) Interestingly in the so-called ‘Domesday Books’, which were a first stage in the Inland Revenue’s valuation survey, the Coronation Road property is described as ‘stable and buildings’.\(^9\) Owned and occupied by Reuban Kirkham, there is a later annotation ‘Jam Factory’.\(^10\)

We therefore have confirmation that in 1903 Kirkham and Hebdige purchased land, after which date they probably erected buildings on the site, for use as a mineral water factory. These buildings were of two storeys, with separate stabling. The premises were certainly not constructed before 1898 as the Ordnance Survey map of this date does not show them. Hebdige is not referred to by the time (c.1910) of the Inland Revenue survey, leaving only Kirkham to sell the property in 1919.

It is not known when the mineral water business ceased, but in March 1918 the premises were in use as a jam factory.\(^11\)

**The ‘Corona Fruit Preserving Company’**

In March 1918\(^12\) a William John Pierce of Sanforth Street, Newbold, commenced in partnership with grocers Richard Hicks of Duke Street, Whittington Moor; Samuel Hicks, of Carlisle Street, Sheepbridge; Alfred Ernest Bradley of 107 Whittington Hill and Thomas Hicks of Duke Street, Whittington Moor.\(^13\) Thomas Hicks was Richard’s son, whilst Samuel and Richard were brothers, with Bradley the brother of Dora Bradley, Richard’s first wife.\(^14\)

The partners styled themselves ‘The Corona Fruit Preserving Company’.\(^15\) Their premises were the former mineral water manufacturing site on Coronation Road.\(^16\) There is, incidentally, no connection with the Corona soft drinks company, latterly subsumed in the Britvic empire.

Details of the business can be pieced together thanks to the Abstract of Title and a February 1921 report in the *Derbyshire Times*.

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\(^5\) The National Archive (TNA), IR 58/22005, property assessment number 154.

\(^6\) TNA, IR 58/22005, property assessment number 155

\(^7\) TNA, IR 58/22005, property assessment number 158

\(^8\) TNA, IR 58/22009, property assessment number 501. Derbyshire Record Office (DRO), D595 R 1/1/32. District Valuation Office ‘Domesday Book’ Brimington 1-1300, f. 40, property assessment reference 501. The owner was a William Chadbourn. In the DRO ‘Domesday Book’ there is a later annotation for this and the accompanying property (500) as 10 and 12 Heywood Street.

\(^9\) DRO, D595 R 1/1/32, f. 17, property assessment reference 154.

\(^10\) DRO, D595 R 1/1/32, f. 17, property assessment reference 154. There is a further, much later annotation; ‘70 Coronation Road’.

\(^11\) *Derbyshire Times*, 17 February 1923, (this report is hereafter cited as *DT*). This comprises a report of the jam factory owner’s bankruptcy.

\(^12\) *DT*.

\(^13\) *AT* — Indenture 12 April 1919.

\(^14\) Information from Doreen Turner and Alfred Bradley, via Mr A. Parkin.

\(^15\) *AT* and *DT*.

\(^16\) *AT*. 

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Each partner contributed £200 for an equal share of the business.\textsuperscript{17} Pierce was the only active partner, except a second, not named, who was a wholesale grocer and acted as sole selling agent for the jam.\textsuperscript{18} This unnamed partner is probably Richard. Pierce managed the business drawing a weekly salary of a little over £4.\textsuperscript{19} In the Abstract of title he is described as ‘fruit boiler’.\textsuperscript{20}

The premises were firstly rented for 11s a week.\textsuperscript{21} By April 1919 the business was running successfully, enabling the freehold of the property, still of some 1002 yards, to be purchased from Reuban Kirkham, by the partners, for £200.\textsuperscript{22} As in the 1910 Inland Revenue survey, Hebdige is not mentioned at this time. New buildings were added by the partners ‘…with additional plant at a total cost of £500’.\textsuperscript{23}

The business was initially successful, but at the year end June 1921 it had made a loss.\textsuperscript{24} This may well have forced dissolution of the partnership, which was carried into effect on the 1 June of that year.\textsuperscript{25}

Pierce evidently decided to continue. He took on the business, buying out his other four partners at £275 each. The Derbyshire Times\textsuperscript{18} reports that this was the supposed value of their shares according to a balance sheet prepared at the time.\textsuperscript{26} The premises, which comprised part of the business, were sold to Pierce for £500.\textsuperscript{27} Presumably the £275 includes an equal share of the property’s £500 value.

Pierce needed to finance this transaction so, in addition to initially paying £50 each to his former partners, he mortgaged the freehold of the property back to them, excepting Thomas Hicks.\textsuperscript{28} The abstract of title shows that Richard Hicks advanced £450 to Pierce, with Samuel Hicks and A.E. Bradley advancing £225 each.\textsuperscript{29} Pierce carried on the business alone under the Corona name.\textsuperscript{30} He presumably employed some staff.

There must have followed a difficult time for Pierce, for on the 30 January 1923, the London Gazette\textsuperscript{31} published a bankruptcy ‘receiving order’ for him, still at Sanforth Street ‘…carrying on business as the Corona Fruit Preserving Company at Coronation-road, Brimington…’

At the creditors hearing in February 1923 it was reported that the business had been losing money since October 1922. Apparently soon after Pierce became aware of his insolvency he had closed down. He attributed his failure to taking on stock at too high a value when the partnership had been dissolved, increasing prices and poor trading through the coal strike.\textsuperscript{32} This was presumably the 1921 ‘lock-out’ when miners across the country were not at work following abandonment of a war-time wages structure.\textsuperscript{33} Pierce was 50 years old at the time of the hearing.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{17} DT.
\textsuperscript{18} DT.
\textsuperscript{19} DT. On the microfilm copy in Chesterfield Local Studies the final pence figure is not readable – the sum given is £4.15s.?.d.
\textsuperscript{20} AT – Indenture 12 April 1919.
\textsuperscript{21} DT.
\textsuperscript{22} AT – Indenture 12 April 1919.
\textsuperscript{23} DT.
\textsuperscript{24} DT.
\textsuperscript{25} AT – Indenture 1 June 1921.
\textsuperscript{26} DT.
\textsuperscript{27} AT – indenture 1 June 1921.
\textsuperscript{28} DT and AT.
\textsuperscript{29} AT Indenture 2 June 1921.
\textsuperscript{30} DT.
\textsuperscript{31} London Gazette, 30 January 1923, p. 755.
\textsuperscript{32} This paragraph is wholly based on DT.
\textsuperscript{33} J.E. Williams, Derbyshire Miners, (1962), p. 642 – 672.
The Official Receiver found that £200 was still owed to R. Hicks, with £100 each to S. Hicks and A.E. Bradley.\footnote{AT} The Receiver agreed to convey the Coronation Road property on the basis of half to R. Hicks and a quarter each to S. Hicks and Bradley.\footnote{AT} On 22 November 1923, S. Hicks and A.E. Bradley sold their part to R. Hicks for £100 each. The property was described as:

> ‘…All that factory stable and premises erected upon the said piece of land formerly used as a Mineral Water Manufactory but then used as Jam Factory together with all machinery buildings erections furnaces weighing machines steam and other engines fixtures and plant affixed to the freehold of the before described premises…’ \footnote{AT}

The manufactory had earlier caused complaint by Brimington parish council. In February 1922 the council reported on ‘thick clouds of smoke’ being emitted from the jam factory at the end of Coronation Road. The Clerk was instructed to write to the Chesterfield Rural District Council about the matter.\footnote{AT} The parish council meeting report in the \textit{Derbyshire Times} notes the Corona Jam Factory by name.\footnote{DT}

The present owner of number 72, Mr A. Parkin, has gathered together a collection of pottery jam jar shards from the garden. These are mainly stamped Keillers of Dundee. He also has a complete jar marked Duerrs, Manchester. Perhaps the Corona Fruit Preserving Company was buying in seconds from the local potteries, whose staple products would have included jam jars. Richard Hicks did have some business connections with the local potteries. He tenanted Pearson and Company land at Whittington Moor.\footnote{AT}

Possibly they were recycling old jars at Coronation Road. We may never know. Neither has any advertisement yet been found from the company. We know that one of the partners, probably Richard Hicks, was acting as wholesaler for the concern. Was the product branded with the Corona brand or sold under another name?

\section*{Subsequent History}

There appears to have been no subsequent history of the premises being used for jam production after Pierce’s 1923 bankruptcy.

A 1918 Ordnance Survey map shows the premises as a rectangular block with outbuilding.\footnote{OS Map} The latter was probably the stables referred to in the 1919 sale to the Corona Fruit Preserving Company and the Inland Revenue survey. By the 1938 edition the site comprised two houses with rear projections.\footnote{OS Map}

The former factory buildings appear to have been demolished and houses constructed on the site following the Corona demise. The abstract of title describes the houses having been erected by R. Hicks

\begin{footnotes}
\item[35] \textit{AT} – Indenture of 21 November 1923.
\item[36] \textit{AT} – Indenture 21 November 1923.
\item[37] \textit{AT} – Indenture 22 November 1923.
\item[38] Brimington Parish Council minutes, meeting of 14 February 1922. Derbyshire Record Office D 177A/PC2.
\item[39] \textit{DT} 18 February 1922.
\item[40] Derbyshire Record Office, D2733/4/16., is an agreement for Richard Hick’s tenancy of land at Whittington Moor from Pearson and Company, dated March 1909. His second wife was the widow of Frederick Green who, it is believed, had been involved with the Albion Pottery on Whittington Moor. This pottery did not, however, appear to make jam jars. Information from Alfred Bradley, via Mr A. Parkin. E. Lockwood \textit{‘R. Hicks and Sons, Grocers of Newbold’}, (2003) [online] http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/DBY/Newbold/Hicks.html. R. Shelley, \textit{Green’s pottery, New Whittington: notes taken during an interview with Mr L. Bradley, June 1993.} (1993) (Chesterfield Local Studies Library).
\item[41] OS Map, 25 inch to 1 mile, (1918), Derbyshire Sheet XVIII.15.
\item[42] OS Map, 25 inch to 1 mile, (1938), Derbyshire Sheet XVIII.15.
\end{footnotes}
on the site, so this must have been after he had purchased the site outright in November 1923.\(^{43}\) The present owner of number 72, however, feels that the original factory building could possibly have been converted to the present houses. He feels that the former floor plan of the house, as one open room on the ground floor, plus kitchen extension, may indicate this.\(^{44}\)

Hicks still owned numbers 70-72 at his death in September 1947.\(^{45}\) Then aged 84, he is described as being the retired senior partner of R. Hicks and Son, provision merchants and corn dealers, Whittington Moor. “This concern is still in business, with premises on Brimington Road North.”

Unfortunately Hick’s death was due to an accident at his daughter’s house on Station Road, when he fell out of a bedroom window. It was thought this had been caused by a dizzy spell or that he had overbalanced.\(^{48}\) Though the *Derbyshire Times* reports twice that his daughter’s house was on Coronation Road, the *Register of Electors* lists her on Station Road.\(^{49}\) She actually lived in the former shop on the corner of Coronation and Station Roads.\(^{50}\)

In 1952 the two houses were devised to Blanche Mycock\(^{51}\) of Dunston Lane, Newbold, by the surviving representatives of Richard Hicks.\(^{52}\) In 1960 the properties were under separate ownership.\(^{53}\)

**Acknowledgements**

The author is particularly grateful to Alan Parkin of Coronation Road for sight of the abstract of title to his property and to the interest he has shown. Mr Parkin also kindly passed to me some notes on the Hicks family researched by Mr Alfred Bradley after speaking to Doreen Turner. Thanks are also due to the staff of Chesterfield Local Studies Library, the Derbyshire Record Office and The National Archive, Kew.

\(^{43}\) *AT* - Indenture 4 July 1952.
\(^{44}\) Information from Mr A. Parkin, 72 Coronation Road, August 2008. Mr Parkin also has some sale particulars, written after the 1960s, which estimate that the property was constructed in 1904/5. Without further structural investigations this theory cannot be verified.
\(^{45}\) *AT*, Richard Hicks died 8 September 1947.
\(^{46}\) *DT*, 19 September 1947.
\(^{47}\) Lockwood, (2003), ‘Hicks.’ [online]. The company’s website at http://www.rhicks.co.uk/about/index1.htm contains brief information about their history.
\(^{48}\) *DT*, 12 September 1947.
\(^{49}\) *DT* 12 and 19 September 1947. Register of electors 1947, Parish of Brimington, p. 12. The register has Mabel, William F. and Harvey Ransford at number 70 Coronation Road, with Lancaster, Jennie and Margery Whetton at number 72. Hick’s daughter, Mrs Gladys Gascoigne, does not have a house number noted in the register. The property is annotated ‘Station Road’.
\(^{50}\) Information from Doreen Turner and Alfred Bradley, via Mr A. Parkin.
\(^{51}\) This is probably Richard Hick’s daughter, possibly by his second marriage.
\(^{52}\) *AT*.
\(^{53}\) *AT*. 
Enlargement from the 1918, 25 inch to 1 mile Ordnance Survey map of Brimington. This is the first time the premises of the former mineral water and jam factory (circled) appear. At that time they were the last buildings on Coronation Road. The jam factory appears to have started in March 1918.

By the time the 1938 edition was surveyed the factory had been demolished and replaced by two houses or converted to dwellings, with rear extensions. At the time these were still, however, the last buildings on Coronation Road.

Kirkham and Hebdige mineral water bottle embossed ‘New Brimington’. The bottle is 215mm high.
What significance does the tree, surrounded by rather decrepit iron railings and seats, near to the Three Horse Shoes public house have?

The author first became alerted to the possible historical significance of this tree some years ago, whilst unearthing some parish council correspondence from the 1960s. The late Miss Jephson of High Street claimed that the tree in question had some form of commemorative value.

It was not until fairly recently, whilst searching through some microfilm copies of old newspapers, that the author became fully convinced of its real significance.

The tree probably dates back to the Coronation of Edward VII. The *Derbyshire Times* of the 16th August 1902 carries a report on the Coronation celebrations at Brimington.

On Saturday 9th August (the original June date had been postponed due to the King having appendicitis) loyal Brimington residents, like countless others up and down the country, attended morning church services. Locally they had a choice of a service at the Wesleyan Chapel, conducted by G.A. Eastwood, or in the parish church.

Here the Rector of the time, the Rev E.M.W. Templeman, conducted the service which was ‘largely attended’. The Staveley Volunteer Band headed a procession, apparently before the service, which was attended by ‘large numbers of children’.

After the service the procession reassembled and ‘proceeded to an open space near to the Churchyard, where a tree was planted by Mrs Goodall, who was presented with a silver trowel by the Rector, in an appropriate speech.’ Mrs Goodall was the wife of the village doctor of the time - they lived at Sutton Lodge. After a suitable acceptance speech from her husband, Captain Goodall, ‘the National Anthem was played by the band and heartily sung by the large crowd present.’

This tree is almost certainly our tree of today, surrounded by the iron railings and seats. To confirm matters the *Derbyshire Times* of 14th June had reported an offer from the Chesterfield Brewery Company to the parish council, of land near the Three Horse Shoes for the planting of a Coronation tree.

At that time R.F. Mills, who lived at Tapton Grove, was effectively in charge of the Chesterfield Brewery Company, who owned the Three Horse Shoes. He was also Brimington’s county councillor.

In the afternoon celebrations continued with the procession reassembling at the old Devonshire Street ‘Central Board Schools’. By way of Brimington Common, the ‘imposing array’, led by the band, headed for Tapton Grove.

Here tea was provided in a large marquee, with well over 1,000 children presented with a Coronation mug. ‘About 200 old people were also entertained to tea.’ The *Derbyshire Times* lists, sports and other

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1. The correspondence was in old Clerk’s files at one time retained by Brimington Parish Council.
2. Miss Jephson lived at number 12 High Street.
3. The majority of this article is sourced from this and other *Derbyshire Times* (*DT*) editions cited in the main text body.
5. Goodall had been captain in ‘K’ company, 2nd Volunteer Battalion of the Derbyshire Regiment, with nine years service. *Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire at the opening of the twentieth century, contemporary biographies*, (1901), p. 307.
6. Mills was described as ‘senior partner’ on his death in 1928. *DT*, 14 January 1928.
musical entertainment. The Coronation bonfire was ignited at 9.15pm. Dancing in the marquee lasted until 10.30 pm. Not to be outdone, before all this, another tree was planted at Tapton Grove, by Mrs R.F. Mills with yet another silver trowel, this time presented by G.A. Eastwood.

The celebrations committee could, no doubt, be pleased with their efforts. But it had some ‘big guns’ to help it on the way. G.A. Eastwood (of Eastwood's Wagon Works at Tapton) and a Mr Rollinson were joint treasurers. Amongst the remaining 32 committeemen were R.F. Mills, The Rector, Henry Westlake (Staveley Company general manager who lived at Brimington Hall) and Dr Goodall. The celebration committee included Tapton people.

It is not possible to say whether the tree at Tapton Grove was marked. But it seems the tree near the Three Horse Shoes was remembered and suitably guarded by iron railings at some time. What happened to the trowels is a complete mystery!

So Miss Jephson was right, and the parish council at the time, which thought there was no evidence to support her, was wrong. Today the Coronation Tree still stands, unmarked, but witness to over 100 years of changes and goings on at this busy corner.

This is a revised and referenced version of an article originally published in the August 2003 edition of Brimington Parish Church Magazine.

The Three Horse Shoes public house, with the ‘Coronation Tree’, sometime after 1945. At this date it does not appear as though the tree has railings, although prior to the 2nd World War any present would probably have been removed for salvage. The white sign on the gable end of Wakefield's stores (extreme right) is advertising 'Spratts Dog Foods'. At this time the kerbs were hatched white - a reminder of the war-time black-out. (Collection P. Cousins)
This brief article describes the circumstances surrounding a memorial in Brimington Cemetery to William Cropper, who died as a result of injuries sustained at a football match in 1889.

The tragic plight of William Cropper, of Brimington, must have caused much concern and regret in 19th century Brimington.

Briefly, Cropper, a prominent footballer with Staveley, died as a result of injuries he sustained at an away football match with Grimsby Town on the 13 January 1889. He was kneed in the stomach, sustaining a ruptured bowel. He died from his injuries the next day, being too ill to be moved. He was only 26 years old.1

Cropper was also an accomplished cricket player. He had played for Brimington and his county, where he had first appeared aged just 19. He has been associated with other football clubs too, including Spital, Chesterfield and Derby County.

His death caused a public subscription to be raised for a memorial to him by Brimington Cricket Club and Staveley Football Club, at his place of internment. This memorial is situated near to the chapels in Brimington Cemetery. It can be seen to this day. Sadly overhanging tree branches have damaged some draped urns atop the memorial, which have become detached within the last ten years.

The Derbyshire Courier of Saturday 21 June 1890 describes work undertaken on the memorial.2 The short article is reproduced in full below.

MEMORIAL TO THE LATE WILLIAM CROPPER

Mr. James Berresford, sculptor, Belper, has just completed a beautiful monument to the memory of the late William Cropper, of Brimington, the professional cricket and football player. It will be remembered with melancholy feelings how this popular young fellow received injuries in a football match at Grimsby, to which he succumbed the next day. The monument is handsome and splendidly carved. It is executed in white Sicilian marble in the renaissance style. The marble is quarried and imported by Mr. Berresford, from Carara, Italy; the district famed for its purity of calcareous stone or mineral, and is susceptible of a beautiful polish. The monument stands a little over 12 feet high. The cost is close upon £50. The committee obtained nearly £80, and the balance of £30 is intended to be put to some other use, though in connection with the lamented decease of Cropper.

This is a revised version of an article first published in the June 2006 Chesterfield and District Local History Society Newsletter.

2 Derbyshire Courier, Saturday 21 June 1890, p. 8.
William Cropper’s memorial in Brimington Cemetery. Above left general view of the memorial. Above the reverse, with football and cricket iconography. Note the draped urn and its companion, which has become detached from the top of the memorial. Bottom left the inscription. Below inscription stating that the memorial had been raised by a public subscription. (Photographs by Philip Cousins, January 2006).
To those of a certain age, the description of the ‘skull and cross bones’ bridge at Tapton immediately describes the ‘dual carriageway’ width bridge over the railway, on what is now the B6543. But why skull and cross bones?

The answer lies with Charles Paxton Markham of Staveley Works and Markham engineering fame.

Where Brimington Road crosses the Sheffield and Rotherham line of the former North Midland and Midland Railway, Brimington Road takes an acute turn to lead into the Swaddale area of Tapton. The corner was for many years an accident spot, particularly before this former main road to Staveley and Worksop (once the A619) was bypassed.

C.P. Markham (1865 – 1926) would have passed this spot many times. At each side of the bridge, on the approaches, he caused to be erected two distinctive signs. Presumably they were cast at Staveley works. As our illustrations show, they comprised a skull, complete with red reflectors in the eyes, over some crossed bones. Markham’s concerns about this highway evidently extended further. In 1920 he had paid to have Brimington Road widened at Tinkersick, at his own expense.

To get the skull and cross bones signs erected Markham would probably have used his considerable influence in Chesterfield, where he was a councillor for many years and thrice mayor, along with his directorship and chairmanship at the Staveley Coal and Iron Company. Charlie Markham, as he was locally known, has been described as ‘the uncrowned king of Chesterfield’. He also owned Markham works.

The signs were obviously of more than local interest, as a sketch of one of them appeared in the London Midland and Scottish Railway Magazine. This sketch, illustrated here, was undertaken by a Mr C.C. Hollis, then employed as a member of the LMS staff at Chesterfield Station. The sketch was reproduced in the Staveley Company Magazine of November 1927. At that time the signs appear to have been securely in place.

The Staveley News of January 1954 (the successor of the Staveley Company Magazine) takes up the story. Highlighted is a picture of one of the signs lying ‘forgotten by the narrow bridge to Devonshire Works’, headlined ‘Ripe for Resurrection’.

The signs appear to have fallen foul of standardised road signage. A date of removal sometime in the 1930s has been quoted. During this period Brimington Road was widened in the Swaddale, Lockoford and again in the Tinkersick areas. The signs, however, probably survived later than that, as

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1 Staveley Company Magazine, Volume 2, No. 1, November 1927, page 27.
2 Chesterfield Corporation, Improvement Committee minutes, 13 December 1920, minute 418.
4 The date of publication in the LMS magazine is not known.
7 R. Thompson and J. Lilley, Chesterfield in old picture postcards, (1989), figure 90. At this figure is a postcard of the sign. The text gives the 1930s removal date.
8 Chesterfield Corporation, Improvement and Highways Committee minutes, 14 May 1934, minute 1582 and 18 June 1934, minute 1849, where the highway is being widened in connection with development of the Swaddale Farm estate.
9 Chesterfield Corporation, Improvement and Highways Committee minutes, 17 September 1934, minute 2365 (b), where the committee agrees in principle to a scheme for widening Brimington Road between Lockoford Lane and the borough boundary at Tinkersick.
10 Chesterfield Corporation, Improvement and Highways Committee minutes, 17 September 1934, minute 2365 (a), where the committee is notified that the county council is proposing to widen the road at Tinkersick.
several local people have remarked that they could remember them into the early 1950s. The *Staveley News* illustration, described above, would also seem to indicate a much later removal than the 1930s. The chances are fairly slim of such scrap metal surviving the Second World War salvage drive, to then remain intact and be photographed in 1954.

The skull and cross bones sign never seems to have been resurrected. What became of it is unknown. Never-the-less the signs live on in this rather obscure name to a corner of Tapton, on which some light has now been shed.\(^{11}\)

Readers might also be somewhat puzzled by what appears to be a rather bizarre isolated section of road and bridge, of dual carriageway width, complete with central reservation.

This is the result of a now forgotten road scheme, which would have formed part of a much larger exercise called the ‘Cross Valley Link’, promoted by the Borough of Chesterfield.\(^{12}\) This was designed to replace the old railway bridge and form a connection with the county council’s Staveley/Brimington by-pass. The then A619 would have been carried across the Rother valley on a viaduct to join what is now the inner relief road at Stonegravels.

The by-pass, approved by the county council in 1969,\(^{13}\) was never built. Its controversial course would have followed the former A619 at Tapton to the road junction with Balmoak Lane. From here it would have proceeded on a new course eastwards, cutting across farmland and Manor Road, near North Moor View, before striking towards Barlborough.\(^{14}\)

The replacement ‘skull and cross bones’ bridge was erected in two halves. In late 1968 the *Derbyshire Life and Countryside*\(^{15}\) reported that half the bridge had been completed, with the second half, taking the place of the old stone bridge, then under construction. Estimated to cost £110,000, this new bridge is of concrete, pre-stressed over a central arch. The old bridge consisted of one major and two minor brick arches, resting on stone-faced piers. Apparently the bricks were 4 by 5 inch specials…the total thickness of the arch was 21¾ inches. The parapets, and north and south faces of the bridge were clad in dressed stone. It was 27 feet in width between parapets, and had but one single narrow footpath underneath [at the side of] the northern parapet.

The ‘Divisional Civil Engineer’, cited in the *Derbyshire Life and Countryside* article, stated that the bridge, then being replaced (railway bridge number 89), ‘…was built in 1840 by the old Midland Railway Company’. This is not strictly correct. The 1840 date is that of the original North Midland Railway line to Rotherham. In 1870 the Midland Railway (as successor to the North Midland) opened the direct line to Sheffield we know today.

Without further research it is not possible to say whether or not the railway bridge was reconstructed as part of the 1870 new line, but the description given is of a typical North Midland Railway bridge of the 1840 line. Available photographs also appear to show the bridge as a typical North Midland design.\(^{16}\)

Perhaps, today, we can reflect that this area of Tapton therefore tells two stories. One of forgotten road signs, the other, of a forgotten road link.

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\(^{11}\) The name is now dying out.


\(^{13}\) Derbyshire County Council, *Staveley-Brimington by-pass*, (no date), no pagination.

\(^{14}\) Derbyshire County Council, *Staveley-Brimington by-pass*, (no date), no pagination.

\(^{15}\) ‘The Skull and Cross Bones Bridge at Chesterfield’, *Derbyshire Life and Countryside*, November 1968.

\(^{16}\) For example, *Back Track*, September-October, 1992, p. 252.
C.C. Hollis’s sketch of one of the two ‘skull and cross-bones’ signs, erected on the approaches to the infamous bridge, over the railway at Tapton. This view is from the Chesterfield side, with the road taking a right hand turn towards the Swaddale area, the river Rother and canal are in the valley to the left. The sketch was originally published in the ‘LMS Railway Magazine’ and later reproduced in the ‘Staveley Company Magazine’ of November 1927.

Forward to the ‘Staveley News’ of January 1954, when one of the signs was pictured languishing ‘by the narrow bridge to Devonshire Works’. What became of it (or the second sign) is not known. Have our readers any ideas?
Monday was a day of great importance in Brimington (albeit a very wet one), for it will long be marked in the parochial calendar as the day on which the foundation stone was laid of a building materialised from the prayerful hopes and zealous efforts of the parishioners for many years. It was the day on which Mrs R.F. Mills who with her husband has for many years exhibited a keen and liberal interest in all affairs relating to the Parish Church, laid the foundation stone of the new Parish Church Hall and Sunday School.

The leaden clouds overburdened with rain obscured the sunshine which would have lent brightness to the interesting little ceremony, but the sunshine which comes from the realization of the fond hopes of years was visible in the faces of the happy little band of Churchmen and Churchwomen who gathered in the brick littered area, where the Church Hall was in the initial stages of erection.

An impromptu platform had been erected in an embryo classroom and bore a choir from the Parish Church, Mrs Mills the lady who was to perform the ceremony “well and truly” laying the stone, the Vicar of Chesterfield, the Ven Archdeacon Edmund Francis Crosse, the Rector (the Rev W.A. Dutton), the Rev. R.K. Blumhardt of Wadsworth near Doncaster (a former Rector) the Rev. G.A. Ready of Long Eaton (a former curate) the Rev. E.I. Tuxford (curate), and the Rev. Llewellyn Charles Cutlack (Newbold).

Among others gathered round the platform we noticed Mr R.F. Mills and the Misses Mills, Mr and Mrs R.T. Dewe, and Miss Dewe, Mr Phipps J.P. Mr and Mrs W.T.G. Burr, Mrs Blumhardt and Mr Eddie Blumhardt, Messes G. Knighton and T. Yeomans (churchwardens), Mr J.W. Shawcroft (secretary), Mr T. Haddock (treasurer) Mrs and Miss Knighton, Mr and Mrs Sharman, Mr and Mrs Hinch, Mr and Mrs C-----, Mr and Mrs J.W. Smith, Mr and Miss Bloxham, Mrs Boulton, Mrs Browne, Mrs Frost, Mrs Stokes. Mrs Stanhope, Mrs Cantrell, Mrs Darkin, Mrs Burr, Mrs Wheway, Mrs Nadin, Mrs Insley, Mrs Chalmers, Mrs Barnes, Mrs Mack, Mrs Henstock, Mrs Hazard, Mrs Watton, Misses Smaley, Brelsford and Berresforde.

The ceremony opened with the singing of a grand old hymn “O God our help in ages past.” After the usual prayers by the Rector the Archdeacon blessed the stone with these words: “Almighty and Everlasting God, mercifully be pleased to bless this stone which we are about to place for a foundation
A burly workman having skilfully placed the stone in position, Mrs R.F. Mills gracefully manipulated a silver trowel saying “In the faith of Jesus Christ we place this foundation stone in the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.” The stone thus solemnly laid, a short address was given by Archdeacon Crosse. That, he said, was a great day for all in the parish of Brimington. Today they were seeing realised the hopes of many years. Very soon, he hoped they would live to see that beautiful building completed. First of all here were the children who would be gathered together there to be taught the faith. That was the first and most honourable use to which such a building could be put – the care of children; to be taught all that was good and true.

But that was not the only purpose for which that building was to serve. The church of God was not something separate from the lives which they ordinary led. The Church was merely an extension of family and social life and within that building he hoped here would be centred from time to time all the social and happy gatherings and all that was good and true in human nature.

Here they would have a most useful room the want of which they had felt for many years. Here they would be able to have all those social, educational and family gatherings which also centred round Church life.

He congratulated them heartily on realising their hopes and he thought they had set an example of devotion and enterprise and liberality in having raised the money and brought it to such an issue.

He was quite sure, continued the Archdeacon, turning with a pleasant smile to the lady by his side, they were all grateful to Mrs Mills for laying the foundation stone. There was no one that they could better have chosen. There was no one else who would have crossed their mind for Mrs Mills and her good husband had been most enthusiastic supporters of that undertaking.

He wanted them to remember that it would their pleasure and their pride that new set of buildings was the result of them all working together in harmony, in union and in fellowship and he hoped that that delightful friendly spirit which now marked the parish of Brimington, under the leadership of his dear friend their Rector, would be a great feature in that parish as long as the world lasted. He did not know that there was any parish which had a better chance. For the most part they were fairly well to do. They had a splendid sprit of combination. Those were the spirits, the characteristics which made for a strong virile Church life. “May God bless you all,” concluded the Archdeacon, “and may you all live long to enjoy the fruits of your labours is my earnest prayer today.”

Subsequent collection plates were passed round for contributions during the singing of the hymn “The Church’s One Foundation”, when the vicar made a characterise appeal for a “thumping big collection”.

The stone bore the inscription “This stone was laid by Mrs R.F. Mills, of Tapton Grove, July 22nd 1912.”

The Uses of the Hall

The Church Hall, when completed will be used primarily for Sunday School work and also for concerts, meetings and other engagements which centre round parochial life. At present, the Sunday School work is conducted at the Church and at the old National school and as the work has prospered and the scholars increased the accommodation has been for some considerable time, totally inadequate, so that new premises were an absolute necessity. The new building is 85 feet in length, and consists of a large hall with two class-rooms. Under the platform in the large hall is a chair store with kitchen and the
usual conveniences. The platform itself is 30 feet by 12 feet and the seating space in the hall capable of accommodating about 300 people. The building is designed by Mr W.M. Ashmore, architect of Chesterfield, while the builder is Mr W.H. Margeresop, of Chesterfield, and the Joiner Mr T. Taylor, of Eckington. The cost of the land amounted to about £1,300 and it is with pride and satisfaction that the people of Brimington realise that this sum has been raised, through their own zealous efforts and hearty combination, by subscriptions from the worshippers at the picturesque old Church and liberality of many friends in the neighbourhood.

The Trustees

The trustees of the fund are Miss Markham, the Rev W.A. Dutton, Mr R.F. Mills, Mr G. Knighton, Mr J.T. Frost, Mr W.T.G. Burr, and Mr Wm. Cantrell.

Garden Party at Tapton Grove

Subsequent to the stone-laying ceremony, those who had taken part in the work, at the invitation of Mr and Mrs R.F. Mills, were invited to a garden party at Tapton Grove.

In the driving rain which deluged from a mass of low-lying clouds a good number of plucky parishioners, most of whom were ladies, forced their way through the buffeting wind to the beautiful house nestling on the slope of the hills at Tapton. In spite of the undue moisture, the gathering was quite a merry one and the guests managed to enjoy themselves immensely. As tea on the lawn was out of the question, tea was enjoyed in the coach house and other outbuildings, which had been set out efficiently.

Meanwhile Mr and Mrs Mills visited their guests at tea with words of welcome and lamentations on a condition of things efficiently bad to spoil any ordinary garden party, and the Rev E.K. Blumhardt took advantage of the occasion to renew many old acquaintances of fifteen or sixteen years ago, when he and his wife lived at the Rectory in Brimington.

During the intervals between the showers some of the guests strolled around the beautiful grounds and after tea were entertained by music delightfully discoursed by Mr J.F. Staton’s orchestra. In the evening a whist drive was held in the entrance hall.

Among the guests were the Ven Archdeacon E.F. Crosse, the Rev W.A. Dutton, the Rev and Mrs Blumhardt and Mr F. Blumhardt, the Rev and Mrs E.R. Tuxford, the Rev G.A. Ready, the Rev Lt G. Cutlack, Mr and Mrs R.T. Dowe and Miss T. Dowe, Mrs ? G. Shea and Miss Peggy Shea, Miss Champion and others.

Mr Staton’s orchestra, which played overtures and selections until about seven o’clock consisted of Miss N. Williamson, Miss G. Barnes, Miss H. Hattersley and Mr W. Wray (violins), Mr W. Martin (cello) Mr W. Evans (bass) Mr C. Staton (clarinet) Mr Orme (cornet) with Mr J.F. Staton at the piano.