

DERBYSHIRE MISCELLANY



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CONTENTS

	Page
Land Tax in the New Mills region 1778-1832 by Derek Brumhead	98
The gypsum industry in the early 17th century by Miriam Wood	111
John Robertson of Baslow - Architect by Ann Hall	113

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Front Cover: Hopping Mill Weir, Milford

LAND TAX IN THE NEW MILLS REGION 1778-1832

(by Derek Brumhead, Gayton, Laneside Road, New Mills, High Peak, SK22 4LU)

The Land Tax, authorised by Parliament in 1692 and finally abolished in 1962, descended from a long line of predecessors.¹ It was not, in fact, purely a land tax and included real estate and property tax, as well as a form of income tax. The rate varied between one and four shillings in the pound until fixed at four shillings in 1798. In 1698 the government abandoned attempts to levy taxation by a national poundage rate and, instead, imposed an annual quota on each county based on the assessments.² These county quotas never varied thereafter. This enabled tax to be levied on all kinds of income: *'all lands, tenements, hereditaments, annuities, offices (except in the army, navy and His Majesty's Household), tolls, profits and other estates both real and personal'*.³ In effect this meant elements such as land, industrial premises, mines, houses and tithes. Each county had the responsibility to distribute the quota among its townships and parishes. Commissioners were appointed to produce and supervise the assessments and the local collection. They were drawn mostly from the *'local gentry, headed by a few peers and leavened by a sprinkling of merchants, doctors and barristers'*.⁴ The commissioners appointed assessors and collectors, usually in pairs for each parish. The principle of double taxation of Roman Catholics established by the Subsidy Act of 1625 was transferred to the land tax in the 1690s but such payment rarely happened in practice when adjustments were made to redistribute the tax.⁵

The county land tax quotas were subdivided into quotas for each individual parish or township. In 1693 the total tax quota for the country amounted to £1,922,713⁶ and the annual quota for the county of Derbyshire was £24,093 19s 9½d. The proportion for the ten hamlets of Bowden Middlecale⁷ was £320 16s 0d⁸

To John Olliver, Raph Boden and George Halford, approved and appointed assessors ... The sum required to be assessed is £320.16s 0d being the proportion charged upon your said Townshipp for and towards the raising and making up the whole sum of £24,093 19s 9½d charged upon the County ... you are to Charge and Assess the Sum of Four Shillings in the Pound, according to the true Yearly value thereof, for one year; (that is to say) For every Hundred Pounds on such ready money and debts, and Hundred Pounds worth of Goods, Wares, Merchandises, or other Chattels or Personal Estate, the sum of Twenty Four Shillings.

The proportion for Bowden Middlecale of £320 16s 0d was divided as follows:

Hamlet	£	s	d	
Bugsworth	6	8	4	
Brownside	2	19	4	
Chinley	15	7	0	
Great Hamlet	11	0	0	
Phoside	6	3	6	
Kinder	6	2	2	
Beard	4	16	4	
Whitle	8	14	10¾	
Ollersett	8	3	10	
Thornsett	10	12	10	
TOTAL	80	4	0	per quarter

In 1713 the ten hamlets of Bowden Middlecale were divided into three groups based on an equitable division of the poor rate – Great Hamlet, Phoside and Kinder: Chinley, Bugsworth and Brownside: Beard, Ollersett, Thornsett and Whitle.⁹ In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries this three-fold division of hamlets came to form the basis of the division of local government areas, census districts and poor law unions and the four hamlets of the last group became linked eventually to form the district of New Mills.

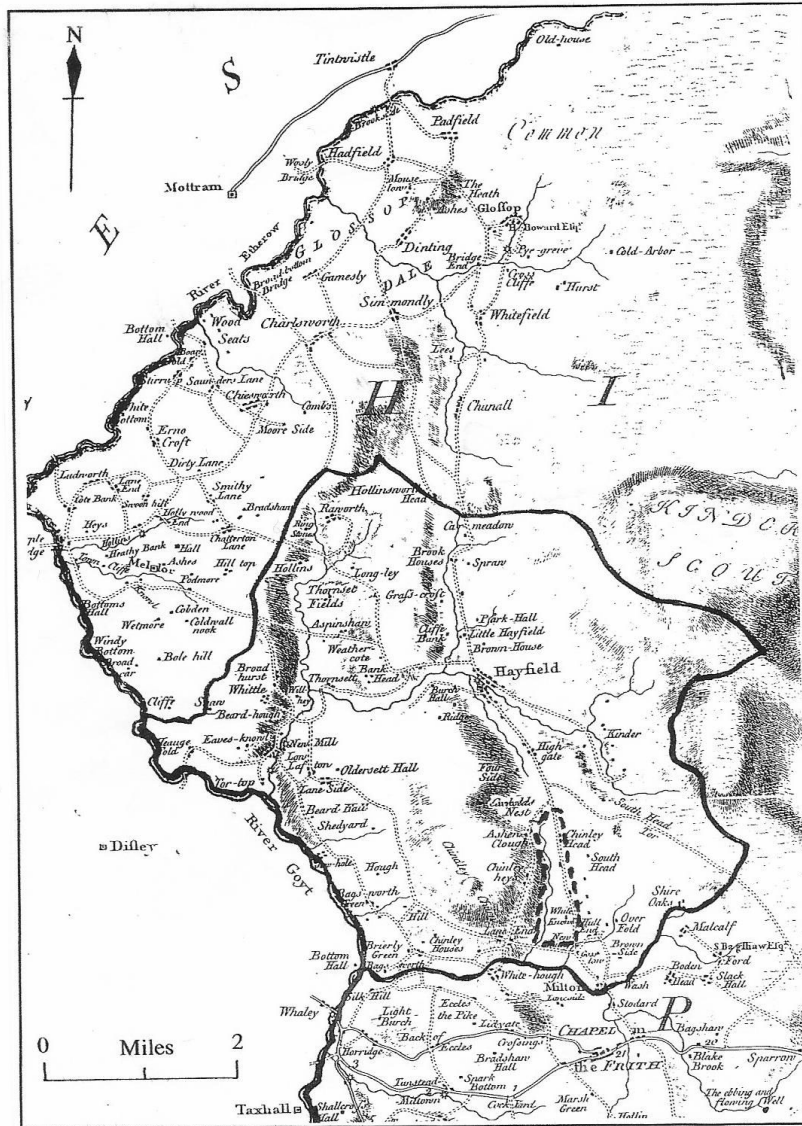


Fig 1. Burdett's map of north-west Derbyshire 1767

(published with minor amendments in 1791 and reprinted by the Derbyshire Archaeological Society in 1975).
The extent of Bowden Middlecale is shown by the black line.

For many reasons, however, the rate of remittance of the tax to the government was erratic and delayed often for years.¹⁰ Receivers had expenses and were liable to meet certain charges, and there was a difficulty in transferring money to London. In addition the 2d poundage that receivers were paid was insufficient and they would often use the balances for their own benefit.¹¹ In 1786-90 Derbyshire's average percentage payments was only 24.1 per cent.¹²

The introduction of quotas in 1698 on the basis of the 1692 assessments encouraged many counties to levy tax on a similar basis to that of other rates such as the poor rate and the county book of rates. In Southampton, the land tax had always been estimated by the poor rate and from the beginning Cumberland apparently raised land tax as an ordinary county rate.¹³ This certainly existed in New Mills where there was a direct connection between the poor rate and the land tax, evident by comparing the poor rate return of 1768 for the four local hamlets with the land tax assessment for the same year (Table 1). In many individual assessments the amounts and descriptions are the same. In Beard hamlet there are 21 individual assessments (poor rate and land tax) which match up exactly, out of a total for poor relief of 46. Moreover, the 21 land tax assessments for Beard in 1778 are headed '*lays*' a term also applying to the poor rate.¹⁴

Ollersset Hamlet 1778.

Ollersset Demain	-	18	-	1	$\frac{3}{4}$
More Newland	-	1	-	1	
Tho. Dawson	-	6	-	6	
More Pingott	-	1	-	10	$\frac{1}{2}$
Randol Taylor	-	6	-	6	
More Millfields	-	3	-	3	
Gibbey	-	9	-	5	
Ellerscroft	-	2	-	5	$\frac{1}{2}$
Joshua Rangely	-	6	-	6	
Tho. Bowden	-	9	-	9	
More Newland	-	0	-	3	$\frac{1}{4}$
Widow Lively	-	11	-	4	
Wm Holme	-	3	-	3	
Obadiak Stafford	-	3	-	3	
John Collier	-	4	-	10	$\frac{1}{2}$
More Newland	-	0	-	6	$\frac{1}{2}$
Hugh Pearson	-	0	-	6	$\frac{1}{2}$
Diglands	-	1	-	1	
Tophole	-	2	-	8	$\frac{1}{2}$
Garrison	-	3	-	3	
W. Radcliff	-	1	-	7	$\frac{1}{2}$
Widow Harriott	-	1	-	7	$\frac{1}{2}$
Newmill	-	3	-	3	
Ralph Bower house	-	0	-	6	$\frac{1}{2}$
James Beard	-	0	-	6	$\frac{1}{2}$
<hr/>					
W. R. T.	-	8	-	3	10

Fig 2. The Land Tax for Ollersset hamlet, 1778.
Derbyshire Record Office, Land Tax for Beard, Ollersset, Thornsett and Whitle, M185, Item 2.

A rise in valuation total would not result in an increase in land tax because of the quota system. But if it was necessary to increase the amount raised by the poor rate, it would be useful to permit the valuation total for the township to rise. This seems to be the case when the Napoleonic wars brought a substantial rise in the poor rate collected in 1804, but there was no equivalent change in the land tax.

What is crucial is the fact that the quotas never varied and remained in force until the tax was abolished in 1962. So, although industrialisation and urbanisation resulted in great changes in land and property values over time, the total amount owed by each township never altered. This was the most widely recognised constraint on the historical analysis of the land tax.¹⁵ If the valuation level of a township changed the only consequence was that individual tax assessments departed proportionately further from the rents but made no difference to the quotas.

Poor Relief 1768

Beard

Stephen Pearson for Beard Hall	1	10	0
More for new land		3	3
Thos Drinkwater for Jowhole		7	7
More for fee farm land		3	3
More for freehold common land		1	7
More of freehold common land		0	6
More for Bearwood fee farm land		8	1
More for cloth mill		0	6
More for £100 of money		1	1
John Drinkwater for Goytside		3	9
More for Byflats		2	0
More for freehold common land		3	9
More for one piece of freehold common land		0	3
Samuel Goddard Bowkers		3	3
William Gaskill for Laneside improved two houses		9	3
More for freehold common land		2	8
More for top piece freehold common land		0	6
John Collier for Shedyard		7	7
More for fee farm land		1	4
More for freehold common land		0	6
John Sale for Bawdbeard		5	5
More for freehold common land		0	6½
More for fee farm land		0	¾
More for stock in trade		0	6½
John Brocklehurst for Howcroft		4	4
More for freehold common land		0	¾
Ralph Arnfield Jowhole		0	6½
James Beard for Hyde farm		5	5
More for a piece of freehold common		1	¾
More for stock in trade		2	2
Thos. Stafford for Brown Hill		1	1
More for freehold common land		0	¾
More for houses in new mill and freehold land		0	6½
Geo Bowdon for house and land Tottop		0	¾
for paper mill		1	1
John Wooley for one house at brown Hill		0	¾
Geo. Brocklehurst for £100 of money		1	1
Robt Bradbury for freehold land		1	1
James Beard and Stephen Pearson for corn tithe		3	9
Jeremy Wyld for house and land		0	¾
Josiah Arnfield for house and land		0	¾
John Arnfield for house and land at Jowhole		0	¾
Thomas Drinkwater for a meadow at Bear hall		0	¾
More for house and land at our Jowhole		0	¾
Samuel Goddard for Stock in Trade		0	¾

Land tax 1778

Beard Domain	1	10	0
More Newland		1	¾
Thos Drinkwater		7	7
Beard Wood		8	½
Jn Drinkwater		3	½
More Byflats		2	½
Bowker		4	4
Wm Gaskell		8	8
Shedyard		7	7
More Newland		1	¾
John Sales		5	5
John Brocklehurst		4	4
Hyde Farm		6	6
Thos. Stafford		0	¾
Brownhill		1	1
Geo Bowden		0	6½
Paper Mill		0	6½
Thos. Goddard		0	6½
More Mill		0	6½
Robt. Higenborham		0	6½
Corn tithe in Beard and Ollsesett		7	7

Table 1: A Comparison of the 1768 Poor Relief Assessment with the 1778 Land Tax Assessment for Beard hamlet in Bowden Middlecale

Few lists survive before 1778 but from then on they have survived in much greater numbers as duplicates among the county Quarter Sessions records, and are now held in county record offices. This is because the Clerks of the Peace in various counties used them to establish men's electoral rights, in essence an electoral register recording the property qualification to vote.¹⁶ From 1780 payment of land tax on freehold property worth more than £2 a year qualified a man to vote. After 1832 the introduction of electoral registration meant that Quarter Sessions no

longer retained land tax records.¹⁷ After that date assessments are to be found in the archives of firms or solicitors acting as land tax commissioners. The records cease in 1949 when compulsory redemption was introduced prior to the abolition of the tax in 1962.

One of the great advantages of the assessments is that they provide a consecutive yearly series (1778-1832 for New Mills). The entries of each yearly list are usually drawn up in the same order, so that even where the details are changed (eg owners and tenants), vague or omitted, particular premises can be tracked down year by year forwards or backwards by comparing names and assessments. This is shown by the example of the Crowder cotton mill (also known as Rock Mill).

Year	Proprietor	Owner and Description	Assessment
1796-98	John Crowder	John Crowder and mill	5s 0d
1797-1801	John Crowder	John Crowder, mill	4s 10 ³ / ₄ d
1802	John Crowder	John Crowder, mill	4s 11d
1803-06	John Crowther	John Crowther	19s 8d*
1807-10	John Crowther	Thomas Crowther, cotton mill	19s 8d
1811	John Crowther	Thomas Crowther, cotton mill	14s 0d
1812-24	John Crowther	Thomas Crowther, land	13s 9d
1825	late John Crowther	Thomas Crowther, land	13s 9d
1826-27	Thomas Oldham	Thomas Crowther, land	13s 9d
1828-32	Thomas Oldham	Himself, land	13s 9d

* From 1803 the assessments were annually and not quarterly.

Thus, even when proprietors or occupiers change, the units can still be matched up by the sequence of entries and the amount of the assessments. The entries also distinguish between owners and occupiers, a useful distinction, although since owners may also be tenants, individuals cannot easily be categorised. An individual may often appear several times in a scattered fashion across the assessments, sometimes as an owner sometimes as an occupier or both. The entries are in effect a register of names, which can be compared with other lists such as enclosure awards and title awards. But it is disturbing when they do not coincide.

In 1798 the government permitted proprietors to buy out or redeem their land tax assessment in perpetuity at a price equivalent to fifteen years purchase of the current tax commitment. The amount of each assessment entered remained the same. Beginning in 1799 or 1800, this is shown in separate columns or lists as *'exonerated'* and *'not exonerated'* on the local assessment forms, when individual taxable units owned by one proprietor were often grouped and listed as a single gross sum. Exoneration of tax merely confirmed its ossication by the very act of having the properties redeemed. In the New Mills assessments the exonerated entries remain the same values throughout, ie 1803-1832. Exonerated property did not have to be listed in the schedules, so subsequent assessments contain a steadily diminishing proportion of all property owners. But reassessments of the non-redeemed entries by the local assessors took place after the redemption procedures (keeping the quotas the same), so that redeemed tax values therefore became increasingly incompatible with those for unredeemed entries. More importantly, after 1803, many occupiers and properties disappeared from the lists because the individual exonerated entries were often given as a lump sum covering what previously had been separate entries. For instance, in 1801, the first year of exonerated entries, 25 proprietors and 58 occupiers/premises are listed, but in 1803 the taxable units owned by one proprietor are grouped so that the number of occupiers/premises is reduced to 29. It becomes necessary to check through previous lists (before redemption) to see who is missing. But for future years new occupiers/premises are not listed and can never be known. The Redemption Act of 1798 also exempted persons whose estates were valued at less than £1 so explaining the disappearance of smallholders. From 1803 onwards the annual total, instead of the quarterly total, was shown.

The number of entries increases at the end of the eighteenth century, doubling from 120 in 1778 to 245 in 1800, indicating the arrival of additional industrial and domestic premises. There was a particular sudden increase between 1795 and 1796 when the entries increased from 142 to 227, the reasons for which are not known. A comparison between the two years is provided in Table 2. Since the total quota stays the same readjustments were made to the assessments of the old entries to accommodate the new ones. The reduction in the 1796

assessments to accommodate the new entries meant that the real costs of the land tax was being reduced and becoming less onerous. Tax columns seldom add to the total noted at the end of the return, although the discrepancy is rarely more the £1¹⁸ and this is the case here.

John Collier	Shedyard	0	7	0
	do New Land	0	1	5
	do Common Land	0	0	6
	Robert Collier for Howcroft	0	4	0
	do Common Land	0	0	3
	Sarah Stafford Brownhill	0	1	0
	do for Common Land	0	0	9
	Robert Bradbury for Pople wells	0	1	0
William Gaskell	William Gaskell for			
	Holehouse Estate	0	8	0
	do for his house on the Green	0	0	3
	do Common Land	0	2	0
	do Cotton Mill	0	0	9
	Robert Bennett for Stonefield	0	0	3
Himself	John Sales for his house			
	on Brownhill	0	0	6
Herself	Sarah Stafford for			
	her house in Newmill	0	0	3
Herself	Mary Bowden for part of tortop	0	0	6
Messrs Cresswell				
and Bennet	John Barnes for Paper Mill	0	0	6
	William and Sarah Arnfield			
	for house and croft	0	0	3
Himself	Henry Hibbert for his house	0	0	6
Himself	Joseph Stafford for his house	0	0	3
Bernard Howard	Thomas Drinkwater and			
	John Collier Corn Tithe	0	2	4
	The Rev Christopher Howe			
	for small tithes	0	0	6
	Total	5	5	6
	True Total	4	8	3

Table 2: In 1796 the number of entries compared with 1795 for New Mills increased from 142 to 227. The additional entries for Beard in 1796 are shown in bold type.

The assessments can also be used to link with information of ownership of ancient lands before 1778. For instance, in the New Mills region there are probate documents dating from 1540, lists of ownership resulting from the division of the wastes and commons in the seventeenth century, and the Thornsett Enclosure award of 1774.¹⁹ These can be recognised in the assessments. For instance the property named as ‘*fee farm land*’ in the assessments are plots in the former King’s part of the wastes and commons sold off in the seventeenth century (Table 2). Property named as ‘*newland*’, ‘*common land*’ or ‘*allotment*’ refer to the former tenants’ part of the wastes and commons. After 1832 (when the land tax lists end), continuity can be carried forward to the New Mills tithe award of 1841. It follows that the assessments and the other rich variety of sources allows a study of the continuum of property ownership to be traced from the pre-1770s to 1841. 1795-6 is one of the best years to illustrate the range of information (Table 2). Again, the standard layout of the assessments from year to year aids the tracing of the history of any particular property even when the names of proprietors or occupiers change.

In 1826 came a significant change in the pattern of assessments. For instance, in 1825 the 208 descriptions break down as follows:

Names	208
Corn Mill	1
Cotton Mill	1
New Land fee farm	1
Corn tithe	2
Small tithes	1
Total	214

In 1826 the assessments were:

Buildings	10
Cottages	13
Cottage	26
Land	135
House	10
Cotton Mill	2
Corn tithes	5
Small tithes	1
Total	202

However, the entries are identical to the previous year and in the same sequence so 'land', 'cottage', 'house' or 'building' on the 1826 assessment can be recognised on the 1825 assessment and can be traced not only backwards through earlier assessments of the first decade but forward to the last year of the assessments, 1832. This practice of entries following the same sequence in successive years is one of the most valuable aspects of the assessments.

Into the nineteenth century there were obviously great changes in population and housing. But it would have been administratively impossible to keep up with the changing new property since the quota system would require continual reviewing of the individual assessments. One result was that in urban areas the total number of buildings in the land tax and in the census returns are often widely different. In New Mills in the early nineteenth century a large number of properties were clearly excluded from the land tax. In 1826 there were 64 houses listed in the assessments while the 1821 census records 553. New buildings, especially the low value workers houses (and there were many in New Mills in the early nineteenth century), escaped land tax. This may be due to the fact that from 1798 very small owners, whose property value was less than 20s per year, were not liable to land tax. However, in the 1796 assessments there are new entries which might refer to millworkers' houses - 'John Barnes (*paper mill*) and tenants his houses ... 6d' and 'Thomas Goddard (*Beard Mill, cotton*) and tenants his houses ... 3d', but there is no indication as to how many there were.²⁰ Both men were mill owners (John Barnes' mill, a cotton mill, was formerly the paper mill listed in the 1778 assessments). Thus, particularly in urban areas like New Mills, the assessments cannot provide an inventory of real property. Occupiers and properties were '*catastrophically underestimated*'.²¹ The quotas remained the same, fossilised. It follows that in New Mills; assessments cannot be used to measure the physical growth of the town and surrounding area as far as the number of houses are concerned. This is clear from comparing the number of houses assessed in 1832 with the 1830 map of the town.²²

The recording of industrial premises on other local land tax assessments is very variable. Places that obviously had industry often have little or nothing recorded, eg Chapel en le Frith assessments have only one mill recorded, Glossop has none, neither has Disley despite having at least two mills on the river Goyt in the vicinity of New Mills. However, its iron furnace (at Furness Vale) is assessed. For Mellor, no industrial units are assessed, even Samuel Oldknow's great mill being unrecorded. But it is very fortunate that the mills of New Mills are recorded, although variable and inconsistent over the years. The individual entries in the early assessments have the merit of not combining land and premises, so that the industrial units can be separately identified and the tax ascribed. This practice did not start, however, until 1794. 1799 is an excellent year for such records and shows what valuable information would be available if every place and every year were similarly recorded (Table 3). At this time the population of New Mills was less than 1800.

Hamlet	Mill	1778		1796		1799	
		s	d	s	d	s	d
BEARD	Paper Mill	0	6½				
	More Mill	0	6½				
	Newmill (corn mill)	3	3				
	More newmill	1	1				
BEARD	Cloth mill (LGH Cavendish, Thomas Beard)			0	6		
	Cotton mill (LGH Cavendish, William Gaskell)			0	9		
	Paper mill (Cresswell & Bennet, John Barnes)			0	6		
	Corn mill (Edward Bower, Bower and Drinkwater)			3	0		
	Cotton mill (Edward Bower, Bower and Drinkwater)			2	0		
	Spinning shop (Thomas Beard, Thomas Crowder)			0	6		
	Cotton mill (Thomas Radcliffe, John Collier)			0	9		
	Cotton mill (Thomas Radcliffe, Siddal Beard)			0	6		
WHITLE	Mill (Thomas Beard, Thomas Beard)			5	0		
	Dyehouse (Edward Bower, Peter Drinkwater)			1	0		
	Mill (John Crowder, John Crowder)			5	0		
	Mill at Goddards (Thomas Beard, John Crowder)			1	0		
	Mill (Randal Taylor, Randal Taylor)			5	0		
	Mill (James Bate, James Bate)			1	0		
	Mill (Robert Stafford, Robert Stafford)			0	3		
THORNSETT	Land and mill (Joseph Hyde, Benjamin Amfield)			1	6		
	Mill (James Hadfield, James Hadfield)			1	0		
	Little mill (George Bowden, George Bowden)			1	3		
	Mill (James Bolton, James Bolton)			1	0		
BEARD	Paper mill (LGH Cavendish, John Barnes)					0	5¼
	Cloth mill (LGH Cavendish, Mr Beard)					0	5¼
	Cotton mill (Wm Gaskell, William Gaskell)					0	8¼
OLLERSETT	Corn mill (Edward Bower, Edward Bower)					2	11¼
	Cotton mill (Edward Bower, Edward Bower)					0	11¼
	Cotton mill (Edward Bower, Peter Drinkwater)					0	11¼
	Cotton mill (Samuel Taylor, John Collier)					0	8¼
	Cotton mill (Edward Fernally, Siddal Beard)					0	5¼
	Spinning shop (Thomas Beard, Thomas Crowder)					0	5¼
WHITLE	Printing works (W Egerron Esq, Barton, Stott et al)					4	10¾
	Goddard mill (Thomas Beard, Thomas Beard)					4	10¾
	Cotton mill (John Crowder, John Crowder)					4	10¾
	Dyehouse (Edward Bower, Edward Bower)					0	5¼
	Dyehouse (Edward Bower, Peter Drinkwater)					0	5¼
	Cotton mill (Joshua Stafford, James Thorp)					0	2¾
	Cotton mill (Randal Taylor, Randal Taylor)					2	5¼
	Cotton mill (James Bate, James Bate)					0	10¾
THORNSETT	Cotton mill (James Hadfield, James Hadfield)					0	11¼
	Little Mill (George Bowden, George Bowden)					1	2½
	Cotton mill (James Bolton, James Bolton)					0	11¼

Table 3. The mills of New Mills as shown on the land tax assessments.

The earliest references to a mill, other than the corn mill, is John Barnes' paper mill in 1778, assessed at 6½d. Goddard Mill owned and occupied by Thomas Goddard, is listed as '*more mill*' after his name and assessed at 1s 1d. The number of individual entries naming an industrial concern reached a peak in the years 1796-1811, with the maximum number of 23 in 1798. Because the mills are so well recorded the assessments provide evidence not otherwise available for the early history of cotton manufacture in New Mills. In New Mills, the assessments make clear that cotton workshops, probably with jennies producing weft yarn, started before the first warp-spinning mills were built and proved complementary to the mills until well after the introduction of the water-powered mule about 1790.²³ Evidence for such complementary workshops in New Mills is found in the land tax assessments. In 1796, when water-powered spinning mills had been established locally for over ten years, the land tax assessments listed 15 cotton mills in the New Mills area (Table 3). '*Mill*' may also mean a machine, suggesting that it is jenny or mule workshops which are being referred to. Most were certainly small - too small for factory mills - ten of the 15 being assessed at 1s or less compared with the corn mill at 3s, and its adjacent cotton mill at 2s, and other mills assessed at 5s. One mill was assessed at only 3d and another in 1796, specifically termed a spinning shop, was assessed at 5¾d (Table 3). Thus the land tax assessments identify this complementarity and illustrates how the factory system grew out of rural or rural-type industry, a condition which has led to it being labelled proto-industry.²⁴

In later years, the inclusion of industrial premises, although not named, can be traced by analysing the proprietors and occupiers who are known to have been engaged and by the use of identical assessments. For instance, in 1812 there are only four industrial premises compared with eleven in 1811, but the '*missing*' ones can be tracked down by comparing names and assessments from previous years. In 1826, all the taxable units listed as '*building*' can be ascribed to an industrial activity according to their occupiers (Symonds list of 57 mills is invaluable for identifying the cotton mills).²⁵ Even so, in 1826 only 10 are listed so there is, for some reason, a degree of under-enumeration.

Formats of the Land Tax Assessments:

1778-1779

The assessments (which are quarterly sums) are laid out by hamlets. A single-column format. The proprietors and occupiers are intermixed

1780-1800.

A two-column format which remains common to most assessments in the 1780s and 1790s prior to the Redemption Act of 1798. The local hamlet assessments are usually carefully laid out so that the proprietors and occupiers are clearly separated with the aid of brackets where necessary.

1801

The assessments are divided into two sections. (1) Headed '*exonerated*' followed by (2) '*Not exonerated*'. All entries are in alphabetical order and the hamlets are not shown. The exonerated amounts are the normal assessments but these amounts are not collected since the redemption sum has been paid. Consequently, at the end of the form the exonerated total is subtracted from the full total to show the net total amount. (Fig 3).

1802

The previous format is changed after one year. There are now two columns parallel to each other. The first is for the '*exonerated*' assessments and the second for the '*not exonerated*' assessments.

1803-1804.

Returns to the 1801 format for two years. From 1803 the assessment sums are for annual amounts and not quarterly.

1805-1807

A printed form is now used but with the same two columns as above. '*exonerated*' and '*not exonerated*' assessments do not occur on the same line (Fig 4).

1808-1819

The printed form now includes a heading '*sum assessed and exonerated*'. The assessments are entered but since there is not another heading '*not exonerated*' has to be written in by hand.

1820

Returns to the 1805 format.

1826

Lines for the rows are printed. An additional column has been added - '*Names and Descriptions of estates and property*'.

Years	Exonerated			Not Exonerated			Total			No of Entries
	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d	
1778							32	7	10½	145
1779							32	7	10½	148
1780							N/A			N/A
1781							33	7	2¼	135
1782							32	7	10½	N/A
1783							32	7	10½	N/A
1784							32	7	10½	136
1785							N/A			N/A
1786							32	7	10½	136
1787							31	4	5¾	135
1788							31	4	5¾	137
1789							34	4	9¾	138
1790							34	4	9¾	138
1791							N/A			N/A
1792							34	5	10¾	139
1793							34	5	10¾	141
1794							34	5	10¾	142
1795							32	7	10¾	142
1796							32	7	10¾	230
1797							33	1	5¼	241
1798							33	1	5¾	243
1799							32	7	10	242
1800							32	7	9¾	245
* 1801	10	10	9¼	21	19	1	32	9	10¼	242
** 1802	10	12	1¾	20	16	10	31	8	11¾	244
*** 1803	42	8	6	87	11	3	129	19	9	
1804	42	8	6	87	6	1	129	14	7	220
1805	42	8	6	87	6	3	122	14	9	217
1806	42	8	6	88	10	11	130	19	5	219
1807	43	3	2	87	1	1½	130	4	3½	220
1808	43	3	2	96	13	4½	142	16	6½	N/A
1809	43	3	2	101	1	6½	147	4	8½	242
1810	43	3	2	88	7	6½	101	10	8½	237
1811	43	3	2	86	12	5	129	15	7	244
1812	43	3	2	86	17	6½	130	0	8½	209
1813	43	3	2	86	17	5	130	0	7	210
1814	43	3	2	86	19	5½	130	2	7½	215
1815	43	3	2	86	12	2½	120	16	4	211
1816	43	3	2	86	13	2	129	16	4	210
1817	43	3	2	85	15	8	129	18	10	211
1818	43	13	7½	86	4	8½	129	18	4	211
1819	43	13	9½	86	3	3	129	17	0½	213
1820	N/A			N/A			N/A			N/A
1821	43	13	9½	86	12	9	130	6	6½	217
1822	43	13	9½	86	0	3	130	14	0½	221
1823	43	13	7½	87	0	2½	130	13	10	223
1824	43	13	7½	86	19	2½	130	12	10	222
1825	43	13	7½	86	19	2½	130	12	10	220
1826	43	13	7½	86	19	8½	130	13	4	224
1827	43	13	6½	86	19	8½	130	12	3	224
1828	43	13	6½	86	18	7	130	12	1½	225
1829	43	13	6½	86	18	6	130	12	0½	225
1830	43	13	6½	86	18	6	130	12	0½	227
1831	43	13	6½	86	18	6	130	12	0½	226
1832	43	13	6½	86	16	3½	130	9	10	228

* From 1801 the names are given in alphabetical order and not under hamlet names.
** From 1803 the assessments are given for the year, not for the quarter.
*** The reduction in the number of entries is due to the fact that the units of exonerated proprietors are grouped together instead of being shown separately.

Fig 4. Land Tax Assessment for Beard, Ollersett, Thornsett and Whitle 1778-1832

Handwritten document titled 'An Act of Parliament passed in the 28th Year of his Majesty's Majesty for granting a Aid for his Majesty by a Land Tax to be raised in Great Brittain for the service of the Year 1801.' The document lists land tax assessments for various individuals and locations, categorized into 'Exonerated' and 'Not Exonerated'. The 'Exonerated' list includes entries for Robert Bennett, Peter Pennington, and others, with values ranging from £105 to £1100. The 'Not Exonerated' list includes entries for William Bradburd, George Bradburd, and others, with values ranging from £100 to £1100. The document is signed by 'James Crauden Esq' and dated '1801'.

Fig 3. Part of Land Tax Assessment for New Mills in 1801
Derbyshire Record Office, 'Land Tax Assessments for Beard, Ollersett, Thornsett and Whittle', M195, Item 1

HIGH-PEAK HUNDRED.

COUNTY of DERBY, (TO WIT.)
 For the Parish or Township of } AN ASSESSMENT made in Pursuance of an Act passed in the
 38th Year of his Majesty's Reign, for granting an Aid to His
 Majesty by a Land Tax, to be raised in Great-Britain, for the
 Service of the Year 1798, and made perpetual by another Act
 passed in the 38th Year of the Reign of His present Majesty;
 and also in Pursuance of another Act passed in the 39th Year
 aforesaid, for continuing and granting to His Majesty, a Duty on Pensions, Offices, and Personal
 Estates, for the Year 180

Names of Proprietors.	Names of Occupiers.	Sums assessed		Sums not assessed.			
		£.	s. d.	£.	s. d.		
	Bro't over	25	1	4	18	6	5
Crawder John	The Crowder Mill					19	8
	" " " " " "					2	
	Anthony Crawder house					2	
Clayton Betty	" " " " " "					1	
Collier John	Martha Taylor house					1	
Cotes Joseph	" " " " " "					1	
	John Barrow papermill					2	
	John Livesley Highhill					3	2
	John Dearson Broadhale					5	8
	Do Newland					13	8
	Do Arnfield Meadow					1	
	Martha Drumwater					1	7
	Do Brax Wood					1	9
	Do Woodhead					11	10
	Do Lower Dames Dize					4	
	Do Turners Bank					2	4
	Do Bull-bower					7	4
	Henry Drumwater					13	9
	Do Dames Dize					7	11
	Do Byfalle					9	10
	Do Common land					1	
	The Collier Shedyard					1	7
	Do Newland					5	7
	Do Brundage & Brownhill					2	
	Robt Collier Howcroft					13	9
	Do Newland					1	
	John Sale Bald Bree					19	8
	Do Newland					2	8
	Do Brownhill house					2	
	Mary Beard, Hydes					1	3
	Do Brundage & Lough					4	7
	William Goddard					13	9
	Abice Brathbury paper					4	
	Jam ^r Stafford brownhill					4	
	Do Newland					3	
	Francis Higginbotham					1	
		25	1	4	18	6	5

Fig 4. Land Tax Assessment for part of Beard, 1805. Derbyshire Record Office, 'Land Tax Assessments for the hamlets of Beard, Ollersett, Thornsett and Whitle'. M195, Item 5.

References

1. Assessments before 1778 are rare because there was no provision for them to be retained between 1692 and 1778 when the Quarter Sessions collections started.
2. Sums assessed are the amounts of tax charged.
3. W.R Ward, *The English Land Tax in the Eighteenth Century*, 1953, p3, quoting an Act of 1677 (29 Car 11, c.1). The early history of the Land Tax is fully treated in Ward's book.
4. Ward, *ibid*, p4.
5. R W Unwin, *Search Guide to the English Land Tax*, West Yorkshire Record Office, 1982, p1.
6. Unwin, *ibid*, p1.
7. Bowden Middlecale in the 'Dark Peak' was an administrative division for tax purposes of 16,000 acres

- and was divided into ten hamlets: Great Hamlet [Hayfield], Phoside and Kinder; Chinley, Bugsworth and Brownside; Beard, Ollersett, Thornsett and Whitle (Fig 1).
8. F Taylor, *Handlist of the Bagshaw Muniments deposited in the University of Manchester, John Rylands Library 24/2/72*, (labelled 1324/2.73b), reprinted from the Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, Vols 36-37 (1953-55), 1955 (R103580), p10.
 9. Derbyshire Record Office, D3470/13/1. Resulting from a petition to the Justices of the Peace 'by a considerable number of gentlemen freeholders and others'.
 10. J V Beckett, 'Land Tax Administration at the Local Level 1693-1798: 'Collection' in M Turner and D Mills, *Land and Property; The English Land Tax 1692-1832*, 1986, pp172-75.
 11. Beckett, *ibid*, p175.
 12. Ward, *op.cit*, Table 1X, p150.
 13. Beckett, *op.cit*, p170.
 14. Derbyshire Record Office, *Land Tax Assessments for the hamlets of Beard, Ollersett, Thornsett and Whitle, 1778-1832*.
 15. Donald E. Ginter, 'The Incidence and Level of Revaluation' in *A Measure of Wealth: The English Land Tax in Historical Analysis*, 1992, p115.
 16. Michael Turner, 'The Land Tax, Land and Property: Old Debates and New Horizons' in Turner and Mills, *op.cit*, p4.
 17. Quarter Sessions records are now generally kept in the local County Record Office. In the Derbyshire Record Office the land tax assessments are on microfilm in years and in each year they are roughly in alphabetical order of parish within each Hundred. The tables in this article were constructed from the assessments when they were in hard copy.
 18. Ginter, *op.cit*, p140.
 19. Derek Brumhead and Ron Weston, 'Seventeenth century enclosures of the commons and wastes of Bowden Middlecale in the royal forest of Peak', *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal*, Vol 121, 2001, pp244-286; R. Weston, *The Enclosure of Thornsett*, New Mills 1992.
 20. In 1799 the cotton mill was up for letting 'with or without a number of cottages'.
 21. Ginter, *op.cit*, p4.3.
 22. A map drawn to accompany George William Newton's private Act of Parliament 1831 for waterworks. Derek Brumhead, 'The Ollersett Waterworks 1834-1907', *Derbyshire Miscellany*, Vol 17 Part 6 Autumn 2006; Derek Brumhead, *The Ollersett Waterworks 1831-1907*, New Mills 2011.
 23. Derek Brumhead, 'New Mills in Bowden Middlecale: domestic textiles in the rural economy before the industrial revolution and the change to factory cotton', *Textile History*, 33 (2), 2002, pp195-218.
 24. LA Clarkson, *Proto-industrialisation: the first phases of industrialisation?*, 1985, p10.
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Dr Dudley Fowkes retires as Editor of *Derbyshire Miscellany*

The Local History Section is extremely sorry that Dudley Fowkes has had to retire as Chairman of the Section and Editor of *Derbyshire Miscellany* due to ill-health. We will really miss his hard work, enthusiasm and vast knowledge of Derbyshire's history. His association with *Derbyshire Miscellany* stretches back over 47 years to when his first article on 'The Butterley Company of Codnor Park 1796-1834' was published in Spring 1971 followed by two further articles in Autumn 1972 and many others over the years.

Whilst working as an Archivist at Derbyshire Record Office, he became Joint Editor in 1981 with Joan Sinar, the then County Archivist at the Record Office, and then Editor in Spring 1983. In this issue, commenting on Joan's retirement and his appointment, he wrote: *Regular readers will note, for the time being at least, I am now sole Editor of this publication.* The 'time being' lasted 35 years! I worked with Dudley as Assistant Editor from 1988 preparing *Derbyshire Miscellany* for publication. It was a pleasure to work with him.

Thank you Dudley. The Section owes you a huge debt of gratitude.

Jane Steer

THE GYPSUM INDUSTRY IN THE EARLY 17TH CENTURY

(by Miriam Wood, 4 The Mill, 42 Matlock Green, Matlock, DE4 3BX)

Among the probate records held in the Lichfield Record Office is an inventory which throws some light on the gypsum industry in the early 17th century. It is the inventory of Walter Cresswall (indexed as Cresswell) of Aston, that is Aston on Trent. His will, which might have given his occupation, has not survived.¹

Cresswall died worth very little. The total value of his inventory was £24 4s 8d, of which £10 19s 4d was money owed him, whilst his own debts totalled £10 12s. No domestic goods are valued unless the tubs mentioned below were such, so perhaps they were too few and poor to be worth valuing. A cow and 2 calves, hay, pease and a few 'kides' (kids were small wooden tubs), tools and 2 stones of flax are listed. The next entry relates to '*Certain Loades of Whit Stonne*' worth £4 and almost certainly is referring to gypsum in some form.

It is chiefly in the debts owed to Cresswall that the clue to the meaning of this entry lies and in them also lies information on the gypsum industry in the 1620s. The smaller pieces of gypsum unsuitable for working into monuments were generally known as plaster and (after calcining) used for plaster of Paris, plastering walls and making floors, whilst alabaster was the word used for the monumental slabs carved into the recumbent tomb effigies of the mediaeval and early modern periods. It was also made into wall monuments. The pits at Chellaston, a parish neighbouring Aston, had been a major source of alabaster, but plaster was certainly also dug there² and, at least in the 17th century (and later), in Aston as well.³

An entry relating to the debt owed by Robert Bingam to Cresswall for 10 loads of plaster (for which no value was given) is the only one mentioning plaster and none mention alabaster, but that one entry is evidence sufficient to tell us what the '*Whit Stonne*' probably is. The gypsum from the area was pure white and '*Whit stone*' is in all likelihood '*white*' stone. The entry says that he 'hath (the word appears to read '*hall*' rather than had or hath as one would expect) and '*bath*' not paid for it. Whether he was a local man is not evident, but the lack of a place given for him suggests he was known to the appraisers of the inventory.

Less obviously relating to the gypsum industry is the listing of 30s (£1 10s) due to Cresswall from Mr Thomas Piddock of '*Gea'sborowe*'. The inverted comma represents an abbreviation in the text of the inventory standing for 'n', suggesting the name is Gainsborough, then a port on the Trent and a gateway to Hull, the Humber and the North Sea, a route taken by lead and alabaster on their way to destinations beyond Derbyshire. In any case, the river must have been the most practical way to transport such a heavy and bulky item as alabaster when at all possible.⁴ It cannot be certain, of course, that this entry relates to the transport of gypsum to or through the port, although it is difficult to see why Walter Cresswall would have had any connection otherwise with Gainsborough. It may be that this entry relates to Mr Piddock purchasing gypsum in some form as money is owed to Cresswall rather than the other way round.

Another entry relates to 15s due to the deceased and owing in London by '*mr Coultes Carver of Stonne in Bartelmewe*' [Bartholomew] (see endnote). Although it might suggest that alabaster has gone to London to be carved into a monument of some kind, the sum involved is small compared to the money owed by Piddock. Whatever the significance of this entry, the entries relating to Gainsborough and London taken together show that Cresswall was involved in an activity that was far more than local.

There are some other entries in the inventory which should be noted as they might indicate a connection to the gypsum industry, although until further evidence emerges we can neither confirm nor rule out such a connection. One such is the Earl of Huntington who owed 33s (£1 13s) to Cresswall. On the face of it, this is surprising, but he was a landowner in Chellaston, who four years previously, in 1622, had sold several properties in Chellaston, including the site of the manor [house] with lands and plaster pits or mines and access to them.⁵ It is not known whether the Earl still retained interests in the gypsum industry or whether this entry has any relation to Cresswall's obvious involvement in it. It is however a reference to note should further information come to light on the connection between the Earl, the industry or Cresswall.

Another entry with possible reference to the plaster industry is that to Robert Cowper of Aston, who owed Walter Cresswall what was, in the context of this inventory, the considerable sum of £4. It was the biggest sum owed Cresswall at his death. The Cowper family is known in Aston from the mid-16th century and throughout

the 17th century.⁶ Some 20 years later than the inventory, in 1646, a rental of the Harpur family's estate refers to a plaster mine in Aston let to Coop' (the abbreviation is for 'er') that is Cooper, Barton and Cockaine.³ Much later, in 1717 there is a reference to Cooper's plaster pit in Aston, though whether it was operational or simply a name surviving from its past is not evident.⁷ These are obvious connections of the Cooper/Cowper family to the gypsum industry, but how far they have any relevance to the entry in Cresswall's inventory it is impossible to say.

It is also of interest that the second of the lessees mentioned in the 1646 rental, is named Barton, probably the same surname as that of one of the appraisers of Cresswall's inventory, but the rental is, of course, 20 years after Cresswall had died. Although his name is written as '*Christopher Barker*' in the heading to the inventory, it is given as '*Christopher Barton*' at the foot of it and this is probably correct. The name '*Barton*' was still current in Chellaston in the later 17th century.⁸ There may be no significance in the identical surnames, but it seemed worth noting in case any further evidence emerges to show whether it relates to the gypsum industry or whether it is simply coincidence.

As to Walter Cresswall himself, nothing is known of him. There are no parish registers surviving from Aston on Trent until the mid-17th century and he is not traceable in the baptism entries for the parish of Chellaston. His debts are partly due to members of his family: to John and Thomas Cresswall 20s. each and to Mary Cresswall 10s. £2 10s was '*laid forth*' at the burial of the deceased (which sum is included in the total of his debts).

The few other debts were to others not apparently family members. Thomas Greene of '*Cotton*' was owed 22s (£1 2s) and, most intriguing, '*bailie*' (presumably bailiff) Houlden was owed by far the largest of Walter's debts, £3 10s. Cresswall also owed 20s (£1) to '*his man*', an entry immediately following that relating to Houlden, but whether this refers to Houlden's man or to Cresswall's is not evident. It is most likely that it is Houlden's man to which this entry refers, but we cannot be certain. We do not know for whom Houlden was acting as bailiff (nor for that matter who he was), why Cresswall was indebted to him nor whether there was any connection with the getting and trading of alabaster and plaster. It is known, however, that the manor of Weston on Trent, which owned significant land in Aston, was managed by a bailiff both in the 16th and 17th centuries.⁹ and that there was a family named Houlden living and farming in Great Wilne and Shardlow, a township in Aston parish, at this time¹⁰

Endnote: '*Bartelmewe*' perhaps means St Bartholomew. There were 4 churches dedicated to St Bartholomew in London in the seventeenth century¹¹ including St Bartholomew the Great, which still survives. Although there is a 17th century alabaster wall monument in the church it is impossible to connect it to the reference in Cresswall's will.

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3. Derbyshire Record Office, D2375/171/20.
4. David Kiernan, *The Derbyshire Lead Industry in the Sixteenth Century*, Derbyshire Record Society, Vol XIV, 1989.
5. Derbyshire Record Office, D171 M/T 4.
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7. Derbyshire Record Office, D779 B/T 939-940.
8. David G Edwards (ed.), *Derbyshire Hearth Tax Assessments 1662-70*, Derbyshire Record Society, Vol VII, 1982.
9. Derbyshire Record Office, D779 B/T 133, M 1.
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11. Information from the Corporation of London Records Office.

Note: Lichfield Record Office closed on 31 December 2017. The records have been moved to Stafford Record Office where they will be available from May 2018.

JOHN ROBERTSON OF BASLOW – ARCHITECT

(by Ann Hall, Riverside House, Calver Road, Baslow, Bakewell, DE45 1RR)

Summary

John Robertson lived between 1808-9 and 1852. He worked with J.C. Loudon from 1829 until 1838, publishing many plans for buildings and articles on architecture as well as a book of thirty cottage designs. In 1838 he began his contact with Chatsworth, possibly via work with Hurst and Moffat, architects in Doncaster, and he became a salaried member of the Chatsworth planning office in 1840. He lived in Baslow and worked with Paxton until his death in 1852. He was buried in Edensor churchyard. It is difficult to assign particular projects solely to John Robertson but it is certain that he helped to complete many designs often attributed to Paxton alone. Most notably, evidence is presented that he drew the first plans of the Crystal Palace from Paxton's initial pen and ink sketch.

Introduction

John Robertson was a very useful architect who is believed to have worked in Joseph Paxton's planning office at Chatsworth between 1840 and 1846 helping with many of Paxton's works during the mid 1800s. He lived in Baslow during this period. This article describes what has been recorded about his life from books and the internet as well as in the Chatsworth archives combined with help from his great, great grandson. Some authors (Chadwick, Colquhoun, Markham and Naylor) have researched the existing Markham and Chatsworth archives and their primary evidence has been very helpful.

In the light of the evidence uncovered by this research, several commonly held beliefs about Robertson's life are shown to be incorrect or questionable and this article aims to re-examine his contribution to architecture in the mid 1800s.

Life from 1808-39 to 1840

Details of John Robertson's early life are uncertain except for the fact that he was born in Scotland in 1808-1809 and his father's name was confirmed as James Robertson, gentleman, on his marriage certificate.¹

The first substantiated record of John Robertson is from the period when he worked as an architectural draughtsman for J.C. Loudon in Bayswater, London.^{2,5} J.C. Loudon wrote magazines and encyclopaedias on glasshouses, gardening, architecture and agriculture, all of which propagated Enlightenment ideas. John Robertson was his '*admiring assistant*'.³ In 1834 Robertson was based at Loudon's office in 39 New Street, Paddington.⁴ He was listed as a contributor to J.C. Loudon's *Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture* of 1832 doing many of the explanatory diagrams and designs and all the lithography⁵ and he published a supplement to this in 1833 in his own name.⁶ This contains '*designs for dwellings in the cottage style*' which some consider to be the source of the plans used for buildings at Edensor. Also Robertson wrote instructive articles in the *Architectural Magazine* of 1834 on varied topics such as '*A descriptive Account of the Hungerford New Market*', '*Elements of Grecian and Roman Architecture practically explained for the general reader*' and '*A descriptive account of the Duke of York's monument...*' and in the same journal of 1837 '*On the Ancient castles of Britain*' assessing their practicality. These publications suggest that he was a competent architect in his own right and well respected by Loudon even though he never formalised his status by becoming a member of the Royal Institute of British Architects or practising alone.⁷

It is uncertain how Robertson met Paxton and came to live in Baslow. There are several references which state that Robertson came to Chatsworth from Derby some time between 1838 and 1840 and that he returned there after his employment ceased in 1846.⁸ In the late 1830s Loudon was working on Derby Arboretum and Paxton was occupied with the development of the Midland Railway in Derby. It has been speculated that if Robertson was helping Loudon with the Arboretum design it is possible that Robertson met Paxton in Derby although no evidence of this has come to light. Alternatively Paxton may have met Robertson at Loudon's London office as they '*were on good terms with each other by 1835*'.⁹ However, I have been unable to find evidence that Robertson had any connection with Derby either before or after his service at Chatsworth.

There is some evidence that he may have been working on an informal basis for Chatsworth prior to his

appointment which suggests that he might have moved directly from London to Baslow. Between 1836 and 1840 Paxton built the Conservatory at Chatsworth. He is believed to have been under the influence of Loudon's pamphlet on *Experimental Hothouses*^{10, 11} and John Robertson designed some of the exterior garden works and the entrance arches which still remain in place.^{12, 13} Robertson wrote letters in 1841 and 1842 defending aspects of the conservatory architecture suggesting that he had a working knowledge of its construction.¹⁴ Swiss Cottage, an 'eye catcher' building overlooking the lakes above Chatsworth gardens, was built between 1839 and 1842 and is another possible collaboration between Paxton and Robertson.^{15, 16} Also he was paid for designs of ten cottages in Edensor in 1838, again in the period prior to his formal appointment.^{9, 13, 17, 18} Contact with Chatsworth archive about these plans suggests that they were for the houses which give Edensor its character.¹⁹ It is interesting that Paxton went away to the Continent with the 6th Duke of Devonshire for nine months immediately after this and work continued on the remodelling of Edensor during this time leaving the question of how much Paxton influenced the work in progress and how much Robertson acted alone. Letters between Paxton and his wife during this time show that there were long periods when there appears to have been little communication between Paxton and the Chatsworth staff.¹³

A further possible route to his employment at Chatsworth is provided by one of his first formal commissions for the 6th Duke of Devonshire. He designed improvements to Ashford Marble Mill in 1840, not long after he first appeared on the Duke's accounts in February when it is assumed that he joined the staff at Chatsworth working in Paxton's planning office.² These improvements were never completed but there are two houses which still exist on Buxton Road, Ashford which are believed to have been of his design. (Rose Cottage 1158587 and cottage to the east 1335249).²⁰ It is interesting to note that these designs are signed by JR, Doncaster. Chatsworth Archive holds records of payment to Hurst and Moffat, dated 1839, 'for measuring and valuing and making plans' for unidentified buildings.^{2, 13} This firm worked in Doncaster so it is possible that Robertson may have been working for them in 1838-39 and provides an alternative explanation as to how he came to work at Chatsworth. In fact he may have arrived in Baslow from London via Doncaster.

From 1840 to 1846

In addition to the Ashford Marble Mine plans of 1840, Robertson is believed to have made some changes to Churchdale Hall, Ashford in that year.²¹ He started the building of Park Lodge, Baslow for the Duke's doctor which was eventually completed in 1842.^{2, 21} He is known to have been the architect of the castellated Gate Lodge, Edensor built 1840-1842^{2, 21, 22} and may have been responsible for the building of other houses in Edensor when Paxton was extremely busy with other projects.^{2, 19} A number of 'folk tales' have arisen, centred around John Robertson, about the decision to erect such a range of buildings in ornate styles and it is impossible to know which version is closest to the events which led to its unique design.^{23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28} Architectural assessments of the Edensor housing are given by Donner and Darley.^{8, 29} One of the stories is that the plans were taken from a design book compiled by Robertson. This book does exist⁶ and no previous authors appear to have compared the buildings in Edensor with plans in this book. Examining an on-line copy of his supplement of 1833, Robertson's designs are quite restrained and typical of Georgian cottages and do not reflect the breadth of styles shown by the buildings in Edensor. Robertson showed himself capable of more flamboyant design in 1840 when he designed the Tower House which is the entrance lodge to Edensor, so this leaves unresolved the question of who designed the rest of the new buildings and alterations in the village. The fountain and the stepped wall around part of the village were built in 1841 to Robertson's design and his plans are to be found in the Chatsworth Archive (Fig 1). Also he is believed to have designed Edensor School, the School House and Roman Villa in 1844.^{9, 30}

In the 1841 Baslow census John Robertson, architect, was a lodger in Woodside, in a lane opposite the present day Devonshire Hotel³¹ and on 26 June that year he married Emma Farrer of Baslow in Baslow Church. Emma was the daughter of Robert Farrer, school master at the Stanton Ford Charity School and grand daughter of John Farrer who had been a minister of Baslow Church for 27 years.³¹ John Robertson was recorded in Bagshaw's 1846 *History, Gazetteer Directory of Derbyshire* as an architect living in Baslow. The 1851 census shows he was living in his wife's old family home, which was probably in the vicinity of Il Lupo across the road from the present day Cavendish Hotel.³¹ with Emma and his two children, Kenneth (christened in Baslow Church on 29 October 1843) and Ida (christened in Baslow on 17 May 1845).³²

In 1841^{9, 33} Paxton is believed to have designed the School and Schoolmistress's house in Beeley and Robertson's involvement is a possibility. He may also have designed some buildings attributed to Paxton in Pilsley as its remodelling was taking place in this decade.

During the 1840s Paxton was occupied with many projects further afield and the extent of Robertson's contribution to these remains unclear. His initials are to be found on many designs but the extent to which he was briefed by Paxton is still under discussion.²

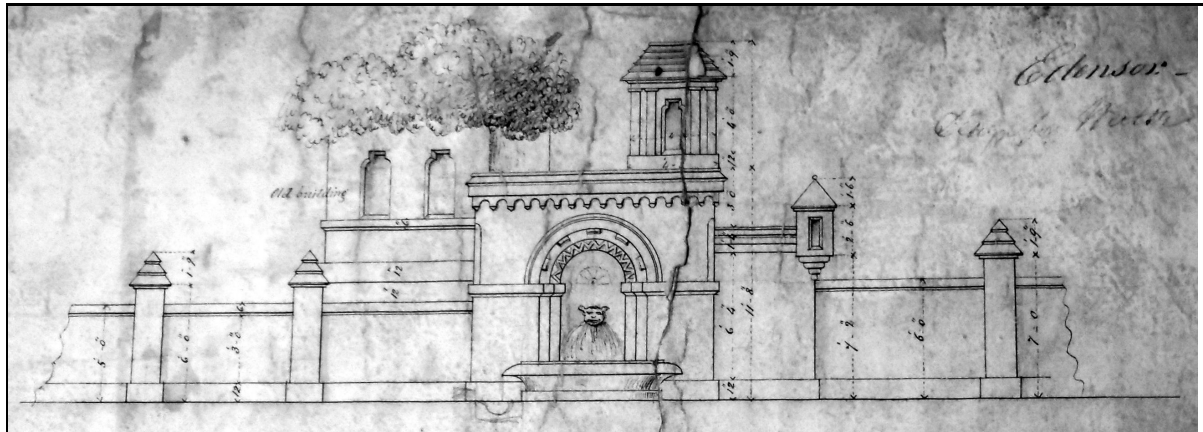


Fig 1: Detail from a plan for the fountain at Edensor, designed by John Robertson in 1841. (by permission of the Chatsworth House Trust)



Fig 2. Detail of the fountain at Edensor

In 1842 Robertson drew the plans for Prince's Park, Liverpool^{2, 17, 34} and the design of the lodges, boat house and the little shelter on the island is likely to have been by him.^{2, 19, 35}

In 1842 to 1847 he planned the rebuilding of Barbrook, Paxton's home in the Chatsworth kitchen gardens to the north of the House. Some of the plans and alterations are described by him in the *Gardener's Magazine*.^{2, 36}

In 1843-44 Robertson started to draw the plans for Birkenhead Park.^{2, 17, 37, 38} He also wrote an obituary poem for

J.C. Loudon who died in 1843. During this period Bolton Hall (Abbey), the Duke's Yorkshire home, was being remodelled and he helped with the preparation of the proposed alteration to some unknown extent as there is evidence that Paxton corresponded with him about it.^{2,13}

In 1845 he drew some of the earlier designs for Burton Closes, Bakewell as well as a lodge, gardener's cottage and, possibly, the gates.^{17,39} More details are given in Pevsner.²¹ Another aspect to his relationship with Paxton at this time is illustrated by the following two pieces of evidence. John Robertson was described as the secretary *pro tem* of the Manchester and Lincoln Union Railway, whilst Paxton was the deputy chairman, in newspaper advertisements in 1845.⁴⁰ Then early in 1846 Paxton asked his wife to '*desire Mr Robertson to come up in the train on Monday and bring with him all the books and papers connected with the Manchester and Lincoln Union Railway*'. This suggests that for a short time at least Robertson helped with Paxton's railway affairs.

From 1846 to 1852

After April 1846 payments to him no longer appeared in the Chatsworth accounts. This has led to speculation that he was dismissed or resigned from the office at Chatsworth. It is commonly understood that there was some dissatisfaction with his work as outlined in correspondence between Joseph Paxton and his wife, Sarah^{2,13} and other commentators are unclear whether it was Sarah or Paxton or Robertson who may have initiated the departure. It is usually assumed that Paxton appointed the young architect G.H. Stokes in Robertson's place but it was several years later that Stokes married Paxton's daughter so nepotism could not be the reason for Robertson's departure.

A possible alternative explanation has recently surfaced which suggests that Robertson may have disappeared from the Chatsworth accounts because he went to work at Paxton's own drawing office which was at Paxton's home in Barbrook and that there was less dissatisfaction with his work than has been proposed by other commentators. From Barbrook Paxton managed many of his projects unassociated with Chatsworth House, its garden and estate. Stokes may therefore have been appointed to take on Robertson's role in the Chatsworth estate office.

There are several pieces of evidence in Chatsworth Archive which support the idea that Robertson was not dismissed for unsatisfactory work but continued working for Paxton until his death in 1852. There are four plans signed with his characteristic JR initials which were drawn between 1848 and 1850. Also in a letter written in 1849, Paxton asks his wife Sarah to '*let ... Robertson be at Derby by the time I come up*'. Further I examined Sarah's letter to Paxton which proposes Robertson's dismissal when he had failed to show up at Birkenhead in 1844. The full text is '*You will see by Kemp's note that Robertson had not shown up yesterday. What a very disgraceful affair. I should discard that gentleman. The young man Hornblower is going to Liverpool in the morning to see what is to be done and to do the work he (Robertson) went to do as he has nothing to do here. It had made a pretty stir, his wife is wild I believe and wanting to go too*'. From this transcript a possible interpretation is that Robertson's absence at Liverpool resulted from an incidence to do with his private rather than working life which upset both Sarah Paxton and Emma Robertson.

Further evidence that Robertson worked for Paxton beyond 1846 is to be found in three articles written in the *Derbyshire Times* in 1882 reminiscing about the design of the Crystal Palace.⁴¹ It is well known that Paxton had a very short time in June 1850 in which to convert his famous sketch on blotting paper into a workable form.^{2,17,42,43,44} Two locals still remembered this feat thirty years later and described their thoughts in the local newspaper. They make it clear that it was someone with the name of Robertson or Robinson, with help from one other person in Paxton's drawing office, who was responsible for completing them within nine days. There is some discussion about exactly where the plans were drawn, the name of the draughtsman (Robertson/Robinson), the payments to be made and the nature of the drinks which were supplied to help them on their way. However Robertson's home was identified and corresponds with his 1851 census record. Also reference in the correspondence to his death early in the 1850s points to John Robertson being the identity of the architect in Paxton's Chatsworth office who drew the first set of plans for the Crystal Palace. Paxton said '*These plans ... had ... been prepared by me at Chatsworth*',⁴⁵ possibly the view of a great man of ideas working with an expert technical team supporting him with the practical matter of preparing drawings. An alternative version to events is given by Markham who says '*Paxton took the blotting paper sketch back to Chatsworth the same night. His ordinary assistants in the Estate Office set to work to prepare more detailed plans*'.⁴³ Given the very short period in which the first architectural plans were drawn it is quite difficult to attribute all of the many innovative ideas to Paxton alone. Possibly Robertson with his assistant would be recognising problems as they arose and trying to find solutions. These might have been discussed with Paxton as the originator of the design. This procedure was

likely to have occurred in many architectural practices in the past and is still practiced today in firms led by an internationally renowned architect, the final attribution and all the honours being awarded to the head of the firm. We may never know how much Paxton's knighthood for the building which was awarded in 1851 was in some part based on the hard work and ideas of these and other unsung heroes from the local area.⁴⁶

Robertson would have been the obvious choice for drawing the plans for Crystal Palace in 1850 when speed was of the essence. By then he had been working in Paxton's planning office since 1838 and had already helped with the erection of the Chatsworth Great Stove (conservatory). The plans drawn in 1848 and 1850 and signed by JR, mentioned earlier, are for the glassing in of the conservatory wall uphill from the present day garden entrance and he may have been involved with the plans for the glasshouse at Burton Closes and the development of the Victoria Regia House at Barbrook which was used to cultivate the famous lily. Several of the latter's innovative ideas were incorporated into the Crystal Palace plans.

After 1846 Robertson is known to have worked on several projects which are associated with Paxton beyond Chatsworth. He completed many plans at Birkenhead Park where he is believed to have designed the Grand Entrance, the Italian Lodge and other park lodges and the Roman Boathouse.^{43, 47, 48} He also helped with the design of the Anglican Chapel and lodge and gates at Coventry Cemetery in 1847.^{49, 50} There are several buildings, some built for the Midland Railway, which are attributed to Paxton, which were erected at the end of the 1840s in Matlock, Darley and Rowsley; it may be that Robertson was involved in planning these too. In the 1851 Baslow census, his occupation was described as journeyman architect supporting the case that he was a 'time-served' architect and still employed in building design. Had circumstances been otherwise, possibly with the aid of a benign father-in-law or other mentor, Robertson may have been recognised as the architect of many more buildings in his own right in a similar way to George Stokes.

However it will be very difficult to work out any further contributions made by Robertson to any of the designs attributed to Paxton between 1846 and 1852 because all the papers concerning Paxton's private practice were transferred to Rockhills, his house in Sydenham, when he moved there after the 6th Duke's death in 1858. Most were subsequently lost when the house was demolished in 1960.¹⁹

I have been unable to trace any work of Robertson's work undertaken outside Paxton's shadow. He certainly did not make his fortune working with Paxton on the design of many iconic buildings and his family seem to have become working people after his death. Earlier in his career he had the appellation of 'Mr. Robertson' in many of Paxton's letters and Emma, his wife was from a middle class Baslow family implying a certain level of social standing. After John Robertson's death his wife became a seamstress, his son Kenneth became a joiner and, in later years, a butler on the Chatsworth estate and his daughter worked as a nurse maid and then in a dairy. In fact Kenneth is likely to have worked for the Chatsworth estate all his life as he received a pension on retirement and this continued to be paid to his wife after his death.¹⁹

For almost a year before his death John Robertson suffered from tuberculosis and a melancholy poem written by him from this period was published in the *Derbyshire Times*.⁵¹ He died on 23 February, 1852 in Baslow aged 43 and was buried in Edensor churchyard.³² There is no marked grave and this may be explained by the fact that many of the grave stones were removed when the churchyard was remodelled in 1868 at the same time as the church.⁹ His death record and the previously described census and birth records support the view that he did not return to Derby or to London to live as has been suggested elsewhere.^{8, 9, 52} It may be speculated that consent was given to bury John Robertson at Edensor rather than at Baslow because of his contribution to the remodelling of the village and the support that he had given Paxton with many local and national projects was well known and appreciated.

Works of John Robertson **Works with substantial evidence for his sole or major contribution**

Date	Work	Notes
1833	Many plans in the <i>Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture and Furniture</i> .	Loudon, ref. 5
1833	Book of 30 plans of cottages.	John Robertson, ref. 6.
1834, 1837	Articles on architectural matters.	<i>Architectural Magazine</i> , ref. 4.
1838-1841	Entrance arch and external works for Great Stove.	Chatsworth Archive ARC/144 unsigned, of the same style as other JR work. Chadwick, ref. 12.

Date	Work	Notes
1838	He was paid for plans for 10 cottages.	Chatsworth Archive, possibly for cottages in Edensor. Duke's green book accounts, buildings and repairs, September 20.
1840	Plans for Ashford Marble Mill and two cottages on Buxton Road, Ashford in the Water.	T Brighton, ref. 20.
1840 approx.	Churchdale Hall, Ashford in the Water.	Pevsner, ref. 21.
1840-1842	Park Lodge, Baslow.	Chatsworth Archive, Duke's Green Book Buildings and repairs, July 4. Pevsner, ref. 21.
1841	Fountain, Edensor.	Chatsworth Archive ARC/127, ARC/128.
1841	Stepped wall, Edensor.	Chatsworth Archive ARC/122 signed JR.
1842	Tower Lodge (Gate Lodge), Edensor.	Loudon, ref. 21.
1842	Plans for Prince's Park, Liverpool and for lodges, boat house and shelter on the island	Chadwick, ref. 2, Colquhoun, ref. 17, Pevsner, ref. 34.
1842-1847	Barbrook, Chatsworth Park.	<i>Gardener's Magazine</i> , 1842, Chadwick, ref. 2.
1843-1846	Grand Entrance, Roman Boathouse, Italian Lodge and other lodges, Birkenhead Park.	Chadwick, ref. 2, Colquhoun, ref. 17, 37 and 38.
1843	Bolton Abbey (Hall).	Chatsworth Archive, Paxton Correspondence, 172.
1843	Obituary poem for Loudon.	J.C. Loudon, <i>Self-instruction for Young Gardeners, Foresters, Bailiffs, Land Stewards and Farmers</i> . 1845.
1844	School, School House and Roman Villa, Edensor.	Bannister, ref. 30. (Roman Villa, built for William Strutt, Park Keeper with separate stair for housekeeper? Christine Robinson)
1845	Burton Closes.	Colquhoun, ref. 17, Pevsner, ref. 21.
1847	Anglian Church, lodges and gates, Coventry Cemetery.	Ref. 49, ref. 50.
1848	Plans for the Conservative Wall.	Chatsworth Archive ARC/160, ARC/161 signed JR.
1850	Plans for the Conservative Wall.	Chatsworth Archive ARC/156, ARC/158 signed JR. ARC/155 unsigned, of same style as ARC/156,158.
1850	Original plans of Crystal Palace.	<i>Derbyshire Times</i> , ref. 41.
1852	Poem.	<i>Derbyshire Times</i> , ref. 52.

Works assigned to Paxton but contributions by Robertson are probable

Date	Work	Notes
1838	The Old Vicarage, Edensor.	Bannister, ref. 30
1839	Rock Villa, Edensor.	Bannister, ref. 30
1839-1842	Swiss Cottage, Chatsworth park	Bannister, ref. 30
1839-1842	New and remodelled houses in Edensor.	On weighing the evidence, John Robertson is likely to have made major contributions. Bannister, ref. 30; H. Read, <i>Edensor 1760-1860 A Century of Change</i> , 1995 in Chatsworth Archive.
1841	School and Schoolmistress's House, Beeley	It is unclear what contribution was made by John Robertson.
1840s	Housing in Pilsley	It is unclear what contribution was made by John Robertson.
1839-1840s	Midland Railway buildings in Matlock, Darley Dale and Rowsley	It is unclear what contribution was made by John Robertson.

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Notes and references

1. John Robertson died on 23 February 1852 aged 43. He was married on 26 June 1842 aged 32. Using the Scotland's People and other family history websites, there are four possible births of a John Robertson in the time period 26 June 1808 to 23 February 1809 with the father given as James Robertson. Further investigation of these did not result in any extra information which would clarify which birth was relevant. Two of them were in Edinburgh and this might be the link to Loudon who came from Edinburgh. A Paisley record was raised in an on-line chat board but the date falls outside this timespan.
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