

DERBYSHIRE MISCELLANY



Matlock, Bath from the Old Bath Terrace.

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Part 6

DERBYSHIRE MISCELLANY

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WILLIAM BARTON — ROWLAND'S VERY OWN HIGHWAYMAN?

(by Ann Hall,

Introduction

During research into old roads around Hassop for the Bakewell Crosses project¹ a very surprising report of highway robbery on the road between Ashford and Calver came to light. There were three incidents in two days and the newspaper reports said that they were carried out by William Barton of Rowland. Using online access to the *Derby Mercury* and *Sheffield Independent* the details gradually unfolded and this article contains extracts from several of the reports to give a flavour of the reporting style of the times.

William Barton in Derbyshire

From court reports² William Barton appears to have been born in Bakewell in 1814. There is no evidence for his birth in Bakewell Baptism records in this year, however a William Barton, son of William Barton of Rolland (sic) was born in 1811³ so his date of birth remains uncertain. He was educated enough to be able to read and write⁴ and he worked as an indoor servant and garden labourer for several local families.⁵ One of his employers was Jonathan Hulley who was a gardener both at Thombridge Hall and Hassop Hall so William may have indirectly worked for the Earl of Newburgh. His employers described him as '*conducting himself in a proper manner*' and '*of general good character and of sober industrious habits and was never suspected of any malpractices whatever*'. He went to Manchester for a year⁶ and then returned to Rowland in his early 20s to carry out his '*atrocious attack*'.⁷ The reason that he left home may explain why an unassuming labourer from rural Derbyshire became a highwayman. He '*incurred the displeasure of the Earl of Newburgh by catching a rabbit for which offence he was banished from his home*'.⁵ Not only this but '*his father [was] discharged [from the service of the Earl] for harbouring him*'. His father rented his house in Rowland and was paid for labouring around the Eyre Estate between 1831 and 1834.^{8,9,10} This must have been a severe blow and possibly viewed as an overly harsh punishment by the family. One possible interpretation of the subsequent events is that William Barton junior felt he had a score to settle.

As an aside it is interesting to note that '*William Barton*' turned out to be a common name in Rowland in the 1830s; there being no less than four people of this name in the records. Apart from the father and son who are the subject of this article there was another father and son who were of the farming rather than of labouring class. In the census for 1841 there are two William Bartons - father (aged 68) a farmer and his son (aged 34) who also appears in the household accounts of the Earl of Newburgh as a butcher.^{8,10} By this date only the mother and sister of the highwayman remained in Rowland.

Barton, the would be highwayman, had purchased a pistol at Willcockson pawn brokers in Chesterfield in September 1835 and his first possible hold up was of Bennett and Millington.⁷ I have been unable to find out where this event took place or any further details. In fact it may not be one of his crimes but it was laid at his door in the light of further events.

The first reports of William Barton back in Rowland and with a firearm are from the recollections of Joseph Bennett speaking in 1905.¹¹ He still had vivid memories of Rowland's highwayman activities seventy years later when he was interviewed for the *Derbyshire Courier*. He said that he was out courting in Blind Lane (Beggaway Lane), Hassop and came across William who fired a pistol. Later Joseph spoke to another courting couple who reported that William had done the same in their presence. No robbery was attempted on these occasions.

The next reports of his activities appear in the *Derby Mercury* on 14 October 1835.¹² '*A labourer in the employment of the Earl of Newburgh had been stopped by him near Hassop ... and his money demanded, a pistol being presented at the same time: the labourer immediately recognised him, and said 'I know you: you are Will Barton', on which the fellow instantly decamped*'. This suggests that William had little competence in highway robbery and that the outcome of this and his subsequent action may be a foregone conclusion.

The following evening of Wednesday 6 October 1835, '*a most daring attack was made upon Mr. M. Frost of Calver, as he was proceeding in his gig from Ashford to Calver, at about seven o'clock in the evening. ... He observed a fellow skulking in the hedge in a way which excited his suspicions, and which caused him to urge his*

horse forward at a quick pace. On ascending a hill, immediately after passing the man, Mr. F. heard a report of a pistol which was discharged from behind him, and was fearful from the flinching of horse that the animal was wounded by the charge: he, however continued to proceed at a good pace and on arriving at Calver a veterinary surgeon was summoned who succeeded in extracting a pistol ball from the sole of its fore hoof. The ball had happily missed Mr. Frost, at whom it was probably aimed'.⁷ Matthew Frost was the Agent of the Earl of Newburgh¹⁰ and this act supports the view that William was out to satisfy his sense of injustice.

William struck again the same day and this time he managed to steal some goods. The *Sheffield Mercury*⁷ continues 'About half an hour after the villainous attempt on Mr. Frost, a boy aged about fourteen years, named Pheasey, was robbed near the same place, of some clothes which were cut out, but not made up, and which he was taking to Bakewell.'. This material was to be used in evidence at his commitment where further details of the robbery emerged. 'Wm Phesey, of Hathersage, tailor ... sent his apprentice to Bakewell, with a bundle containing several pairs of cut-out trowsers and among the rest a pair of cotton cord ones, and a number of buttons wrapped in a piece of written paper.'¹³

The evidence that was produced later at William Barton's trial was in fact the cotton cord trousers and the paper in which the buttons were wrapped. And more details of the robbery were given in court. 'Francis Hays, the apprentice, deposed that as he went to Bakewell with the bundle the night being rather dark a tall man overtook him, and they walked together ... The prisoner offered to carry his bundle, but he said that he could carry it himself. When they got to Hassop Flats, the man took the bundle from under his arm, and pulled out a pistol, saying, if the witness [Francis] would not be off, he would shoot him. Witness walked away directly, and the prisoner [William] called after him, that if he made any noise he would shoot him. Prisoner jumped over a hedge into Lord Newburgh's meadows.'¹³

From these accounts it seems that William tried to hold up Matthew Frost somewhere on the hill between Hassop and Calver (on the present day B 6001) and that he robbed the apprentice on the same road between Hassop to Bakewell on the approach to the Hassop roundabout.

The next day, Thursday, William returned to the pawnbroker in Chesterfield and offered a pair of unfinished trousers as a pledge, '[who] declined to take them as they were not made up'.⁷

Later on Thursday, 'two constables of Bakewell, while pursuing him in a chaise, came up with him in a place called Robin Hood (on the A 619 Baslow to Chesterfield road). On perceiving the man, they instantly jumped out of the vehicle, and seized him: but he forced himself from their hold, and darted from them. The constables pursued and fired two pistols at the robber, but missed him, and he succeeded gaining a neighbouring plantation, and has for the present escaped'.⁷ Firearm competency seems to be lacking in everyone involved in this case.

So from this point how did William Barton, highwayman, end up in court? William Barton seems to have decided life was not for him in the Rowland area. Newspapers report 'He has recently been pursuing his pilfering pursuits in the neighbourhood of Cuckney, Nottinghamshire. ... he stopped a person in the employment of the Duke of Portland, at the top of Warsop Hill, pointed a pistol at his head and threatened to blow his brains out if he made the least resistance; he took from the man ten or eleven shillings, and various other articles'.¹⁴ In court the victim stated that 'two men came out of a clump of trees on to the road. They came up to the witness and told him to stand and deliver. They stood holding a pistol to each side of his head and Barton said if he did not deliver they would blow his brains out'.¹³ This report of two men and two pistols and other details is quite puzzling as it does not fit with all of the other evidence which describes him as acting alone and purchasing one pistol. It is possible that other footpads were working in the same area and that this robbery was not carried out by William Barton. This crime was used as the basis of his subsequent sentence⁵ so, to some extent, he may be the victim of a miscarriage of justice. The court report from the National Archive was unobtainable so this discrepancy remains a mystery.

The newspaper report continued 'He [William] soon afterwards stopped a person in the employ of Messers Hollins of Langwith but some other work people coming up he effected his escape a reward of £25 is offered.'. This was not before he had dropped a bundle containing 'a pair of cord trousers, cut out but not made up'¹³ which was to provide the evidence against him at the trial.

After this episode, there are no more accounts of robbery by him and this is later explained by the fact that he joined the Army. He enlisted into the 7th regiment of the Dragoon Guards stationed in Nottingham six days after

the start of his crime spree. In the Army '*... he had conducted himself in an orderly and proper manner and having given a feigned name, no suspicion was attached to him*'. However in January 1836, '*his old habits of thieving, ... were too strong for him, and he was tempted into stealing a watch of one of his comrades*'.¹⁵ 'The commanding officer wrote to the Earl of Newburgh on the subject. Mr Frost immediately forwarded instructions to Bland, the Sheffield constable, who went over to Nottingham,' '*accompanied by a servant of Lord Newburgh's who swore to his identity*' '*which he did the moment he changed his regimentals - as he then appeared dressed in the same clothes as he had on when committing his acts of depredation and violence. He was immediately taken into custody, heavily ironed, and arrived at Chesterfield in custody of Bland and another constable about seven o'clock and was that night taken before Earl Newburgh and was by his lordship forwarded to Sheffield to the custody of Sheffield magistrates ... the same night*'.¹⁶

He was charged with '*robbing [the] groom of the Duke of Portland ... of ten shillings demanding ... money, with intent to rob ... and with feloniously robbing ... several pieces of woollen cord ... Kersleymere cloth some buttons and small articles*'.⁶ At a subsequent hearing three charges of theft were examined and he was committed to Nottingham. On 10 March 1836 at Nottingham Assizes, '*William Barton was tried under three indictments for highway robbery, found guilty, and sentence of death recorded*'.¹⁷ as the *Derby Mercury* starkly states. It is for such deeds that this sentence was considered appropriate in the 1830s.

Researches into death records proved unfruitful so it was not possible to verify that the sentence had been carried out. Further investigation of criminal records on the Ancestry website provided the explanation. In the Nottingham court records his sentence was 'Death' but this was commuted to '*Transportation for life*' which was a common procedure at this time. Near the end of March several people from the Hassop area wrote a petition to the Secretary of State attesting to his good character and suggesting that he was harshly punished by the Earl of Newburgh for the original crime of catching the rabbit.⁵

This petition was unsuccessful and William was sent to the prison hulk 'Fortitude' in Chatham, Kent. Old navy vessels were used as prisons at this time and records had been kept of his stay.^{18,19} In these his character is said to be '*very bad*' and he '*is disposed of*' on 22 September 1835 when he was taken on board 'John 4' which sailed to New South Wales.^{4,20} This means that in a little over one year William Barton had progressed from being in farm service in Rowland to living a convict's life on the other side of the world.

At the time of these events, the newspaper reports contain quite a collection of colourful language concerning this man and gives the feeling he was a desperado, terrorising the countryside. '*Barton ... is one of the most desperate characters in the country*'.¹⁴ '*He carries a brace of pistols with him, and is a most determined fellow; he has lately escaped two or three times from custody*'.¹⁴ '*This notorious character*'.¹⁷ '*Footpad ... has a reputation of having committed many robberies in the old style - namely with the presentation of a pistol*'.¹⁵ He is even quoted as an example of wickedness personified, in correspondence discussing '*Comparative States of Crime in Catholic and Protestant districts*'.²¹ He was also accused of a further shooting incident on the Ashford road which must have occurred while he was in the Army. In late October 1835 '*Thomas Fidler, constable of Hassop, was returning with his cart and horse to Rowland from Bakewell at about six o'clock in the evening, he was fired at, but the ball happily lodged in the shelving of his cart. It is supposed that this attempt on the life of a fellow creature was committed by the notorious Barton ... near the same place ... a reward of £50 is offered*'.²² So there must have been other highwaymen at work in the local area.

But are this the only reports on his character? Maybe tabloid journalism was as much of a barrier in those time to finding the full story as it is now. Further titbits of information suggest that William Barton was not such a ruffian and more likely to have been a simple lad who had taken a wrong turning in life. '*There is not that ferocious appearance in him that is so generally reported; and in his conversation he seems rather diffident than otherwise. He is about six feet high, a well made young man, and in a military dress would present a good appearance. There is nothing about him to strike a man with terror, any more than any man of his stature*'.¹⁶ '*Barton is a fine looking fellow, measuring 6 feet in height and his face ornamented with a profusion of mustache [sic]*'.¹⁵ This fits with the comments that in the Army he had '*conducted himself in an orderly and proper manner ... no suspicion was attached to him*'.⁵

William Barton in Australia

Finding out more about William Barton's life in New South Wales proved to be difficult. The convict indent describes him on his arrival in February 1837. He is given as a protestant and single with the trade of groom and

gardener and with no previous convictions. He has a fair, ruddy complexion, brown hair and hazel eyes with several marks and scars. Tattooing on the transportation journey was not uncommon and his most interesting ones were of a 'woman with a sprig in hand inside lower right arm ... [and] ... blue ring third finger left hand'. Compared with others in the same indent he seems to have picked up a only few minor scars and tattoos of an innocent nature.⁴

He was assigned to work for G. McLailey in the Paterson River District²³ in the hills north of Maitland about 100 miles from Sydney; convicts being assigned to farm work in the colony being a common occurrence. He obtained his ticket of leave in 1844²⁴ which allowed him to work for himself as long as he stayed in the District of Paterson, reported to the authorities regularly and attended church each Sunday. He was granted a conditional pardon in 1847 for good conduct²⁵ but the final paperwork was not complete until the 1st February 1849.²⁶ This meant that he was a free man on condition that he did not return to the United Kingdom. Any more details of his occupation or abode during this time of punishment have been elusive. Furthermore investigations through correspondence with several History groups in the vicinity of Maitland with an interest in families from these times produced no definite information on his life after the pardon.

It may be that he is the William Barton who married Mary Ann Turner in Maitland at the end of 1849 and this would make him the father the three children born between 1850 and 1854.²⁷ Even if this was William Barton originally from Derbyshire no further trace of this Barton family has been possible so far.

The fate of the young man in Australia who was the highwayman from Rowland is still to be teased from the records. It is to be hoped that his week of youthful madness in Derbyshire was put far behind him and that he made good Down Under.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Derbyshire Record Office and Matlock Local Studies Library for help with completing this article.

If readers have any more information about William Barton of Rowland the author would be glad to include this information in the record and acknowledge the contribution. Please get in touch with annhall4@hotmail.com.

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THE NEW MILLS TORRS HYDRO AND TORR MILL

(by Derek Brumhead,

A working hydro electric power scheme has been built in the Torrs gorge. In June 2008, a reverse Archimedes screw twelve metres long, two and half metres wide and weighing ten tonnes arrived in the town on a low loader. Since there was no road access, in a spectacular operation it was winched over the 30 metre high Union Road bridge into the Torrs gorge. It has been installed on the site of Torr Mill, a former cotton spinning mill, making use of the fall of about 20 feet over an adjacent weir which powers the inclined screw generating about 70 KW of electricity and should generate about 260,000kwh of electricity a year. The output is used by a local Co-operative supermarket and any surplus fed into the National Grid. A fish ladder has been provided.

The scheme is an interesting case of the modern re-use of the eighteenth century water power site. Torr Mill, was opened on this site at the confluence of the river Goyt and river Sett in the 1790s, when it was not much larger than a barn. This mill took water from directly above the large weir and excavations not only exposed the arched entry of this water into the mill (HR on Figure 1) and the tailrace tunnel (TR on Figure 1) under Union Road bridge, but also part of the of the original wheel with its iron rim and wooden spokes. These are being preserved for display in the Heritage Centre. Two bricked-in windows were also exposed. These appear to have been the exterior basement windows of the original late 18th century mill which were hidden when the mill was enlarged.

This leads us to the interesting fact that the present foot bridge over the river Goyt (below Union Road bridge) was relocated about the time that the mill was enlarged. It used to be a few yards nearer the weir but was moved to its present position to make room for the new mill. The old bridge and site of the new bridge is marked on the sketch map (Figure 1). When the mill was enlarged in the 1840s (steam power was also introduced) it then took water via a leat from upstream in the river Goyt which crossed the river Sett by a trough to power a broad waterwheel set deep down in the basement of the mill.

An interesting aspect of the scheme by Water Power Enterprises which cost £300,000 is the way it was funded. There was a grant of £135,000 and a £61,000 loan, but the rest was raised through a £500 share offer taken up by around 200 mainly local people and businesses. Any such hydro-electric power scheme obviously depends on a suitable site, and the water drop height and volume per second. The North-West region with its climate and hilly topography and countless streams, rivers and mill sites is ideal for future schemes. It is interesting to speculate what the wheelwrights and millwrights establishing the early rural cotton mills in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries would make of this 21st century use of one of their water power sites.

Admittedly, this is only a nod in the green direction, but a very impressive one, adding to the existing attractions of the Torrs gorge, which include high level road and railway viaducts, the spectacular Millennium Walkway, and superb outcrops of a Carboniferous (Coal Measures) sandstone, the Woodhead Hill Rock.

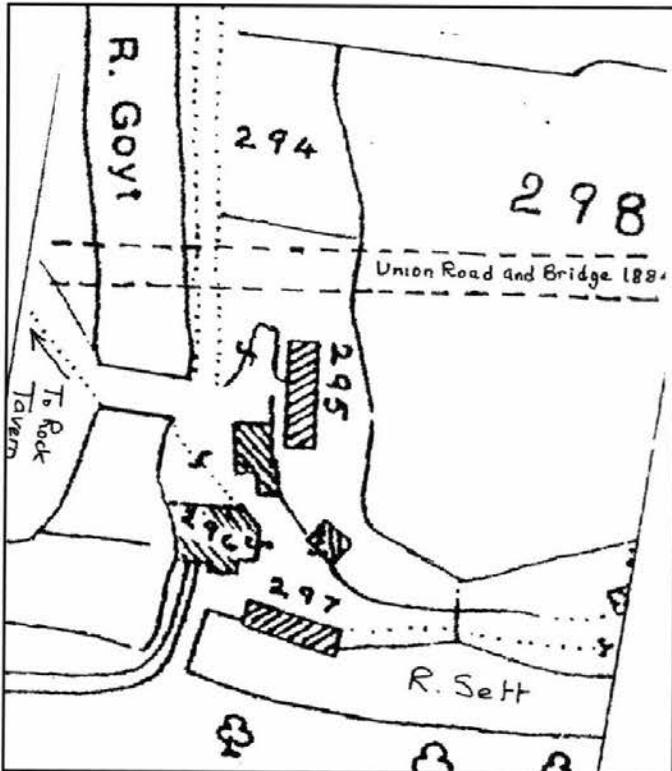


Figure 2

Enlarged extract from New Mills tithe map 1841 (drawn by Ron Weston) showing Torr Mill. The layout of the buildings is the same as the plan of 1828. The line of Union Road bridge opened in 1884 has been added.

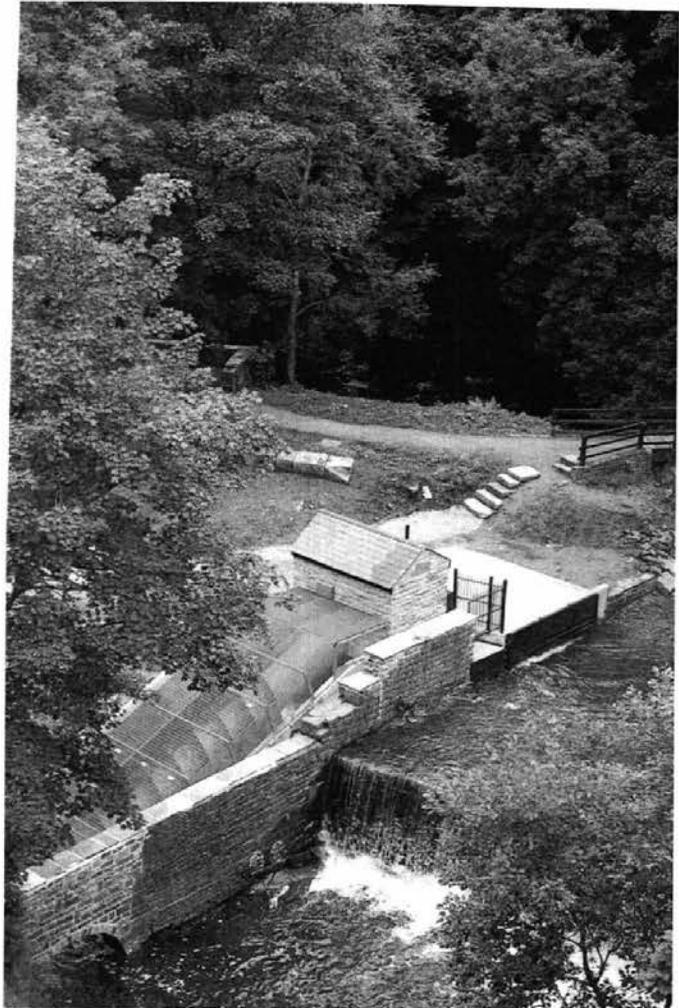
Plots:

295 Four cottages (1 empty) and a warehouse

296 Cotton mill and yard

297 Six cottages (1 empty)

Figure 3
The Torrs Hydro taken from Union Road bridge.



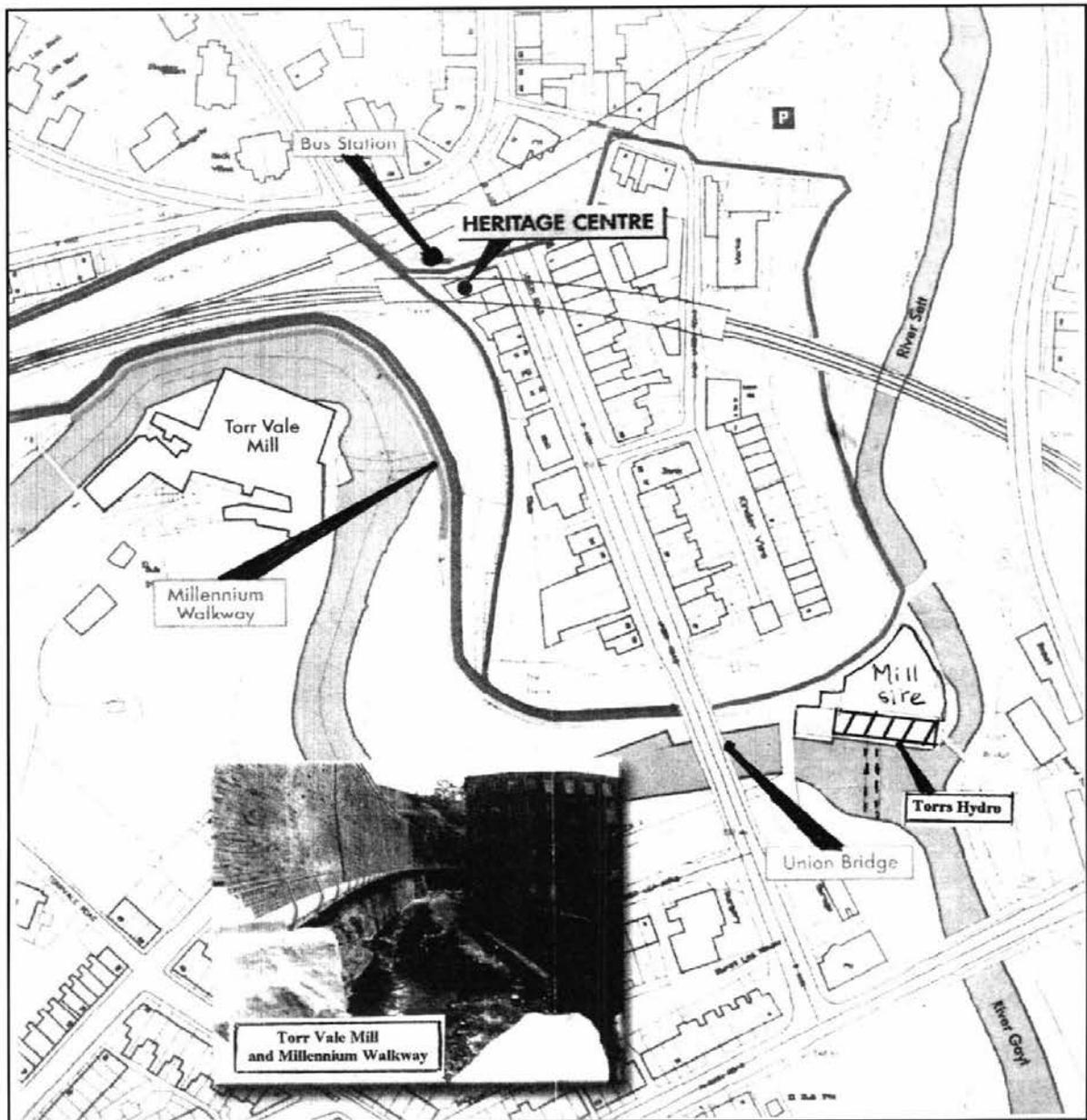


Figure 4: Modern map of the Torrs and its features.

THE ORDNANCE DEPOT, DERBY AND ITS LATER OWNERS 1805-1966 PART 3: AMBROSE MOORE (1788-1873) AND THE WILSON FAMILY

(by Jane Steer,

In *Derbyshire Miscellany*, Autumn 2014, Joan D'Arcy and I wrote an article about the Derby Ordnance Depot which was bought by Ambrose Moore, a Spitalfields silk manufacturer, c1823 for use as a silk mill. He owned the building until c1884. Further research, carried out because there are very few local references to Ambrose, found that not only was he a prominent silk manufacturer but that he became a prominent businessman in the City of London. This led to Part 2, 'Ambrose Moore (1788-1873)', which was published in *Derbyshire Miscellany*, Spring 2015. More information also emerged about Ambrose Moore and his family. Besides his own descendants, his mother, Ann Wilson, came from a long established farming family of Wilsons based in Stenson and Twyford in South Derbyshire whose younger sons were found apprenticeships. As a result, from the late 18th century, the silk industry made some members of the Wilson family very wealthy. Some descendants bought country estates and others became well known scientific academics, an Admiral and a Lord Mayor of the City of London. Two of them used their wealth to '*promote the causes of God*'. One, a member of the Church of England, founded the Wilson clerical dynasty and purchased the advowsons of churches, the other supported the Dissenters and founded the Congregational church in Derbyshire. A later philanthropist Wilson also supported the Congregational church and many other charitable organisations and one became the Bishop of Calcutta. Note: the family trees only show people mentioned in the text.

Twyford and Stenson

For 200 years the Wilson family were farmers in the small rural villages of Twyford and Stenson and many of them were buried at Twyford. The Trent and Mersey Canal runs through Stenson. In 1835, Pigot and Co in their *Commercial Directory of Derbyshire* described Twyford and Stenson as follows:

TWYFORD is a village, and with STENSON, form a chapelry, in that part of the parish of Barrow which is in the hundred of Appletree, pleasantly situate on the banks of the Trent, five and a half miles S.S.W. from Derby. The chapel is dedicated to St. Andrew, and the living is connected with the vicarage of Barrow. In 1821, 235, and in 1831, 219 inhabitants.

The Wilsons supported the churches in Barrow-on-Trent. Ambrose Moore bought the advowson of St Wilfred's church at Barrow-on-Trent c1856-7. When a new parsonage was built in 1858, Bishop Daniel Wilson sent a £50 donation towards its erection at the request of Ambrose Moore. The Dissenter Thomas Wilson contributed a considerable sum towards the support of the Rev Mr Smith at Barrow-on-Trent Independent chapel in 1793. John Wilson (1755-1835) entertained Methodists and was a member of the congregation at Barrow on Trent.¹

John Wilson 1755-1835

Ownership of the Stenson farm passed from John Wilson to John Wilson, who was usually the eldest son. The John who was born in 1755 was the eldest son of John Wilson (1720-1789) and Ann Cocks (1736-1764). His brothers were William, Thomas and Stephen and his sisters were Ann (1758-1803), mother of Ambrose Moore, and Mary. As the eldest son, John inherited the family farm and stayed in Stenson; his brothers were apprenticed to silk manufacturers in London.

John farmed on two farms, one of his own and one which, in 1830, he rented from Sir George Crewe, 9th Baronet, the owner of Calke Abbey. Beside the farms at Stenson, his will shows that when he died in 1835 he also had real estate in Twyford, Stenson and Findern and an estate at Calwich near Mayfield, Staffordshire. John was a well respected farmer. When he gave up one of the farms in 1831 and his property was sold at auction on 21 and 22 February, the auctioneer, Mr Brearley stated that '*the longhorned cows are equal, if not superior, to any Dairy in the Country*'. The contents included 40 longhorn and shorthorn cows, 2 bulls, 34 sheep, 7 pigs, 3 wagon horses, a wagon, a cart and farm implements, wheelwrights timber, the contents of the dairy and cheese room (all listed) and 6 strikes of potatoes. He also sold some furniture: bedstands, feather beds, dressing tables, chairs, tables, etc. When he was 75 he was described as a plain and retired man who was infirm with a considerable fortune of about £40,000.²

John died a bachelor on 2 October 1835, aged 81. In his will dated 1832 with a codicil of 1834, he was described as a '*Gentleman*' rather than a farmer. He left twelve legacies including £5000 to his nephew, Ambrose

Moore of Derby, £1000 to his niece, Mary Ann Wayte, wife of George Wayte of Twyford and mother of Elizabeth Hickson, and £2000 each to his nieces Ann and Susan Wilson of Derby. His real estate in Twyford, Stenson and Findern was left to Mary Anne Wayte during her lifetime. Mary Ann and her husband George could also purchase within three months of his death any part or parts of his house, his farming stock and implements, household furniture and other effects belonging to the houses, farms and lands which he owned. The estate at Calwich was left to George Wayte and the other trustees during the life of his niece Elizabeth Hickson. A trust fund of £3000 invested in Parliamentary stocks or funds of Great Britain was set up for Elizabeth Hickson and any children. In default the trust fund would go successively to Ambrose Moore (1788-1873), his nephew Melvil Wilson (1799-1868, son of his late brother Thomas), his nephew Forrester Wilson (1812-1878, half-brother of Melvil Wilson) and to his nephew Fletcher Wilson (son of his late brother Stephen, 1761-1814).³

Another trust was set up '*for the three children of my late niece Jane Stevenson (the wife of Mr Stevenson now or late of Derby Draper)*'. Jane, the daughter of his late brother Stephen, had married George Stevenson in 1823 but had died on 19 January 1828. Her three children were Mary Jane (1824-1909), George Wilson (1825-1889), and Joshua Stevenson (1825-1906).

The trustees, who were also the executors, were George Wayte of Twyford, gentleman, his cousin William Gould of Hanson Grange, Thomas Briggs of Derby, mercer and draper and John Henshaw of Weston-upon-Trent, yeoman, who were left £100 each. The 127 acres 2 roods and 27 perches of the Stenson farm left to Mary Anne Wayte eventually passed to Ambrose Moore (her brother). His grandson, Cunningham Wilson Moore sold the northern part of the farm to a Mr Foreman in 1881 and the remaining 58 acres 1 rood and 27 perches to Sir John Harpur Crewe of Calke Abbey for £3050 on 26 May 1884⁴ (see p140).

Ann Wilson 1758-1803 and her son Ambrose Moore

Ann Wilson (1758-1803), sister of John Wilson (1755-1836), married Ambrose Moore (senior) by licence on 24 August 1779 at Barrow-on-Trent with Twyford. Ambrose was a City of London merchant living in the parish of St Albans, London.⁵ No more is known about Ambrose apart from the fact that Harriet Wilson mentions her father receiving letters from his father sent from Calcutta, where an Ambrose Moore was listed as a mariner in 1810.⁶ Ann lived in Friargate, Derby when she died in 1803.

Ann and Ambrose (senior) had three children: Mary Ann (1782-1857), Eleanor (c1788-1814), and Ambrose who was born on 6 November 1788 in Kingsland, London. Mary married a farmer, John Hickson of Nether Worton, Oxfordshire, by licence on 25 November 1806 at Barrow-on-Trent with Twyford. Her uncle, William Wilson had bought Nether Worton in 1797 (see p142) and John rented a 300 acre farm from him at £650 a year. John died of consumption in 1811 shortly after the birth of their daughter, Elizabeth (1810-1863). On 27 May 1824, Mary married George Wayte from Milton at Barrow-on-Trent. She died on 11 May 1857 at Repton.⁷

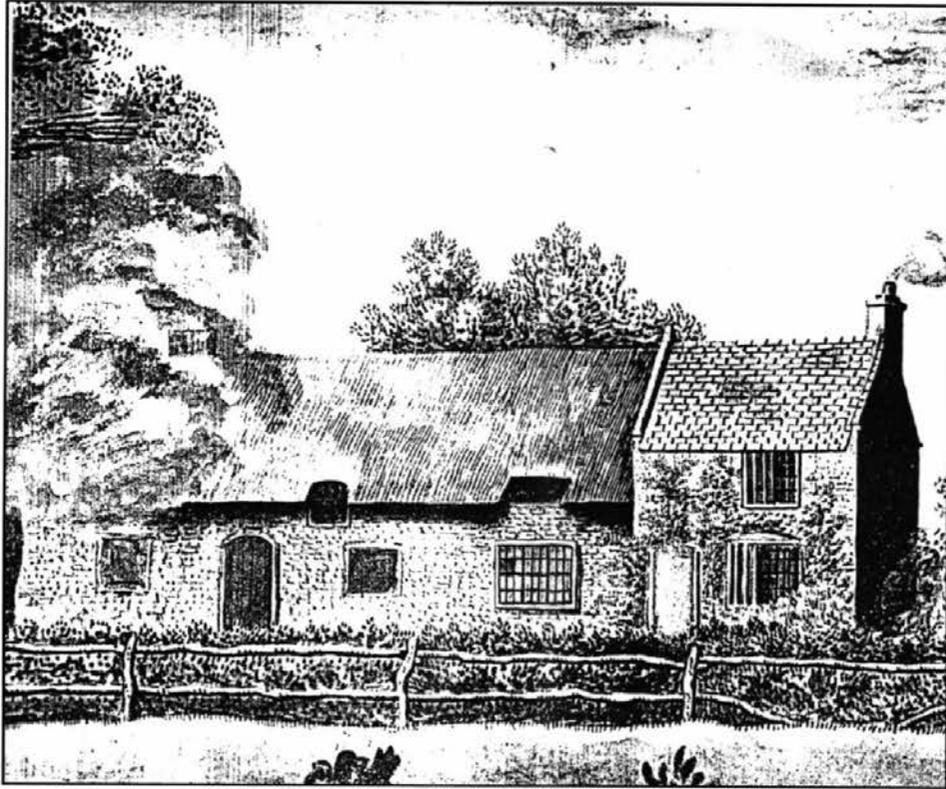
Eleanor died on 23 April 1814, also of consumption, shortly after she went to London to live with her brother, and was buried at Twyford. The inscription on her slate headstone reads:

*Life how short, eternity, how long. To the Memory of ELEANOR MOORE who died Jan 23rd 1814 aged 26 years. Strangers, this tomb invites your thoughtful eye Here youth, and health and earthly fair. Are all cut off - and tell you ye must die, How soon ye know it but in time prepare.*⁸

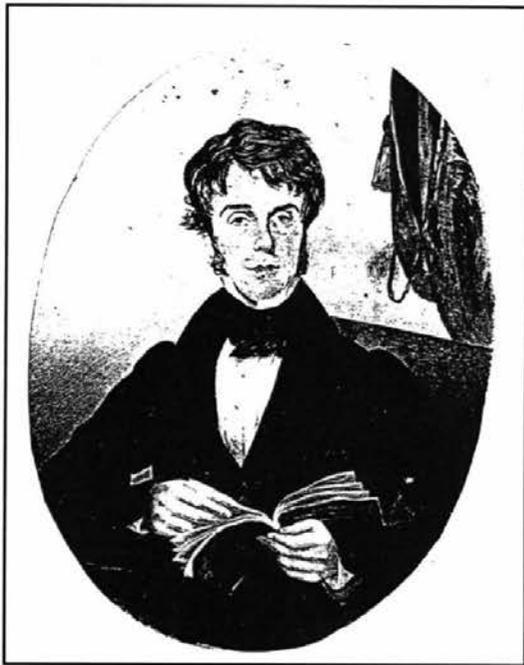
Ambrose, their son, spent most of his early years in Derby where he lived with his mother on Friargate. When he was 14 he was apprenticed to his uncle, William Wilson, a City of London silk manufacturer of 31 Milk Street, Cheapside. He completed his apprenticeship in 1809 and in 1810 he and his cousin, Joseph Wilson (1786-1855), William's eldest son, were made partners in William's firm. (see Part 2). Ambrose was also active in the Weavers Company and was elected Renter Warden in 1822, Renter Bailiff in 1825 and Upper Bailiff in 1826.

When Ambrose was 36, he married Harriet Fox, a minor, b1816, the daughter of Dr Francis Fox, the well known Derby surgeon, at St Werburgh's church, Derby on 5 September 1826 with the consent of her father. Dr Fox had married Charlotte Douglas, the sister of the late Mrs Joseph Strutt, thus giving Moore a family link to the Strutt family. After a honeymoon in Paris they went to live at 31 Milk Street, Cheapside.⁹ They had seven children.

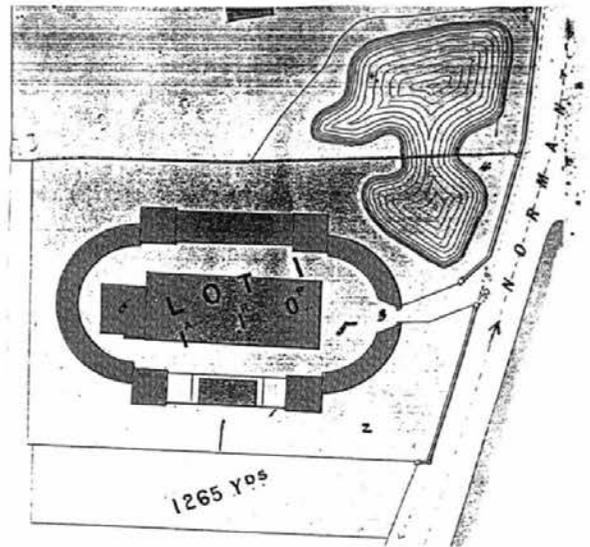
Harriet (1831-1913) married Joseph William Wilson (1829-98), fourth son of the Rev. William Wilson of Over Worton House at Over Worton church, Oxfordshire on 17 January 1851. At the same time Fanny Mary, the youngest daughter of the Rev. William married Samuel Henry Fortnum Cox (SHF Cox) of Sandford Park, about



Stenson Farm. The right hand wing is new. Drawn by Harriet Moore. *The Family Sketch*, 1909.



Ambrose Moore, 1832. *The Family Sketch*, opp. p11



The Depot Mill, Derby, *The Family Sketch*, opp. p13

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. The Moore's house. | 2. Their garden. |
| 3. The Great Gate. | 4. The Reservoir. |
| 5. The Yard. | 6. The Engine House. |

two miles south of Over Worton. Fanny died in childbirth on 5 January 1852 but her son, Samuel Herbert Cox, became an Inspector of Mines in New Zealand, President of The Society of Engineers in 1895 and Professor of Mining at Imperial College 1907-13.¹⁰ Harriet and Joseph had 11 children.

Joseph William was the grandson of John Wilson's brother, William (see p140). Unlike his brother who went into the church, he decided to be an engineer and was apprenticed to and then employed by Charles Fox (1810-1874, of Fox & Henderson of Birmingham. Harriet Ann Moore's youngest brother.) as an Assistant Engineer to supervise the wood-working machinery whilst the Crystal Palace was being built. Later in 1851 he and SHF Cox founded an engineering company, Cox and Wilson, and built the Oxford Engineering Works at Oldbury in Birmingham, employing 300-400 men. Although the firm was successful, Joseph became ill and it closed down. Joseph, now a Member of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, and Ambrose Moore founded the Timber, Sawing & Turning Co Ltd in 1857 in Banbury. Here he patented a circular gauge and disk-paring tools for which he received the Medal of the Society of Arts. He had had pupils for many years and always taken an interest in their mechanical as well as their theoretical training, so in 1872, Joseph, now also a qualified Civil Engineer, together with his eldest son, Joseph, founded the Crystal Palace School of Practical Engineering at the Crystal Palace in Sydenham.¹¹ Harriet died on 5 February 1913 at Peak's Hill Cottage in Purley.¹²

Eleanor (1833-1923) did not marry and was living with her father in Wandsworth in 1871.¹³

John Wilson Moore (1836-1873) married Nina Augusta Henrica, daughter of Robert and the late Hon Erica Gun Cunninghame of Mount Kennedy, co Wicklow on 21 February 1860. Nina Moore died in childbirth on 9 July 1869. John was called to the Bar in 1871. He died in Worthing in 1873. Ambrose Moore settled the Depot Mill, Derby, but not its contents, on him at the time of his marriage.¹⁴



Admiral Sir Gordon Moore as a Rear Admiral. Photo: Library of Congress.

Children: Cunningham Wilson Moore (1861-1905) married Frances Mary Cooke at East Stonehouse, Devon on 29 December 1881. Her father was a retired Lt Colonel at the Marine Barracks in Plymouth. They divorced in 1894. Cunningham lived in Belfast in 1881, working as an electrician and civil engineer in 1884. Fellow of Geological Society of London. Founder member of Geological Society of South Africa in 1895. Author, with A.P. Wilson Moore, of '*A Practical Guide for Prospectors, Explorers and Miners*'. Died in Blomfontein Orange River Colony, South Africa in 1905.¹⁵

Archibald Henry Gordon Wilson Moore (1862-1934), later Admiral Sir Gordon Moore, K.C.B, C.V.O. Controller of Mechanical Warfare Department, 1917.¹⁶

Douglas de Vere Wilson Moore, 1863-1871;

Aubrey Percy Wilson Moore, b 1867 Bonchurch, Isle of Wight. Civil and Mining Engineer, Sheba Queen Gold and Exploration Co, Barberton, Transvaal, c1899-7;¹⁷

Alwyne Guilbert W. Moore, b July 1869, d 5 July 1869.¹⁸

John's children were involved in two Chancery cases: in 1863, the Plaintiffs were Cunningham and Archibald, infants and in 1874, the Plaintiffs were Archibald and Aubrey, infants.¹⁹

Emily Susan (1838-1874). She became the fourth wife of Samuel Henry Fortnum Cox (SHF Cox), who now lived at Cornwall House, Penzance, on 30 August 1873 at Wandsworth. She died in childbirth on 29 September 1874 at Lower Carloggas, St Columb, Cornwall, aged 36. '*Emily Susan, 'beloved wife of Henry Cox and their infant son'* (Thomas Henry).²⁰ Henry's first wife, Fanny Wilson, and his third wife, Rosamund Headeach, also died in childbirth. His second wife, Marie Ursula Fuller, had four children.

Ambrose Trench, born 27 July 1840,²¹ died young.

Edith (1844-1862) died of diphtheria, '*a new disease which had only been in England for 4-5 years*', on 12 November 1862 at Downside, Epsom, aged 18, '*the fourth and dearly beloved daughter of Ambrose Moore*'.²²

Adeline, born on 15 March 1848 at Endsleigh Street, London (Ambrose was now 59), married Arthur Marks.²³

From when he was an apprentice Ambrose had lived at 31 Milk St, Cheapside but by 1841, when he was 52, Ambrose and his family had moved to Endsleigh Street, Tavistock Square, St Pancras. They were still there in 1851 when Ambrose listed his occupation on the census as '*banker*'. In 1862 (now 73) he lived at Downside,

Epsom²⁴ but had moved back to the London area by 1871, living at St Ann's House, Wandsworth with his daughter, Eleanor, now classing himself as a landowner.

Ambrose died, aged 85, on 10 February 1873 at St Ann's House, Wandsworth. He was buried at Twyford together with his grandson, Douglas de Vere Wilson Moore, 1863-1871. In his will, which was proved on 7 July 1873, he left his wife a silver tea service and three pictures: a miniature of himself, a miniature of his wife and his infant daughter Harriet and a portrait of their deceased daughter Edith, which were to go to their daughter Harriet Wilson after his wife's death. His son, John Wilson Moore was also left three pictures: a portrait of his uncle John Wilson of Stenson, a picture painted by Eyre of Derby²⁵ of the farmhouse at Stenson and a picture painted by Witherington RA²⁶ of his son when he was a child. He also gave his daughter Harriet, independent of the control of her husband, the advowson of Barrow on Trent with Twyford, which after her death was to go to Joseph William Wilson, her eldest son. He left the remainder of his real and personal estate to his executors John Rickard and Cooper Jones Worth upon trust, to be converted into money and invested in public stock of the United Kingdom or India or any other colony of the United Kingdom or in any railway company (conditions stated). The monies were to be divided into equal shares between his daughters Harriet, Eleanor and Emily for their sole and separate use. His estate was valued at less than £5000. John Rickard was a silk manufacturer in Derby, John Jones Worth, a gentleman, lived in Primrose Hill.²⁷ His wife, Harriet Moore, died in 1881.

After probate was granted, in addition to the property mentioned in '*The Ordnance Depot, Derby and its later owners 1805-1966*',²⁸ 34 houses on Ambrose Street, Moore Street, Normanton Lane and Rosehill Street, Derby were offered for sale by Oliver & Newbold in the *Derby Mercury* on 2 April 1873.

Harriet Ann Wilson, née Moore (1831-1913)

Towards the end of the 19th century Harriet wrote a history of her family '*A Family Sketch*' touching on the Wilson, Moore, Douglas and Fox families for her children and grandchildren which she finished in 1901. She begins with the Wilson family in Stenson and ends with her father's death in 1873. It gives a picture of a happy childhood and a happy marriage. She was obviously very fond of her father and her 'dear' mother. Most interesting though are her comments on everyday life: where the family lived, her extended family, religion, railways, her husband's career, etc. Harriet and her mother drew the illustrations in the book.

When Harriet, Eleanor and John were born, their parents lived at 31 Milk Street, Cheapside, but in the summer when they were young they usually went to Derby

to our dear little cottage at one corner of the large yard in the centre of which stood my father's large 'silk throwing' mill called the 'Depot'. At each corner of the yard stood one of these small house, originally intended for the sentries or other soldiers in charge.

Two of them had small gardens. How we loved ours! It was like paradise to the little London children, accustomed to stiff walks on hard pavements, this pretty garden with the closely trimmed lawn, and the round rose bed which I had to keep free from dead roses, and the beautiful Acacia Tree, outside the drawing-room window, under which we used to have tea, and the damson tree at the other end, from which we used to help to gather the fruit, and the greengage tree on the wall, which was our father's favourite. The garden adjoining belonged to Mr Rickard, who held the post of manager.

... Sometimes, as a great treat, our father took us into the enclosure within which was the Reservoir. This instead of being simply a square tank for receiving the water for the condenser of the engine in the mill, had been cut into the likeness of a pretty pond, and my father had planted fruit and other trees round it, and had stocked it with gold and silver fish which increased wonderfully, owing to the water being warm.

Sometimes Ambrose took them to look at the mill and his factory in Devonshire Street..

How awestruck we were, as we gazed at the beam-engine, with its regular up and down motion, and then with all the 'throwing machinery', superintended and worked by all the women and girls who flocked into the yard every morning when the great six o'clock bell sent out its clanging summons. There were, I think, six floors in the mill, all full of machines, and in the yard, on either side of the great entrance gates, were sheds in which were kept great crates full of bobbins, ready for winding the silk on, and, prettiest of all, the beautiful soft silk fresh from China, in the shiniest skeins, white, or pale yellow or pale gold.

... I ought to mention my father's smaller factory for silk weaving, in Devonshire Street, Derby, managed by Mr Bancroft, with its Jacquard looms, mysterious and fascinating to behold; beside the various cottages belonging to him in the streets near the 'Depot', where we ... watched the growth in a hand-loom of some rich and beautiful fabrics of velvet or satin or brocaded silk.

When the family were in Derby they went to church at St. Werburgh's.

Harriet's family story also reflects the changes in travelling to Derby during her lifetime. Their early annual journeys to Derby were made in their carriage, which was an old-fashioned 'chariot' with post horses. Starting about 6am, it took about 12 hours, changing horses at every 15 or 20 miles. In 1839 Harriet went on her first railway journey:

We went as usual to Derby for the Summer and were greatly excited by this new method of travelling. We went in our own 'chariot' as usual, but it was perched up on a railway truck and formed part of the train. I can recall Euston Square station as it was then, and can also see again our yellow-painted carriage in its strange new position. The railway only being finished as far as Rugby, we then descended from our elevated position and pursued the rest of the journey in the usual fashion, but before we returned to London in the autumn, such progress had been made on the line that we were able to go all the way by train. This was on 29 October 1839.

The new trains could cause problems, as Harriet relates:

We all went to Derby on 27th July [1846] but, to our consternation, our father was left behind, as he delayed too long getting into the train and had to follow on the next, arriving at 2.30am. He was not used to trains!

Ambrose loved the old farm at Stenson and was very fond of his Uncle John whom he visited several times a year. Harriet remembered visiting her Uncle John. The parlour was in the new part of the house to the right of the front door in the sketch (p136). In 1866 Harriet's son Joseph joined Ambrose in Derby as he wanted to visit his childhood home. They stayed at the old farm at Stenson and visited Twyford church, etc. The old house was taken down many years later and a new one built on the site.²⁹

Elizabeth Hickson (1810-1863), daughter of Mary Moore: A Stenson Scandal

After Elizabeth's father died in 1811, she and her mother went back to live in Stenson with Mary's uncle, John Wilson. When her mother married George Wayte in 1824, John rebuilt a dilapidated house on his land for them.³⁰ John, who was unmarried, doted on Elizabeth and more or less adopted her as his own child. Even though she went to boarding school in Derby and Spondon, she led a quiet life at home on the farm and was kind and unsophisticated. She had a small fortune of £2000 in her own right and had a very large expectation from her uncles. In 1828, when Elizabeth was 17, her fortune led to a conspiracy between four impecunious young men to 'affect a marriage without the due publication of banns' between Thomas Buxton and Elizabeth. Thomas Buxton and Mary Ann Buxton were the children of Mrs Buxton, a small farmer in Stenson. Mary Ann had gone to school with Elizabeth and saw her quite frequently. Besides Thomas, the conspirators were William Webster, a sheriff's officer in Derby who 'contrived the plot', his brother Erasmus, a one time attorney in Manchester who left because of financial difficulties, and Benjamin Wilde who had been an army captain but now kept a second rate public house, the White Lion, in Manchester. Thomas agreed to pay William £500 and to give him his favourite horse if the plot was successful. A clerk at St Werburgh's church in Derby told William that in a large parish it was unlikely that there would be an inquiry into an application for publication of banns. The parish of Barrow-on-Trent was very small and the proposed marriage would have been discovered so William applied to the parish of Manchester where probably 190-200 applications were made per day. Wilde went to see the parish clerk who assumed that Thomas and Elizabeth lived in Manchester and the banns were published.

It had been noticed that Thomas and Elizabeth were meeting and she was forbidden to see him but she was still allowed to see Mary Ann who acted as the go-between. On 9 June 1828, Elizabeth said she was going to see Mr Goodall in Normanton and set out in a pony and trap accompanied by a boy on foot. She then sent the boy with the pony to Normanton whilst she went to Littleover to meet a carriage where Thomas, Mary Ann, William and Erasmus were waiting for her. They drove round one side of Derby to avoid going into Derby and then took the road to Matlock, hence avoiding the turnpikes. At Matlock they took fresh horses and paid the post boy 6s 8d not to leave before 7pm. Erasmus returned with him. The other three went to Manchester and stayed with Wilde.

The marriage took place at 8am the next morning on 10 June but the register was signed before the ceremony by Thomas and Elizabeth who said they were of the parish of Manchester and after the ceremony by the clergyman which was an irregularity. The couple returned to the White Lion with Wilde where they were found later that day by Ambrose Moore, the marriage unconsummated. At a following court case Mr Justice Bayley told the jury that conspiracy to bring about a marriage by banns in this manner was a punishable offence but the marriage was binding. The two Websters and Thomas Buxton were found guilty and sentenced to three years in prison in Lancaster Castle. Mary Ann Buxton was found not guilty.³¹ The case was a national sensation, widely reported in the press, as were all the later cases.

Mary Ann Wayte brought a *'Petition for a Bill to declare void an alleged Marriage between T. Buxton & E. Hickson'* on 4 May 1830 which was referred to a Committee of the Whole House of Lords. Evidence for *'An Act to declare void an alleged marriage between Elizabeth Hickson, a infant, and Thomas Buxton'* was taken from the witnesses on 3 and 9 June 1830 in the House of Lords, including Ambrose Moore. The evidence makes fascinating reading. The divorce was not granted but a Deed of Separation was obtained in 1838.³²

After the elopement Elizabeth went to live in London with Ambrose Moore.³³ When she was 32, she met a law student, John Shaw, in Derby. They wanted to marry but the marriage would be illegal in England. So they decided to get a divorce in Scotland. Shaw found employment in Scotland and became a member of the Scotch bar. Thomas Buxton was persuaded to go to Scotland for a payment of £40 for expenses and a contingent fee of £250 and to remain there until after the divorce. Elizabeth followed and the divorce was finally obtained in March 1846, Shaw and Elizabeth marrying on 17 June 1846. Sadly Shaw died in 1852. There were three children of the marriage, Elizabeth Mary, Rosa Jane and John Horatio. After Elizabeth's death in 1863, the trust funds were paid into Chancery and the children claimed Elizabeth's £2000 inheritance from John Wilson which was in trust for her and then her children. This was challenged by Ambrose Moore and other relatives on the grounds that Thomas Buxton and Elizabeth were not divorced under English law because divorce under Scottish law was not recognised in England. The case, *Shaw v Gould*, came before the Courts in November 1865 when it was decided that the divorce was invalid and the children were illegitimate. An appeal was made in the House of Lords on 27, 30, 1 March and 7 May 1868 but the decision of the Courts was upheld.³⁴ The inheritance now passed to Ambrose Moore and his heirs. When Ambrose and John died in 1873 the inheritance passed to John's eldest son, Cunningham Wilson Moore, born in 1861. As Cunningham was a minor, the Trust was administered by Chancery until a disentailing deed was signed on 15 December 1881, shortly before his marriage to Frances Cooke on 29 December 1881. Cunningham then raised mortgages using the land as security until the sale of part of Stenson Farm in 1884 to Sir John Harpur Crewe (see p135).³⁵

The Younger Wilson sons and the silk industry

In the mid-18th century the Wilson family forged its first connections with the silk industry when Stephen Wilson (1723-55), son of John Wilson and Ann Henshaw, married Mary Fullalove of Coventry and founded a successful ribbon business in Coleshill, Coventry followed by, in 1754, a branch in Wood Street (later no 124), London. His younger brother, Thomas (1731-94), married Mary, the daughter of John Remington, a wealthy clothworker, merchant and Alderman of the City of Coventry in 1754. Thomas became a co-partner in the family business in October 1754 until his death in 1794. When Stephen died suddenly in 1755, Thomas ran the London branch whilst his widow Mary (Fullalove), who had four young children in look after, and his son John (from 1772) looked after the business in Coventry. Thomas's son, Thomas (1764-1843) and Stephen's nephew, William Wilson (1756-1821) were apprentices at Wood Street. By the end of the 18th century, William was a very successful silk manufacturer at 31 Milk Street, Cheapside. His family apprentices included his son, Joseph, Ambrose Moore (son of Ann) and Daniel Wilson (1778-1858) (pp142, 145).³⁶

William Wilson 1756-1821. 31 Milk Street, Cheapside, Nether Worton and Over Orton, Oxfordshire

William was the second son of John Wilson and Ann Cocks of Stenson and the brother of John (1755-1835). He served his apprenticeship from 1770-1779 at Wood Street, London. The year William obtained his freedom he was elected to the Court of the Company of Weavers.

William married Elizabeth West in 1779. She was the second daughter of Daniel West, a wealthy silk merchant who was elected Upper Bailiff of the Company of Weavers in 1774. For the first seven years of their married life William and Elizabeth lived in Goldsmith Street, Cheapside before moving in 1790 to 31 Milk Street, Cheapside which was rented from Thomas Flight and in 1791 from John Remington. He became one of the most successful silk manufacturers in Spitalfields, said to be worth £250,000 when he died. He manufactured broad loom silks woven on looms driven by a waterwheel and employed 500 people, including journeymen.³⁷

Elizabeth died on 27 February 1795 as a result of a miscarriage and was buried in the family vault at Christchurch, Spitalfields. In 1810 William retired to his estate at Nether Worton, Oxon, which he bought in 1797. The adjacent Over Orton was bought in 1799. His son Joseph and Ambrose Moore then ran the business. During his time at Nether Worton, William bought the advowsons of Nether and Over Worton, Doddington, St Mary's Islington and Wandsworth. His son, William, went into the church and four of his daughters married churchmen.³⁸ He was High Sheriff of Oxfordshire Lordship in 1813.³⁹

Daniel Wilson (1778-1858), who married Ann Wilson, William's eldest daughter, left school on 4 December 1792, when he was nearly 14, and was apprenticed for 7 years to William Wilson. *The Life of Right Rev. Daniel Wilson, DD, late Bishop of Calcutta and Metropolitan of India*, Vol 1, by his son-in-law, Josiah Bateman, throws some light on life at Milk Street. Daniel describes William as 'a strict and a just man who claimed unlimited obedience from all who served him'. He was also a strict and conscientious churchman.⁴⁰

On 16 February 1797, Daniel wrote to a school friend about life with his uncle:

My individual employment is not laborious, but it is constant. Our usual hours of work are from six o'clock in the morning till eight o'clock in the evening in the summer; and seven o'clock in the morning till eight in the evening in the winter. So that you see I have but little time to myself. After eight o'clock, in general, I am at liberty to read or write alone, till supper time, which is at half-past eight o'clock, or a quarter to nine, and after this I sit reading with the family till ten o'clock, when my uncle calls them to prayers, and all go to bed. But as my leisure moments were by these regulations exceedingly circumscribed, I have always been accustomed to spend a couple of hours in my room before I retired to rest. Then I used constantly to study my Latin and French, so that I was making considerable progress in both.

Bateman described life in the warehouse in Milk Street:

The full tide of business is flowing through the warehouse in Milk Street; 500 weavers in succession, of all ages and both sexes are depositing their finished work or seeking more; customers are hurrying in and out, books being posted, bills negotiated and a colossal fortune reared. Master's eye is everywhere and in his presence all is order and decorum. But when the day draws to a close and he retires, restraint is thrown off and discipline relaxed. The young men gather together, conversation is let loose, jokes are practised, words are unguarded, disputation is aroused.⁴¹

Ambrose and Harriet Ann went to live at Milk Street after their marriage in 1826. Their daughter, Harriet, who lived there till she was 7½, described it thus:

It was the house of business, No 31; a comfortable, roomy house with the warehouses and counting house on the ground floor, the dining room, the breakfast room and kitchens on the first floor, above them the drawing room and principal bedrooms and at the top our nice day and night nurseries.⁴²

William died on 24 August 1821 at Nether Worton. In his will which was proved on 9 October 1824, he left the Manor of Nether Worton, the Rectory, the advowson of the parish church, the mansion house and his property in Nether Worton and Sandford in trust to Joseph, his eldest son, together with the lease of his house and premises at 31 Milk Street and £2000. His youngest son, William was left the Manor of Over Orton, the capital message, the advowson of the parish church, his property in Over Worton and Doddington and the Manor and chapel of Hampton Gay or Gate in trust, the perpetual advowson of the Vicarage of Walthamstow, Essex and £2000. The freehold warehouses on the west side of Bow Lane near to Cheapside in the City of London and the dwelling houses, counting houses and rights belonging to no 21 went to Joseph and William as tenants in common.

His son-in-law, Rev. Daniel Wilson, was left the perpetual advowson of St Mary's church, Islington and £5000. Daniel's children, Daniel and John were left £4000 each. His son-in-law Rev Charles Weatherall was to be presented to Byfield Rectory. His son-in-law Rev Richard Greaves of Lutterworth, Leics, was left the advowson of the Rectory and parish church of Lower Tooting, Surrey and £1000 for a suitable residence for Tooting Rectory. Sophia, the wife of Rev Richard Greaves and Selina, the wife of Rev John Davies were left £5000 each.

His nephew, Ambrose Moore, cousin Mary Gould of Church Street, Ashbourne, nephew Fletcher Wilson and nieces Jane, Anne and Susanna, children of his brother Stephen, were left £200 each. His great niece Elizabeth

Hickson was left £500. All his other leasehold estates, mortgages, etc (apart from stocks or trusts) were to be sold by his Trustees and invested in stocks in one of the public funds. Ten charities were left £100 each.⁴³

Thomas Wilson 1760-1829

Thomas was the third son of John Wilson and Ann Cocks of Stenson and the brother of John (1755-1835) and William. He married twice, first to Catherine Homfrey by whom he had a son, Melvil, and secondly to Elizabeth Mary Edwards by whom he had four children. Thomas, in partnership with Gabriel Shaw, founded the House of Thomas Wilson at Warnford Court, Frogmorton Street, London. They were general merchants who dealt in Russian and American trade. In later life he lived at Portman Square, London.⁴⁴

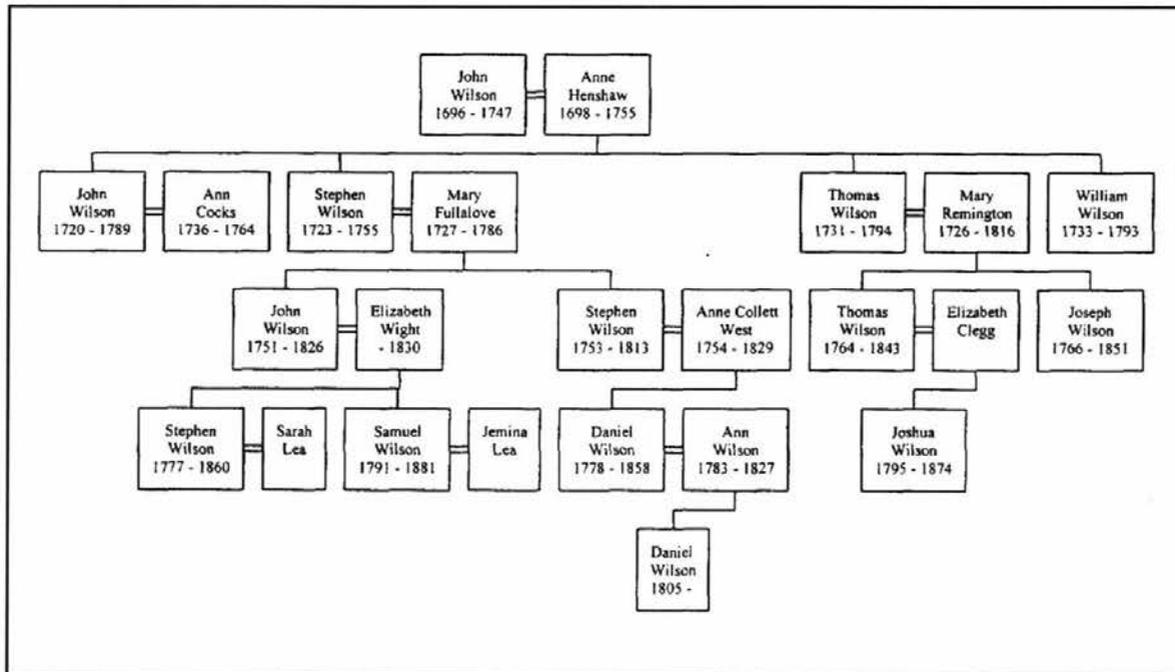
Thomas wrote his will, dated 29 April 1829, proved 6 July 1829, in his Counting House at Warnford Court. At this time his nephew Fletcher Wilson and his son, Melvil Wilson, were also partners in the business. Thomas was entitled to 2/3rds of the profits which he divided between Melvil (6/12) and Fletcher (2/12). He left his wife, Elizabeth, all his household effects and carriages, the use of his house in Portman Square and an annuity of £2000 for the rest of her life and the property left to her by her father, Thomas Edwards. His daughter Rosa, who was to live with her mother, was left £500 a year during her minority, to be increased to £1000 a year when she was 21. Because Melvil was given £20,000 when he married, his son Forester was left £20,000. Melvil was left another £10000 and Forester £5000 (less because of an inheritance from his grandfather Thomas Edwards). The executors were Melvil and Forester Wilson and the trustees were Enoch Durant of Copthall Court, Ambrose Moore, Melvil and Fletcher Wilson. His freehold and leasehold estates were to be sold. The copyhold and customary estates were left to Melvil. The monies went to Melvil and Forester in equal shares.⁴⁵

Thomas was buried at Twyford where the inscription on his tombstone reads::

Beneath this tomb lie the remains of Thomas Wilson of the City of London merchant. He was the third son of the late John and Ann Wilson of Stenson. Was born April 13th 1760 and died June 15th 1829. He was a father to the fatherless and defended the cause of the widow.

Stephen Wilson 1761-1814

Stephen was the fourth son of John Wilson and Ann Cocks of Stenson and the brother of John, William and Thomas. A silk merchant in Bread Street in the City of London, he was made bankrupt in 1795. He married Jane Mason and his son, Fletcher, was one of the partners in The House of Wilson. After Thomas's death in 1829 Fletcher was appointed Danish Consul General in London on 26 August 1830.⁴⁶ Stephen was buried at Twyford.



Family tree of John Wilson 1696-1747

John Wilson 1720-1789

This John, the father of John Wilson of Stenson (1755-1835), married Ann Cocks. His parents were John Wilson (1696-1747) and Anne Henshaw (c1698-1755) who owned some freehold land and rented a farm from Sir John Harpur of Calke at Stenson. Two of the latter's sons, Thomas and Stephen, were silk manufacturers.

Thomas Wilson, 1731-1794 of Highbury, Islington

Thomas was the 5th of 11 children of John Wilson and Anne Henshaw. In 1747, his father took him to London to find him a suitable apprenticeship but on the way home he fell ill in Leicester and died. Two years later in 1749 Thomas went to St Kitts, West Indies. He probably worked on the plantations because he was a trustee for Jos. Marryat who owned 133 slaves in Granada (see Part 2, p120). On his return in 1752 he went to Coventry to work first with his younger brother William and then for his elder brother Stephen, the successful ribbon trader of Coventry and Wood Street, London. In December 1754 he entered into a co-partnership with Stephen (see 140). He married Mary Remington of Coventry (c1729-1816) in June 1754 and they had 3 children: Thomas (1764-1843), Joseph (1766-1851) and Mary (1869-1847). He took on a long lease of 12 Highbury Place, Islington in 1777 which remained in the family for many years.



Brookside Chapel, Derby. (Glover, 1829, Vol 2, p434)

In London Thomas became a Dissenter and a wealthy benefactor, who used his personal wealth to build chapels and to help the Evangelical Society, formed in 1776, to supply and train ministers in the Congregational church. Thomas bought some freehold property on Brookside in Derby in 1783 on which he erected Brookside Chapel, a meeting house 54' x 48' and a vestry room, at his own expense, with some contributions from the congregation. It was opened on 5 June 1784 when sermons were preached on several successive mornings and evenings. A Minister was not appointed until 1802 when James Gawthorne settled in Derby for over 50 years. In 1803 the accommodation was increased with the erection of a gallery in front of the chapel and subsequently galleries on each side. In 1836 the walls were raised 6 feet and other improvements were made.

Thomas also made efforts to revive '*decayed interests*' or to established new ones. In Derbyshire these included chapels in Ashbourne, Alvaston, Belper, Bakewell and Melbourne. He gave financial support to the independent chapel at Barrow-on-Trent founded 1790 which John Wilson (d1835) attended. The author of Thomas's memoirs, his grandson, Joshua Wilson, regarded Thomas as the principal founder of modern Congregational non-conformity in Derbyshire.

Thomas became Treasurer of Hoxton Academy, a Dissenting Academy in Hackney, which prepared young men for the Christian ministry in October 1778. He also '*felt keenly for the injured Negro race*' and in 1790 subscribed £500 for a colony in Sierra Leone which sadly failed. For some years he provided annual dinners for poor members of the church at Haberdasher's Hall besides contributing in other ways to their relief. He died on 30 March 1794 and was buried in a vault in Bunhillfields burying ground. In his will he left £200 in 3% Consolidated Bank Annuities to the Evangelical Academy at Hoxton and £60 to the deacons of the church meetings at Haberdashers Hall for the poor in the congregation.⁴⁷

Thomas Wilson 1764-1843

This Thomas, the son of Thomas Wilson (1731-1794), was born on 11 November 1764 at 124 Wood Street, Cheapside. He was apprenticed to his father in 1778 and in 1785 entered into partnership with his father and cousins, becoming a 'silkman' (ribbons and gauzes). He married Elizabeth daughter of the late Arthur Clegg, timber merchant, on 3 March 1791 at the Collegiate College, Manchester. He inherited money made from silk manufacturing from both his father and his grandfather, John Remington of Coventry, and retired from business early in 1798 because he wanted '*to promote the causes of God*'. Like his father, he was Treasurer of Hoxton Academy and its successor, Highbury College, and was a benefactor of Congregational chapels and educational institutions. From 1825-1837, he was a founder member of the Council of the University of London (foundation stone laid in 1827; now University College London). He was a founder member of the London Missionary

Society in 1795 when he donated £100 and its Treasurer from 1832-1843. From 1837 he was a founder member of the Metropolis Chapel Fund Association, having already built several chapels in London and elsewhere.⁴⁸

Daniel Wilson 1778-1858

Daniel, who was the eldest son of Stephen Wilson (1753-1813), silk manufacturer, and Ann Collett and the grandson of Stephen Wilson (1723-55) and Ann Fullalove, was born in Church Street, Spitalfields on 2 July 1778. He was apprenticed to William Wilson. Initially uninterested in religion he had a change of mind in March 1796 and left the business in 1798. Shortly afterwards he enrolled at St Edmund's Hall, Cambridge and was ordained in 1801. He married his cousin Ann Wilson, William's daughter on 23 November 1803. William bought the advowson of St Mary's Islington for £5500 in 1821 and, following the death of the previous vicar, Daniel was installed as its vicar in 1824. In 1832, aged 54, he was ordained as Bishop of Calcutta and Metropolitan of India following which he presented the living at St Mary's Islington to his son, Daniel. He spent the rest of his life in India, dying there in 1858.⁴⁹

Stephen Wilson 1777-1860

Stephen was the son of John (1751-1826) and Elizabeth Wilson and the grandson of Stephen Wilson and Mary Fullalove. He married Jemima Lea and became the partner of her father, Richard, in Lea and Wilson & Co, Old Jewry in 1810. He too was elected a Bailiff in the Weavers Company. He introduced the Jacquard machine, which cost £1000, into England in 1820, obtained a patent in 1821 and built a factory in Streatham in which the Jacquard looms were installed. The factory was the first purpose built textile factory in London and still exists as a Sainsbury's coffee shop. Lea & Wilson manufactured handkerchiefs and shawls and the workers were paid 17s for plain work and 35s for figured work per week, higher than that paid by most manufacturers. Like his cousin, Ambrose Moore, he was an ardent advocate for the repeal of the Spitalfields Acts.⁵⁰

Samuel Wilson, 1791-1881

Samuel was the younger brother of Stephen Wilson (1777-1860) above. He was the only member of the Weavers Company to become Lord Mayor of London. He was born in 1791 and, like his brother, apprenticed to Richard Lea. Samuel was made free as a silk weaver in 1813, the year in which he married Jemima Lea. He was elected Alderman in 1831, Sheriff in 1833 and Lord Mayor in 1838. The Company made special arrangements to celebrate his election as Sheriff, sharing the cost of a barge for the river journey to Westminster with the Spectacle Makers, the Company of the other Sheriff. 'A proper supply of Scarfs and Cockades' was ordered, flags, banners and livery gowns were provided and the Company dined at the London Tavern in Bishopsgate (the Weavers' Hall was in dire need of repair). This was shockingly expensive so when he became Lord Mayor, Samuel Wilson was accompanied with due pageantry but travelled in the civic barge. Samuel also organised a ceremonial dinner for 111 members of his family in the Egyptian Hall at the Mansion House on 5 April 1839.⁵¹

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JOHN PORTER, CITIZEN AND MERCHANT TAILOR OF LONDON (D.1664)

(by Miriam Wood,

Research into the history of the Holden family of Aston Hall and the beginnings of the modern Aston estate in the mid-17th century, revealed a number of references to the name Porter. These occurred in the Holden family's archives between 1654 and 1664 in papers relating to the affairs of Robert Holden and of his sons. Robert was the founder of the Aston estate, buying Aston Hall in 1648, almost certainly from the proceeds of cattle trading.¹ His business (and more personal matters, too) seems to have brought him contacts in London, one of whom was 'cousin' John Porter.

The first items involving 'Cozen' Porter are two papers of accounts, 1654-1655, from which it is evident that Porter was acting as a private banker to an unnamed person, receiving money and making payments on his behalf. This kind of informal arrangement between family, friends and business associates was perfectly normal at the time as there were as yet no banks. References to 'son Henry' and 'brother Wandell' make it fairly certain that the unnamed person is Robert Holden, whose eldest son was Henry and one of whose brothers-in-law was Thomas Wandell, citizen and merchant tailor of London.²

The remaining references show Porter in a different guise, as a provider of cloth. One is an account headed 'Bought of John Porter and Comp' for purchases of cloth made 1656-1657 with 'More' purchased early in 1658.³ It is endorsed 'Cozen Porters note for stufte 1656, 1657' and 'Mr Robert Houlden'. Robert Holden died in January 1660 but the connection with Porter continued, for there is another account of cloth bought of 'John Porter and Comp' in May 1660.⁴ Other references are in an account of cloth bought of Jeremiah Halfhid, John Porter and Edm. Wiseman in late 1662 and a receipt on behalf of John Porter for payment for cloth in November 1663.⁵ The last is a note endorsed on a receipt for payment for cloth purchased in June 1664, that 'I owe cous Porter for Gown and Peticoat' (a skirt worn over a gown).⁶ These often relate to payments by Samuel Holden, Robert's son and his successor at Aston Hall.

There is nothing to indicate the real nature of the relationship between Robert Holden and John Porter. The pedigree of the Holdens does not suggest any connection between them, and 'cousin' in the 17th century did not have the specific meaning it has today. Nor does John Porter's will give any help on this point, but it has useful information in other respects - for instance, it makes it clear that Porter was based in London, which the accounts do not make explicit and that he was born in Aston upon Trent.⁷

In his will, he describes himself as John Porter of the parish of St Martins Ludgate citizen and merchant tailor of London. The will was made on 1 February 1660, that is 1661 in modern style dating, when he was 'weake amd infirme in body', but he evidently recovered his health as he was still involved in selling cloth in 1663 and 1664, and his will was proved only in July 1664. He divided his goods, debts, moneys etc. into two equal parts, one part being left to his wife Elizabeth according 'to the Antient and lawdable custome of the City of London', the other half distributed to various beneficiaries. He left his brother Joseph £50 and £10 to make him mourning and others mentioned included Jeremy Halfhid and Edmund Wiseman, his partners, Mrs Mary Wood the testator's mother in law and the two unnamed children of his deceased uncle Samuel.

John next gave £5 to the poor of the parish of Aston upon Trent, where he was born, to be distributed at the discretion of his friends Mr Samuel Holden and Mr Thomas Cooper of the same parish. Interestingly, John did not indicate any other relationship than friendship with Samuel Holden. What does seem probable from the will is that he was related to the family of the Reverend John Porter, Rector of Aston 1617-1637, for John of London's references to his uncle Samuel and brother Joseph make it likely that he was the Rector's son, as will be seen. Unfortunately, Aston's parish registers have not survived from the first half of the 17th century so it is impossible to be absolutely certain.

John's various bequests add up to £130, servants were to have mourning and his apprentice was to be disposed of to the same trade with a reasonable payment of money. Elizabeth was his residual beneficiary and executrix. It is difficult to judge from John's will just what his circumstances were, particularly as we do not know what he owed or was owed. He was obviously not poor, but one would guess comfortable rather than rich. He apparently had no children and must have died fairly young.

It is the coincidence of the family names in John Porter's will and those in the wills of the Porter family in Aston upon Trent which suggest that he was possibly the son of the Reverend John Porter. As we have seen, John Porter of London refers to his deceased uncle Samuel in his will and the Rector undoubtedly had a brother named Samuel, mentioned in his will of 1637.⁸ More significantly, perhaps, the Reverend John Porter's will refers also to his 4 sons, John the eldest, Robert, Samuel and Joseph - and John of London left his brother Joseph £50 and £10 for mourning.

It is nevertheless, still possible that John Porter the merchant tailor and Joseph were sons of another brother of the Reverend John Porter and Samuel, for the wills of John and Samuel's father, the Reverend Robert Porter Rector of Aston from 1588 to 1617⁹ and of his widow Joan (1632)¹⁰ mention four other sons, Robert, Timothy, William and Edward, although how many had married and had families is unknown. On the whole, however, it seems most likely, even if not certain, that John of London was the son of the Reverend John Porter.

If John Porter the merchant tailor was indeed the son of the Reverend John Porter of Aston upon Trent he was at the time his father died (1637) still underage, but was to have a close (enclosed land or field) and house in Derby on his mother's death and a 'flat' of land was to be his, but we do not know whether the Rector made any other provision for his children than that indicated in his will. If this small amount of property was all he had to start adult life with, it would not have taken the younger John far. Somehow his family must have financed an apprenticeship in London and perhaps he was the John Porter who, according to the Rolls of the Drapers' Company, was bound apprentice in 1647 and obtained his freedom in 1655.¹¹

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