

DERBYSHIRE MISCELLANY

Vol 18



Cromford Canal at Codnor Park c.1955

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

Volume 18

DERBYSHIRE MISCELLANY

Volume 18: Part 2

Autumn 2007

CONTENTS

	Page
<i>The probate inventory of a master shoemaker: William Titterton of Ashbourne, died 1642</i> by Catherine Dack	26
<i>John Thacker Saxton: a Chesterfield radical</i> by Lesley Phillips	32
<i>The traditional Boots shop - a personal view</i> by Ruth Evans	38
<i>I join the Derby Sketching Club and meet Mrs Mundy</i> by the late Fred Ellingham	42
<i>The Angel Inn, Cornmarket, Derby formerly the Elephant and Castle Inn</i> by Jane Steer	44

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ISSN 0417 0687

THE PROBATE INVENTORY OF A MASTER SHOEMAKER: WILLIAM TITTERTON OF ASHBOURNE, DIED 1642

(by Catherine Dack)

William Titterton came from a yeoman family of petty freeholders. He therefore had access to sufficient capital to train and set himself up as a master craftsman in the local market town. He probably died in his thirties, by which time he had set up a considerable business, supplying high quality shoes to what must have been a widely-dispersed clientele, as will be seen. His inventory is remarkable, as it may be the earliest known record of the use of standard shoe sizes.¹ Unlike a large majority of shoemakers, William was not poor. His high investment in the business reaped promising returns. Despite his relative youth, he held a valuable lease on his house, had invested to a small extent in land and also left a surplus large enough to pay off his debt to his brother and to provide for his widow. The impetus behind his partial flight from farming derived from the fact that he had five brothers. We know much of his family circumstances from the will of his brother Thomas (1679).² Thomas was presumably the eldest, since he remained a yeoman and was a rentier in old age. He had set William up with a large loan and had also invested widely in real estate, including three houses. His will reveals him to have been the patriarch of a large extended family of brothers, their sons and their adult grandsons. Thirteen of these men survived him. Like William, he was childless, so his considerable assets were dissipated. Even so, there were three generations of Titterton shoemakers, glovers and curriers in Ashbourne. One collateral descendant of William was sufficiently prosperous to apprentice his son Richard to an apothecary, a traditional route to social advancement. Although Richard eventually had a shop '*in the best part of town*', fully fitted out for his profession, he died childless and intestate in 1732, marking the end of the dynasty.³

Why did William decide to become a shoemaker? At the time, Ashbourne was one of around 700 market towns in England with minimum populations of 500-1000 supposedly servicing hinterlands of 3-6 miles in radius.⁴ Their economies had always depended quite sharply on the organic and mineral resources of their hinterlands. Agricultural produce and raw materials were bought and processed in the towns, where communities of tradesmen and craftsmen congregated. Their exertions provided the 'added value' which underpinned urban prosperity. Ashbourne had notable cattle, horse and cheese fairs, was an early thoroughfare town on the route from London to the north-west and (significantly) had provided groceries and wine to the county gentry from at least the mid-sixteenth century.⁵ It would therefore be incorrect to regard the town's sphere of influence as restricted to a radius of a few miles. The considerable extent of the town's early specialization in the leather industry is perhaps less well-known.⁶ The agriculture of the hinterland was primarily dairy-farming, which supplied the raw material, while the demand for the products was assured, for they included saddles, harness, breeches, bellows, bottles and many other essential artefacts, besides footwear. William Titterton clearly appreciated the commercial possibilities of bespoke shoemaking in Ashbourne at this time.

The proportion of adult male householders engaged in Ashbourne's leather trades in the mid-seventeenth century can be estimated fairly accurately from the parish registers. Exceptionally, during the interval 1656-63, the vicar of Ashbourne recorded the occupations of fathers, bridegrooms and decedents. The 292 men identified as residents of Ashbourne and Compton (a small suburb) would be mostly married householders.⁷ For comparison, the imminent hearth tax return of 1664 recorded a total of 229 households (taxed and excused) in Ashbourne only.⁸ Given that some of the 229 households were headed by women, there is a discrepancy to be covered by the omission of Compton, the exclusion of bachelors, migration between 1656-1663 and a fall in the population in the early 1660s, when deaths exceeded baptisms. Overall, the parish register sample appears to cover almost all of our mid-century target population. Excluding labouring (25.7%) the largest employment sector was clothing and footwear (17.8%), while a further 5.8% were employed in processing leather or saddlery. Additionally there were 16 butchers, which seems a high number for a town of around 1000 inhabitants and sparsely-occupied hinterland. In all, there were 32 shoemakers, 5 skinners, 10 glovers, 5 curriers, 5 tanners, a fellmonger and a saddler, constituting c20% of adult male householders. The total number of male leather workers was much larger, for it included an unquantifiable number of unmarried men, youths and apprentices, while some women doubtless contributed. This immediately suggests that trading in leather goods, particularly shoes and gloves, extended far beyond the town's hinterland.⁹ The inventory attached to William Titterton's will of 1642 (Table 1) effectively corroborates this theory, as well as providing anecdotal information about the ubiquitous dual employment of the period and a high level of self-sufficiency, which was to disappear in the wake of the 'consumer revolution' of the following century.¹⁰ The evidence for this is the absence of

manufactured consumer durables, such as clocks, cabinets, upholstery, sets of chairs, chests of drawers, occasional tables and looking glasses, which became commonplace in such households during the early eighteenth-century. In contrast, William's furniture consists largely of chests and makeshift assemblies of shelves and boards, softened only by cushions. Additionally, this household not only produced most of its requirements, but also sold honey, cheese and linen in the market.

In his will, William disposed of personal possessions which his wife could not use. He left a token shilling each to his apprentices and also to his god-children, probably his two namesake nephews. One followed in his uncle's footsteps, suggesting that his aunt either gave or sold to him the tools of the trade. William left gifts to his five brothers: to Thomas his sword (the badge of a minor gentleman), to Edward his musket and 'bandware', perhaps bought in preparation for the approaching civil war,¹¹ to Richard his white stockings, to Nicholas his long worsted stockings and to George his 'Bretone Coate'. He refers to his recent purchase of land, rented out for the life-time benefit of his wife.

The background to the production of an inventory for probate purposes was the Church's legal right to prove wills in its consistory courts and to charge a fee. According to T. Arkell, the Church was genuinely concerned to promote goodwill between families and neighbours, trying to ensure that property was divided in accordance with the wishes of the deceased and that due debts were paid. Inventories do not record a testator's net wealth. Real estate is excluded and is difficult or impossible to value from its description in the will, while the decedent's liabilities are normally omitted (although not in this case).¹² Arkell warns that some inventories were '*created much more conscientiously than others*'.¹³ The appraisers' judgements would be unreliable outside their expertise, for example, books might be under-valued by illiterate farmers. Pewter and brass was weighed for its scrap value, so was probably undervalued. It is clear that much of the paraphernalia of everyday life (including ephemeral printed matter and most clothing) was ignored by appraisers, perhaps giving a false impression that our ancestors' houses lacked clutter. However, this tended to be counteracted by the heterogeneous collection of objects which appeared in every room, such as cheeses in the bed chamber.

In this instance, the inventory seems to be among the more reliable of such documents. It was written in a fairly clear and accurate secretary hand by an attorney and was signed fluently by him and two of the other three appraisers. It is significant that the arithmetical sum was absolutely correct, despite the large number of items, running to two pages. The odd mixture of Arabic and Roman numerals in the quantities (but not the sums of money) indicates that arithmetical notation was at a cross-roads. After the Restoration, accounts would be facilitated by the exclusive use of Arabic numerals. The literacy of the scribe is illustrated by his spellings and grammar. Most are surprisingly close to modern English, although cushion is spelled phonetically as 'kushen'. A further feature which adds authenticity is the inclusion of debts, added conscientiously by the appraisers even though they were not themselves listed as creditors (See Table 1).

Table 1: The inventory of a will made by William Titterton in 1642

A true & p(er)fect Inventorie of all the goods debts Cattells & chattells of Will(ia)m Titterton late of Ashburne in the County of Derby shoemaker deceased had & taken by Will(ia)m Taylor, Richard James, Richard Walton & Roger Sheepie, the Sixteenth day of August ano D(omi)ni 1642

			£	s	d
Imprimis		his apparell & money in his purse	4	0	0
Item	2	paire of shoes of the twelves & three paire of the elevens		15	0
	five	paire of the tenns		14	10
	vi	paire of the nynes		17	0
	vi	paire of the eights		16	6
	vii	paire of the sevens		18	0
	vi	paire of the sixes		14	0
	vi	paire of the fives		13	0
	4	paire of the fours		8	6
	4	paire of the threes		8	0
	4	paire of the twoes		7	4
	5	paire of the ones		8	9
	12	paire of childrens shoes		13	6

6	paire of boots	1	15	0
one	p(ar)cell of Dressed Lether (sic)	1	18	0
vii	Dressed Calve Skines	1	2	0
all	offall (off-cuts) dressed lether	1	3	2
117	paire (9 Dozen and 9) of lasts & 1 paire of boote trees	1	12	6
one	shaving knife and one cutting knife		2	0
one	h . 1 greassing (greasing) bord & a punching lead		1	6
	2 shelves & 2 benches 2 seats one cheer (chair) one bord & other shelves & allputens (!)		7	0
all	reales & standars that holde upp the lasts		3	0
xi	hydes undressed	7	0	0
4	Calve skins & all offall leather (sic) undressed	1	12	0
9	boards 1 piece of seeling, 1 bedsteed & bed & Cloathes in the outcast sic: is this the maid's abode in the attic?)	1	0	0
1	Cheese presse		3	4
	1 paire of panyeers (panniers) & empty hives, 1 kilmnell (sic, a trough for bread-making) 1 turf spade & . 1 hey spade & 1 doshun (for oatmeal)		8	0
2	barrowes & v seacks (sacks)		8	0
4	kyne (milking cows)	12	0	0
	Corne upon the ground	8	0	0
6	yonge beasts	14	0	0
6	loades of hay	5	0	0
all	pewter & brasse	3	10	0
6	hydes to come home (from the tanner?)	5	10	0
2	scayne (knives)	1	2	0
4	beds in the two chambers w(i)th their furniture	6	0	0
all	Lynnens	4	0	0
3	Chests & 1 . forme in the further chamber in the nearer chamber 2 chests 1 barrel) of meale 2 gownes	1	0	0
60	cheese and shelves	4	0	0
	hon(e)y & (bees)wax	1	0	0
all	Bees	8	10	0
	a ... of c(er)taine ground for 2 years	2	0	0
	a reccord of the lease of the house where the testator dwelt	7	0	0
2	spits & other iron ware		8	0
1	musket & bandware	1	0	0
	oyle & hempe		2	6
all	bowkes (for bleaching linen) lathers (looms?) spinning wheels		8	0
xiii	yards of lynen cloath		5	0
	2 presses 1 Cupboard 1 table w(i)th frame 7 buffet stooles			
	1 cheere (chair) 6 kushens & 2 benches	2	10	0
	his books		10	0
all	fewell (fuel) harrowe hopp (sic) & 1 sword & 1 skipp	1	10	0
4	silver spoones & other spoones	1	0	0
	TOTAL	121	15	5
	(Appraisers agreed with this)			
	<u>Debts owing by the said deceased</u>			
Imprimis	owing to his brother Thomas Titterton by bond	69	0	0
Itm	to Mr Browne	5	0	0
	to the Shoemakers trade	2	0	0
	for the ioyst (?) of 4 kyne	4	0	0
	for the ioyst of yong beasts	2	11	0
	owing to his Brother Nicholas		4	0
	owing to his servant maide		8	6
	TOTAL	83	3	6

Source: Lichfield Record Office, B/C/11, Ashbourne, William Titterton, 17 Feb., 1642/3. Transcribed by C.N. Dack and published with permission.

William's gross personalty was £121 15s 5d, which seems high for a provincial shoemaker (most of the numerous local practitioners left no will), but was quite usual for a yeoman. It equalled the mean value of 53 wills for Ashbourne (a one-third sample) in the last four decades of the century and was rather higher than the mean of £107 for 404 wills sampled by other researchers from five national depositories (West Cornwall, Mid-Essex, South Gloucestershire, Lichfield, and Mid-Yorkshire).¹⁴ Beginning with the household's by-employments, we note that its participation in farming was considerable. Probably the maid, who was paid in arrears, was responsible for milking the cows, while the two women would make cheese. The overt lack of brewing equipment seems unusual at this period, although '*hopp*' must refer to hops. In his will, William refers to his '*liquor kettle*', a rather ambiguous item missed from the inventory, and bequeaths it to his wife. He includes it among the tools of his trade, suggesting that it was available for refreshment in the workshop. William's corn and hay production are not negligible and he died at a very inconvenient time, just before the corn was harvested and the hay stacked. The corn was probably wheat and the house possessed a utensil for kneading dough. William did not have a horse and cart, but it might be assumed that his farmer brothers assisted with ploughing, sowing, harrowing and harvesting at the appropriate season. More unusual for a man of his resources and standing is the absence of a horse to ride; perhaps it had been disposed of during his illness. His wife was probably responsible for weaving linen, for there is evidence that even gentry women would occasionally take up fine weaving as a utilitarian pastime.¹⁵

The most remarkable features of the inventory are the large number of completed boots and shoes in stock (76 pairs), the marked shoe sizes and the large number of individual lasts. The shoes were therefore made to order and the clients' lasts were kept, just as they are today by bespoke shoemakers.¹⁶ Few Ashburnians would have been able to afford such expensive shoes, nor would those made of calfskin have been suitable for heavy work. This is a high quality, fine material and even the off-cuts were worth a considerable sum. It may be assumed that William kept bees deliberately to provide beeswax to polish his product, honey being a very acceptable by-product. The comment that there were '*6 hydes to come home*' suggests that William's '*yonge beasts*', a by-product of milk-production, provided him with calf leather, sent out to the tanner and currier as required. To date, there is no evidence of the identities of William's clients, but the individual lasts suggest that they either appeared personally to be measured, or William had to go to them. So the usual suspects would be gentry from a countywide area, extending into Staffordshire. It is tempting to suppose that shoe sizes have not changed over the centuries, given that the range 1-12 for adult shoes is virtually the same today, but we cannot be sure that there have been no adjustments of scale. The distribution of sizes is surprisingly even and must refer to the variation of foot size in the client population. Compared with today, there appears to be a rather high percentage of very small sizes, although childrens' sizes would overlap the lower end of the adult range.

William's lifestyle required complex organisation and the overall impression is of a household continually employed from dawn to dusk. As mentioned, the standard of comfort in a yeoman's house of the Carolingian period was low, except for bedding, on which people spent as much as they could afford. Heavy bed-curtains kept out the chill in winter. There is no mention of warming pans, which are almost invariably found in later yeomen's wills (filled with glowing coals) and no reason to suppose that there were hearths in the two chambers, which would be roofed with thatch. Later in the century appraisers generally described beds in detail, distinguishing between feather and flock '*beds*' (or mattresses) and referring to the opulence of the hangings, or '*bed furniture*', including pillows, bolsters, blankets and counterpanes. £6 seems to be a respectable sum for the period. It covers four beds, but the matrimonial bed would perhaps account for at least half the sum, while £4 worth of '*lynnens*' suggests high quality sheets for all, unless the appraisers were dismissive of differences. There may have been four or more apprentices or nephews if they occupied three beds, since boys often shared beds. As noted, the maid appears to have occupied an attic or cock-loft. The stocks of honey, oatmeal and cheese were probably stored not far from the master's view, in his own chamber. It seems likely that the rooms on the ground floor comprised a workshop, the houseplace and a dairy, since there is no mention of a parlour. The houseplace was furnished with a long table, consisting of a board on a frame, buffets and benches provided with cushions and one chair for the master of the house. There was only one hearth, equipped with a roasting spit.¹⁷ It probably burned logs and also peat, from the evidence of the peat spade. A peat fire could generate even heat and also burn through the night. However, farmers in the peak district harvested peat from the moors for a variety of purposes, including the roofing of outbuildings and the conditioning of clay soil.¹⁸

As remained the case for a further century, people ate with spoons and fingers, cutting pieces of food from a common dish with a personal knife and transferring it to a platter or wooden trencher; probably to a pewter plate in this household. The knife which appears with William's razor in the inventory was probably an implement of the trade, for personal knives (like wedding rings) are not usually recorded. Table manners were not unrefined, since most households of this standing possessed table linen, including napkins. William's four silver spoons would be proud possessions, owned by few below the gentry. Although he did not sign his will, it seems possible (even probable) that he could read, for very few people possessed any books of sufficient value to be recorded in an inventory, not even a Bible. Testators who had in happier times autographed a deed might be too ill to sign on their deathbeds. Everyday clothes, such as the ones William bequeathed to his brothers in his will, rarely appear in inventories and are omitted here. The nature of the two 'gownes' is therefore puzzling. Typically, gowns were the dress of magistrates, professionals, clerics and academics at this period, but it seems unlikely that William would either have possessed such clothes or have failed to mention them in his will if he had. Overall, William seems to have organised his living space with the meticulous care he doubtless applied to his work. There are numerous chests, shelves and cupboards for a relatively small house, but no 'lumber' or 'things missed or forgotten', terms which appraisers used to describe heaps of rubbish. Even the cushions and buffets suggest a pernickety housewife. We can envisage the shoes and lasts arranged neatly on shelves to the ceiling, carefully graded by size for easy reference.

William's indebtedness to his brother is not unexpected at this early stage in his life. For Thomas it would be an ideal investment, lent to a man he could trust, covered by assets and attracting a regular income. For William, the interest was fixed by law to no more than 5%, which he could evidently well afford. In fact, no business could be run without access to credit and William was steadily increasing his own assets through the use of the loan. The fact that his net personalty was nearly £40 would have been a pleasant surprise, since he makes provision in his will for the eventuality that his goods would not be sufficient to cover his debts. It is possible that William was in fact the eldest son (since he possessed the sword) and the loan could have been his brother's inheritance, which he would have been obligated to pay in full in due course. The debt of £5 appears to be his funeral expenses, for Mr Browne was the vicar. The debt to the 'Shoemakers trade' looks like a levy on a guild member, which William presumably was, since he had at least two apprentices. Although Ashbourne was not an incorporated town there are many instances of indentured apprentices over the years.¹⁹ Finally, I have been unable to trace the meaning of the word 'ioys'. It could mean payment for pasturing the animals. ['ioys' is a corruption of agistment - ed.]

Two generations after William's death, his collateral descendant, Richard Titterton, was a prominent shoemaker in the town. Trade was probably declining from its peak of prosperity, as he apparently died poor in his old age, in 1703. But in his middle years his working household contained his three teenage children over 15 years, plus a maid and two apprentices. His poll tax bill was among the highest in the town at £1 11s. 20. Another shoemaker at this time was Richard Etches (d. 1693), who left only £46 gross and only ten pairs of finished shoes. However, his interest in culture is apparent in his ownership of a pair of virginals.²¹ The Etches dynasty was to achieve significant wealth in the eighteenth century, but not by persisting with shoemaking.

By c1715 the number of (master) shoemakers had halved to 16 and the total percentage of (master) leather workers had declined to 12.7%, although the leather trade remained by far the largest employer. These figures are derived from the parish registers, which again recorded the occupations of adult males, over a period of about 15 years to 1717 (unfortunately for the last time in the century). Occupations were becoming increasingly specialised and were no longer entirely reliant on the hinterland for raw materials, which now included iron, tin, lead, copper and coal.²²

Notes and References

1. Lichfield Record Office (LRO), B/C/11, William Titterton, Ashbourne, 17 February 1642/3.
2. LRO, B/C/11, Thomas Titterton Ashbourne, December 1679.
3. *Derby Mercury*, 3 August 1732.
4. R. Sweet, *The English Town, 1680-1840: Government, Society and Culture*, 1999, pp8-9.
5. Refers to the 'Beds and horses' survey (1686) and Chatsworth House Steward's Accounts (1549-65), in D. Hey, *Packmen, Carriers & Packhorse Roads: trade and communications in north Derbyshire and south Yorkshire*, 2001, pp 123, 136.

6. However, tanning is referred to as an '*extremely old-established industry*' in Ashbourne, producing '*several affluent families*', in A. Henstock (ed.), *A Georgian Country Town, Ashbourne, 1725-1825*, 1989 (2 vols), Vol. 1, p30.
7. Some separate households might share a partitioned building. Note: individuals have been counted only once.
8. The National Archive, E179/94/402.
9. Among those who prospered for generations were the Walker family of tanners, one of whom was eventually promoted to the Commission of the Peace in 1772 and so '*dignified with the title of esquire*'. Henstock, *A Georgian Country Town, Ashbourne*, Vol. 1, p30.
10. See N. McKendrick et al, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: the commercialisation of Eighteenth-century England*, 1982.
11. Two of William's nephews followed the flag in Charles II's reign and were never seen again.
12. Some researchers have noted the much reduced totals when debts are known, as in the present instance. But many 'middling' testators had fulfilled familial obligations in earlier life and were content to die solvent.
13. T. Arkell, 'The probate process', in T. Arkell et al (eds), *When Death Do Us Part: understanding the probate records of early-modern England*, 2000, pp.7, 12, 13.
14. T. Arkell, 'Interpreting probate inventories', in Arkell et al, *When death Do Us Part*, p.100. Essex and Gloucestershire were among the wealthiest regions outside London.
15. Mrs Wardle and Mrs Pole, two gentlewomen who lived near Ashbourne in the early eighteenth century, wove the household linen and a burial suit respectively, as recorded in their husbands' wills. Mrs Pole did not live to see her macabre gift to her husband in use. C.N. Dack, *The distinguishing features of a rural middling sort: a socio-economic and cultural study of Alstonfield, Staffordshire, c. 1660 N 1740*, unpublished M.A. dissertation, Leicester, 2004, p38.
16. Cheap shoes were sold in the market. In a lease of the tolls in 1675, the lord of the manor excluded '*standing of stalls for shoemakers*'. Glamorgan Record Office, P/DF BO16 N, informant A. Henstock. It has been said that such shoes did not distinguish left and right, but the reference in this will to pairs of lasts shows that this was not true for 'quality' footwear.
17. This 'one-hearth' household was clearly not poor, as is sometimes assumed by researchers of the hearth tax. C.A. Smith found that the average personalty relating to taxed one-hearth households in six Nottinghamshire towns was £84. C.A. Smith, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Nottingham, 1997, p49. Similar evidence has been obtained for Alston(e)field, a rural parish in the Staffordshire Moorlands, where 450 households were taxed in 1666. Sixty-seven subsequent inventories relating to identified, one-hearth households had a mean personalty of £73.8. C.N. Dack, *The distinguishing features of a rural middling sort*, p17.
18. The practices were recorded in manorial court records when those without turbarry rights were fined. Alstonfield Court Leet records, Derbyshire Record Office, D54/3/13. etc
19. Twenty-nine were resident in the 232 households in the town in 1689, according to the poll tax record. Derbyshire Record Office, D258/24/10/52.
20. Despite its name, the tax was discretionary, for Edward Titterton, a tailor and collateral descendant of William, had seven qualifying household members, but paid only 1s.
21. Lichfield Record Office, B/C/11, Ashbourne, Richard Etches, 18 March, 1693. Virginals are associated with high culture; popular music of the period was played on bagpipes (reference in the parish register).
22. Occupations included gunsmith, three watch and clock-makers and four tinsmith/ braziers.

JOHN THACKER SAXTON: A CHESTERFIELD RADICAL

(by Lesley Phillips,

In 1820 nine men were tried at York Assizes in the aftermath of the Peterloo Massacre. One of them, John Thacker Saxton, was born and raised in Chesterfield.

John Thacker Saxton was born about 1777, the son of John and Sarah Saxton of Chesterfield. The parish register records the baptism of their son, John Thacker Saxton on the 16th May 1777.¹ The Saxton family seem to have come from Crich, but by the last quarter of the 18th century John Saxton, father of John Thacker Saxton, was living and working in Chesterfield. He was involved in several businesses in Chesterfield, one of these being a hosiery business, which he carried on in partnership with George Chapman. He was also earlier innkeeper of the Castle Inn and posting house in New Square c1771-1783, through which he had some connection with the Thacker family.² He was Mayor of Chesterfield in 1799.³

Members of the Thacker family were living in Chesterfield at this time; Thomas Thacker appears in the Quarter Sessions as a bailiff and gaol keeper in 1778 and 1779. In 1766 a William Thacker was landlord of an inn in Swine's Green.⁴ However the connection between the two families has not yet been established. The name of John Saxton, hosier of Chesterfield, also appears in the Derbyshire Petty Sessions in March 1793 when he was fined £10 and costs for writing a receipt without a 2d stamp.⁵

In 1803 Saxton and Chapman's hosiery business failed, and George Chapman deserted his wife,⁶ leaving the citizens of Chesterfield to raise money to buy an annuity for his abandoned wife Elizabeth. She had two children to support, one only a few weeks old. The petition for Elizabeth Chapman survives in the Barnes Collection at Chesterfield Library:

Bar210. A folio sized notebook. 1803.

To the ladies and gentlemen of Chesterfield and its environs.

The following humble petition in favour of Mrs Chapman is undertaken by the advice of those friends, who hath been for some time past eye witnesses of the extreme misery and wretchedness of mind she hath been reduced to, through the unfortunate circumstance of her husband's bankruptcy, and his finally disappearing never to return. The connection formed by Mrs Chapman with the house of Saxton & Co. was no choice of hers, so far from that she was totally adverse to it. The circumstances that followed that unhappy connection, were a series of unlawful and cruel perswasions to induce her to give up her birthright; which she was compelled to do for the sake of peace, being no longer enabled to withstand the severe solicitations made use of upon that occasion, so that no imprudent conduct on her part, hath in any shape been the means of bringing that house into the ruin in which it is now involved, because the most painful matters that were carried on in that connection were kept in entire secret from her, till the very time its final accomplishment took place. She is now cast upon providence as a poor, wretched and miserable orphan, with two children, the youngest of which being only a few days old, being now confined to her bed upon that occasion, and without any support but what arises from the huminity of her friends, she hath therefore been advised to throw herself upon a generous public, hoping to obtain that compassion from them, which she sincerely hopes no one of them will ever fell [feel] the want of, and they may rest ashured [sic] that her gratitude for favours received will end only with her life. The purpose of this petition is to raise by subscription a [sic] sum of money to give her some little independency, in the way of providing bread for herself and children, which sum, is intended shall either be sunk in an annuity upon her life, or to be disposed of some other way, as her friends may think most advisable.

NB

The money to be paid into Mr Wilkinson's hand betwixt now and Christmas next, if more agreeable to the subscribers than paying it at present.

From another letter in the Barnes Collection at Chesterfield Library we know that Elizabeth Chapman was living in Dalston, London in 1829.⁷ Saxton and Chapman also had premises in London, in St Paul's Churchyard. A notice in the *Times* of 3rd December 1803 advertises a house and warehouse to be let, '*late in the occupation of Messrs Saxton and Chapman, wholesale hosiers*'.

Notices appeared in the *Derby Mercury* of 15th and 22nd September 1803 calling in all goods belonging to, or payments due to, Saxton & Chapman. The assignees of the bankrupts were a London banker named Lewis Lloyd and William Seddon of Cromford.

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,
By Mr. GOSLING,
(By order of the Assignees of Messrs. SAXTON & CHAP-
MAN, Bankrupts,)

Upon the Premises at Chesterfield, on Monday, Tuesday,
Wednesday, and Thursday, the 19th, 20th, 21st,
and 22d days of September, 1803; the sale to begin
each day at ten o'clock.

ALL the Valuable and Elegant HOUSEHOLD FUR-
NITURE and Effects of the said Bankrupts, con-
sisting of several 4-Post and Camp Bedsteads with rich
Chints, Figured and Cotton Hangings, and Window Cur-
tains to match; excellent Feather Beds, Mattresses,
Blankets, Counterpanes and Quilts, Mahogany Ward-
robes, double and single Chests of Drawers, Side-board,
Dining, Card, Pembroke, and other Tables; Wash
Stands, Trays, Chairs, and Night Table, Biddy, &c.
large and elegant Mahogany Book-case with drawers and
glass front, Library of Books, Wilton and other Floor
Carpets, Bedside ditto, Pier, Swing, and other Glasses.

The auction of the household effects of Saxton and Chapman was advertised in the *Derby Mercury* on the 15th September. It was to take place over 4 days, the 19th to 22nd September, the first day at Chapman's and the following 3 days at Saxton's house, suggesting that Saxton was by far the wealthier of the two men.

Examinations of the bankrupts were to be held at the Nags Head, Pleasley on the 27th of September when they were to '*surrender themselves and make a full discovery and disclosure of their estate and effects*'. On the 28th and 29th September the Bankruptcy Commissioners were to receive proof of any debts owing by Saxton and Chapman.

The dividend resulting from the bankruptcy of J. Saxton and G. Chapman, hosiers of Chesterfield, was announced in the *London Gazette* of 15th March 1806, for the 24th April. John Saxton seems to have remained in Chesterfield following the failure of his business. J. Saxton, hosier of Chesterfield, was granted his certificate (discharge from bankruptcy) in a notice which appeared in the *Times* on 7th August 1824.

By the beginning of the 19th century there was a strong movement for parliamentary reform; radical politicians wanted annual general elections, votes for all men, a secret ballot, and the repeal of the Corn Laws. The Corn Laws passed by parliament kept the price of corn artificially high. This protected the profits of the landowners, who also controlled parliament. The high price of bread and shortages following poor harvests, led to rioting in some parts of the country, and workers also began to demand higher wages. Many of the supporters of the radical movement were weavers, framework knitters and hosiers.

John Thacker Saxton grew up in this political climate, though whether he was involved in his father's hosiery business is unknown. By the age of 23 he had a business as a printer and bookseller in Chesterfield. A notice in the *Derby Mercury* of 20th March 1800 advertised that he had '*taken the shop lately occupied by Mr Frost in the Market Place*'. This business soon got into trouble, and ended less than a year after his father's bankruptcy.

The *London Gazette* of 28th May 1804 records the bankruptcy of J.T. Saxton, printer; to surrender June 4, 5, July 7, at the Angel Inn, Chesterfield. Attorney Mr. Thomas, Chesterfield.

The *Derby Mercury* also carried notice of John Thacker Saxton's bankruptcy on the 31st May 1804.

WHEREAS a Commission of Bankrupt is awarded and issued forth against JOHN THACKER SAXTON, late of Chesterfield, in the county of Derby, Printer, Bookfeller, and Stationer, and he being declared a Bankrupt is hereby required to surrender himself to the Commissioners in the said Commission named, or the major part of them, on the fourth and fifth days of June next, and on the 7th day of July following, at eleven in the forenoon on each day, at the Angel Inn, in Chesterfield aforesaid, and make a full discovery and disclosure of his Estate and Effects, when and where the Creditors are to come prepared to prove their Debts, and at the second sitting to chuse Assignees, and at the last sitting the said Bankrupt is required to finish his examination, and the Creditors are to assent to or dissent from the allowance of his Certificate.— All persons indebted to the said Bankrupt, or that have any of his Effects are not to pay or deliver the same but to whom the Commissioners shall appoint, but give notice to Mr. THOMAS, Solicitor, in Chesterfield aforesaid.

The notice in the *Derby Mercury* describes Saxton as 'late of Chesterfield'. By May 1803 it appears he had already left the town to start up again elsewhere. He may have been drawn to Manchester at this time because of the reform movement.

One of the most famous reformers of the age was a gifted speaker named Henry Hunt⁸ (1773-1835), who was nicknamed the 'orator'. Although a landowner from Wiltshire, Hunt believed passionately in the radical cause, and spoke of reform to huge crowds in some of England's cities. He also campaigned for shorter working hours and an end to child labour. Hunt's supporters included a group of men in Manchester who started a weekly newspaper called the *Manchester Observer* in January 1818. By 1819 the newspaper had become a national paper. One of the writers for this paper was John Thacker Saxton.

Saxton now came to the fore as a campaigner for electoral reform, and his name featured in national newspaper reports of the campaign meetings. On the 14th June 1819 Saxton was one of the speakers at a meeting at Ashton-under-Lyne said to have been attended by some 12,000-15,000 people.⁹ A report in the *Times* on 13th July 1819 of a meeting in Blackburn describes him as even disputing with a fellow reformer who called for household suffrage. Saxton declared that 'to accept of household suffrage when universal suffrage was our right, would be compounding the basest felony that was ever attempted on a great community'.

The editor of the *Manchester Observer*, James Wroe, had formed a group named the Patriotic Union Society with other radicals in Manchester. This Society invited Henry Hunt to speak at a meeting on the 16th August 1819 at St Peter's Field. The meeting drew a large, orderly and peaceful crowd of perhaps 50,000 or 60,000 men, women and children. The number of people attending alarmed the local magistrates, who had already planned to arrest Hunt at the scene. Their subsequent arrest of Hunt and his fellow radicals, and the dispersal of the crowd using armed cavalry¹⁰ resulted in the tragedy of the Peterloo Massacre. Eleven were killed and some 400 people were injured.

On the 19th August in an account of the events at St Peter's Field in Manchester, the *Times* reported;

"...a cry was made by the cavalry 'Have at their flags'. In consequence they immediately dashed not only at the flags which were in [the speakers'] wagon, but those which were posted among the crowd, cutting most indiscriminately to the right and to the left in order to get at them..."

A person of the name of Saxton, who is, we believe, the editor of the Manchester Observer, was standing in the cart. Two privates rode up to him. "There" said one of them, "is that villain, Saxton; do you run him through the body." "No," replied the other, "I had rather not – I leave it to you." The man immediately made a lunge at Saxton, and it was only by slipping aside that the blow missed his life. As it was, it cut his coat and waistcoat, but fortunately did him no other injury."

Following the events at St Peter's Field, Henry Hunt and his fellow reformers were arrested and brought before local magistrates. John Thacker Saxton was one of those arrested.

At Lancashire Assizes in September 1819¹¹ John Thacker Saxton, aged 42 was charged with others, '*That they... being persons of a wicked and turbulent disposition, did, at Manchester, in the said county, on the 16th of August inst., combine, conspire, confederate and agree together, to excite tumult and insurrection within this realm, and by force and violence to alter the government and constitution thereof as by law established*'. They were also charged with using seditious speeches, and displaying banners, flags etc. for the same unlawful purpose.

Saxton made a plea for bail to be set at a lenient rate. '*We are all poor persons, and have families, and therefore find a difficulty in providing bail*'. When bail was set at £200 with two sureties of £100 each, Saxton added, '*My Lord, there are many of us who are very poor, and whose friends are in the same situation; a hard winter is coming on, and it is very hard for innocent men to lay here upon a false charge of our merciless prosecutors*'.

Whilst awaiting trial, a letter written by John Thacker Saxton to his fellow reformers was published in the *Times*, on 25th November 1819.¹² The letter had been published following a verdict of local magistrates that a proposed reform meeting should not be held in Liverpool.

"The formidable preparations which your tyrants have made to meet you, their unarmed and suffering victims, is the highest compliment in their power to bestow upon you; it is more even than you could hope to gain by the meeting..."

I beg leave to conclude with reminding you, and all the friends of liberty and justice, that our cause grows and gathers strength with the plunderings of our enemies; whilst their rapacity must not only destroy the means of their own existence, but must, ere long, turn them to the destruction of each other."

J.T. Saxton

In March 1820 Henry Hunt and his fellow radicals were tried at York. The *Times* of Saturday, 18th March 1820, described the start of the trial of Hunt and nine others.

"The appointment of this day for the trial of Mr Hunt and nine other individuals seized along with him at Manchester caused a great crowd to collect at an early hour before the Castle gates. They, however, were not thrown open till 8 o'clock, when a tremendous rush was made by the multitude through the narrow gateway and across the castle yard up to the doors of the Court House.

The scrambling for seats was ... immense, and numbers of individuals climbed from the body of the court into the galleries on each side of it."

Some of the defendants represented themselves. John Thacker Saxton was represented by Mr Holt. One of the witnesses examined by Holt was a man named John Hampshire. He stated that;

"I live seventeen miles from Manchester, in Derbyshire. I know Saxton; I saw him on the 16th August. I called on him about 12 o'clock. I went to give him an order about printing some bills, and found him at home. I remained with him about an hour. I dined with him that day. I had only seen him once before. I left the house a little after one o'clock. I left it with Saxton. We went to the Manchester Observer office. Saxton had some situation in the Observer office. He was a reporter to that paper. I stayed a short time with him there, and saw him preparing paper and pencils to write notes at a

public meeting. I went to the meeting. I went towards, but the crowd pressed and I got sick rather. Some person seeing this, said I had better get up on the hustings, and I was handed up. I saw Saxton there on the hustings after I had mounted some minutes. I did not see him before Mr Hunt arrived. I saw him writing on the hustings. Saxton did not address the multitude in my hearing. I must have heard him had he spoken, as he was down in the cart-body as a reporter. I stayed till the dispersion of the meeting."

At the end of the trial, which ran from 16th to the 27th March, Hunt was sent to jail for two and a half years, and four of his fellow radicals were each imprisoned for one year. Saxton and three others were found not guilty and were allowed free on the grounds that they had attended the meeting as journalists. Although Saxton often spoke at reform meetings, on this occasion he was there to report for the *Manchester Observer*, and not as a speaker. The arrest of journalists reporting on the meeting caused some public concern, especially as one of the men arrested was John Tyas of the *Times*. The historian E.P. Thompson wrote;

"Within two days of Peterloo, all England knew of the event...

Peterloo outraged every belief and prejudice of the 'free-born Englishman' – the right of free speech, the desire for 'fair play' the taboo against attacking the defenceless."¹³

Following Peterloo and the trial, Saxton's name disappears from the national press. The *Leeds Mercury*¹⁴ in 1822 reported that a bookseller of Bolton named T. Thacker Saxton was charged by Bolton magistrates with exciting a breach of the peace, by 'having his hat bedecked with ribands, and vociferating with Stentorian lungs 'Hunt and liberty'. The report added, 'Our readers may perhaps wonder what legal offence there could be in this; but their surprise will cease when they recollect that the transaction took place within the jurisdiction of the Manchester magistrates'. This incident took place less than 2 weeks after the release of Orator Hunt from Ilchester gaol, where he had served his two and a half years sentence.

John Thacker Saxton finally appears in Hertford in the 1830s, still campaigning for parliamentary reform. Between 1833 and his death in 1835 he published a paper called the *Hertford and Ware Patriot*, later *The Radical Reformer and Hertford and Ware Patriot*.¹⁵ His business address was Poet's Corner, Dimsdale's Buildings, Hertford, and his newspaper was distributed in Hertfordshire and London.



By the time of Peterloo J.T. Saxton was a married man, as an article in *The Times* mentions Mrs Saxton travelling in Hunt's carriage.¹⁶ A person named Thomas Thacker Saxton died in the Hertford registration district in 1855, so it seems likely that other members of Saxton's family also came to live in Hertford. John Thacker Saxton, a radical reformer and son of a Chesterfield hosier, died on 30th March 1835 aged 58,¹⁷ and was buried at St Andrew's Church, Hertford on 5th April 1835.¹⁸

Notes and References

1. John Thacker Saxton baptised 16 May 1777, son of John and Sarah of Chesterfield (IGI).
2. Information from Mrs J. Maguire.
3. Chesterfield Library has a photograph of a portrait of John Saxton, said to have been painted in his mayoral year. Ref: M9 X3304.
4. Information from Mrs J. Maguire.
5. 1793.3 SAXTON John (Chesterfield, Sc) Hosier [Writing receipt without 2d stamp] fine: £10.00 + costs (Justice: Rotherham s). www.Wirksworth.org.uk: Derbyshire Petty Sessions
6. Elizabeth Wilson married George Chapman at Chesterfield on 28th November 1792. Their daughter Elizabeth was born on 16th November 1803, and baptised at Chesterfield on 11th January 1804. The couple also had a son, George Wilson Chapman, born on 15th April 1801 and baptised at Chesterfield on 16th October 1801. (IGI)
7. Barnes Collection, Chesterfield Library, Bar173.
8. 'He was born to cut a figure before a mob. His lungs were of enormous power and endurance. He could make himself heard at great distances in the open air'. R.J. White, *Waterloo to Peterloo*, 1957.
9. Reported in the *Times*, 22 June 1819, p.3.
10. Hunt's arrest was made by the Manchester and Salford Yeomanry; the magistrates then brought in the 15th Hussars to disperse the crowd.
11. Reported in the *Times*, 7th and 8th September 1819.
12. His letter was written at the *Manchester Observer* Office, dated 4th August and printed by J. Wroe.
13. E.P. Thompson, *The making of the English working class*, 1963.
14. As reported in the *Times*, Tuesday, November 12, 1822.
15. Illustration from <http://www.hertfordshire-genealogy.co.uk/data/newspapers/hertford-and-ware.htm>, reproduced with permission.
16. 'Mrs Saxton and some others were in Mr Hunt's carriage'. Evidence of Thomas Brooks at the trial of Hunt and others, reported in the *Times*, 27 March 1820.
17. *The Reformer*, 31st March, 1835, death notices: 'On Monday, the 30th instant, at Hertford, aged 58, Mr. John Thacker Saxton, late Editor and Printer of the 'Ware Patriot'.
18. John Thacker Saxton age 57 buried Hertford St Andrew 5 April 1835. *National Burial Index*, 2nd ed.

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THE TRADITIONAL BOOTS' SHOP - A PERSONAL VIEW

(by Ruth Evans,

In June 2006 while visiting Bury St Edmunds to celebrate my sister's 65th wedding anniversary, my watch broke. My energetic brother-in-law whisked me down to Sneezum's (an appropriate name for a shop in a town with Dickens connections) to find a cheap replacement. I was interested to note a couple of doors away a shop front bearing a striking resemblance to our old Derby Boots' shop at the corner of East Street and St Peter's Street, ornamented with figures connected with the town's history. Like ours it was no longer Boots, the lower part being a brash example of W.H. Smith's.



Boots, Bury St Edmunds

Photograph: Ruth Evans

On arriving home I remembered that there was a reference to our shop in N. Pevsner's *Derbyshire*. In a footnote I read '*At the corner of East Street a wonderful example of the old Boots' shop, originated by Jesse Boot and his architect Morley Horder. This one is no longer Boots' but it still has all the distinctive half-timbering, statues of famous figures, etc.*' I knew nothing of Morley Horder but I had a vague memory of seeing other examples of such shops in other towns.

In my old 3s 6d Pevsner's *Suffolk* I had looked up Bury St Edmunds to see if he mentioned the Boots' shop. He did, in less flattering terms: '*Then follow the premises of Messrs Boots', a riotous and glorious Victorian fantasy, utterly unconcerned with the spirit of Bury, with lots of timber framing, gables and stucco ornamentation and with niches containing statues of Kings.*' He obviously had in mind the fine Robert Adam building facing it across the road. My brother-in-law pointed out that in the more recent hard-back revised edition of *Suffolk* there was an interesting footnote: '*Mr Adrian R. Allen writes: In a printed diary of 1918 I have seen illustrations of the other Boots' shops with exterior decoration very similar to Bury's. These were (perhaps still are) at Peterborough in particular, and to a lesser extent at Newcastle, Edinburgh, Kingston-on-Thames and Shrewsbury. Evidently a type of architecture peculiarly Boots.*' An *embarras de richesses!* Not all the relevant Pevsners were available but we checked Edinburgh without success. Shrewsbury however yielded a rather sour comment: '*A little lower down, on the same side of Pride Hill, Boots the chemist's premises are another awful warning how not to carry on the Shrewsbury tradition. This building was put up in 1907 and 1920, at a time when enlightened firms ought to have known better than so blatantly to outdo the proudest of the original buildings.*' Certainly the other fine half-timbered buildings must emphasise its fakeness.

At last it occurred to me to consult Pevsner's *Nottinghamshire*. Nottingham friends had assured me they knew nothing of any similar Boots' shops there but at least it might tell me something of Morley Horder. Here I found under Beeston '*A shopping centre completed in 1973 involved the demolition of one of Boots' first shops.*' A footnote expanded: '*It was of 1908, in their prestige half-timbered style, inspired by the Jacobean building they restored for use as a shop in St Alban's. By A.N. Bromley, with statues, heraldry, and stained glass by Morley Horder depicting local history (c.f. Shrewsbury, York, Derby).*' Another to add to the list! I tried to enrol friends

in York to look around - but no response as yet. Pevsner also revealed that Morley Horder had designed the earliest building, the 'palace of education' on the new site that Jesse Boot gave to Nottingham University College and also designed Florence Boot Hall. He was described as '... designer of Boots' Tudor-style shops and architect of private houses in the Cotswold style ...'. I wonder if the St Alban's shop has survived.

By now my Bury informant had visited the local Planning Office which provided the following description:

*Cornhill
(West side)
No 15
II*

Shop 1910. By Michael Vyne Treleavan for Sir Joseph [sic] Boot. Brick with ornate render; plain tiles. Exuberant Jacobean style.

Exterior: 3 storeys; 3 canted bays to the 1st storey with mullion and transom windows, 4-light to the 2 outer windows, 6-light to the centre, all with diamond-ledged panes to the top lights. The windows are flanked by 4 niches with semi-circular shell tops containing life-size figures of a Roman warrior [?], St Edmund, Edward I and Edward VI, all in appropriate costume with cartouches above. On the 2nd storey, bracketed shafts to the 2 outer canted mullioned bay windows which have oriel bases decorated with leaf scrolls, swags and masks. A central square 6-light bay window has a moulded timber base decorated with leaf-motif, coved below with vine trails and a winged cherub head. A raised timber band above the 1st storey windows has leaf-scroll ornament.

Between the 2nd storey windows are plaster panels in low relief with strapwork and caryatids. Wide eaves overhang below 3 gables projecting from the front slope of the roof. The centre gable is larger, and all have panelled plasterwork in their pediments, the 2 outer with strapwork and cartouches, the central pediment with a seated medieval monarch surrounded by other figures. Ornate hanging finials to the gables. Barge-boards with carved motifs. A late C20 shop front to the ground storey.'

A help in describing Derby's shop but not identical. The windows particularly vary from the above as the bay windows are not canted but have rounded corners, with not diamond panes but rows of square panes only in their tops, and the rounded arch of the central panes gives them a distinctly arts and crafts air, closely resembling, eg some Norman Shaw windows. Above all, much more care has been taken to preserve the lower part of the shop as it is painted in the same pleasant brown shade as the upper woodwork, and the windows appear to be contemporary with some carving on the pilasters and timber band above. The corner window is rounded. The figures on Derby's shop may not be so important nationally, except for Florence Nightingale, but they are local residents and did good work for the town. The Derby shop has two dates on it, 1912 on the corner gable and the late date of 1935 on the East Street side - presumably when the shop was extended at that time. The Bury shop is Grade II listed: I hope Derby's is.*



Boots, Derby

Photograph: Ruth Evans

In a biography of Jesse Boot, *Jesse Boot of Boots the Chemists* by Stanley Chapman, 1974, on page 87, we find a helpful account of the creation of the shops.

'Boot loved building and his wife had a passion for interior décor and ornamentation. The commercial value of restoring well-loved local landmarks became clear when, in response to pressure from the local antiquarian society, Boot successfully restored a picturesque Jacobean shop in St Alban's market place that he had bought for its site value. Increasingly conscious of their middle class customers, Boot and his wife began to indulge their taste by building new shops in expensive imitation of medieval and Tudor styles. Boot kept the Nottingham architect, A.N. Bromley, at work designing new shops with reproduction facades at Shrewsbury, Winchester, Lichfield, York, Exeter, Gloucester, Kingston-on-Thames and other towns with a heritage of old buildings. A London architect, Morley Horder, designed the statues, heraldry and stained glass windows to ornament the building and depict the celebrated figures and events of local history. The expense brought a valuable return in terms of local publicity and the approbation of 'good taste'. Boot was so enthusiastic about his medieval creations that he introduced them to a few localities that had no pretensions to historical importance. At Beeston, an industrial satellite of Nottingham which was being woken from rural slumber by the arrival of hosiery, lace and bicycle factories, he built a tall 'medieval' shop to dominate the straggling shopping centre, proudly emblazoned with the date A.D. 1905. The previous year Boot told his shareholders that 'Sixteen years ago [1891] ... the average branch was of a type which is now becoming non-existent among our shops.'

I was taken to Peterborough to see the old Boots' shop there, near the Cathedral, happily surviving though no longer a chemist's shop. It even sported a turret at one end. We photographed it, and I hope to hear whether other members are familiar with these shops in the other towns mentioned. Lichfield is near enough for me to visit there in the near future.



Boots, Peterborough

Photograph: R. Evans

September 2007

At last I wrote to the Tourist Office in St Albans to ask if the old Boots building was still there with a view to visiting it. My letter was passed to the library of the St Albans and Hertfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society, where the Librarian, who seems not to have known of this episode in the history of the town, went off to the Public Library where he also worked, to do some research. He kindly sent me photocopies of the correspondence to the local papers and of the Petition (headed by the Earl of Verulam) sent to Messrs Boots together with copies of photos of the building, dating from 1885 to the present time. The letters to the *Herts Advertiser* and *St Albans Times* afforded me much amusement and were a vivid picture of the struggle at

the time between people ruthlessly pursuing 'progress' and these influenced by William Morris and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.

Pro Bono Publico (they almost all used pseudonyms) asks *'Why is there all this hullabaloo about an old tumble-down wreck in the Market Place?'* whilst Vandal writes *'I want to know if the archaeologists are going to have all their own way? Are they going to be allowed to dictate to business men as to how they shall adapt their premises to their needs? I call it nothing less than presumption on their part to interfere.'* Fortunately a sensible letter from the Secretary of the Archaeological Society presented a more calm and rational view, and finally, after the petition and a deputation Jesse Boot wrote a dignified and conciliatory letter, informing them that he is *'instructing our architect to spare neither pains nor expense in maintaining the upper portion of the premises in its integrity, whilst making the ground floor a convenient and handsome modern place of business'*.

So Boots it became, though it is now a Laura Ashley shop.

Many thanks to Mr Scott Chalmers of St Albans for providing this information.



Boots, St Albans, c1950s-60s
Tom North, *Memories of St Albans*, 2000

* Editor's note: The Boots shop in Derby is Grade II listed.

I JOIN THE DERBY SKETCHING CLUB AND MEET MRS. MUNDY

(by the late Fred Ellingham)

Introduction

This article was sent to the Society earlier in the year by Carole Payne of Marple Bridge whose late neighbour, Joy Ellingham, was the daughter of Fred Ellingham. He was an artist who worked for Crown Wallpapers in the early 20th century and lived in or near Derby. It recounts his days sketching in Markeaton Park and his meeting with Mrs Mundy. The article has now been deposited in Derby Local Studies Library.

I joined the Derby Sketching Club, and there I spent the happiest days of my life. I was brought up to use a brush, so soon became an active member and again tramped all over Derbyshire, this time with my sketching pack on my back, with some very charming artists. They were much older than I was and a different kind of gentleman than I had met before, they were full of fun and good humour.

They informed me one night at the Club that Mrs. Mundy allowed members of the Club to sketch on her estate. Her estate joined the town of Derby and extended several miles until it joined Lord Curzon's estate at Kedleston, but they did not tell me to write for permission.

So one afternoon I went on to her estate, which was quite near where I lived and sat me down by the trout stream, a beautiful subject with a white stone foot bridge crossing the brook and autumn trees in the background. There I made myself comfortable and started on my picture. I had not been there long when I heard and saw Mrs. Mundy's carriage pass by, but I was surprised to hear it stop in a few moments. Presently, to my surprise, a gentleman came across the bridge and came up to me and said "*Mrs. Mundy wants to know what you are doing on her grounds*". I told him I was sketching and I was a member of the Derby Sketching Club and understood that Mrs. Mundy had given permission to the members of the Club to sketch there. He was very nice and said I had better come along and have a word with her.

Now I had heard a lot about Mrs. Mundy - her husband was the famous Colonel Mundy (deceased) and she was one of the first ladies of the land, having been a Cavendish. She was most autocratic, proud and domineering, so I knew what to expect. When I arrived at her carriage I raised my hat with a sweep and a low bow, as I have seen in pictures of Sir Walter Raleigh bowing to Queen Elizabeth. She gazed at me for a moment, then held her lorgnettes up to her eyes and said "*Who are you and what are you doing on my grounds?*". I said my name is Ellingham and that I was sketching. "*Who gave you permission*" she said. "*I understood that members of the Derby Sketching Club had been given permission*" I answered. "*Certainly not. Have you written asking for permission?*". I said I had not. Then she spoke in a loud voice, "*How dare you trespass on my land*". I was quite calm, I bowed once again, "*Madam*", I said, "*I had no intention of trespassing on your estate, and I will at once pack up and go*". (Another bow). She looked at me through her lorgnettes and said "*No: you go and make your sketch and when I come back I will come and see what you have done*". I thanked her and bowed once again, then she drove off.

I returned to my sketch and started putting all my best into it and after about one hour and a half's hard work, in my opinion, it was looking quite good and I was just wondering how long she would be when I heard the carriage and saw the tall stately figure with long train walk across the bridge.

As she approached me I stood up and bowed. She asked me how I was getting on with my sketch, then holding her lorgnettes up gazed at my efforts. "*How lovely*" she exclaimed and "*what a lovely subject*". Then she asked me where I had learned painting and a lot of things about myself. Then came the big surprise. I was to leave my things just as they were and go with her into her big Georgian Mansion and see some of her work.

She had done some grand work, having studied in Italy. Also hanging round this enormous room were some grand pictures, mostly by Italian Masters. One picture made me stop and remark "*what a lovely young lady*". It was a large picture with oval mount, the workmanship (Italian) was absolutely perfect and also the colours, the face was beautiful with such a kind expression, and the pale blue evening gown with a full crinoline skirt completed the lovely picture. She looked at me and almost blushed, and with one finger to the side of her

mouth, she curtseyed and said "*that was me when I was young*". I could not have said a more fortunate thing, although it was from the bottom of my heart.

Later, when she showed me out at the front of the house and down the long flight of stone steps, she said "Goodbye", and "*Mrs. Mundy grants Mr. Ellingham permission to sketch in her park whenever he likes*". I returned to my easel, packed up my things and went on my way rejoicing, with much to tell the Club.

I was to meet Mrs. Mundy many times after that, and many the commissions she gave me to do and many the picture she bought from me, always giving me more than I asked.

The next time I went sketching in Mrs. Mundy's park, I put the picture that I had finished and nicely mounted in my bag, as she had asked to see it when it was finished, and I hoped she would be tempted to buy it. I did meet her and she asked me if I had the picture, so I produced it. She admired it very much and said "*how can Mrs. Mundy become the possessor of the picture*". I once again bowed and said "*if Mrs. Mundy would accept it, I would indeed be honoured*". I could have done with the money just then, but I am glad now I did not ask any money for it. The next time I saw that picture it was hanging on the wall with the Italian Masters.

Every time I went in to the Park to sketch she always found me. I think the men on the estate would tell her. Sometimes we would sit on a seat and talk and she would laugh like a young girl. She must have been over seventy.

If she wanted me to paint her a picture she would write to me asking me to call and I would be taken upstairs by the smiling butler. She had four nephews and wanted to make them each a present of a picture of the house. The house was very large, it was of mellow red brick and had about 50 windows, a beast of a thing to do. Each picture had to be from a different position, she finding the place and taking me to it.

She also wrote and asked me to call and meet General Sir Binden Blood as he wanted me to paint him a picture of the house. He was a grand type of soldier, very upright in his frock coat and top hat, but with a nasty scar down one side of his face, it looked like a sabre cut, it is a wonder it had not cut his head off. When I had finished the picture, of course, I had to show it to Madam. She found one or two minor faults, and then asked me how much I was going to charge him; I said "*a fiver*", she said "*make it a tenner, he has lots of money*".

I was invited one Sunday morning to call and help her with mounting some of her old sketches for her Church Bazaar. The church was on her own estate. I had forgotten to take my penknife, so she rang for the butler to bring the knife box up. I never saw such an odd lot, long handles and hardly any blades left. When I said they were worse than ours at home, she roared with laughter. I expect they belonged to the kitchen. At any rate I made her sketches look very nice and she sold every one for her church.

Unfortunately for me she met with a serious accident, slipped as she was getting out of her carriage and broke her thigh. She never walked again. In fact I do not think she ever got out of her bed. She used to write to me sometimes and ask me to bring my pictures to show her. I used to go and sit by her bedside and chat with her. She offered to send me abroad - Italy to study - but I was under an agreement with the Company.

One day there came a new nurse. She was Russian, a beautiful dark young woman with dangerous flashing eyes. She soon let me know I was not wanted, and it was not very long after that, that Mrs. Mundy died. Her estate known as Markeaton Park was taken over by the Town of Derby and turned into beautiful playing fields and gardens and the house a Museum etc. The last letter she wrote to me I still have and she refers to the place of our first meeting.

THE ANGEL INN, CORNMARKE, DERBY

FORMERLY THE ELEPHANT AND CASTLE INN

(by Jane Steer,

I was looking for some deeds in the listing for the Robotham Collection¹ in Derby Local Studies Library when the words '*Previously Elephant and Castle Inn - now known as The Angel Inn*' caught my eye. Because the address of the Inn was the Cornmarket, Derby, I was intrigued. Before the Angel Inn was demolished in 1969 to make way for the new Littlewoods store, it had been a fine timber framed building and I had always understood that it was the medieval inn which had belonged to the parish of All Saints in the 16th-early 18th centuries. Not so. The six deeds relating to the Inn unearthed a strange little story concerning, over the years, an Inn which was acquired by Jedediah Strutt, a charity, legal inconsistencies and the Court of Chancery. An added bonus was a plan of the Inn which was drawn in the margin of two of the deeds - something which I had never seen before.

In the 17th century Elizabeth Wilcox of Spondon set up a Charity which became known as Wilcox's Charity. She confirmed in her will, dated 20 April 1646 that she had conveyed '*her messuage with appurtenances being in the towne of Darbie aforesaid nigh St Peter's Bridge*' to her executors, William Turner, Roger and Thomas Allestre and Richard Brooke on 10 June 1637. The premises were to be used after her death for the relief of the poor of several parishes in Ashwell in Rutland, Elvaston in Derbyshire and St Peter's parish in Derby. Half the rents and profits were to go to Ashwell parish and the other half to Elvaston and St Peter's. They were to be distributed by her executors and after their deaths by the parsons, vicars, and churchwardens of these parishes on the Feast-day of St. Thomas, the apostle.² By 1776 all the original executors are dead. The Indenture which records the new trustees: Exuperius Turner of London, William Fallows the Elder of Derby. John Bateman of Derby and Christopher Heath of Mickleover, banker, refers to three houses near St Peter's Bridge.³

Between 1765 and 1789 Jedediah Strutt (1726-1796) was buying properties in Derby on Morledge Street and near to the Gaol Bridge (St Peter's Bridge)⁴ which probably also included the third part of a silk mill in St Peter's Parish. They were all conveyed to his son, William in 1796.⁵ The Derby Calico Mill was built on this land between 1792-3. Although not adjacent to the Markeaton Brook, Strutt had also bought the Elephant and Castle Inn by 1783, a few doors away from the Brook on the Cornmarket.⁶ Between the Elephant and Castle Inn and the Markeaton Brook lay the property belonging to the trustees of Wilcox's Charity of St Peter's parish.

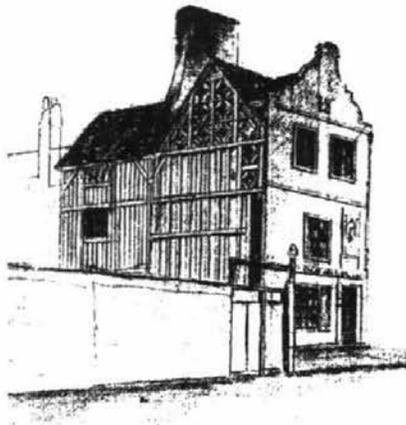
The land belonging to the Charity was obviously more attractive to Strutt than the Inn because Jedediah Strutt agreed to exchange properties with the trustees. The copy of the Agreement of Exchange in the Robotham Collection dated 12 June 1782 records that the Charity's property: dwelling houses near to St Peter's Bridge in the tenancy of William Mason, William Titterton, John Hare, Dorothy Harrison and Mrs Ledwith and a messuage in the tenancy of Jane Brooke, was exchanged for Strutt's property: the messuage known by the Sign of the Elephant and Castle on the Cornmarket, Derby, its brewhouse and stables lately tenanted by Samuel Dawson, but now untenanted, a dwelling house in the yard of the Elephant and Castle tenanted by Simon Mansfield, a small stable or standing for two horses near the house and the gardens on the east side of the house also late in the tenure of Samuel Dawson.⁷ However, the catalogue for the Strutt of Belper archive at the Derbyshire Record Office lists Strutt's copy of this Agreement as '*Exchange of ... the Angel Inn and houses in the yard in exchange for houses on St Peter's Bridge*'.⁸

By 1804 all the Trustees appointed in 1776 had died, apart from Christopher Heath. An Indenture of 4 October 1804 states that Heath '*on account of his great age being minded and desirous of relinquishing the trust*' was resigning and again new Trustees, Richard Forester, MD, Charles Upton, James Bellairs and Joseph Handford, were appointed. This Indenture also records the change of name to the Angel Inn - '*formerly known by the sign of the Elephant and Castle but now known by the sign of the Angel*', but there is no mention of why the name was changed. The lease also states that the Inn was formerly tenanted by Samuel Dawson but is now tenanted by Nathaniel Bosworth.⁹

The Inn was probably let out on a 21 year lease from 1784 because a new 21 year lease was drawn up on 25 February 1805. The trustees rented it to Nathaniel Bosworth for £28 per year and the lease drew attention to 'a

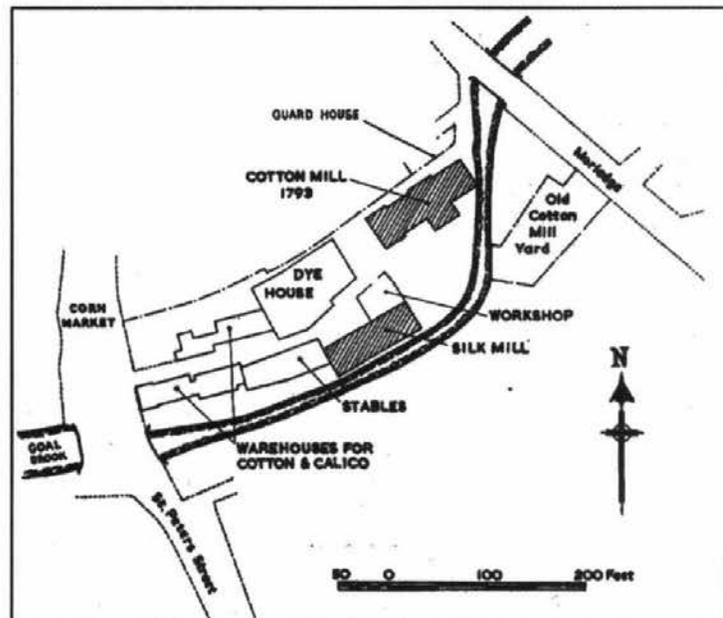


Cornmarket, Derby, c1910. DLSL



The 'Old Angel Inn', c1836.¹⁰

Plan of Strutt's Mills, Derby 1820.¹¹



plan thereof [the Inn] is executed or drawn in the margin of these presents and which for greater certainty these presents are intended to refer'.¹²

The plan in the margin gives a illuminating insight into the layout of an Inn in the centre of Derby in the early 19th century. The plan shows the Inn (dwelling house), 16ft 6in wide, a brewhouse, stables, the Old Dining Room 50ft 9in long, a Hay Room and a Wood Yard. It was surprising to see the two pigsties in the middle of Derby. Hopefully the Old Dining Room next to one of the sties was unused. However the Inn would have obtained full marks for recycling today because its food waste would have been fed to the pigs which, in their turn, would have been eventually fed to the guests and staff at the Inn.

When the Inn was let out on the next 21 year lease to John Reeves on 23 September 1823, it was not in the names of the Trustees but in the names of the Honourable and Reverend Thomas Dawnay, vicar of the parish of Ashwell, William Webster and William Jackson, churchwardens at Ashwell, The Reverend Richard Rowland Ward, clerk vicar of St Peter's, William Shore and John Cantrill, churchwardens at St Peter's, Reverend John Swain of the parish of Elvaston and William Allestree and Thomas Briggs, churchwardens at Elvaston.¹³ This lease too had a plan in the margin.

The Report of the Commissioners appointed ... to enquire concerning Charities in England and Wales relating to the County of Derby 1819-1837 explains why the 1823 lease was in the names of vicars and churchwardens after first listing the two properties belonging to Wilcox's Charity:

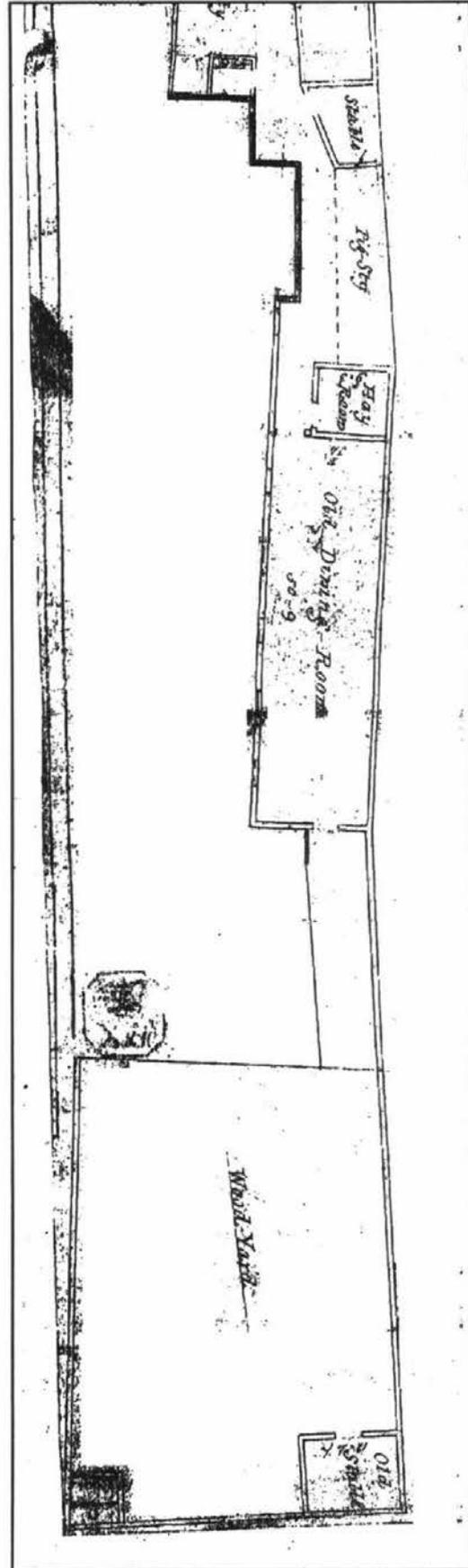
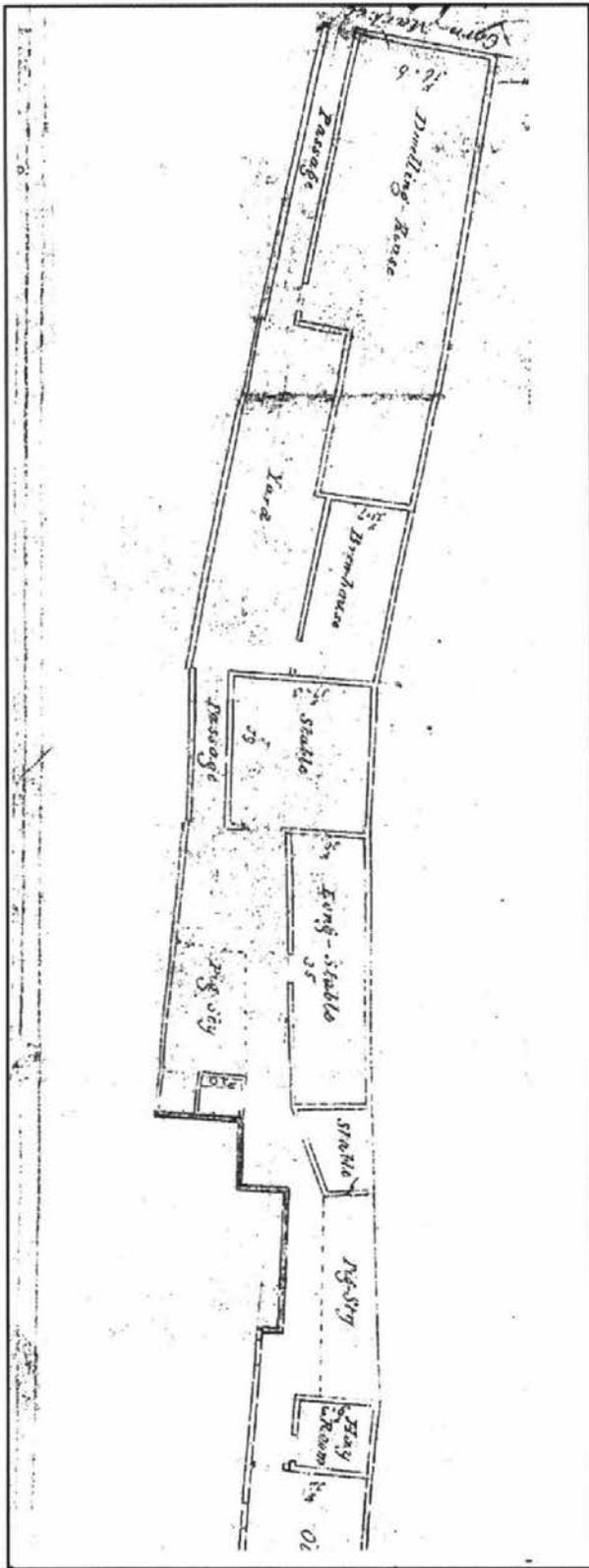
1. A messuage, yard and outbuildings in the Cornmarket, Derby, near St Peter's Bridge, called the Angel Inn in the occupation of Samuel Elliott, as under-tenant to John Reeves, who held a lease granted by the rectors, vicars and churchwardens of the three parishes dated 29 September 1823 for 21 years at an annual rent of £36 with a covenant to keep the buildings in repair.
2. A messuage and garden behind the Angel Inn and adjoining its back buildings in the occupation of William Taylor as undertenants to William Strutt, George Benson Strutt and Joseph Strutt by lease of the same date for 21 years at an annual rent of £11 and a similar covenant for repair.

The Report explained that rents of £28 and £9 10s respectively had been agreed for the previous 21 year lease granted in 1805 by Richard Forester, MD, Charles Upton, James Bellairs and Joseph Handford, the trustees of the lands belonging to Wilcox's Charity. However the Commissioners stated that *'it does not appear that these gentlemen were appointed trustees by deed; and we are informed that present rector of Ashwell refused to acknowledge their right to act, and in consequence thereof, the existing leases were granted'*.

Before the lease was granted to John Reeves the outbuildings of the Angel Inn were in a dilapidated state. He agreed to *'lay out a considerable sum in repairs, which was done under the inspection of a surveyor'*. The Commissioners also reported that the rents had been collected by Mr Whiston, solicitor, of Derby who was paid £1 1s a year. Fire insurance cost £1 7s a year and Mr Whiston had been paid £2 3s 4d in 1824 for work concerned with re-letting the building. A surveyor had been paid £2 for inspecting the repairs.

In 1851 the Charity must have had more problems because it was planning to sell the Angel Inn to the Corporation of Derby. A legal opinion was sought from Thomas James of Grays Inn on the legality of the title. At the end of an Abstract of some of the title deeds belonging to the Charity (ending with the 1804 deed),¹⁴ was a statement which explained that the last lease had expired at Michaelmas 1844. The Vicars and Churchwardens were intending to let it again by auction, either upon a building or common lease for as many years as thought best for the interest of the parishes and had doubts about in whom the legal estate in the premises was now vested and who would be the proper parties to make a valid lease as only one of the last appointed Trustees was now alive.

In the opinion of Mr James, he thought that the Vicars and Churchwardens were entitled to let the lease after the death of the Executors, as stated in Elizabeth Wilcox's will. But he stated that the title of the Charity to the present estate [the Inn] following the agreement with Jedediah Strutt was bad on several accounts, including, in his opinion, that the exchange of 1782 was made without authority. His advice was that new Trustees should be appointed by the Court of Chancery and that a petition might be presented for this purpose.



Plan of the Angel Inn 1805

The plan ran the whole length of the deed. It has been reduced by 71% and reproduced in two parts with an overlap. Cornmarket is at the top of the left hand plan.

The Vicars and Churchwardens must have taken his advice because the property was sold to the Corporation of Derby in 1852 for £2000 by virtue of an order of the Court of Chancery. This was invested in freehold security, in the names of the trustees of the charity appointed by the court: William Whiston, the younger, of Derby, gentleman, Herbert Mountford Holmes, coach manufacturer, Henry Morley, gentleman, George Gascoyne, builder, John Walters, ironmonger, and Edward Etches, cheese factor.¹⁵ In 1857 the interest of the trust funds was £90 per annum but by 1912 it had fallen to £14 17s a year.¹⁶ As for the Angel Inn, it was bought c1890 by Cox and Malin, the wine merchants who owned it until it closed in 1962.¹⁷

The first Angel Inn.

So the question now is - where was the Angel Inn in the Cornmarket which belonged to the parish of All Saints? I wondered whether the Elephant and Castle had earlier been named the Angel. But both Inns were in existence in the middle of the 18th century. The Elephant and Castle in the Cornmarket appears in 'A list of the houses engaged for the entertainment of the friends of Sir Henry Harpur at the time of the election' in 1763 at the same time that cockfighting was being advertised at the Angel Inn on the Gaol Bridge (St Peter's Bridge).¹⁸ Cox and Hope writing in 1881 comment that the Angel Inn had been the most important tenement of the parish of All Saints until it was sold in 1732 to raise funds to erect a new gallery at the west end of All Saints which had just been rebuilt. They too thought that it was 'still a licensed house under the same sign'.¹⁹ Maxwell Craven records an Inn called the Angel in Rotten Row c1673,¹⁷ as does William Hutton, 'A great flood upon Markeaton-brook, carried away the hay, filled the cellars as high as the Angel (Rotton Rowe) and broke down three of the ten bridges.'²⁰ Perhaps this was the site of the Inn which belonged to All Saints?

References

1. Robotham Collection DL 107 Derby Local Studies Library (DLSL). The firm of solicitors dealing with the Charity's legal matters was Whiston & Sons, presumably taken over by Robotham & Co, Solicitors, 3 St Mary's Gate, Derby, at some time.
2. Will of Elizabeth Wilcox. Robotham Collection, no 79.
3. Abstract of deeds in 1851. Robotham Collection, no 91.
4. Strutt of Belper Archive, Derbyshire Record Office (DRO) D3772/T1/1, T1/7 near Gaol Bridge 1765 and 1783, D3772/T1/2, T/4, T1/5 Morledge Street 1766, 1787 and 1789
5. Strutt Archives, D3772/T4/5/1-7. Deeds dated 1783-96. They include land and 1/3rd part of the silk mill and messuages and land in the parish of St Peter in Derby which he was transferring to William Strutt.
6. Strutt Archives, D3772/T1/6/1-46 and T1/8/1-5. However, although the Strutt papers date the purchase of the Elephant and Castle as 1783, the agreement of exchange in the Robotham Collection, no 89, is dated 12 June 1782 and an Abstract of deeds in 1851 (Robotham Collection, no 91) quotes 12 June 1788 as the date of an Indenture between Strutt and the Trustees.
7. Agreement between the Trustees and Jedidiah Strutt. Robotham Collection, no 89. Also Strutt Archives D3772/T1/8/4.
8. Strutt Archives, D3772/T1/8/4.
9. Indenture between Christopher Heath and the new Trustees, 1804. Robotham Collection, no 87; Abstract of deeds in 1851. Robotham Collection, no 91.
10. DLSL D6 728.5.
11. R.S. Fitton and A.P. Wadsworth, *The Strutts and the Arkwrights 1758-1830*, 1958, p199.
12. Robotham Collection, no 86.
13. Lease dated 1823. Robotham Collection, no 81.
14. Abstract of deeds in 1851. Robotham Collection, no 91.
15. Whites 1857 Directory of Derbyshire, p76. <http://www.n.f.wilson.btinternet.co.uk/>
16. Kellys Directory of Derbyshire 1912.
17. Maxwell Craven, *The Illustrated History of Derby's Pubs*, 2002, p24.
18. Llewellyn Jewitt, ed, *Reliquary*, vol VII, 1866-7, p 176 and 180.
19. Rev. J. Cox and W.H. St. John Hope, *The Chronicles of the Collegiate Church of All Saints*, 1881, p22-3.
20. William Hutton, *The History of Derby*, 1791, p235.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Dr Joan D'Arcy for her help in trying to identify the site of the Angel Inn which belonged to the parish of All Saints.