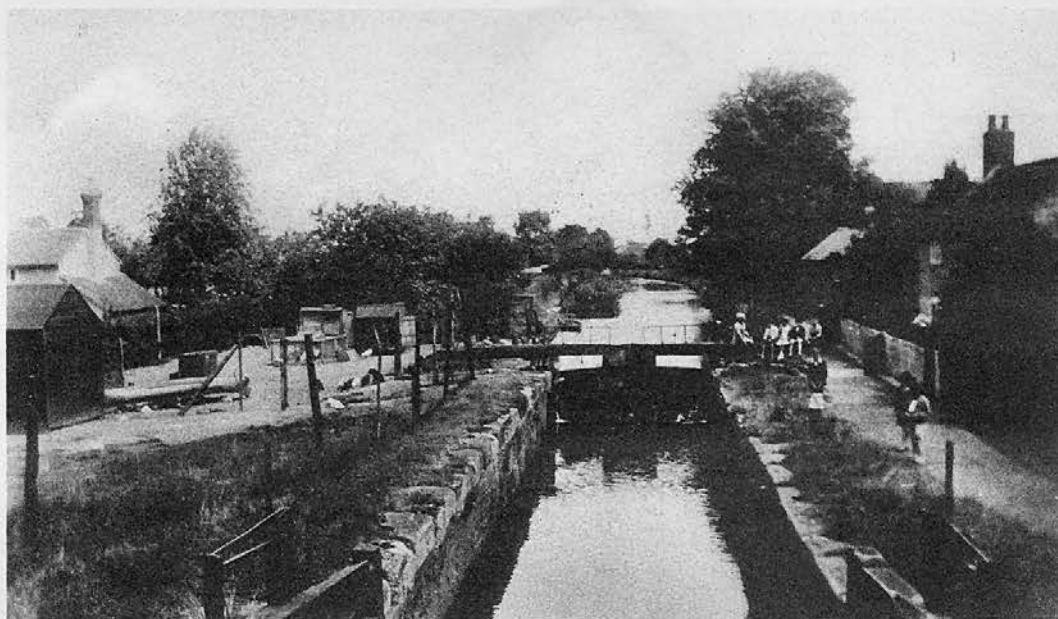


Vol 16

# DERBYSHIRE MISCELLANY



**Shelton Lock on the Derby Canal**

**The Local History Bulletin  
of the  
Derbyshire Archaeological Society**

Volume 16

# DERBYSHIRE MISCELLANY

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## COLONEL GELL AND MAJOR SANDERS: INTERNAL FEUDING AMONG THE PARLIAMENTARY FORCES IN DERBYSHIRE DURING THE CIVIL WAR OF 1642-1646

(by Ron Slack)

The Civil War began in August 1642 when King Charles I, who had deserted his increasingly unfriendly Parliament earlier in the year, left his place of exile in York and marched south. He made his first stand in Nottingham and began recruiting. Over the county border in Leicestershire the militia had already been successfully raised by Henry Hastings, son of the Earl of Huntingdon, whom Charles had recently appointed Sheriff and who was to prove one of his most effective commanders. In Derbyshire the king had no equivalent to Hastings and the county gentry hesitated. The Earl of Devonshire failed to raise the militia for the king and the Lord Lieutenant, the Earl of Rutland, was similarly ineffective in Parliament's service.<sup>1</sup>

The king remained in Nottingham until the 13th September and on the following day reviewed the hastily mustered militia of Derbyshire. He was not impressed, taking only five hundred for his service and sending the rest home. In Derby, on the 15th September, he commandeered every firearm available, with the promise of their return once Parliament had been brought to heel, and raised a forced loan of £500 from the Corporation. From Derby he marched to Shrewsbury by way of Uttoxeter.

After the indecisive battle of Edgehill in October 1642, the king established a base of operations for his army in Oxford, while in the north-east he had a second force, raised and commanded by the Earl of Newcastle. To prosecute the war effectively these armies needed to fight as one and to do this they required free movement and communication across the midland counties. While these counties remained in Parliamentary hands the royalist efforts were hamstrung. Of the midland counties Derbyshire was especially important because of the revenue raised from farming out the duties paid by its highly prosperous lead industry. Lead itself, of course, was a vital war material, used in the manufacture of gun metal and ammunition. By the end of the year the king's early advantage in Derbyshire and its neighbour counties had been lost.

### **A decisive move**

The failure of Parliament to organise resistance to the king in Derbyshire was made obvious by his unopposed progress through the county. However, while most of the gentry still hesitated, there was one man who had made up his mind to fight. This was Sir John Gell of Hopton who, while the king was in Nottingham and Derby, was in Northampton, requesting and receiving a colonel's commission from the Parliamentary commander, the Earl of Essex, to raise a regiment of 1,200 men to hold Derbyshire. Gell had been a Deputy Lord Lieutenant, with militia responsibilities, since 1638, and had been granted his baronetcy only in January 1642. He was rich from the rents of his estates at Hopton and elsewhere and from extensive interests in the lead industry. Like others among the minor gentry he was instinctively opposed to the king's absolutist ambitions and, being a Presbyterian, was hostile to the king's attempt to impose high-church Anglicanism on the church. The motivation grounded in Gell's political and religious convictions was strengthened by ambition, and he was driven by a natural energy and pugnacity. Gell took a grip on the county, enforcing adherence to Parliament and holding firm against attacks by the Earl of Newcastle's northern forces and by local enemies, chief of whom was Hastings, within an easy march of Derby and always threatening. At Essex's suggestion Gell went to Hull, where the Governor, Sir John Hotham, provided him with the first unit of his regiment, a force of two hundred infantry, originally recruited in London. From Hull he marched to Derby and set about fortifying the town. By January 1643 a Parliamentary Committee had been set up in Derby, dominated by Gell, his younger brother Thomas and two sons-in-law, all of whom had recently been made Deputy Lords Lieutenant. These relatives, helped by Gell's ally Sir George Gresley, ensured that the Committee was at first wholly under his control. His authority was enhanced by his appointment as Governor of Derby in January 1644 and, while his hold was challenged and diminished by new Committee appointments in 1644 and 1645, he remained in control until the king's surrender at Newark in May 1646. The Derby regiment grew, acquiring cavalry, dragoons and artillery, and Gell soon found himself taking part in combined operations outside the county, a pattern which persisted throughout the war.

### The regiment

Civil war soldiering began as a confused and amateurish business. When the political conflict moved to war there was no national army for either side to woo and, while there were a few with Thirty-Years War experience, most of the commanders were new to military matters. Gell was an exception. He may have taken part in an expedition led by the Duke of Buckingham in 1627<sup>2</sup> and he had been a Captain in the Derbyshire trained bands. He owned a training manual called *"The pathwai to martiall discipline"*, by Thomas Styward, published in 1582, which he had been advised to take to militia musters and which, from its bloodstained cover and pages, seems to have been carried into battle too.<sup>3</sup> All over England local nobles and gentry made up their minds and recruited their tenants and neighbours by personal loyalty, by the prospect of regular pay, clothes and plunder, or by coercion. While the constitutional authority to raise the militia lay with the king, in practice the outcome in each county depended on the local balance of power - in Leicestershire Henry Hastings succeeded in mobilising the militia for the king, while in Derbyshire the Earl of Devonshire failed to do so, leaving Gell to outmanoeuvre the rest of the hesitant neutrals and royalists in the county. In Derbyshire, as elsewhere, the troops were raised by individual gentry, and there was always a tendency for Gell's heterogeneous force to fragment. His officers were always liable to switch allegiance to other commanders on the same side.

Gell first commissioned his brother Thomas as Lieutenant-Colonel and a tenant and old acquaintance of his, Johannes Molanus, as his Major. Among others who brought armed units to join the regiment, and who thereby obtained commissions, was Thomas Sanders of Little Ireton. His contribution was an infantry company of two hundred men and he was appointed Captain. While Gell could rely on the loyalty of his brother and Molanus, he and Sanders became irreconcilable enemies and when Sanders was later to declare that Gell was a greater enemy to him than any Cavalier, Gell was happy to agree. They were temperamentally unsuited. While Gell was intolerant of any opposition to his authority, Sanders, coming from the same social class, resented his pretensions. Sanders was also *"a very godly honest country gentleman"*<sup>4</sup> and hated Gell's more relaxed morals and earthy and violent language. They were divided also by their politics, which in the seventeenth century went with religion. Gell was a conservative Presbyterian and for most of the war was in tune with the dominant party in Parliament, believing in a national church run by elders rather than bishops and favouring the establishment of a constitutional monarchy. He was to find himself disillusioned by the outcome of the war. Sanders was more radical and was eventually to support the Independent faction, so-called because it advocated independently-governed local churches. The Independents were to become dominant in the army and to expel men of Gell's persuasion from Parliament, before trying the king for treason and executing him. The enmity between Gell and Sanders also arose naturally from Sanders's attitude to his military service. He regarded his two hundred foot soldiers as a private army, as he was later to regard the company of cavalry which he raised. Gell was noted for the thoroughgoing zeal, extending easily to violence, with which he defended what he regarded as his rights, and was the last man to have been happy with a semi-independent unit in his regiment.

### Captain Sanders deserts

On the 21st April 1643 Prince Rupert, moving north after capturing Birmingham, recaptured Lichfield after a siege of eleven days, and was expected to make Derby his next objective. However, after the town's defences had been strengthened in preparation for the coming assault, and extra men called in from neighbouring garrisons, Derby was spared when Rupert withdrew to join the king in operations in the south. He did, however, take Burton, whose garrison had been withdrawn to take part in the defence of Derby, and left a detachment to hold the town. Gell moved quickly to retake it and put in Captain Sanders with his two hundred men, later reinforced with sixty dragoons.

Having survived this threat from the south, Gell was soon in danger from the Earl of Newcastle's army in the north. A garrison established by the Earl in his castle at Bolsover was already carrying out raids in the north of the county and he established further strongholds at Wingfield Manor and Chatsworth. As the body of his army moved south, capturing Wakefield and Sheffield, Sir John assumed that Derby would be the next target. He called in the Burton garrison to strengthen the town's defences, as he had done when Prince Rupert was expected, only to discover, to his fury, that Captain Sanders had deserted him. In Gell's own words, *"In the meane tyme that wee left Captayne Sanders at Burton, one Mr Houghton, a Lancashire man, was made Colonell, and hee made the said Sanders his Leiftennant Colonell, soe that Colonell Gell lost that great company and above sixty dragoones horse and armes, which was a great losse to Derbyshire when the enemy were soe aboute us"*.<sup>5</sup> This desertion, which probably indicates that the corrosive enmity between Gell and Sanders was already established, was described more explicitly by Gell's ally Sir George Gresley - *"Captaine Saunders, who had one hundred and eighty of our foote, well*

armed, and some horse, raised in our county, and intended principally for this countries service, under our regiment, he refused in this our extremity to come unto us, yet he sent us his coulours and commission, but kept our men, armes, and horses; all which he turned over to Colonell Houghton; and was for that good service made his liefetennant-colonell".<sup>6</sup> In Sanders's own version of this episode is heard a wounded, whining tone of self-justification which was characteristic of his explanations of his clashes with Gell. He had raised the troops himself, doubted the validity of Gell's commission, had been "thrust out of the county" by Gell in order to put him "in danger of ruine"<sup>7</sup> and had accepted Haughton's commission only to save himself and the Burton garrison.<sup>8</sup> The point about the troops being raised by him and, by implication, his to dispose of, illustrates an attitude which made it impossible for him to serve happily under Gell.

Sanders's new commission was short-lived. The queen, Henrietta Maria, had returned in February from a fund-raising visit to France and had assembled an army at York. After the failure of combined Parliamentary forces to prevent her from moving south on her way to join her husband at Oxford, the queen's army menaced Gell's position. She failed in an attack on Nottingham and marched on to Newark, where she was joined by Hastings. Her next target on the way to Oxford was bound to be Burton, and Gell, calling for help from the Nottingham garrison and from Staffordshire, moved his troops to Egginton Heath to await their arrival before reinforcing the Burton garrison.. "But", said Gell, "nobody would come". Without help he had to retreat to Derby and on the 2nd July the queen's troops stormed Burton, killing many of the defenders and capturing many more, including the newly-promoted Lieutenant-Colonel Sanders, his commander, Haughton and his major, Nathaniel Barton.

### The return of Captain Sanders

An attempt to besiege Hastings in the strongly fortified Tutbury Castle, helped by a contingent from Nottingham, was aborted when the Nottingham force was withdrawn after a report that Newcastle was on his way to break the siege. Gell had hoped to relieve the pressure on Derby by taking Tutbury. An additional motive for the effort was that Sanders, Haughton and the others taken prisoner at Burton were being held there. In the event Sanders was exchanged and returned to serve again as major, under Gell, in a new regiment of cavalry which he had raised himself. This development, which was to make it impossible for Gell to exercise full control over the Derbyshire troops, was forced on him.

On his release Sanders had gone to London and obtained Parliamentary permission to raise money in Derbyshire for the formation of a contingent of cavalry to operate in the county.<sup>9</sup> Such an addition to the Derbyshire force was needed and Essex granted him a commission. While Sanders and his friends regarded the appropriate rank to be that of colonel, Essex restricted him to major, presumably in an attempt to preserve a single unified force in Derbyshire. However, Sanders was given the power to appoint his own officers and to have command of all the cavalry in Gell's regiment except Gell's own troop, an arrangement guaranteed, in the words of one of Sanders's allies, to cause "inconveniencies".<sup>10</sup> Sanders's own interpretation of the arrangement was "I acted, he had the honour",<sup>11</sup> an interpretation which Gell was not likely to share. However, with the alternative prospect of a second regiment under a Colonel Sanders, Gell wrote to him on the 12th December 1643 accepting the arrangement - "I am contented you shall have full power and authority to constitute and appoint captains and all other inferior officers belonging to a regiment of horse according to an agreement formerly made betwixt us before the Committee at Derby and according to the effect and purport of a comission granted unto him the said Major Sanders by his Excellency the Earl of Essex. I onely desire to except my owne troope".<sup>12</sup>

Sanders appointed a number of captains who shared his religious and political views and were to prove allies in his opposition to Gell. The most prominent were Nathaniel Barton, Joseph Swetnam, Robert Greenwood, and Robert Hope. Barton, Sanders's former major at Burton, and Swetnam, were clergymen, Swetnam being the vicar of All Saints in Derby, while Greenwood's civilian role was running a leather manufacturing business in Ashbourne.<sup>13</sup> Robert Hope of Derby served as lieutenant in Greenwood's troop until being appointed to command his own in June 1644. In the months ahead, contemplating his fractious regiment, Gell may have brought to mind the words of his military bible, Styward's "Pathwai to martiall discipline" - "where many divisions are: there happens the sooner discord and disorder". To add to Gell's problems Sanders also joined the Committee, under an order of Parliament dated the 16th October 1643,<sup>14</sup> together with an ally, Captain Robert Mellor, a Derby alderman with a commission in Gell's own company.

### Committee business

Parliament's division of responsibility between Gell and the Committee was always likely to cause conflict between them, as similar arrangements did in other counties, including Nottinghamshire. As colonel of the Derbyshire regiment, Gell was responsible for military operations in the town and county, while the Committee was responsible for raising the money to finance them. At first the conflict was muted and Gell was able, up to the end of 1643, to conduct his war without challenge to his authority. The Committee, dominated by his relatives and Sir George Gresley, rarely met and allowed him to get on with things. Even this Committee, however, was a necessary evil as far as Gell was concerned, and there are many reported expressions of his impatience with it. As early as June 1643, according to one of his enemies, he called the committee men "*base fellowes*", who would "*undo*" the soldiers, and wished that there were no committees.<sup>15</sup> Sanders was probably accurate when he described Gell's method of conducting business - he regarded the Committee "*as being a meanes to curbe & hinder him of sole power & rule, which he aimed at. When there was none of the Committee but himselfe, Sir George, his brother, 2 sons in lawe & Capt Mellor & myselfe he did what he pleased, wee two left standing for sifers - the rest did what he would have done. We had noe sett tyme, noe place but his chamber, noe chare & noe order entered but entered in an arbitrary way. When any person or cause came to him that he favoured he would then make an order & send it aboute to our houses for us to signe without any debate at all, but if an honest man came aboute a busines he affected not, were it never soe just, he would delay and tell him, I am but one and can not doe any thing, except the Committee were here*".<sup>16</sup> Gell's position was greatly strengthened in January 1644 when Essex appointed him Governor of Derby.<sup>17</sup> The commission placed Derby "*together with all officers & souldiers therein, to be under your commands*". It instructed "*all officers & souldiers under your power, & all other the inhabitants of the said towne, and alsoe all others whom it may concern to obey you as their Governor*".

### The problem of Major Sanders

Neither the agreement between Gell and Sanders nor the unambiguous terms of Gell's commission as Governor could prevent the inevitable conflict between them, and the Earl of Essex was soon aware that his arrangement was not working. On the 21st February 1644, two months after Gell had signed his submissive letter, Essex was writing to Sanders, reminding him of his military duty - "*I would have you yeild all due obedience unto Sir John Gell as Colonell of that regiment of horse to which you are major. And it is my pleasure that you doe not to lead forth that: regiment nor any part thereof upon any service without the approbacon and consent of Sr John Gell your said Colonell*".<sup>18</sup> The appointment of Sanders to the committee and the inclusion in Gell's regiment of Sanders's company, officered by Sanders's own appointees, certainly "*curbed and hindered*" him. Sanders, like Gell himself a small man,<sup>19</sup> proved a very successful commander "*of one of the bravest regiments of horse in the North*"<sup>20</sup> but there was mutual loathing between him and his colonel. When, in September, Sanders mentioned the agreement that Gell had signed on his appointment the previous year, Gell "*spoke in a great deale of anger and said, I wish that clubb law were lawfull & in fashion, speaking in a threatening manner*".<sup>21</sup> However, in spite of his impatience and frequent angry outbursts at dissenters, Gell respected his officers' opinions on military matters and tried to take care of his soldiers. Sanders himself agreed that Gell consulted him and the junior officers, in a "*loveing & amicable*" manner, before undertaking any operation.<sup>22</sup>

### Divided loyalties

The danger from the north was removed when the Earl of Newcastle's army was routed at the battle of Marston Moor on the 2nd July. While this victory made Gell's task of holding Derbyshire much easier, it also brought him problems. The main victors at Marston Moor were Lord Ferdinando Fairfax, commander of the Parliamentary forces in Yorkshire, and his son Sir Thomas, commander of the cavalry and Lord Fairfax's second-in-command. Sir Thomas had made an enemy of Gell by failing to send help when Newcastle was threatening to over-run Derbyshire, and after Marston Moor his father exacerbated Gell's antagonism by garrisoning Bolsover with a regiment commanded and partly officered by deserters from Gell's regiment. By the autumn Gell was trying hard to persuade Parliament not to transfer Derbyshire to the Northern Association, a proposal which would place him under the command of the Fairfaxes and which was being pushed by William Wolley of Riber, Lieutenant-Colonel of the Bolsover garrison, and others of the anti-Gell faction.<sup>23</sup> Derbyshire had been ordered to associate with the Midland counties at the beginning of the war and on the 20th September the Leicester Committee wrote to Derby proposing a joint letter to the Speaker supporting their continued association.<sup>24</sup>

Gell's main argument to Parliament was that, with the Earl of Newcastle's army gone, he and his regiment were more urgently needed in Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire. Privately, the last thing that Gell wanted was to serve under the Fairfaxes. Sanders on the contrary badly wanted to serve under Sir Thomas Fairfax and had

proposed joining with the Nottingham cavalry under Colonel Thornaugh in an expedition led by Fairfax to relieve the Lincolnshire town of Torksey, then being besieged by troops from strong royalist garrison at Newark. In a scathing letter to Sanders written on the 25th September, the day after Sanders had been asked to join the Torksey expedition,<sup>25</sup> Gell showed himself to be a wiser man and better commander than his rival.<sup>26</sup> He rebuked Sanders for the Torksey proposal, suggesting that Thornaugh's reason for going was simply that the enemy were near his estate. The Derby forces should undertake nothing without the order of "*those that wee are under*" and should "*associate ourselves southwardly*". Gell went on to insist that there should always be consultation before any operation was undertaken - "*I beinge strange to the busines, doe desire to confere with those captis and officers that should go upon the servis, before I order them upon servis. It concerneth theyre lives, and the treuth is I am very tender of those brave and valiant frends that have been so faithfull in our servis*". Gell finally condemned the enterprise as dangerous to the safety of the county - "*If once routed beyond Trent it may prove the lose of our County*". Sanders should have conferred - "*I shall say litle more but leave it to a Councell of Warre and your selfe*". Sanders made a sarcastic annotation - "*St Jo: Gell his loving letter to me*".

Gell also reminded Sanders that the soldiers he was proposing to take to Lincolnshire had not been paid - "*Further you know that our souldiers doe expect monies, which if they have not I can not expecte further servis from them ... I doe thinke it exceedinge harde to leave of gettinge of monies for our souldiers*". Gell was always very serious about paying his soldiers. "*The pathwai to martiall discipline*" warned him to ensure that "*the good souldier be not anie waies hindered of his paie, which would do so much hurt to his good nature, without whom the Coronell can availle little or nothing*". The serious shortage of money for the soldiers' wages, and the likely dangerous consequences of not solving the problem, prompted Gell and the Committee to petition Parliament at about this time.<sup>27</sup> "*Your petitioners have for a long tyme kept together the souldyers here with hopes of pay, of which they now grow weary & press your petitioners for some present money, more than we know how to raise, & in case of faylor, we are in danger to loose our souldyers (as being many thousand pounds in arrears unto them) which would be very prejudiciall both to this & divers other neighbor counties*". They asked Parliament for £2,000 immediately and the proceeds of sequestrated royalist estates in the future.

#### **The garrisons at Barton and Coleorton**

In October, with the menace of the royalist garrisons in Derbyshire gone, Gell returned to the attack on another persistent drain on his resources, Tutbury Castle. On this occasion, instead of attempting to capture the place, he sent Captains Barton and Greenwood of Sanders's cavalry to set up a garrison at Barton Hall, about three miles from Tutbury, from where they attacked the defenders' supply columns and made continual raids against them. Gell was able to report to Essex on the 16th November 1644 that the force at Barton "*so curbs that garison that on Thursday last the souldyers there laid downe theyre armes & refused to serve any longer without present money*".<sup>28</sup> In November Gell sent Sanders himself to help in setting up a similar operation at Coleorton, near Ashby, to nullify the effectiveness of the garrison there. In the poisonous atmosphere caused by his attempt to join Fairfax Sanders went off to Coleorton with five troops of his cavalry. The Coleorton garrison was to be manned jointly with troops from Leicestershire, the arrangement specifying Derby dragoons as well as cavalry, and Sanders was soon complaining that they had not been sent - "*it is some foote we desire, with whose helpe we can save our quarters and doe our owne business in this part of Derbyshire*".<sup>29</sup> He complained about the conditions and threatened to leave - "*we this night lie horse and men in the fields ... pinched with cold*". The infantry failed to arrive, though letters from Gell did come, provoking more complaints - "*we expected mouskets, & not papers yesternight*".<sup>30</sup> Gell must have accused Sanders of cowardice for proposing to leave Coleorton, as Sanders's reply protested that his soldiers were brave men - "*our horse have not been slow to ayd others upon the least alarum*". A Leicestershire force of horse and foot was on its way to join them "*and that you wil engage none of your foote after such importuning is strange*". In spite of all the acrimony the Coleorton garrison succeeded in its objects of impeding the royalist lines of communication and keeping the parliamentary ones open.

#### **The Recorder election**

The quarrel on the Committee became more venomous late in 1644, when the post of Recorder at Derby became vacant in November and Gell proposed his brother Thomas. Thomas Gell was a barrister and must have seemed the obvious man for the job. Sanders, however, did not agree, and his characterisation of Thomas Gell in a letter written from the garrison at Coleorton throws grave doubt on his objectivity. Thomas Gell, "*sweet Tom Gell*", according to the Countess of Rutland, for whom he had worked,<sup>31</sup> and faithful ally of his brother in all his causes, including the Parliamentary one, was, as far as Sanders was concerned "*unfit for the place.. in respect of his mean estate, want of learning, law and honesty, his conversation being so scandalous, for unclean swearing and hating all*

honest men; that he favoured malignants and enemies in arms and was not to be trusted or confided in".<sup>32</sup> Gell, predictably was furious and gave Sanders a verbal beating at a meeting in Derby Town Hall. Sanders, unrepentant, wrote to Gell from Coleorton - "I wonder at your slanderous words spoke of me in the open hall at Derby. I desire our actions may be compared and weighed, then it will appear wheather I be a brownist, a coward & a knave or noe. What I am & what I have don ... moste in these partes know: but to call me a knave, malice & envy itself (& I perseave there is enoffe in you towards me of both). I am confident my integrity will defend me. I confesse ... I think the Lieutenant Colonel unfit to be Recorder and I will hinder it all I can. For two brothers and two sons-in-law solely to rule a county, all honest men resent. I seek not the place of governor or colonel. Rather than hinder the public, I will sit down from arms and seek to do the kingdom service in another way & if I be not called (for I will not by unlawfull meanes seek it) I will returne to a private life & soe end my dayes ... I desire that personal dislikes and grudges may not hurt the public".<sup>33</sup> Sanders's reference to the Gell family control of the Committee indicates personal jealousy and his last sentence is an unlikely declaration of self denial from an ambitious man. To admit to being a "Brownist" or Independent would at that stage to have been admitting to political extremism and Gell had clearly drawn blood with his gibe.

### The Committee enlarged

The officers of Sanders's company shared their Major's loathing of Gell. He was accused of unfair distribution of money as between his own and Sanders's troops and of welcoming any who consequently deserted into his own company. This perceived discrimination resulted during 1644 in Sanders's officers joining others in the county in petitioning Parliament for additional members to be put on the Committee to break Gell's grip on it.<sup>34</sup> Parliament, aware of the trouble in Derbyshire, agreed to increase the size of the Committee.

Gell tried to organise opposition to it among the officers of the regiment, all of whom he invited to a dinner in December 1644.<sup>35</sup> After the meal his brother Thomas proposed to them that they should join in opposing the new committee's work. Gell had earlier said that Mellor and others were trying to "*procure authoritie to the Committee & they would have me ruled by a Committee but I will not, and they that cross me I will cross them*".<sup>36</sup> It is clear from his brother's proposition that he imagined that his hostility to a committee controlling the military was shared by the soldiers. He was disappointed. The captains of horse, Sanders's men, all refused Thomas Gell's proposal.

### Presbyterians and Independents

It was ultimately a disaster for Gell that Sanders and his officers were Independents, even though, since the term was at that time still a term of abuse, they denied it. The Independents were the men now remembered as Roundheads, typically from lower in the social scale than country gentlemen such as Gell, more religious and disciplined than the generality of Parliamentary soldiers. It is noticeable that Sanders invoked the Deity far more often in his letters than did Gell in his and it is also significant that Sanders felt obliged to deny that he and his officers "*go about to supress the gentry*".<sup>37</sup> A tract of 1648, entitled "*City Spectacles*", abused Sanders and his officers in the vituperative style characteristic of the time - "*In the next place I must needs unkennell a nest of Independent cowards and vermine. And first I must pluck out by the eares Sanders (that Diminiture of Alexander), Capitaine under Sir John Gell; (the greatest act of valour that he ever did was to shoot a gentleman through the arme, and cut him after he was taken prisoner and disarmed): when he was to goe upon any service he had a trick to make his souldiers mutiny; which he did famously, when he should have gone with Colonel Gell to Naisby fight. His officers are like him*".<sup>38</sup> It is interesting that the pamphleteer repeated in 1648 a slander which had earlier been levelled against one of Sanders's officers, Captain Swetnam, by Hastings, that he attacked a soldier who had already surrendered.<sup>39</sup> He went on to accuse Captain Hope of stealing a communion cup and being "*pull'd out of his breeches*" for it.

It was the new breed of Parliamentarians who came in 1646 to destroy the Reverend Emmanuel Bourne's house, Eastwood Hall.<sup>40</sup> After blowing up the house with a barrel of gunpowder they sang a psalm and then marched to the church, where their commander preached a sermon. The cultivated Bourne was scornful - "*Lord! what stuff and nonsense he did talke, and if he could have murdered the Kyng as easily as he did the Kyng's English, the war would long since have been over*". After the service the troops destroyed the old parish registers, which were in Latin and therefore suspiciously "*popish*". These religiously and socially defined political divisions were eventually to split Parliament and the army. In the small world of the Derby Committee, where the arrival of Sanders in October 1643 had disturbed the hitherto unchallengeable alliance of Gell, his brother, his sons-in-law John Wigley and Henry Wigfall and Sir George Gresley, these large divisions were an element in the irreconcilable enmity between Gell and Sanders.



### Gell versus Sanders

Gell's patience with his reluctant major broke in the early weeks of 1645. Sanders had refused to go with a force sent to Newark in December, instead going to London, where he was taking part in lobbying Parliament for the appointment of the new Committee members. On his return Gell ordered him to join his cavalry, who were by then at Southwell, in Nottinghamshire. He took care to put the order in writing.<sup>41</sup> The letter, dated the 5th January, was signed by the Gell brothers, Gresley and Gell's son-in-law, Henry Wigfall, and pointedly referred to their positions as Deputy-Lieutenants and their authority from Parliament's Committee of Both Kingdoms. It instructed Sanders *"to follow such commands as you shall receive from the said committee or the chief commanders"*. Sanders ignored this, *"pretending that none of us had power to command him"*,<sup>42</sup> and Gell then wrote to Essex accusing Sanders of refusing to obey him.

Essex at last recognised the impossible situation he had engineered - *"by reason the major conceaves his commission to be independant [Essex] called for the booke to see what it was, & perusing the same he found his commission larger than usuall, & that the major had made use of it to other purposes that he never intended, & therefore he resolved to call it in ... and hath likewise sent him another"*.<sup>43</sup> He wrote to Gell on the 16th January to tell him this and assure him that he intended Sanders to obey his (Gell's) orders. Essex then sent him the new commission to deliver to Sanders, saying how displeased he was at Sanders' behaviour,<sup>44</sup> and on the 29th January Gell informed Essex that Sanders refused to accept the new commission and that he had been placed under house arrest.<sup>45</sup> Sanders demanded to be allowed to resign his commission in person and to leave the service. This was not the first time that Sanders had threatened to resign and Gell was characteristically sarcastic *"My Lord this Major hath usually upon discontent offered to lay downe his armes, which I conceive is no loss to the publique"*. There were letters from the Committee to the Earl of Essex<sup>46</sup> and to the Committee of Both Kingdoms<sup>47</sup> supporting Sanders and on the 11th February Essex ordered Gell to release him and send him details of the charges.<sup>48</sup>

These events provoked a flurry of activity. In a letter resigning his commission Sanders told Essex why he would not accept his new one - *"I refuse to accept a new one because I will not be under the command of him who desires my ruin more than any Cavalier in England"*.<sup>49</sup> Claiming that his officers and soldiers refused to serve under Gell he took steps to remove his company from Gell's regiment. While under house arrest he wrote to Colonel Sandes, commander of the Nottinghamshire cavalry, with whom his troops were then serving, asking him to send Swetnam to Fairfax to ask for a commission.<sup>50</sup> He also asked that Swetnam's troop should not be sent back to Derby, where *"their horses and arms will be taken from them"* and speculated that another troop of his company, Capt Hope's, might escape from Derby if Fairfax demanded more help from Gell.

There is nothing to suggest that Gell would disarm his own troops, and indeed all the evidence is that he was trying hard to keep these men on side. He wrote to them in Nottinghamshire on the 3rd February pointing out that Sanders had come to Derby not to get money for their pay, as he understood they believed, but with a pass from Colonel Sandes to go to London.<sup>51</sup> He said that the treasurer had no money but that he himself had borrowed some and would get more - *"Some of you petitioned for a new committee but if it were not for the old, you would not have received one penny"*. However, the £400 or £500 he sent them was accompanied by a copy of a "protestation" which the reluctant officers were asked to sign, undertaking to remain in the Derbyshire regiment - *"Whereas some captains of horse and dragoons intend to go away with their troops, contrary to the trust reposed in them, I profess, as a gentleman and soldier, not to depart with any part of my troops from the service in Derbyshire, where they were raised, without the consent of my colonel, Sir John Gell, and the rest of the deputy lieutenants"*.<sup>52</sup> They then wrote to the Committee asking whether, since they were not going to sign this undertaking, they should return the money. While the Committee was discussing the officers' letter Thomas Gell left the room and returned with his brother. In an understandable fit of rage and frustration Sir John threatened the Committee men with his cane, which was clearly more than a ceremonial accessory. He told them that *"if they medled with his souldiers or answered that letter hee would cracke the crowne of the proudest of them all (some Baronetts & knightts being then present) & he gave the committee most uncivile speeches calling them knaves & shitten stinking fellowes"*.<sup>53</sup>

Gell was clearly not suffering from paranoia in his complaints against his Major. While he was writing to the troops in Nottinghamshire, their Captain, Swetnam, was in York, pleading Sanders's case for a commission in Fairfax's army.<sup>54</sup> While *"Sir John is extremely odious here"*, Fairfax could not give him one, *"being loth to clash with Essex"*, but the commission would be granted *"so soon as Sir Thomas is settled"*. Essex had at first intended to replace Sanders. Gell asked him to do so when he wrote on the 29th January and Essex replied that he had read his letter and had sent a replacement major.<sup>55</sup> On the 12th February Sanders was informed by his father, who lived in London, that *"there was a communication given to one Engleby to be major of your regiment under Gell"*.<sup>56</sup>

However, Essex had already changed his mind by the time he wrote to Gell on the 11th February instructing him to release Sanders and send the charges against him. Gell was *"not to put any other in his place, or remove any officer before you heare from me againe. But I intend he shalbe no longer your major than he shal obey you as his Colonel"*. On the 17th February Gell reported to Essex that Sanders had been freed but had not yet set off for London *"notwithstanding al his former pretences of hast"*.<sup>57</sup> Sanders was waiting for an answer to a letter which he had written to Cheshire, but Gell was sure that Essex would know what it was about before he did.

Thomas Gell was sent to put the case against Sanders, which was heard before the Council of War.<sup>58</sup> Sanders was accused of refusing to help in convoying a consignment of guns from Peterborough in 1644, of refusing to join a skirmish at Egginton Heath, of joining the party in London petitioning for addition to the Committee instead of joining Fairfax in blockading Newark and of refusing to go there on his return from London. In his answers Sanders denied being ordered to join the convoy, said he had failed to arrive in time at Egginton Heath because his stable was locked and he had no horse, denied refusing to go to Newark, saying that at the time he went to London it had not yet been decided who should go there, and said that he needed a rest for health reasons before joining the troops at Newark when he returned. There were the story of Sanders's desertion at Burton, a claim that he had run away at a siege of Newark and another that he had never led his troops in person. He explained his conduct at Newark by describing the loss of most of his men, saying that he had been ordered to join the retreat with Major Molanus, and insisted that he had often led his men into battle. There were accusations and denials of subversion and Sanders insisted that he always obeyed reasonable orders from Gell. He was supported by a petition from the county in denying that he had misappropriated money he had raised for his company.

Gell won a paper victory. Sanders and the cavalry remained hostile. Sir Thomas Fairfax wrote to Gell on the 7th February ordering him to send Sanders's horse from Nottinghamshire to assist Sir William Brereton, commander of the Parliamentary forces in Staffordshire and Cheshire, in a siege of Chester.<sup>59</sup> Still unpaid, the cavalry were posted to Chester. Gell informed the Committee of Both Kingdoms on the 18th that nine troops had been sent.<sup>60</sup> They were to be commanded by Swetnam *"until Major Sanders shall come to them"*. In a letter to the cavalry captains dated the 10th February conveying this order, and in later ones, Gell gave vent to his anger at the subversion going on - *"I am more beholden to Sir Thomas Fairfax than to you, for he acknowledges me to be your Colonel, but this I impute to that ungrateful fellow Swetnam rather than to the rest"*.<sup>61</sup> He dismissed their refusal to accept the money he had sent to them - *"if you refused the money I borrowed to send to you, it is no fault of mine"*. He informed the officers that he had already appointed Captain Barton to take command until a new major arrived *"which is not Major Sanders, for the Generalissimo of the Kingdom is pleased to send me another major"*, an unfulfilled expectation that was a bitter blow to both men, forced to serve together until Gell's regiment was disbanded. Swetnam should hand over his command to Barton when they met. Although Gell put the chief blame for his troubles on Swetnam, Barton was no less hostile.

While the troops were still on their way to Cheshire Gell wrote to them with orders for two of the captains, Hardstaffe and Batteley.<sup>62</sup> He ordered Hardstaffe to bring his troop back to Derby, which he considered insufficiently defended, and Batteley to return alone for consultation. He promised Hardstaffe *"accomodation fitting for you"* and Batteley *"satisfaction"* for him and his company. These were officers whom he had himself appointed and he was at pains to point out to the cavalry that *"I make a difference betwixt those that are obedyent to their Colonell & such as endeavour to styrr upp mutinies"*. By May many soldiers had deserted and made their way back to Derby. Gell, instead of punishing these men, gave them £1 each on condition that they did not rejoin their company. At the same time he gave Captain Swetnam his opinion of Sanders in terms that echoed Sanders's own - *"he had rather fight with Major Sanders than with any Cavalier in England and that he would have his pennyworth out of him"*.<sup>63</sup>

Barton, Swetnam and the rest of Sanders's supporters were irreconcilable. An exchange of letters had Gell and his antagonists expressing their enmity in a show of sardonic wordplay.<sup>64</sup> They wrote to Gell - *"Sr, Capt Hope is returned hopeless & so we [are] helpless. You do wel to exercise our patience. If our style have been thought too high on the former wee hope this wil make a compensation for all"*. Gell replied in the same vein - *"Captaines, I dyd not fynd Captaine Hope at his departure so hopeless as you mention, and I hope you are not so hartless as to hold yourselves helpless. It was your owne wilfulness that hath caused your want of money. And when the Treasurer is furnished it is intended that you shal have pay, if you will acknowledge me as your Colonell & yourselves as my souldyers. You cannot justly say that to be exercised which you have not, patience, but passion, which style overflows. Nor do I fynde so much humility in your last letters ... as to make compensation for the high style which yourselves confess to be in your former"*.

The expeditions to Nottinghamshire and Chester were, according to Sanders, part of Gell's malevolent campaign against him, as it put his troops to long winter marches, aggravating the discontent they already felt over lack of pay, while Gell's own troops stayed in the comparative comfort of Derby.<sup>65</sup>

### **The battle of Naseby**

The course of the war was fundamentally altered in 1645 by the formation of the New Model Army. It had become apparent that the king was unlikely to be defeated while the operations of the different Parliamentary armies were imperfectly coordinated and while confusion often reigned at local level. The military confusion in Derbyshire was typical. Here, the disruption caused by local commanders such as Sanders, who had raised their own forces and regarded themselves as entitled to serve under the superior officer of their choice, was compounded by the army commanders. Essex had failed to make clear who was in command of the Derbyshire cavalry and Lord Fairfax had first formed a regiment of deserters from the Derbyshire regiment and had then installed it in Bolsover Castle, where it competed for funds and supplies with Gell, who had a commission from Fairfax's colleague Essex to defend Derbyshire. In addition, militias such as Gell's force always placed local defence needs first. A centrally commanded, properly equipped and provided army was necessary if the king's own divided armies were to be destroyed and prevented from reforming. In February 1644 the House of Commons, recognising the need for coordination, had set up the Committee of Both Kingdoms to run the war, and in the autumn it ordered this Committee to consider the formation of a new army. The Committee presented its proposals on the 6th January 1645. The new army was to consist of twenty-two thousand men, drawn from the existing armies, and by April Sir Thomas Fairfax had been appointed its commander. As second-in-command, with the rank of lieutenant-general, Parliament appointed Oliver Cromwell, whose own regiment, nicknamed the Ironsides, had proved itself the best trained, best disciplined and most enthusiastic unit in the Parliamentary armies. The New Model soon had a chance to prove itself.

Derby braced itself when the king's army moved as far north as Tutbury, threatening the garrison at Barton. This still consisted of troops led by Captains Barton and Greenwood, who sent urgent requests to Gell for powder and ammunition, which was not forthcoming.<sup>66</sup> The reason was probably that Gell had none to spare and no money to buy any. The king moved next against Leicester, sacking the town with the massacre of many of its garrison and, as part of a general concentration of Parliamentary troops to meet the danger, Gell withdrew the garrison from Barton. This was later held against him by Captain Barton, who claimed that the local villagers begged for the troops to be returned to defend them against the Tutbury garrison, which was now free to resume its marauding expeditions.

After his success at Leicester the king turned south again and, although outnumbered two to one, engaged the New Model Army at Naseby on 14th June and was heavily defeated. Gell had been instructed by Fairfax to take command of the combined cavalry and dragoons of Cheshire, Staffordshire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire at Nottingham and pursue the king. However, he failed to arrive in time to take part in the battle. Exactly why is difficult to determine. He had never before shown any tendency to avoid a fight. Gell claimed that his force took a fortnight to assemble and that by the time he moved off the king had already been defeated at Naseby. Fairfax himself, in a letter to Sanders, talked of Gell's *"unwillingness presented, but of disobedience cannot say"*.<sup>67</sup> Although Gell was soon to be in favour of making peace with the king it seems unlikely that in 1645, with the war still undecided, he held back for political reasons. The answer may lie in the time which he claimed to have taken in assembling his troops at Nottingham. By the middle of 1645 he no longer had complete control of either the committee or the regiment as the Sanders faction opposed him in both. Sanders's company was committed to him rather than to Gell and their discontent was aggravated by the usual difficulty in paying and feeding them. The pamphleteer may have been right to blame Sanders for the delay.

### **Mutiny and desertion**

After the battle of Naseby, Fairfax ordered Gell to remain north of Leicester until the royalist garrison there was subdued and then dismissed him. Later in the month, in a confusion which was typical of this war, the Derby garrison received conflicting orders from Fairfax and the Committee of Both Kingdoms.<sup>68</sup> Fairfax instructed Sanders to take the cavalry to Gloucester. While the Committee at Derby wrote to Fairfax for confirmation of this order a second came from the Committee of Both Kingdoms addressed to Gell, instructing him to take his brigade to Worcester. The disaffection among the cavalry officers erupted on the 5th July, when Gell was leading the regiment out toward Worcester. According to Sanders, who had gone to Gloucester, his troops heard that he was on his way back to Derby and immediately deserted Gell.<sup>69</sup> Gell's explanation was that they refused to go

beyond Sinfen Moor because there was no money to pay them.<sup>70</sup> Whatever the reason the troops returned to Derby where they were not allowed to enter the town. The Derby Committee wrote to Sanders, asking him to collect these soldiers together as they were "*scattered about in the country, to the great damage and oppression thereof*".<sup>71</sup> Gell's depleted expedition proved abortive and he too returned.<sup>72</sup>

By the 8th July Sanders, who had been instructed to continue serving under Gell, had collected all nine troops of his company. He wrote to the Committee of Both Kingdoms - "*You have commanded me to obey Sir John Gell as my colonel. I conceive it hard that I and those honest valiant captains should be engaged to observe the result of one mans absolute will while others have their commands from Parliament*".<sup>73</sup> If matters from then onward were to be properly conducted by a council, he was prepared to serve under Gell, "*but if I am subjected to his sole will, I shall lay down my commission and sit down in some angle, spending the rest of my days in contemplation and devotion*". The threat of resignation remained Sanders's favourite ploy. At the same time he wrote to a contact asking him to intercede with Fairfax and Cromwell to make him sole commander of the cavalry. He described quarrels among the Derbyshire regiment, where his own soldiers were wearing Fairfax's colours and Gell's own troops, wearing Gell's colours, were abusing them and threatening to pull the Fairfax colours out of their hats.<sup>74</sup> In a letter dated the 14th July 1645 Gell reminded Sanders about the order from the Committee of Both Kingdoms instructing him to obey him as his Colonel<sup>75</sup> - "*I therefore command you to come to Derby and bring your own troop, Capt Sweetnams, Capt Bartons, Capt Watsons and Capt Sleights*".

### Fighting in the West

Whatever the reason for his failure to reach Naseby, Gell continued to fight during the rest of 1645. Barton was reoccupied and in August troops from there took part in harrying the king's army. The king moved north after Naseby, reaching Lichfield on the 10th August, Tutbury on the 12th and Ashbourne on the 13th.<sup>76</sup> During the royal army's march from Tutbury to Ashbourne Sanders attacked its rear near Barton and on the 14th Gell sent him instructions "*I desire you with the regemente to follow in the reare & to take all advantages that may be, but with this caution, that the regement be not too farr engaged ... when the enemy is to goe or passe thorow any streete place or lane, then you may ingage so many as you thinke fitt for you to fall on with our horse, and doe your worke quickly. You had better to spare sum of Capt Greenwood's horse & send for the dragoons to make good your retreat for by this observation you will expecte a party to be sente against you speatially to drive you awaie. Take heede of ambuscadoes ... I pray you send to the Stafford horse to join with you. I have directed one troope to you that did com oute of Staffordsheare*".<sup>77</sup> This was sound and helpful advice, but probably the kind of detailed supervision that Sanders hated. However, he continued to follow the king and Gell reported to the Speaker of Parliament on the 15th that a hundred of the Derbyshire cavalry, "*more valient than discreet*", had charged five hundred of the enemy.<sup>78</sup> Sanders had one killed and ten taken prisoner, against twenty royalists killed and sixteen captured.

Also during August the Barton garrison successfully raided Tutbury, after Gell sent reinforcements.<sup>79</sup> Greenwood and another cavalry captain, Villiers, took a hundred horsemen and, dismounted, made their way through Tutbury and captured the guardhouse. They came away with prisoners and about a hundred and twenty horses. In September Gell wrote to Sanders recalling Villiers's and a second troop to Derby and noting that "*Mr Barton, your supposed captain*" had quit the county.<sup>80</sup> Barton had made his long expected transfer to the New Model Army, where he continued to press Sanders's case for a commission. Gell expected further defections and repeated his order to Sanders to send Villiers' troop to Derby, and "*in case they do mutiny and will not return to spare their country, you are to imprison some of the chief, whereof Cornet Allen is one*".<sup>81</sup>

### Tutbury failure

At the beginning of September Gell was asked by the Staffordshire force to join in another attack on the garrison at Tutbury. By his own account he responded by sending Thomas Gell with four hundred infantry.<sup>82</sup> However he had been instructed by the Committee of Both Kingdoms to hold five hundred infantry ready to march to join Colonel-General Sydenham Poyntz, who had recently been appointed commander-in-chief of the forces of the Northern Association<sup>83</sup> in a blockade of Newark. According to Gell's account the Derbyshire and Staffordshire contingents met a mile from Tutbury and considered the situation. They decided that as any siege of the castle would take at least a month, during which time the Derbyshire force might be recalled to comply with the Parliamentary order, the operation should be abandoned. On the face of it this was a sensible decision. However it provided more material for the plotting going on at Derby, which this time involved Thomas Gell.

According to Sir Samuel Sleight one of the recently-appointed, anti-Gell, members of the Derby Committee,

Sanders had been sent to the rendezvous, accompanied by himself and Thomas Gell.<sup>84</sup> The Staffordshire force had withdrawn unilaterally when they heard that the Derbyshire troops were on standby, leaving Sanders and his men "to the fury of the enemy", who had been alerted by the troop movements. In spite of the obvious military reasons for the withdrawal Sanders branded this aborted operation as disgraceful and demanded to know why the orders had been changed. Gell was scornful - "*What, do you prate?*", and threatened to knock him over the head.<sup>85</sup> Sanders claimed that Thomas Gell had agreed with him that the return from Tutbury was a shameful desertion. He went on to say that Thomas had told him that his brother was unworthy to command the regiment and had only kept his position through the efforts of their half-brother, the MP Sir John Curzon, and himself. Sleigh claimed that, after this episode, Thomas said that if the militia continued under his brother's control the country would be ruined and proposed that he and Sleigh should take a proposal to Parliament that the regiment should be run by a sub-committee of the county Committee. The conflicting accounts of this episode, and Gell's apparent failure to communicate fully with his senior officers, suggest that the hostility between Gell and Sanders was damaging the effectiveness of the regiment. It was still, however, to play a valuable part in the last moves in the war and took part in the blockade of the king in Newark which ended with the king's surrender to the Scots on the 8th May 1646.

### The record

Gell's achievement had been remarkable. At a time when desertions, caused by low pay and poor provision, were common in both Parliamentary and royalist armies, he had held together a force which had repeatedly fought off attempts by the king's forces to occupy Derbyshire, thereby saving the county from the devastation which a major battle would have brought. If he had not held Derby for Parliament the royalist garrison at Newark would undoubtedly have taken Nottingham and the king's armies would have had liberty of movement through the centre of the country. Mainly by dint of his widespread family connections but also by his own energy and forcefulness he had used the Parliamentary Committee to control the county and ensure that enough money was raised from those who could pay to enable him to continue his war. The fall of Newark and the surrender of the king in 1646 brought peace to the county and Gell, as he was frequently, and sometimes plaintively, to remind Parliament, had been the main instrument in keeping Derbyshire on the Parliamentary side. However, though peace was no doubt a blessing to the people of Derbyshire, John Gell got no credit for it. Parliament was bombarded with petitions protesting at Gell's conduct of the war, and Sanders presented the Commons Committee for Examinations with a long list of articles for his impeachment.

### The investigation

Gell's enemies on the Derby Committee and in Sanders's company had combined to present a petition to Parliament.<sup>86</sup> They asked that Gell, his brother and Molanus be called to answer to Parliament for their misdeeds, that Gell's and Molanus's "*rough soldiers*" be removed from Derby and given some other service and that the government of the town be transferred to Sir George Gresley and four others - "*a committee of honest and able persons only, that they may see the desires of their souls in the advancement of justice, piety, lawful liberty and safety*". On the 28th October 1645 Parliament gave Gell a month's notice to appear before the Committee to answer the charges against him, and Sanders, Swetnam and Greenwood a similar time to appear to testify.<sup>87</sup> The anti-Gell campaign was going well and at the beginning of November 1645 Sanders, serving at the siege of Chester, was sent a copy of a letter reporting that the petition had been delivered, accompanied by a speech by Sir Samuel Sleigh, and had been well received.<sup>88</sup> A copy of the indictment was enclosed. Gell's accusers wrote again to Sanders on the 5th November, enclosing the Parliamentary orders for him and the others to appear, and telling him to get a pass from his commander at Chester, Sir William Brereton.<sup>89</sup> Careful organisation is revealed by the note that "*Capt Hope and Capt Watson are not summoned because all cannot be spared at once*", and the conspirators told Sanders "*we go towards London this day sennight [a week]*". Brereton issued Sanders with his pass on 10th November, noting that his regiment was left in the hands of Capt Watson, and that he was expected to return quickly - there was still a war on.<sup>90</sup>

Beginning on the 5th December 1645, the Committee for Examinations heard a succession of Gell's accusers, including Sanders and some of his officers, Derby Corporation aldermen and his enemies on the Derby Committee.<sup>91</sup> For many of its meetings the Committee for Examinations included two of the Derbyshire MPs, Curzon and the former Derby Committee treasurer Nathaniel Hallows. The allegations of Gell's dictatorial rule in Derby were damaging to him - among many similar outbursts he was quoted as wishing, with Molanus present, that "*the devil cutt the throats of the new committee*". However, the financial allegations were potentially the most serious and the ones he was at most pains to refute. The Parliamentary Committee of Accounts had asked

for Derbyshire's accounts in July, 1645 and that it had been established by September that £50,000 had been received by "*severall commisaries, officers and treasurers*" employed by Gell. This, plus £2,000 seized from royalists, had not been accounted for. Henry Buxton, "*kinsman and servant to Sr John Gell, and noe treasurer*" had received £20,000 of which he had paid the treasurer £5,000 and disbursed the rest without authority. It was further alleged that Gell and Molanus, who had acted as Gell's "*commissary*" or quartermaster at the beginning of the war, had received £2,200 from Hallowes, recorded in receipts which they had given and which had been presented to the accounts committee by Hallowes. This sum did not appear in Gell's accounts.

### The Sanders paper

There were more complaints in the summer of 1646 and Sanders presented an indictment to the Committee for Examinations - "*Articles against Sir John Gell, Baronet, Colonel of a Regiment, Governor of Derby and a Justice of the Peace for the said county*".<sup>92</sup> It was a summary of Gell's alleged high-handed and tyrannical behaviour toward the Committee and others, his financial misconduct, and his unfairness to Parliamentarians and favour to royalists. There were specific allegations that Gell had failed to supply Colonel Ashenhurst and the Bolsover garrison and that he had abandoned Ashenhurst to an enemy attack near Bakewell, the latter presumably a reference to an incident in November 1643, when Molanus had arrived too late to prevent the defeat of a Staffordshire force by Newcastle's troops at Hartington and Ashenhurst had been captured. The indictment ends with a general attack on Gell's character. Gell, "*besides other scandalous conversations, is a frequent swearer, jeerer and scoffer of religious men and practices, a protector of loose and disolute persons*". Gell does indeed seem to have been skilled in the highly coloured invective in fashion at the time. While this seventeenth century abuse often sounds either quaint or exaggerated to twentieth century ears, the offence which it clearly caused to his enemies demonstrates its effectiveness. The large amount of religious material among his papers suggests that his jeering and scoffing was selective, directed, in the fashion of the time, against any whose religion differed from his own brand of Presbyterianism. He is also likely to have had a short way with any whom he considered hypocrites.

### Scandal

The mention of "*scandalous conversations*" and "*loose and dissolute persons*" foreshadows a later accusation that he was a "*foul adulterer*".<sup>93</sup> Gell himself had once remarked that he "*used not to meddle with women, unless they were handsome*",<sup>94</sup> lending some colour to this accusation, and Sanders's Captain Greenwood told the Committee for Examinations two stories which suggested that it may have been true. On one occasion Greenwood called on a Mrs Colledge, the wife of an absent royalist, to collect her tax, and discovered his Colonel with her. The fact that Gell violently insisted that she be exempt, in spite of the fact that her husband was on the other side, suggests that his visit was of an amatory rather than a military nature. Greenwood, in a second incident, "*came into a roome where Sr John was & a Mrs Gibb who is reputed a scandalous woman*". Mrs Gibb was abusive and Gell, said Greenwood, defended her by striking him across the mouth with his cane. Gell's enemies knew that accusations of immorality would strengthen their case with a puritanical Parliament.

### Verdict

There is no reason to doubt the abundance of evidence that Gell conducted the finances of the war in a totally unprofessional way, and that the arrival of the new committee men at the end of 1644 saw a tightening of procedures and accounts, all opposed with disgust by Gell. He saw this as a slight on his conduct of the war and a disregard of the sacrifices he had made. He was driven by a mixture of conviction and ambition. Self-enrichment was not his motive for fighting the war and he suffered losses which contrasted favourably with the gains made by some of his enemies, who died rich men. His favouritism over taxation and soldiers' pay was unscrupulous and obviously unfair. However, it was also one of the devices - another was fear - which he had to use to maintain his position and continue to present an effective opposition to the royalist enemy. The way in which he waged the war can only properly be judged in the light of events and procedures elsewhere. His poisoned relations with Sanders and others were similar to conflicts on both sides and in all parts of the country. The Derbyshire mutinies again were paralleled throughout the country and were caused by Parliament's inability to pay its soldiers.

### Post war

Having won his war, Gell had lost the peace, though none of the accusations made against him resulted in prosecution. With the war over, however, Parliament was anxious to return as quickly as possible to a peace footing. Among large-scale demobilisations throughout the country, in June 1646 the Derby garrison was

ordered to be dismantled and the troops offered service in Ireland. Gell's governorship was thereby abolished and Derby returned to the administration of the Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses. Service in Ireland did not appeal to all the troops, however, and throughout 1647 there were still subversive officers at Derby leading unpaid and mutinous soldiers. Sir John remained in Derbyshire. In June 1647 Thomas Gell's servant reported that Sir John had gone to Bath and that Sanders had gone to the army "*with a petition from some of the horse of his faction*".<sup>95</sup> In 1648 Gell, who had transferred his estate to his son John in 1644, as the son's marriage settlement, moved permanently to London. He gave money to the king during his protracted negotiations with Parliament and the army,<sup>96</sup> and in 1650 was tried and imprisoned for "*misprision*" of treason, ie failing to disclose his knowledge of a royalist plot.<sup>97</sup> He was pardoned and released in 1653, and at the Restoration of Charles II in 1660 was further pardoned for his part in the war.<sup>98</sup> He continued to live in London, where he died in 1671. He was buried at Wirksworth.

### Major Sanders's career

John Gell's nemesis, Sanders, continued his attempt to get a commission in Sir Thomas Fairfax's New Model Army. By the 5th March 1646 his erstwhile Captain, Barton, was in Cornwall with Fairfax, and he reported to Sanders that he had pressed Sanders's wish to bring his company over to the New Model and be commissioned in it.<sup>99</sup> Fairfax and Cromwell had said that "*they desire no horse more than yours*" but that since the army was so far over to the west, nothing could be done at present. When the army moved east they would see whether the whole company could be incorporated. If this proved not to be possible Sanders and his officers would still be given commands, either infantry or cavalry. Barton had also told Fairfax about allegations which Gell had made against him and Fairfax had replied "*his conscience told him he did not deserve it and he was loth to take any great notice of it*". In April Barton wrote again, from Oxfordshire, to tell Sanders that as soon as the General arrived he should come and make his case, and "*I much desire to hear what success you have had against Sir John Gell*".<sup>100</sup> He assured Sanders that things were better in the New Model - "*I have no reason to find fault with my present commander or my position in the army*". Sanders in fact joined the Nottinghamshire regiment of Colonel Thornhaugh when Gell's was disbanded and became Colonel when Thornhaugh was killed in battle. He and Barton were in London at the time of the king's execution and in May 1649 Sanders's regiment guarded Parliament while Fairfax and Cromwell left to put down a rising by the Levellers, one of the new ultra-democratic movements. He remained in the army and became an MP. His will of 1689 revealed that he had done well out of the war.

### Acknowledgement

This article is largely based on material in the Chandos-Pole-Gell (D258), Sanders (D1232) and Gresley (D803) collections in the Derbyshire Record Office, and I wish to thank the DRO staff for their help.

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#### Abbreviations

DNB *Dictionary of National Biography*

DRO Derbyshire Record Office

HMC Historical Manuscripts Commission

TA *A true account of the raising and imployeing of one foot regiment under Sir John Gell from the beginning of October, 1642* (by Sir George Gresley) (printed in Stone, 1992)

TR. *A true relation of what service hath beene done by Colonell Sir John Gell ... from October, 1642, till October, 1646* (by Sir John Gell) (printed in Stone, 1992)

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# JOHN FAREY'S DERBYSHIRE: CATTLE AND DERBYSHIRE FARMING IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

(by Roger Dalton, University of Derby, Kedleston Road, Derby)

The three volumes of John Farey's *Survey of the Agriculture and Minerals of Derbyshire* form an important statement on the economy of the county in the first decade of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> The third volume begins with a series of chapters about livestock, the first and longest of which, at 87 pages, concerns cattle. The prime importance of cattle in Derbyshire farming is indicated in the opening sentence: '*neat cattle, beasts, or cowstock, for the purposes of the dairy chiefly, form a principal feature in the economy of the Derbyshire farms*'.<sup>2</sup> It is appropriate therefore to review and contextualise Farey's observations on cattle in Derbyshire in order to clarify the characteristics of cattle based enterprise in the county during the first decade of the nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup>

Farey received his commission to report on the agriculture of Derbyshire from the Board of Agriculture which had been established in 1792 with the aim of identifying and promoting good agricultural practice.<sup>4</sup> Consequently the authors of the Board's reports, which were published in two series for all counties in England and Wales, carried out surveys which highlighted the innovatory activities and opinion of the more substantial and articulate farmers and estate owners. The contribution to the farm economy of the majority of tenant farmers, especially those on smaller holdings, was passed over with limited comment and hence it is difficult to be clear as to what might have been typical of farm practice in a given county. This is evident from Figure 1 which shows the locations by breed of all the farms with cattle based enterprises visited by Farey during his survey of Derbyshire in 1808. Clearly Farey's comments on cattle were biased towards the southern part of Derbyshire rather than the Peak District or the eastern coalfield areas where, presumably, he found farming to be less innovative and worthy of comment.

## Cattle Breeds

In his report Farey described the nine breeds and nine cross breeds of cattle as shown in Table 1 which he amplified by listing comments from the more elite farmers who kept them. The Old and New Longhorn breeds were the most important for Derbyshire farmers, the greater number of references to specific herds being reflected in the distribution pattern shown on Figure 1.

Table 1. Cattle Breeds as listed by John Farey

1. Old Long-Horn	7. French	13. Short-Horn and Devon
2. Short-Horn	8. Welsh	14. Short-Horn and French
3. New-Longhorn	9. White	15. Short-Horn and White
4. Devon	10. Old and New Long-Horn	16. Short-Horn and Lincoln
5. Hereford	11. Long and Short-Horn	17. Devon and French
6. Scotch	12. Long-Horn and Devon	18. Scotch and White

However the situation with respect to Longhorns was complex as they existed not only as recognised breeds but also as a 'type' of cattle of various shapes and colours kept by many farmers. Stanley has described such Old Longhorn variants as being derived from the ancient cattle stock of the region which '*were widely spread at an early date throughout the grazing districts of the Midlands*'.<sup>5</sup> Even towards the close of the eighteenth century Marshall<sup>6</sup> was able to identify distinct local strains of Old Longhorn in the Midlands. Derbyshire Old Longhorns were dairy animals and distinguishable from those of Staffordshire which were better adapted to grazing, but '*a superior dual purpose strain existed along the banks of the Trent at the border between the two counties*'. Farey himself observed a '*great variety of mixed or uncertainly crossed animals*' in Derbyshire which '*prevailed almost generally in this County formerly, and did so to a very great degree, until about the beginning of the present Century*'.<sup>7</sup>

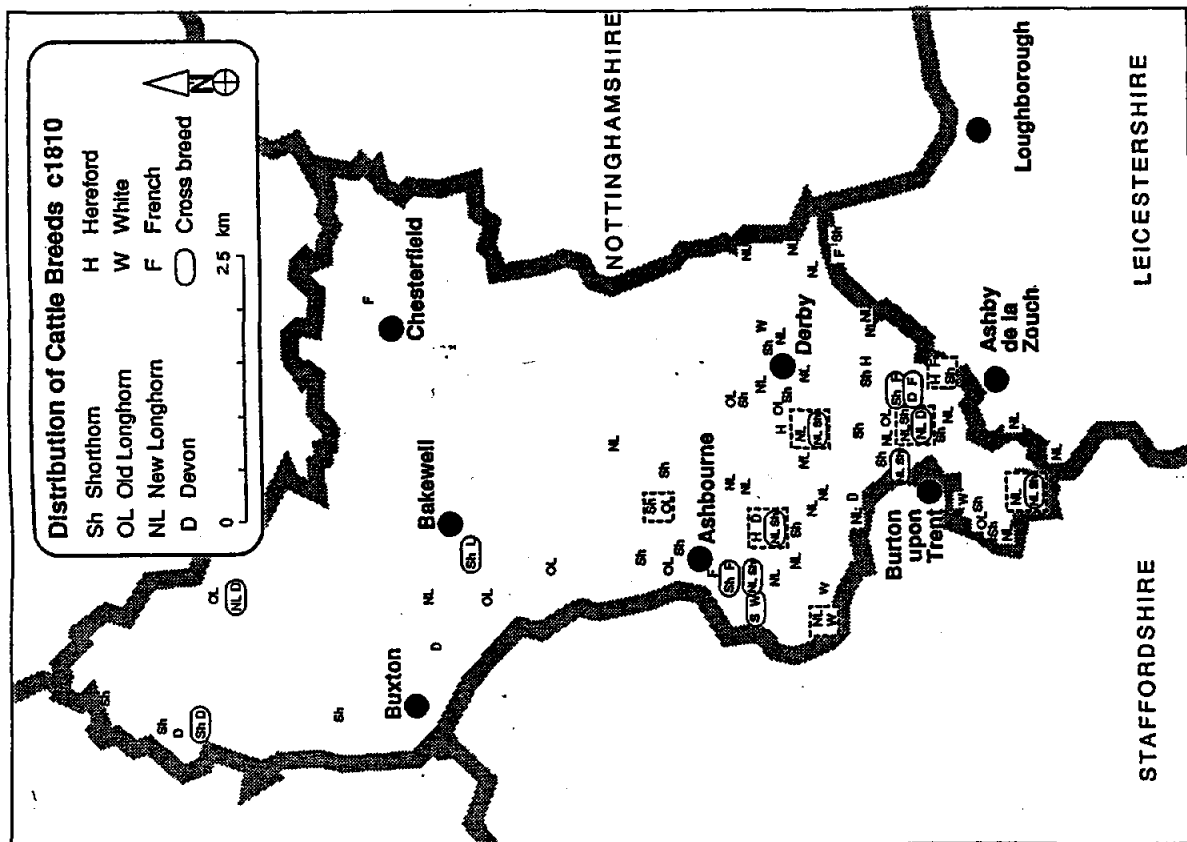


Figure 1

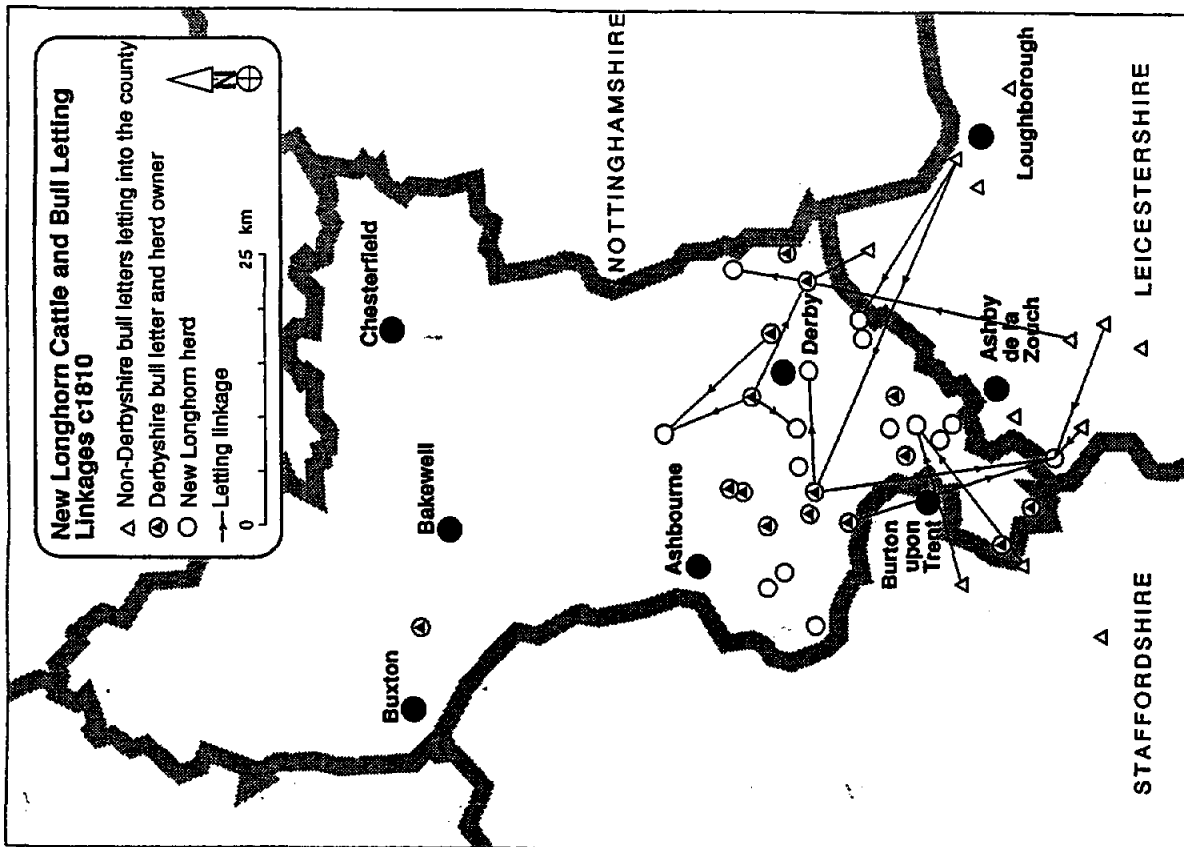


Figure 2

It is therefore difficult to know whether the term Old Longhorn, even as used by Farey, referred to traditional stock or animals which had been improved to varying degrees but it is fair to say that, when considered as a distinct breed, the Old Longhorn cattle of the Derbyshire sort were superior dairy animals. They were also known as Lancashire or Westmorland as improvement had been partly achieved through the introduction of stock from north-western counties which shared Derbyshire's dairying traditions. Farey<sup>9</sup> described Derbyshire Old Longhorns '*as a useful sort of dairy cows with large bags*' which were also '*thrifty*', meaning they were able to produce quality milk from indifferent pasture-land. Clearly these animals were integral to the dairying tradition of Derbyshire, the keepers of Old Longhorns listed by Farey being specialist dairymen, including John Pearsall of Foremark, who had a herd of 30 for cheese making.

New Longhorn cattle were a product of the eighteenth century<sup>10</sup> being developed from traditional local Longhorns as well as cattle bought in from Lancashire. Significant among Midland breeders who played their part in its early evolution were Gresley of Drakelow near Burton upon Trent from 1710, and Webster of Canley in Warwickshire and Fowler of Rollright in north Oxfordshire from the 1740s. However Robert Bakewell, one of the heroic figures of the English Agricultural Revolution, is credited with making the greatest contribution to the development of the New Longhorn through systematic inbreeding. At his model farm of Dishley Grange, located on the banks of the Soar north of Loughborough, he worked from the 1750s until his death in 1795 to perfect and disseminate the new breed. The New Longhorn emerged as an animal in which the beef properties were enhanced on a smaller bone structure but somewhat at the expense of milk.

By the time of Farey's visit to Derbyshire the New Longhorn was well established, some farmers describing it as the New Derbyshire Longhorn but there was variation in opinion as to whether it was best kept as a dairy or a dual purpose animal. It was practice for farmers to hire pedigree bulls to improve their herds and Farey<sup>11</sup> was able to list twenty bull letters, including a number in Leicestershire (see Figure 2), who would almost certainly have been dealing in New Longhorns derived from Bakewell's stock. From such arrangements the general improvement of livestock had been proceeding for some decades, as demonstrated by Farey's note of a report from William Cox of Culland near Brailsford, which shows that improved Longhorns from different persons' herds had been distributed among the tenants of Coke of Longford, Pole of Radbourne and Meynell of Meynell Langley as early as the 1760s.

Thirty six farmers are listed by Farey as keeping New Longhorn cows in herds varying in size from 15 to 50. Typical was Richard Harrison of Ash near Etwall who kept 50 cows in milk. '*His father Mr John Harrison derived his stock originally from Dishley and Rollright; he has hired bulls from Mr Samuel Knowles of Nailston: he breeds all that he uses; usually raises 15 or 16 cows and 3 or 4 bulls annually*'.<sup>12</sup> Farey also gave prominence to the sale of the celebrated New Longhorn herd of E. N. C. Mundy of Markeaton Park north west of Derby.<sup>13</sup> This event took place on 21st April 1808 and was '*but poorly attended*' as '*unfortunately a deep snow fell in the preceding night and it snowed and rained most of the day*'. The cattle were auctioned individually in 40 lots and realised £1,093 11s 6d with prices ranging from £3 3s for a two year old bull calf to £84 for a bull called Sweetwilliam who was to win the bull prize at Derby Fair the following day. Many of the cattle went to local farmers such as William West of Twyford and John Toplis of Wirksworth who purchased a dairy cow and a heifer respectively. Some animals returned to the original centres of New Longhorn breeding including a heifer purchased by R. Honeybourn who had taken over the management of the Dishley Grange Farm following Bakewell's death in 1795.

Shorthorns were also a major development of the time. The Colling brothers of Darlington<sup>14</sup> are credited with having originated the breed and the association with the north-east is evident from their identification as Holderness, Yorkshire or Durham cows, localities from which they were sold into Derby and other Midland markets. At this time the true dairy Shorthorn, which came to dominate British milk production in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, had yet to be evolved. The animals described by Farey were dual-purpose in character giving good quantities of milk and capable of fattening profitably when discarded from the dairy. Although Farey cited 21 farmers who kept Shorthorn cattle it was too early for them to be widely introduced although Figure 1 shows a similar distribution to the Longhorn breeds. Some farmers had reservations about Shorthorns including Chandos Pole of Radbourne who '*found them too delicate for his wet clayey lands*' and it was not until the 1830s that the Shorthorn overtook the Longhorn as the most frequently cited breed in Derbyshire dairy stock.<sup>15</sup>

Farey devoted 14 pages to Longhorn and Shorthorn cattle but barely six to the other six recognised breeds and all nine cross-breeds. Relatively few farmers are named as keeping them and these are mainly elite members of

the agricultural community. The Earl of Chesterfield at Bretby (Bradby Park), Sir Henry Crewe of Calke and Edward Coke of Longford are frequently mentioned as their interests in cattle were evidently diverse. Devons were considered useful but in the hands of few persons, Edward Coke kept Herefords for rearing bullocks and the Earl Moira of Donington Park Alderneys for their rich milk. While it is evident from Farey's list (Table 1) that various crosses using Shorthorns had been tried against other breeds the most significant cross in terms of number of herds was between Longhorn bulls and Shorthorn cows. Among the owners of five larger herds of crossed Longhorns each comprising 30-50 animals was Philip Oakden of Bentley Hall who had also crossed a Shorthorn bull with Longhorn cows.

### Dairy Stock or Grazing?

The core problem for farmers with respect to the breeds of cattle available was profitability. Farey resolved this into two questions firstly: *'which is the most profitable breed of cows?'* and secondly whether *'dairying or grazing is the most profitable?'*<sup>16</sup> In a review of the opinion of fifteen leading farmers a key issue of great concern to them all was the suitability of the New Longhorn for dairy purposes. William Cox of Culland and Richard Harrison of Ash were both positive as to the amount of milk that could be produced but others were less convinced as New Longhorns were observed to fatten and dry up in late summer. Typical of the latter was Thomas Jowett of Draycott who stated that: *'flesh is had at the expence of milk, in great measure'*. This would match the conclusion of William Marshall that *'the fattening quality of this improved breed in a state of maturity is undoubtedly good .... as dairy stock however their merit is less evident; dairywomen here and elsewhere bear witness against them'*.<sup>17</sup> Farey sought to develop the debate by quoting the milking records of cows of different breeds made on the Earl of Chesterfield's farm at Bretby which also enabled him to take account of the emergent Shorthorn breed but unfortunately Old Longhorns did not feature. The Bretby records were therefore inconclusive in relation to the main issue but did show that Shorthorns consumed more feed and produced half as much milk again as New Longhorns but that the Shorthorn milk was lower in butter fat contents.

The general economics of dairying were presented by Farey using figures derived from George Nuttall of Matlock although breed of cow was not a consideration. These indicated that keeping a cow for a year cost £19 1s 4d with a return of £20 17s 3d if cheese were made and £26 8s 4d if milk were sold. However the more profitable selling of liquid milk was only an option for farmers within or adjacent to urban areas where there were no transport problems. Farey noted that peri-urban farmers sold milk into Derby, Chesterfield and Sheffield while enlightened industrialists, such as Strutt at Belper and Oldknow at Mellor, set up farms to supply milk to their workers. However the system which prevailed across the greater part of rural Derbyshire meant that milk processing was the norm.

In common with other dairy districts the early nineteenth century system in Derbyshire enabled farmers to derive income from three sources other than milk processed as cheese or butter: calves, fattened cows when discarded from the dairy and pigs. The value of calves varied with their age so that George Nuttall allowed £2 10s for the sale of a calf at 4 weeks in his calculations while Samuel Rowland of Mickleover reportedly fattened calves until they were six weeks old and sold at an average of £3. Other farmers kept calves from seven to twelve weeks and made 4 guineas a head. At the other end of the herd cycle cows to be discarded from the dairy were fattened for slaughter. For example Richard Harrison of Ash removed cows from his herd at different ages as they declined in milk. He dried his cows in the middle of September and then fattened them on the aftermaths and hay and turnips.

In the south of the county specialist fattening of stock was not a serious alternative to dairying. It was the opinion of William Smith of Swarkestone Lowes, for example, that the red marl lands around Ash, Brailsford and Etwall were *'better adapted to dairying than to grazing'*.<sup>19</sup> However, Farey gave some emphasis to those farmers, including Lea of Stapenhill, who had fattening enterprises in addition to their dairies. Characteristically stock were bought in for fattening and often these are described as Scotch which may mean they had been driven down from Scotland and were being finished for market. Additionally Hereford oxen were variously bred or bought in and used to work the land before they were finally fattened, as exemplified by Thomas Hassall of Hartshorne who *'works and fats Hereford oxen'*.

A further income source was pigs and Farey observed that *'Derbyshire being a considerable dairy county large numbers of hogs are kept'*.<sup>20</sup> Cheese making left a residue of whey which formed *'the principal liquid food of pigs'* and to which was added green crops, swedes and potatoes. Farey noted that Derbyshire could not *'boast of a particular or characteristic breed'* - *'the excellent sort found on the larger farms have called them the Burton or the*

*Tamworth breed*. Thomas Moore of Lullington was typical of dairy men in this respect having 'a fine breed called ginger (? Tamworth) .... they are kept on whey and at 14 or 15 months old weigh 15 to 17 score he annually kills 16 or 17 such for family use'.

### **Cattle, Feed and Cheese Production**

While dairying with subsidiary pig keeping was the dominant enterprise the issue as to the suitability of the New Longhorn for the dairy was further discussed in terms of variability in the amount of cheese that could be produced from one cow in one season. Farey<sup>21</sup> quoted the seasonal sale of cheese by 30 farmers as ranging from two to five cwt per cow. A rule of thumb was that one pound of cheese could be made from one gallon of milk so that a cow producing two cwt of cheese would have given 240 gallons of milk in that season plus milk otherwise disposed of for calf feeding and family use making a total output of possibly 300 gallons. The Old Longhorn, said to have produced four and a half hundredweight of cheese annually, comes out ahead of the New Longhorn at three hundredweight which would justify the reservations about its milking performance indicated above. It is difficult however to relate such figures to a county average for cheese production per cow given the status of the farmers who managed these animals. It is interesting to note the view of Henry Holland, in his report on the then leading cheese making county of Cheshire, that '*the quantity (of cheese) from a herd may be stated at 300 lb per animal*' i.e. two and a half cwt '*with bad milkers included*'.<sup>22</sup> In Derbyshire the lower figure of three hundredweight may therefore have been more typical of the cheese output for many farms irrespective of breed type.

As with every stock system a further fundamental influence on productivity was the amount and quality of feed available. Farey's account of Derbyshire highlights a conventional grass-based system involving grazing in summer and the feeding of hay in winter. This applied to all dairymen, although those with acreages less than about 30 to 40 acres had insufficient land for cropping, and were thus dependent on permanent grazings and meadows.<sup>23</sup> Hay crops could be meagre and cattle which dried off in late autumn often came through the winter in poor condition for spring calving. Larger farms were much better placed to avert such problems as they had scope to grow supplementary stock feed in the form of temporary grass, swedes, turnips, potatoes and cabbages as part of an arable rotation system in which the greatest acreage was invariably given over to grains.

Farey indicated that certain beliefs guided the approach of many Derbyshire farmers to the management of grass. Although disputed by some it was thought that: '*old sward makes more and better cheese than new lands as observed in the same place, that sheep kept along with cows lessen the produce of the dairy by picking most of the best grasses, that dairy cows kept upon artificial grasses are seldom productive*'. Improved or temporary grass was also thought to result in tainted milk and cheese so that Farey was led to assert that '*the best and fattest cheese is made from inferior land*'. Notwithstanding this conclusion Farey made an extensive review of grasslands in volume 2 of his report.<sup>24</sup> He commended the quality of the grazings on the extensive floodplains of the Trent, Dove and other major valleys and the great usefulness of limited areas of water meadow also in valley locations. However the management of other grazings away from river valleys was noted as extremely variable and Farey identified '*too many instances of the neglect and weeding of pastures*'. Thistles were singled out for special mention: '*too many repeatedly left to ripen and disperse before they were cut*' even on Lord Vernon's estate at Sudbury. On the other hand Harvey of Hoon Hay was commended for good practice by combining the grazing of land by sheep and cattle so that '*the whole surface is eat down fair and smooth*'.

In these circumstances supplementary purchased feed might be thought to have had a particular role but this is to anticipate the late nineteenth century system of liquid milk production. Oil cake was but '*little used*' and only Abraham Hoskins of Newton Solney is recorded as buying brewers' grains from Burton which were being purchased by farmers at this time.<sup>25</sup> Fodder crops including roots and green crops are listed for most Derbyshire parishes in the 1801 crop returns. The swedish turnip or swede was described by Farey as '*spreading and widely grown*' apparently succeeding on the '*rather stiff land of the red marl*' although it would have been suitable for sheep as well as cattle. Some farmers such as Rowland of Mickleover and Mundy of Markeaton drew turnips for feeding in yards while other simply lifted them and folded stock across them. Farey was impressed by the usefulness and versatility of cabbages it being feasible to '*pull and chop cabbages in the yard when frozen solid*'. Farmers he visited reportedly had up to four acres in roots and an acre of cabbages.

### **Cheese Making**

Farey<sup>26</sup> gave an extended account of the ways in which cheese and also butter were made and concluded that

*'the process of cheese making seems differently conducted by different persons'*. The basis of all cheese making is the addition of rennet (derived from the lining of calves stomachs) to milk to secure the separation of curd from whey followed by the pressing of the curd to form cheese. However a whole range of variations in the conduct of the process at different stages are possible to give different types and quality of cheese. Such variations would include initial milk quality, whether or not a proportion of the cream has been skimmed off, the temperature and humidity of the dairy, the efficiency of the separation of curd and whey, the degree and effectiveness of pressing (larger farms used hewn gritstone blocks) and also the manner of salting and wrapping to form a protective exterior against mite infestation. To these considerations can be added cheese storage which under the best circumstances involved regular turning in specially constructed cheese chambers which allowed air circulation. The competence of the farmer's wife and her dairymaids was critical in these matters and in Farey's day, when little was understood of the biochemistry involved, it was a matter of the careful application of experience. It is not surprising therefore that quality and character of cheese was widely variable the best being marketed in London and the less good being sold locally.

The figures quoted by Farey show that Derbyshire cheeses were commonly about 20 lbs in weight and in a state of perfection after one and a half to two years of storage although clearly much younger cheese was also marketed. As to character Farey identified some Derbyshire cheese with Double Gloucester i.e. a full fat coloured cheese although he objected to the considerable expenditure on annatto, the Central American dye used to produce the orange appearance. Indeed Morton,<sup>27</sup> writing much later in the 1870s, also described the Derbyshire process then current as similar to that for Double Gloucester to make middling class of cheese. However other types of cheese were being made in the early nineteenth century so that Farey noted that Robert Stone of Boylestone produced *'Stilton of very good quality'* and the parishes of Aldwark and Shottle had *'long been famous for particularly rich and fine toasting cheese'*.

At the time Farey was writing the cheese trade appears to have been expanding and *'since the making of the Trent and Mersey, the Derby, and the Erewash and other canals the trade in this staple commodity of Derbyshire farming has been much changed'*. He noted that some factors (cheese traders) were buying *'2,000 or more tons annually principally on commission for London dealers or for those who have Government contracts'*, the Navy being a large purchaser of cheese. Interestingly 2,000 tons matches the Pilkington's<sup>28</sup> figure of the amount of cheese sent out of the county annually and is also compatible with Pitt's<sup>29</sup> comment in his Leicestershire report that 5,000 tons was traded annually down the Trent from Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Staffordshire. Of this 1,500 tons was derived from Leicestershire with the rest divided between the other two counties. However to the 2,000 tons of traded cheese must be added an estimate of cheese either marketed locally or used within the farm community, possibly a further 1,000 tons or more. This would give a total of at least 3,000 tons and accepting an estimated average seasonal output of 3 cwt per cow would have represented the product of 20,000 cows.

Factors or middle men had long been important in cheese marketing. It was practice for factors to visit farmers to check the quality of cheese prior to purchase and subsequent selling on to local retailers or to wholesalers in the London market. The small dairymen were seemingly *'often obliged to sell for want of money'* and therefore to *'accept the prices thus offered by the factors' and within two or three days deliver it, at the warehouses at Derby, Shardlow, Horninglow etc...'*. Farey also noted that *'with these men it is a ready money trade though some few give six or eight weeks credit'*. The larger farmers were treated differently in that prices were not fixed at the inspection stage. Thus Harrison of Ash thought that *'half the cheese of the county was delivered without the price being fixed until two to three months after'* although some money was advanced on account. Prices were subsequently determined, *'or pretended to be so'*, by the prices at Derby St Luke's Fair. Clearly the factors were in a position to manipulate individual farmers. Farey quoted the observation of Smith of Swarkestone Lows that *'at the Derby Fair of 1808 the average price was about 70s per cwt yet Mr Richard Phillips of Somersal Herbert and numerous other little dairymen had sold to factors in September at 60s per cwt'*.

### Cattle Diseases

In addition to the manipulation of the market farmers also had to cope with a range of ailments which afflicted their livestock. Farey<sup>30</sup> concluded his chapter on cattle with extended comment on diseases (distempers), the control of which was beyond the capabilities of local cow doctors. A range of disorders were recognised but the causes were not understood and hence remedies were experimental. Two diseases, black-leg and blood water, are given considerable attention both of which, together with foot rot, are exacerbated by poor land drainage.

Black-leg or black quarter is caused by the soil organism *clostridium chauvæi* which is often field specific and

absorbed via food or skin abrasions. It is now controlled by vaccination but in Farey's time it was a frequent and often fatal disease affecting young stock. Farmers visited by Farey emphasised the suddenness of the onset of black-leg and were aware that it is not contagious between animals. They were also aware that it was particularly prevalent when stock are first turned out on pastures so that Francis Blake of Bradley Farm noted that *'calves kept in the house are never affected by it'* but when the calves *'lie out on cold ground, they are very commonly struck by it'*. The hot gaseous swellings of neck, shoulder and thigh which characterise black-leg were described by John Pearsall of Foremark who bled cattle in the spring *'and gave nitre and camphor or camphor and brandy, which lessened but did not cure the mortality'*. Francis Mundy of Markeaton thought that black-leg *'prevails most in bleak and cold situations'* that is where soils are acid and poorly drained which matches modern observation that drainage and heavy liming will alleviate occurrence.

A further problem related to poorly drained tick infested land was blood water or red water (babesiosis) caused by a protozoon blood parasite transmitted by the common tick. Charles Geaves of Hope Woodlands observed that stock were *'very subject to blood water, about that time that they begin to mend in condition in spring'*. Other farmers identified the heavy red marl lands in south west Derbyshire and also the shale country of the Ecclesbourne valley as areas where blood water was prevalent.

Other diseases included scouring, i.e. diarrhoea, which had a range of potential causes from dietary to microorganisms. The garget or mastitis infected the udder and was, as now, significant in dairy farming. Other health problems noted by Farey included skin disorders, hoven or gaseous stomach swelling through grazing spring pastures and slipping or contagious abortion. Another quite specific environmental disorder in the limestone Peak was belland or lead poisoning *'from grazing too long in the vicinity of lead furnaces or cupolas and sometimes from drinking the water that has been used in the buddling or dressing of lead ore'*.

## Conclusion

Farey's account of the characteristics of cattle based enterprise in Derbyshire farming in the early nineteenth century enables clear conclusions to be drawn. Longhorn cattle were of prime importance either as the recognised breeds of the Old and New types or as elements of the traditional and partly improved stock of the mass of farmers in Derbyshire and across the Midlands. The main objective in relation to cattle was the production of milk rather than specialist fattening of animals which was a distinctly subsidiary enterprise. The bulk of the milk produced was made into cheese on the farm and in this connection the Old Longhorn type had advantages over the New Longhorn which, although a significant breed innovation, was dual purpose or better suited to grazing for meat rather than the dairy. The selling of calves, fattened cows and pigs was important as a subsidiary enterprise within the dairy system. The farm based making of cheese led to diversity in quality and although much of the cheese was akin to Double Gloucester other types were produced. Sufficient sound cheese was made for a sizeable quantity to be traded into the distant London market via the Trent and Humber by factors who had a controlling influence on the price obtained by farmers. The provision of feed for cattle was based upon permanent pastures which were grazed and mowed for hay. Farey judged a substantial proportion of grazings to be indifferent in character and it was also the case that the incidence of disease was in part related to poor drainage. Supplementary winter feed was produced by farmers with larger areas of land in the form of roots and cabbages but purchased feed was perceived as of minor significance at the time.

While Farey's observations on feed indicate limitations to the productivity of cattle based enterprise in Derbyshire it is useful to consider his survey from the perspectives of other agricultural commentators. For example Farey's clear identification of the importance of dairying and cheese making links back to the opinions of the late eighteenth century writers Pilkington<sup>31</sup> (1789) and Brown<sup>32</sup> (1794). Both men saw cheese making as a developing specialism in Derbyshire which seems to have increased in significance by Farey's time. An important causal factor would have been the near trebling in cheese prices from 30 shillings (£1 50p) to 80 shillings (£4) a hundredweight which took place during the period of the French Wars up to 1815. Following Waterloo prices fell back to 50 to 60 shillings a hundredweight and until the mid nineteenth century and farming generally was relatively depressed. Consequently it is not surprising that a more sober perspective on farming in Farey's time is gained from the reports of the Tithe Commissioners who investigated the agriculture of Derbyshire on a parish basis between 1836 and 1850. Farey citations of Harrison of Ash near Etwall show that he was a progressive member of the farm community yet Commissioner Roger Kynaston writing of Ash in December 1838 *'saw nothing to remark on in the farming and certainly nothing that bordered on High Farming'*.<sup>33</sup> High Farming meant a high input/high output approach to husbandry and it was on the basis of a series of judgements in this vein that Beckett and Heath concluded that the tithe evidence indicated that *'Derbyshire was*



not yet greatly improved'. By inference the same was most likely to have been true of the farming which Farey described.

## References

1. J.T. Farey, *General View of the Agriculture of Derbyshire*, Vol I 1811, Vol II 1815 and Vol III 1817 London.
2. Farey III, p. 1.
3. For sheep see Roger Dalton, 'John Farey's Derbyshire: Sheep Farming in the Early Nineteenth Century', *Derbyshire Miscellany*, 1999, Vol 15, Part 4, pp. 115-120.
4. Although in receipt of Government funding the Board of Agriculture was an independent organisation. It published two series of reports on each county in England and Wales, the second which included that of John Farey being the more comprehensive. Farey, who had experience in the management of the Duke of Bedford's estate at Woburn and was also a keen geologist, was jointly commissioned in 1806 by the Royal Society and the Board of Agriculture to survey the minerals and agriculture of the county. His survey and report were unique in this respect. Farey was a second choice surveyor of the Board of Agriculture as an earlier report by a William Curtis had been considered inadequate.
5. E Stanley, *Robert Bakewell and the Longhorn Breed of Cattle*, 1995, Ipswich.
6. W. M. Marshall, *The Rural Economy of the Midland Counties*, I, 1796, London.
7. Farey, III, pp. 1-2.
8. J. Holt, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Lancaster*, 1795, London, noted the trading of cattle from the north-west into the Midlands via Derby market.
9. Farey, III pp. 2-3.
10. While tradition clearly points to the key role of Robert Bakewell in the development of the New Longhorn there are no surviving records of his work. He undoubtedly bought cattle which were already improved from the Canley and Rollright farms but appears to have adopted a more focused and intensive approach to stock breeding. See W.M. Marshall, *op cit*, for a contemporary account of the evolution of the New Longhorn.
11. Farey, III pp. 4-5.
12. Farey, III p. 9.
13. Farey, III, pp. 11-13.
14. See R. Trow-Smith, *Life from the Land*, 1967, pp. 130-1.
15. See R.T. Dalton, 'Agricultural Change in Southern Derbyshire 1800-1870', *East Midland Geographer*, 20, 1997, pp. 33-41.
16. Farey, III p. 3.
17. Marshall, *op cit* p. 281.
18. Farey, III pp. 36-8.
19. Farey, III p. 42 while fattening is discussed on pages 24-29.
20. Farey, III aspects of the raising of Hogs are discussed on pages 164-176.
21. Farey, III pp. 44-45.
22. H. Holland, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cheshire*, 1808, London.
23. Analysis by the author of Tithe surveys made between 1836 and 1850 shows that few farms of less than 40 acres had land in arable at this time.
24. Farey, II, p. 190 et seq.
25. Roger Dalton, 'The Relationship of the Brewing Industry of Burton upon Trent to Local Dairy Farming in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', *East Midland Historian*, 9, 1999, pp. 25-31.
26. Farey, III pp. 46-56.
27. J.C. Morton, 'On Cheesemaking in Home Dairies and Factories', *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England*, 2nd series XI, 1875, pp. 261-300.
28. J. Pilkington, *A View of the Present State of Derbyshire*, Vol I, 1789, London, p. 301.
29. W. Pitt, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Leicester*, 1809, London, p. 288.
30. Farey III, pp. 76-87. E. Boden (ed) *Black's Veterinary Dictionary*, 19th ed. 1998, Cambridge, has been used to assist understanding of the various disorders identified by Farey.
31. Pilkington, *op cit*.
32. T. Brown, *General view of the Agriculture of the County of Derby*, 1794, London. This was prepared as the Derbyshire volume for the first series of Board of Agriculture Reports.
33. See J.V. Beckett and J. E. Heath (ed), *The Derbyshire Tithe Files 1836-1850*, Derbyshire Record Society, 1995, p. liii.

## THE MIDLAND COUNTIES RAILWAY BRIDGE IN SAWLEY

(by Ian Mitchell)

In October 1838 construction of the Midland Counties Railway was well under way. The railway was to link Derby, Nottingham and Leicester with the London and Birmingham Railway at Rugby. The directors of the company had established two committees to supervise the work north and south of the River Trent respectively. The "North of Trent" work running over generally flat terrain between Derby and Nottingham was the most advanced, with tracklaying already under way with a view to opening the line in 1839.

The meeting of the North of Trent Committee on 30 October was attended by a visitor, who had a complaint about the construction of the railway. This was recorded in the minutes as follows<sup>1</sup>:

*Mr Foxcroft the Clerk to the Trustees of the Sawley Turnpike Road attended and complained that the Road way beneath the Bridge erected by this Company over that road had been so much lowered as to render the passage of it during the time of flood dangerous. Mr F was informed that the Directors would be desirous of providing a remedy and Mr Woodhouse was instructed to meet the Trustees on the spot for such purpose on Friday next.*

The turnpike road in question was the Lenton to Sawley Ferry branch of the road from Chapel Bar Nottingham to St Mary's Bridge Derby. This was opened in 1758-9 and with the opening of the Harrington Bridge over the River Trent, which replaced Sawley Ferry in 1780, it became an important through route to Tamworth and Birmingham. The Midland Counties Railway crossed the turnpike road in open countryside on the flood plain of the River Trent between the villages of Long Eaton and Sawley, at grid reference SK481322. Immediately to the east of the turnpike road was Sawley Junction, the north-west corner of the triangular junction between the Midland Counties Railway lines to Derby, Nottingham, and Leicester.

The same topic came up again at the next meeting on 27 November 1838<sup>2</sup>:

*With reference to minutes No 278 it was resolved that the following agreement between this company and the Trustees of the Nottingham and Sawley Turnpike Road be approved and be signed by the Chairman of this committee.*

*"The Midland Counties Railway having built an arch over the Sawley branch of the Nottingham and Derby Turnpike Road which is neither so wide nor so high as their act required; and in order to heighten such arch, having cut down about three feet of such Turnpike Road under said arch thereby making a cavity which will receive flood waters at and after the floods on the River Trent, and impede or render dangerous the passage through or under such work, and the Trustees of such Turnpike Road having complained of such impediment and danger, the aforesaid Company for remedy thereof have 1<sup>st</sup> Proposed to make an opening by the East side of such arch of 12 feet in width, and 14 feet in height measuring from the ancient surface of such road to let carriages through without passing the flood-water in such hole or cavity, and 2<sup>nd</sup> They propose to make a good gravelled road and way to and through such opening from the point where the intended road leaves the old road to the point where it joins the same again; 3<sup>rd</sup> They propose to raise the footway on one side under the arch so as to let foot-people pass without wading through the water and 4<sup>th</sup> To maintain and continue such opening as public carriageway for ever hereafter at their own costs and charges and 5<sup>th</sup> (If required by the said trustees) to fill up so much of the said cavity that has been made by lowering such turnpike road at any time hereafter. And the Trustees of such Turnpike Road so far as they legally can or may being satisfied that if such proposals are carried into effect much of the inconvenience occasioned by such arch and cavity will be done away.*

*It is hereby agreed that this memorandum shall be signed by the Chairman of the Directors or Committee of such Company and by three of the acting Trustees of the said Turnpike Road and shall be entered into the proceedings of the said Companies, and shall be binding upon both the said parties, saving the rights of the public."*

It is obvious from this wording that the Directors of the Midland Counties Railway realised that they were in the wrong and moved quickly to do a deal with the Turnpike Trustees, to avoid potential litigation and disruption to the works of completing the railway.

In the intervening 160 years the area between the villages of Long Eaton and Sawley has become completely built up. There is now a railway station to the west of the bridge, opened in 1888 as Sawley Junction, but renamed Long Eaton in 1968. The turnpike road is now the B6540 Tamworth Road, and there is a busy roundabout immediately north of the bridge. The original bridge today carries high speed trains running between Derby and London, but Sawley Junction is no more as the road leading east from the roundabout, Fields Farm Way, was built in the 1980s along the course of the original Derby to Nottingham side of the Midland Counties Railway's triangle of lines. Trains from Derby to Nottingham now have to slow to 20 mph to round a much sharper curve constructed to serve Trent station, which was built on the Nottingham-Leicester side of the triangle in 1862 to act as an interchange point for passengers, and closed in 1968.

The main line of the road dips under a low arched stone bridge, number 19 in the current Railtrack numbering sequence,<sup>3</sup> and there is an additional small girder bridge to one side (number 19A) which looks like an afterthought but with stone abutments which appear to be contemporary with the main bridge. As predicted in 1838, flooding of the road where it dips under the railway has been a regular event, but the arrival of mains drainage now at least means that the water can drain away when it stops raining. Nowadays the main problem from the bridge is when tall road vehicles ignore the warning signs and get stuck under the arch. In this circumstance the additional opening constructed as a result of the deal between the railway and the turnpike still serves as a diversionary route for smaller vehicles.

Was the building of the bridge too low a deliberate decision or a mistake? To answer this question we can compare three items of evidence:

- (i) The original act of parliament authorising the construction of the railway<sup>4</sup>
- (ii) The contract for the construction of the railway<sup>5</sup>
- (iii) The bridge as it exists today

Clause LXIII of the Act of Incorporation of the Midland Counties Railway deals with the dimensions of bridges carrying the railway over roads. Minimum heights and widths were specified to ensure that road traffic would not be inconvenienced by the construction of the railway, together with a limit on the maximum gradient permitted if the roadway had to be altered to climb or descend on the approaches to the new railway bridge. For a turnpike road such as that at Sawley, the vertical clearance between the road surface and the centre of the arch had to be a minimum of 16 feet, and the width of the passageway for road vehicles had to be a minimum of 30 feet.

The contracts for the construction of the Midland Counties Railway survive in the Public Record Office. The bridge at Sawley was part of Contract No. 1, which covered the section of the Derby-Nottingham line between Derby and Meadow Lane at Long Eaton, plus a short stretch of the curve from Sawley towards Leicester (as far as a bridge over the Erewash Canal). This contract was let to William Mackenzie of Leyland in Lancashire. The contract document includes drawings of all bridges, and drawing No. 28 is that for the bridge over the turnpike road at Sawley. The drawing shows a stone bridge very recognisably similar to the main arch of the bridge that exists today. The height to the underside of the centre of the arch is 12 feet 6 inches above the original road surface, with a dip in the road to achieve a clearance of 14 feet. The width of the skew arch is 30 feet measured at right angles to the road, and 42 feet along the line of the railway.

Determining the measurements of the bridge as it exists today is difficult. Standing in the middle of a busy main road with tape measure or levelling staff is not a practical proposition. The current height restriction on the main stone arch of the bridge (no. 19) warns away road vehicles over 12 feet 3 inches high, *but this is the clearance over a typical road vehicle width, which should not be compared directly with the historical documents which specify the height to the centre of the arch.* Scaling from photographs suggests that the clearance to the centre of the arch is approximately 13 feet from the present-day road surface, and the width of the arch is 42 feet along the line of the railway. The road dips under the bridge, but there is no easy datum against which to measure the

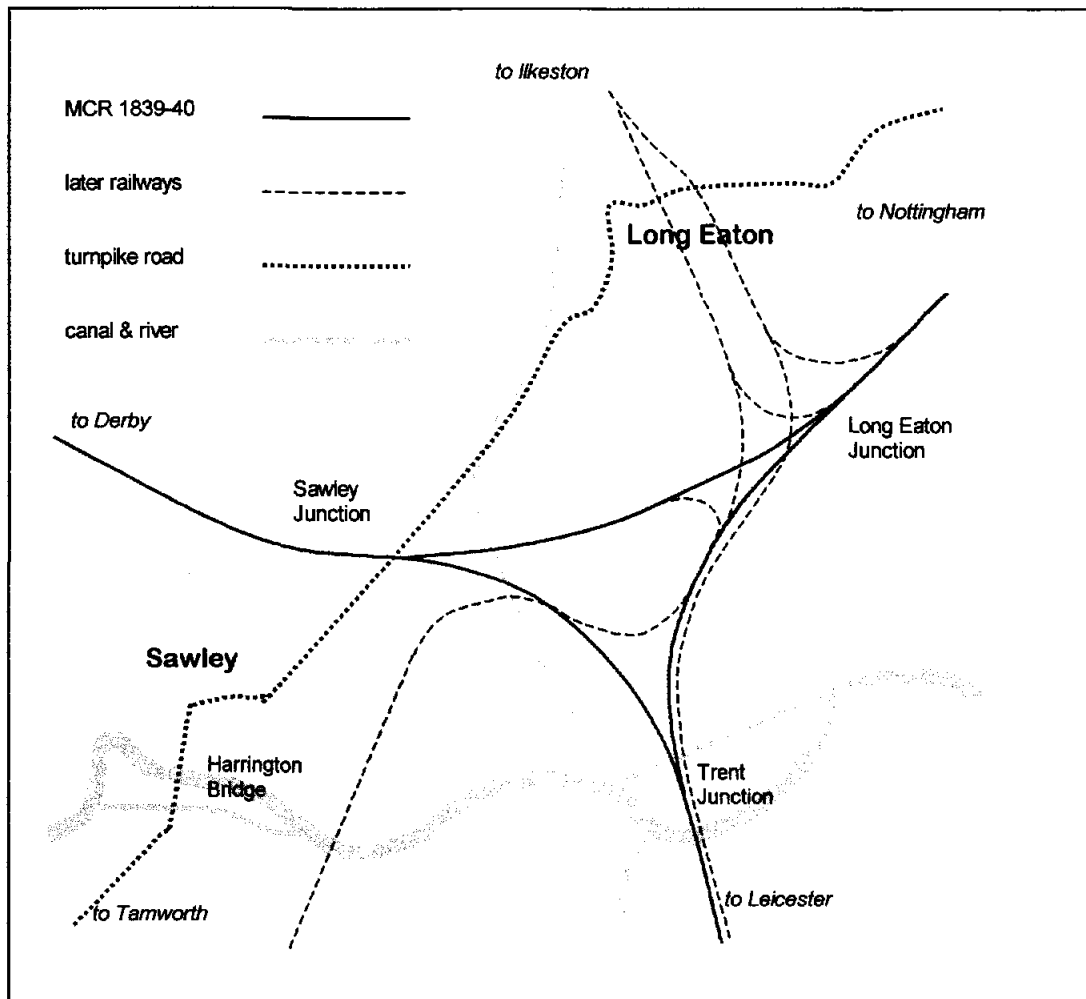


Figure 1: Roads, railways and waterways around Long Eaton and Sawley



Figure 2: South elevation of railway bridges over Tamworth Road, Sawley

amount of dip.

The current height restriction on the additional girder bridge (no. 19A) is only 10 feet. This is reduced from the original clearance by some substantial timber bracing inserted below the main bridge girders, apparently to keep the abutments from moving together. The width of road under this bridge is approximately 10 feet.

Comparing the three sources of evidence, it appears reasonable to conclude that the contractor Mackenzie did indeed build the bridge in accordance with his contract, with the reduction in clearance from 14 feet to 13 feet being accounted for raising of the road level as a result of improved surfacing of the road in the 20th Century. On the other hand, the discrepancy in height between the 16 feet minimum in the Act of Parliament and the 14 feet in the contract drawings was either a deliberate decision or an error by the Midland Counties Railway and its engineer. An attempt to put this right by deepening the dip in the road under the bridge from 1 foot 6 inches to 3 feet, created the flooding problem that led to the complaint from the Turnpike Trustees.

It seems most unlikely that the reduction in the height of the bridge below that required by the Act of Parliament was an error. The requirement for clearance over the nearby Erewash Canal was only 10 feet, so the Sawley road bridge determines the height of the embankment that carries the railway across the flood plain of the River Trent. As the Sawley bridge is at the north-west corner of the triangle of lines to Derby, Nottingham and Leicester, raising the bridge by 3 feet could have involved heightening almost a mile of embankment. As the embankments are typically 80 feet wide, and the contractor was paid 10 pence per cubic yard for earthmoving, the extra height could easily have cost the railway an extra £2000 on construction costs, and even more if it was necessary to buy more land for use as borrow pits to obtain the additional fill. The early railways were also very concerned to avoid fluctuations in gradients because of the limited tractive effort of the locomotives. £2000 was a substantial amount of money in the 1830s, even for a major railway project, so it is not surprising that Midland Counties Railway took a chance and built the bridge at the height which suited them, and did a deal with the Turnpike Trustees when they were found out.

The final question is whether the additional opening at the side of the bridge was ever constructed to the height of 14 feet as specified in the agreement between the railway and the turnpike. The current clearance is only 10 feet, and it seems unlikely that the 4 feet difference is accounted for only by the timber bracing under the girders and road surfacing. However it is likely that the current girders are not the original ones, and it is possible that back in 1839 the additional opening was constructed in a very light manner (possible in timber) to give the maximum possible clearance, and had to be strengthened at a later date to withstand the increasing weight and speed of trains.

#### References and footnotes:

1. PRO/RAIL/490/13 Midland Counties Railway - Meetings of Committee of Works North of Trent, minute 278, 30 October 1838.
2. PRO/RAIL/490/13 Midland Counties Railway - Meetings of Committee of Works North of Trent, minute 307, 27 November 1838.
3. The bridge was always locally known as "number nine bridge" (oral evidence via Keith Reedman). The current numbering sequence seems to have been introduced sometime between 1935 and 1960, and takes account of the diversion of the railway to enter Derby station from the south in 1867, and additional bridges such as that constructed in 1935 to carry Raynesway over the railway on the outskirts of Derby.
4. 6 William IV, Cap lxviii, Midland Counties Railway Act of Parliament, 21 June 1836.
5. PRO/RAIL/490/19 Midland Counties Railway - Contract No. 1 for works in connection with the construction of the railway, 29 June 1837.

#### CORRECTION

#### SOUTHWOOD HOUSE AND GARDEN: A RARE SIXTEENTH CENTURY SURVIVAL.

Vol 16, Part 1, pp 29-32:

Janet Spavold has written with the following correction to paragraph 5 on page 32:

Southwood passed from the Burdetts to the Harpur Crewes by exchange in 1821 not by marriage as stated in the article.