

Stapleford and District Local History Society



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Free to Members

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MEETING REPORTS

13 May 2015

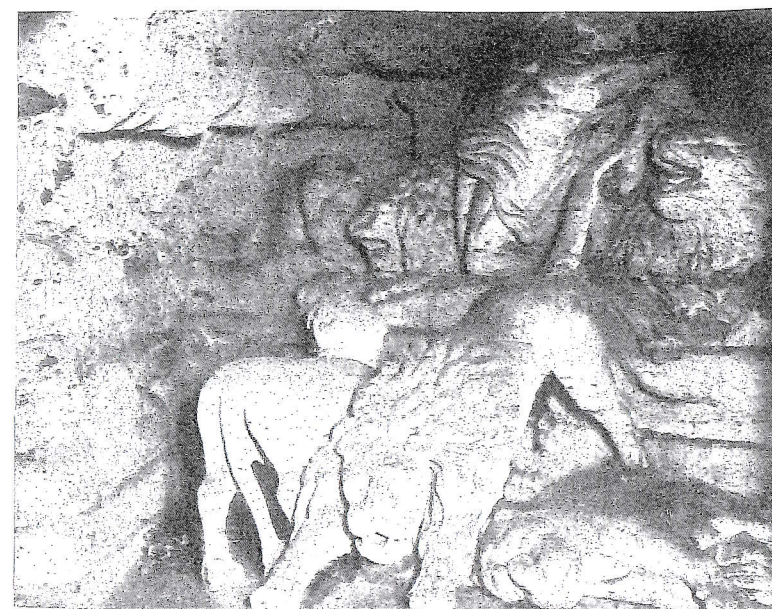
WELL, WELL, WELL – THE STORY OF NOTTINGHAM'S CAVES AND WELLS

by Peter Hammond

'In one of my talks I mentioned that there were at least 400 known caves in Nottingham. A member of the audience asked me "How many unknown ones are there?"' – Peter in a previous talk.

Peter started his talk by saying that there were now more than 550 known man made caves in Nottingham and that the first note of them being used as dwellings was in Saxon times.

He explained that there were two major outcrops of rock – the castle rock and the further east Broadmarsh/Sneinton outcrop. He illustrated this by showing pictures of the caves near Brewhouse Yard and those at Sneinton Hermitage.



Most of the caves were first used as dwellings. A lot of Peter's talk was about detailing the variety of different uses that caves were put to later. He showed examples of many of these. Among others he listed:-

- 1 Tanning – under Broadmarsh
- 2 Brewing and storage under various public houses (the constant temperature of 13 degrees C was very useful in brewing)
- 3 Linked to the brewing was the caves' use as malt kilns
- 4 Places of worship (eg under Willoughby House) with religious symbols carved into the walls
- 5 Nefarious practices such as gambling, cock-fighting etc (one of the caves under The Salutation Inn had a small link to the rooms above to be used for an early warning system)
- 6 Mortimer's Hole was an example of a cave used simply to link places together
- 7 Follies – we were shown a slide of a carving of Daniel in the Lions' Den, one of a series of carved caves near The Ropewalk
- 8 Tombs – there were examples of these in the Rock Cemetery
- 9 Cells – evidence showed this use at the Galleries of Justice
- 10 Ice Houses
- 11 Stone was dug out for construction purposes
- 12 Air-Raid shelters during World War Two

While showing examples of all these, Peter explained that he had helped to dig out some of the caves. He had started cave excavating while still at school, being offered that option during sports periods thanks to teachers who were archaeologists. His personal enthusiasm and experiences added a lot of charm to the talk.

He explained that many caves incorporated wells and showed us some good examples.

He described how useful items found in the caves were to archaeologists. He had brought along a whole table full of interesting artefacts. He chose a few to talk about and left them all out for us to look at in the refreshment break, drawing a lot of attention.

In the second half Peter explained some of the artefacts in more detail (there were some delightful bottles).

He also presented some old large scale maps of various Nottingham streets, showing the houses and the caves linked to them.

He closed by mentioning the website devoted to the Caves of Nottingham especially:

nottinghamcavessurvey.org.uk

This was an absorbing, well planned talk, presented with great enthusiasm and charm. Peter has a very clever way of involving his audience and this skill added to the enjoyment of the evening.

John Shaw

10 June 2015

A HISTORY OF GIRLS' SCHOOLS IN VICTORIAN DERBYSHIRE

by Liz Keeley

Liz started by telling us where the idea for this talk had come from. While researching her family tree, she had come across a letter from her great, great, great aunt, saying how well she was doing at school. This set her wondering what schooling was like for girls during the 1800s. Was it like the school depicted in *Jane Eyre*? Liz decided to research the girls' schools in Derbyshire. She asked us how many we thought there were. We guessed between 3 and 20. Liz replied 'About 800'.

She then described these schools and showed us slides of the sorts of buildings they were in. They were mainly in small houses and were run by women, and often only lasted a short time. The schools were often more a money making enterprise for the women than a system of education for the girls. They were also often a sort of fostering service for disruptive families. They flourished because at that time it was thought that a woman's place was in the home and these small schools fulfilled that idea. Most schools had a mixture of boarding and day pupils.

Girls of all ages were taught in one room. They were taught different subjects from boys because '*girls had smaller brains than boys*' and any stress could cause energy to be directed away from the reproductive organs! The girls were taught not only the basics of reading and writing

and simple arithmetic, some history and geography and RE, but they were also taught '*accomplishments*'. These were things that would help a girl to get a man and included housecraft and arts subjects – music, drama, drawing and painting. The girls did not play team sports (these could also damage the '*energies*') and there were no exams for girls. Oxford and Cambridge were not interested.

Schools in the spa towns were larger. This was because when people were being treated they usually moved to these towns for a considerable time.

In the second half of the century there began to be competition from religious schools such as the Moravians in Ockbrook and the Convent in Derby.

In 1861 the government set up a survey into female education and the resulting conclusion was that it was '*unfavourable*'. Unwilling to put any money in itself, the government encouraged '*endowed schools*' with various funding sources. Quite often these were attached to existing boys' schools. Liz detailed some of these schools and named their principal founders and managers.



Girls' schools began to advertise for qualified teachers. They began to set examinations and publish the results. They began to allow sports and to have uniforms – the gym-slip! Liz pointed out that the teachers of French usually came from Switzerland or Belgium because the French were still regarded as enemies.

In 1902 the government gave the responsibility for schools to Local Education Authorities.

Liz concluded her talk by going back to her great, great, great aunt's letter. Further investigation showed that it was not a letter home from a girls' boarding school. The school was just round the corner from home and had been written to show off the aunt's excellent spelling and beautiful handwriting.

This was a fascinating, well designed talk. Liz had obviously gone to a lot of trouble to find the appropriate and interesting illustrations. Her explanations were very clear and full of humour and she had a good way of involving the audience. I will be honest and say that I had not had very high expectations for a talk with that title. I was very, very pleasantly surprised.

John Shaw

08 July 2015

**BESS OF HARDWICK:
A WOMAN OF MANY PARTS!**
by Maureen Taylor

In full costume, Maureen told us that she was going to be Elizabeth Throckmorton (Raleigh) and was going to tell us the story of her friend, Bess of Hardwick. They had met when they were both Maids of Honour (to Queen Elizabeth). Maureen also said that, although not exactly a '*rags to riches*' story, this was certainly a '*lower gentry to almost Royalty*' story. Bess of Hardwick started life as lower gentry and became the richest in the land.

She was born in 1822 or 23, the fourth child of John and Elizabeth Hardwick. When her father died and her brother was too young to inherit, her mum, a widow, only received one third of the inheritance. They were poor.

Bess's life story was then told to us in great detail and in a very lively way. We learned about her four husbands. The first was Robert Barlow, who was 13 years old when they were married (she was 17) and who died when he was 14.

The second husband was Sir William Cavendish (married in 1547 – he was 20 years older than Bess). This marriage started well. They had eight children. Sir William owned land in Devon, which he sold and bought the Chatsworth estate, and they lived there. Sir William was appointed 'Treasurer of the Chamber' but was later accused of embezzlement and only his death saved the family from disgrace. When he died Bess was over £3,000 in debt.

The third husband, Sir William Loe, who was a very rich man, paid off her debt. When he died (poisoned by his brother) Bess inherited all his money.

The fourth husband was George Talbot and he was already the richest man in the land. Their combined wealth was huge and they took great pains to secure it for the family. George's marriage to Bess began to falter and when he had a stroke he threw Bess out of Chatsworth and she moved to Hardwick. Later, when George died, and she became the richest woman in England she built her Hardwick Hall (1597).



Bess lived in the new Hall for eleven years. She died in 1608 and is buried in Derby Cathedral. The Hall is well worth a visit. Maureen listed some exhibitions that will be on there in the near future.

There was a significant amount of complicated political intrigue during Bess's life. Maureen explained this very clearly by making the characters concerned very simply understandable. There were descriptions such as 'a bit chippy', 'gormless' and 'easy-going'. Her descriptions of the political events were also littered with stories of 'secret marriages' (and the trouble they caused) and women 'starving themselves to death' – in this way the manoeuvrings were made much more fathomable.

This was a very enjoyable and impressive talk – all done in costume and without notes. Maureen had researched and chosen some interesting (mainly portrait) slides. The only slight criticism I might have was that sometimes the pictures were not very clear, but I think this was the fault of a lovely, sunny, summer evening, and who could complain at that?

John Shaw

12 August 2015

THE HISTORY OF SHIPLEY HALL AND PARK AND THE MILLER MUNDY FAMILY

by Patrick Ashcroft

For the second month in succession we were addressed by a speaker in costume. This one spoke with a charming Norfolk accent. He introduced himself as John Harmer, the Norfolk gamekeeper to Alfred Edward Miller Mundy, owner of Shipley Hall.

He said that the distant past of Shipley could be summed up as '*known to the Romans*' (in the 19th century a hoard of Roman coins was found there, and then lost), '*named by the Saxons*' and '*owned in Medieval times*'. The Domesday Book has notes for two estates, Shipley and Algrave. These were later joined into one estate by marriage.

William the Conqueror gave Shipley to Gilbert of Ghent. Gilbert gave it to the Vavasours. They gave it to the Muskhams. The

Muskhams gave it to the Strelley family, who owned it for about 400 years.

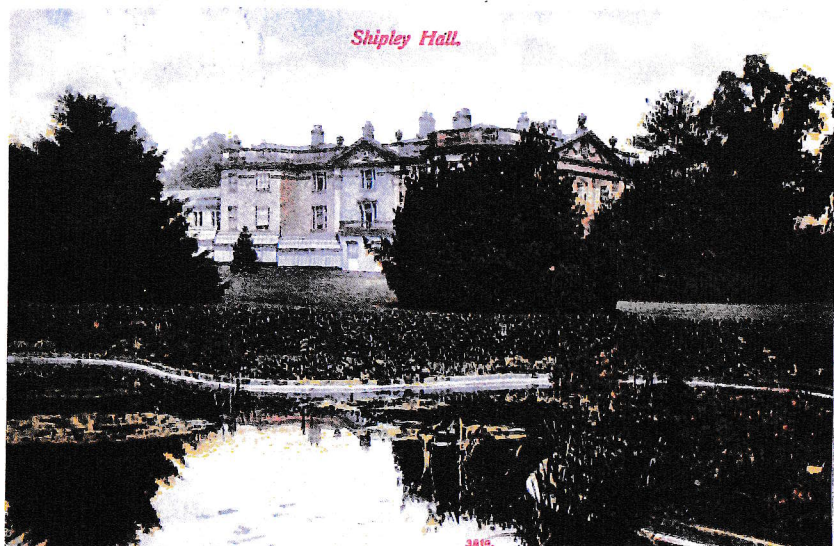
In 1608 the Strelley family sold it to Sir George Parkham. John Harmer described him as an 'asset stripper'. He sold rights for bellpit coalmining and he sold tracts of land for the wood. It was in Parkham's time that there appear the first records of a Shipley Hall.

Some of Parkham's dealings were a bit shady and the house was sold to the Leche family. (John explained that these were lawyers and, knowing that Parkham was in trouble, they got themselves a bargain).

The Leche family were one time Cromwell supporters and so they retired to live in Shipley in about 1680. Later they moved down to Kent and a daughter married a Miller. Their daughter married a Mundy and the Miller Mundy dynasty began. They came back to Shipley and greatly improved the house and gardens. They wanted to hide the coal pits by careful landscape gardening and they even moved the whole village of Shipley out of the sight of the Hall.

In 1920 the family moved away to Hampshire and sold the Hall to the Shipley Colliery Company. The Hall soon fell into disrepair and was literally undermined by mining. It was pulled down in 1943.

This was how John Harmer closed part one of his talk.



Part two of the talk was retelling stories that surrounded the History of Shipley. These stories included 'The Scandal of Shipley' - a story that included links with royalty and was much more widely reported in European newspapers. Also included was the fascinating double burial of Alfred Edward Miller Mundy, the pets' graveyard and various ghost stories. These added another dimension to the History of Shipley and were well told and interesting.

This was a very 'easy listening' evening. Patrick had explained at the beginning of the evening that he was more of an entertainer than historian. I think he combined the two roles brilliantly. We all enjoyed his storytelling skills and we learned a lot.

John Shaw

09 September 2015

HISTORY ALONG THE EREWASH VALLEY TRAIL by Robert Mee

Robert explained that his plan for the evening talk was to do a 'virtual' walk round the whole of the 30 mile Erewash Valley Trail, talking about some of the history surrounding it and concentrating on some of the smaller, more obscure places.

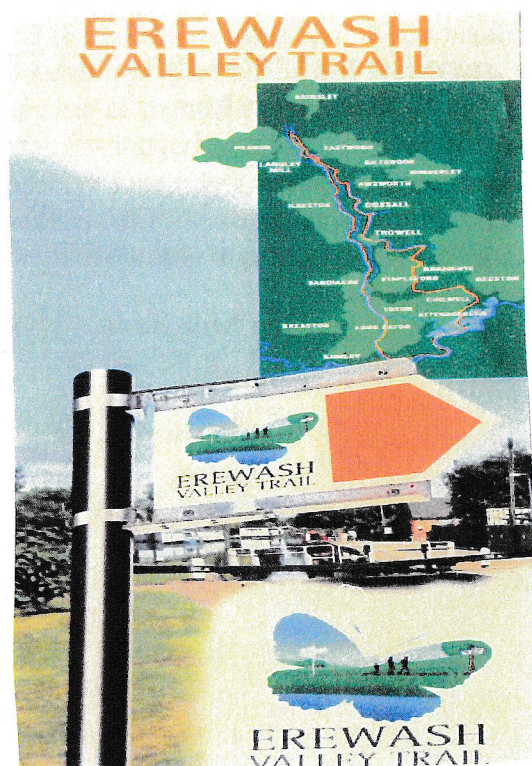
He started his journey at Langley Mill Basin which, he explained, was the junction of three canals:-

- 1 The Erewash Canal opened in 1779 which, despite being eleven miles long, was dug out in only 20 months.
- 2 The Cromford Canal, opened in 1794 and fourteen and a half miles long.
- 3 The Nottingham Canal which was opened in 1796.

The virtual walk started down the Nottingham Canal. We were told this was a 'contour' canal and therefore had no locks. The journey was down to Cossall and the history included a mention (and a picture) of the Giltbrook Viaduct which was demolished in 1963 to make way for the A610, the ill-fated Awsworth Ski Slope (built on an old slag heap) and the infamous Chatterley Hotel, whose website contained many dubious claims.

Once through Cossall the canal continues to Trowell. It was a surprising fact that in 1951 Trowell was chosen as the Festival of Britain Village. Two arguments given in favour of this were, one, that it was near the centre of England and, two, was an example of the old and the new. One argument against it was that it was very near the very dirty, noisy, busy Stanton Iron Works.

We then went on to Stapleford. The canal, which once went all the way into Nottingham, now stops at Coventry Lane. Robert told us a bit about Stapleford history but, being very aware of the audience, asked to be corrected if necessary. (It wasn't necessary!)



The Trail then goes through Chilwell (talk of the shell factory explosion in 1917) to Attenborough.

We were shown a picture of a huge crowd on the Attenborough Station platform. The platform is surprisingly big for a village the size of Attenborough, because this was the nearest station to the very important Chilwell Barracks.

From Attenborough the trail follows the River Trent to Trent Lock (including the Cranfleet Cut). At Trent Lock the Trail joins the Erewash Canal and goes through Long Eaton. We were reminded of the amazing mill buildings and the extraordinary library building. The Erewash Canal continues on through Sandiacre past the Springfield Mill, now residential flats.

The Erewash Canal then continues past Stanton (it was used by Stanton and Staveley Works for many years), through to Ilkeston (an interesting diversion to the Bennerley Viaduct and its possible future as a part of the National Cycle Track), through Shipley Gate and back to Langley Mill Basin.

This was a very well designed and illustrated talk. The slides were well chosen and very informative. We all appreciated Robert's enthusiasm for aerial photographs. He was very relaxed, knowledgeable and easy to listen to.

I was inspired by this talk and will certainly be walking the Trail soon. There was a very good attendance at this meeting and I'm sure it was enjoyed by all.

John Shaw

IMPORTANT REMINDER

Please remember that from February 2016 our monthly meetings will be held in St Helen's Church Hall, Frederick Road, Stapleford at 7.30pm. We shall also be changing the meeting night to the 2nd Tuesday of each month. There will be no meetings in January and August.

The first meeting will be held on Tuesday 9 February 2016 :

A talk by Stephen Flinders – Terror from the Skies – the night the Zeppelins came

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE CONSTABULARY
NEWS LETTER. TO MEMBERS IN THE
ARMED FORCES.

1ST JUNE 1944.

FOREWORD BY THE CHIEF CONSTABLE:

I have felt for some time the desirability of maintaining closer contact with all you members of the Nottinghamshire Constabulary who are serving in what is going on in the Force and in the County. As a consequence I have decided to issue a "Nottinghamshire Constabulary News Letter" which will be sent to all members of the Force who are serving as above or are in captivity, in the hope that these letters will be of interest to you, will keep you in touch with the Force, and with the main items of interest concerning it and its members. Further letters will be issued about every three months, and I trust they will reach all of you.

Some of you have now been away for over four years; many of you are in distant lands and some are in captivity, but however long you have been away or whatever you may be, you may rest assured that you are not forgotten in your Force, and that your interests and those of your dependants are as closely watched as if you were here.

Mrs. Lemon joins me in wishing each and all of you the Best of Luck and a speedy and victorious return to the Nottinghamshire Constabulary where a warm welcome awaits you.

F.J. LEMON. Lieut. Colonel. Chief Constable.

EDITORIAL:

In embarking on the first issue of the Quarterly "News Letter" from this Force we first of all desire to wish you all the Best of Luck and trust that it will not be long before you are back home again and we can all celebrate VICTORY and your safe return.

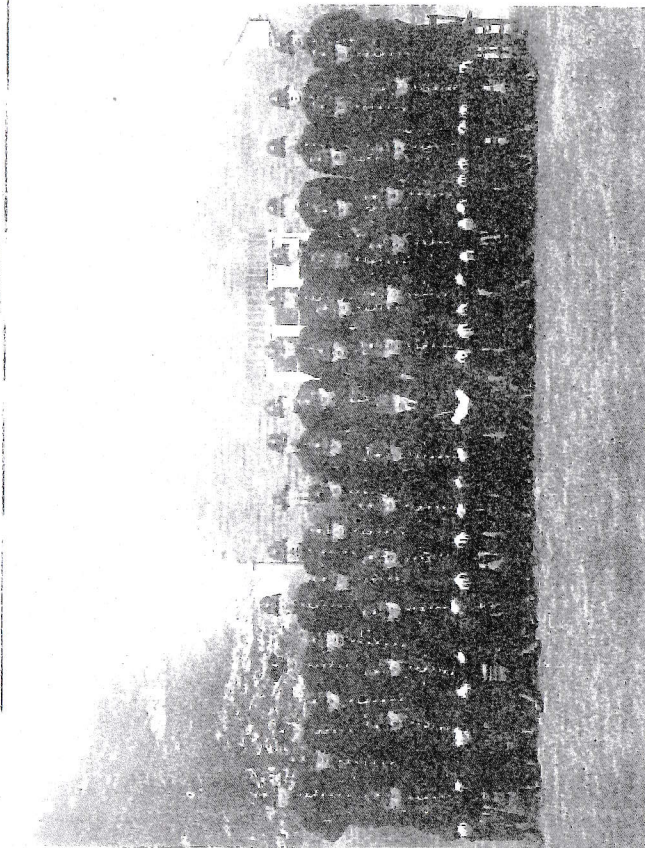
A good deal of water has run under the bridges since you put away your Police uniform and donned one of a different hue; and many events of far-reaching importance have taken place during this time, but we can rest assured that you have been constantly in our thoughts.

As the Chief Constable has stated in the Foreword to this issue, it will be the object of the "News Letter" to keep you posted with happenings in the Force and information of your comrades carrying on at home and those in the Armed Forces. With this end in view we shall be glad to hear from you at any time so that items of interest can be circulated to all Officers through the medium of the "News Letter".

Owing to the period covered by this first "News Letter" we are afraid its length is greater than we originally intended, but future issues will not be so voluminous and will only contain items of interest which have occurred during the preceding three months.

NUMBER OF MEMBERS IN THE FORCES:

One hundred and fifty members of the Force are now serving in the Armed Forces – 22 in the Royal Navy, 10 in the Royal Marines, 94 in the Army and 24 in the R.A.F.



ROLL OF HONOUR:

We pay homage to the following comrades who have made the supreme sacrifice:-

P.C. 308 J.A. EATON, Mansfield Division, Royal Navy, killed on active service in the North Sea on 13th February 1944. He is buried at Sheffield and several members of the Force attended the funeral.

P.c. 23 K.J. SHERIFF, Worksop Division, Royal Artillery, killed in action in Burma on 13th February 1944.

P.c. 15 J.N. GREEN, Mansfield Division, Corps of Military Police, died as a result of a motor cycle accident in England on 20th May 1943.

All were promising Officers and their loss is keenly felt. Our heartfelt sympathy is tendered to their respective families and dependants.

Page 4.

CHANGES IN THE FORCE:

October 1940: Sergeant J.W. CULLEY, promoted Inspector and transferred from Stapleford to Bingham vice Inspector W.W. HALL, retired on pension.

P.c. 130 ASHLEY promoted Sergeant and transferred from Stapleford to Hucknall.

October 1941: Inspector J. HEALEY, in charge of the Hucknall Section, retired on pension and was succeeded by Sergeant A.G. CURTIS, Stapleford Section, who was promoted to Inspector.

February 1942: P.c. 170 HILLGROVE, Mansfield Division, promoted to Sergeant and transferred to Stapleford Section.

POLICE WAR RESERVE: There are still a number of Police War Reservists serving in the Force, although the strength has been considerably reduced. They show a commendable desire and willingness to learn their job and have given us much assistance, but there is no doubt that they – like you – will only be too ready and willing to return to their normal occupation as soon as circumstances permit.

FIRST POLICE RESERVE: The strength of the First Police Reserve has been considerably reduced in consequence of many members finding it necessary to resign on the grounds of ill-health which is not surprising in view of the arduous duties they are called upon to perform in war-time. However, we still have a number who are faithfully carrying on and it is hoped that the time is not far distant when they will be able to return to a well-earned retirement.

SPECIAL CONSTABULARY: The Special Constabulary in the County has been reconstituted and brought more into line with the organisation of the Regular Force. His Grace The Duke of Portland has honoured the Force in accepting the post of County Commandant, and each Division is under the command of a Divisional Commandant. Divisions have been divided into Sections and Areas and placed under the command of an Inspector or Sergeant according to their size and importance. Practically all members of the Special Constabulary now perform duty in uniform similar to that issued to the Regulars, except that caps are issued instead of helmets. Those who knew Mr. A.P. WILLIAMSON.

Inspector in charge of the Retford Borough Section of the Special Constabulary, will regret to hear that he passed away recently. Many will remember him as a well-known and able Police Court Advocate and ex-Mayor of Retford. He was a good friend to the Police and his loss will be keenly felt by his friends in the Regular Force.

WOMEN'S AUXILIARY POLICE CORPS:

We now have 49 members of the Women's Auxiliary Police Corps serving in the Force as motor drivers and telephonists, also 17 women employed as clerks at Headquarters and Divisional Offices. They are all cheerfully doing their bit and helping to "hold the fort" in your absence. The motor drivers are issued with a smart uniform similar to the W.A.A.F. only dark blue with white shirt blouses and collars. It is rumoured that Superintendents felt very bucked when a ravishing blonde or brunette was detailed to act as their personal driver and bodyguard, although a senior Superintendent was heard to remark that whilst a lady was very useful to him in the day-time he did not know what to do with her at night.

The drill instructor, after having experienced the pleasurable task of drilling the squad, feels he is now competent to rehearse the beauty chorus of a Cochran Revue.

Another senior officer at Headquarters suffered a perpetual headache during the process of issuing the squad with uniform. This Officer, whose only experience of any of the mysteries of ladies' wearing apparel in the past has probably been the same as

yours, that is paying the bills and reluctantly compelled to remark "How marvellous – it does suit you", muttering under his breath "What damned extravagance", was inundated with questions as to the length of skirts, hang of coats, texture of stockings, colour of overalls, etc. However, one does not know to what limits it is possible to rise or fall when confronted with such circumstances, but by assuming an entirely unwarranted professional knowledge of such details and the exercise of supreme patience the Officer was eventually able to report with great relief that the squad had been equipped and fitted efficiently.

The streets of the old town of Mansfield, of which many of you will have pleasant recollections, will shortly be adorned by the presence of two smart uniformed members of the Women's Auxiliary Police Corps who have been appointed for outside duty in Mansfield. It is an entirely new departure for this Force and its development will be watched with keen interest not only by members of the Force but by certain members of the public in the town and district.

NEWS FROM THE DIVISIONS

STAPLEFORD:

P.c. 259 WALTERS. (L/Cpl. C.M.P.) Has been abroad since September 1941, and served through the Libyan campaign, at El Alemain, Knightsbridge (where he was wounded in the foot, which has now recovered), Tobruk, Tunis and Cape Bon. He is still serving in the M.E.F. In letters home he states he has enjoyed good health throughout his service abroad, but complains regularly of the nuisance of flies and beetles.

HEADQUARTERS:

(last section) Wartime football in Nottingham has just finished with the Forest being beaten 4 – 3 at home by West Bromwich Albion in the Final of the Midland Cup Competition. It was a most exciting game. They were drawing 2 -2 after ninety minutes, so extra time had to be played, at the end of which the score was 3 all and then the game went on until the winning goal was scored. Hard Luck the Reds. There were about 18,000 people there. Notts. County did not have a very good season; they have had a mixed lot of players and finished up trying out a lot of youngsters. No doubt you have heard that they have engaged Major Frank BUCKLEY (late Wolves) as Manager. He has turned out many star players for the Wolves from local talent, and we hope he repeats the performance at Meadow Lane.

That is all I have to tell you for the present, and to round off this little note, all members of the staff, including the ladies, joining me in wishing you the Best of Luck and a safe return.

T. MOORE, Superintendent

My thanks to the Nottinghamshire Police and also N.A.R.P.O. for allowing me to publish extracts from the Newsletter of 1st June 1944. Editor



April 1985

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Cartoon of a Turnpike by Thos. Rowlandson.



From the article on Sgt Joseph Button of the 9th Foot by Ken Marsh.
Medal News December 2014 January 2015

21

The Ilkeston Pioneer 15th June 1917.

V.C. FOR A STAPLEFORD HERO
WON IN GALLIPOLI
TO BE DECORATED BY THE KING.

Lance-Corpl. Walter Richard Parker, of 14, Brookhill Street, Stapleford, is to-day a proud man – and the town in which he lives is equally proud of him – for he has by his “gallant conduct in the face of the enemy” gained that most coveted of all distinctions, the Victoria Cross, which is to be presented to him in person by His Majesty the King. Two years have passed since L-Corpl. Parker performed the service which has now been duly, if somewhat tardily, recognised; and the official intimation must therefore have come to him last week to some extent as a very pleasant surprise. The following is a copy of the communication received by him from the Admiralty:-

“Sir, - I am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to inform you that, after full enquiries made, with regard to a report which they have received of your gallant conduct in the presence of the enemy, on the night of the 30th April – 1st May 1915, at Gaba Tepe, Gallipoli Peninsula, Whilst serving as Lance-Corporal in Royal Marine Light Infantry, Portsmouth Battalion, they have recommended to the King, and His Majesty has been graciously pleased to approve, the award of the Victoria Cross to you, in recognition of your services on the occasion in question. The award will be announced in the “London Gazette” in due course. A further communication will be made to you for your attendance to receive the decoration above mentioned.

Yours obediently,
W. Graham Greene.

Lance-Corporal Parker is the eldest son of Mr. Richard Parker, and the late Mrs. Parker, of Lime Grove, Stapleford, and is 36 years of age. Within a month or so of the outbreak of war, viz, on September 7th, 1914, he answered his country's call, his one aim being to assist in preserving the honour and safety of the land of his birth and the glorious British Empire. Immediately after joining the colours he was attached to the Portsmouth Division of the R.M.L.I., under the command of Colonel Luard, Captain Morton, and Captain Syson. After a thorough training under the above mentioned officers, the Division was reviewed just prior to embarkation by H.M. the King and Mr. Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty. Embarking on the “Gloucester Castle,” from a West Coast port, on the last day of February, 1915, our hero called at Malta, Lemnos, Alexandria, and Port Said. Later he was to be found in the great review, held in the Egyptian desert, beneath the shades of the Pyramids of the ancient Pharaohs, by General Sir Ian Hamilton, just prior to the embarkation of the expeditionary Dardanelles landing forces. Subsequently he found himself in Skiros Bay, and was then engaged in a three to four days' cruise, which evidently had as its object drawing the Turkish fire from the land batteries, just prior to the opening of the great British Naval bombardment. Our representative, as he listened in the sitting-room of the heroic V.C.'s home, to the vivid description of the great bombardment, and the memorable landing at Gaba Tepe beach by the Australian and British Forces, to which the Royal Marines formed the principal support, found a disposition- commendable, perhaps, but incorrect in perspective – to laud enthusiastically and yet invidiously certain sections of

the of the forces engaged in that immortal landing. But whatever may be worthily attributed to other forces at the landing there must and can be no losing sight of the salient fact that the Royal Marine Light Infantry rendered splendid service at the Dardanelles. In a quit manner, Stapleford's hero related some of his experiences on landing and some of his hair-breath escapes on sea and land, leading up to the date and action which brought so distinguished an honour to him, and others, who worked night and day, without any relief, with the Hospital Staff, under Surgeon Playne, D.S.O. a magnificent man, one of the best that ever wore uniform. "We were in and out," he said, "both night and day, attending to the wounded, and rendering first aid to the injured. Having been at work in the Hospital some time, Colonel Luard, Capt. Syson, and Capt. Morton came in quietly and called for a volunteer to go down to one of our own Companies which was enfiladed. All of us realised the task was almost super-human. Lance-Corpl. Parker was the senior N.C.O. on duty. To leave the company, amongst which were many men wounded, and probably dying for lack of medical assistance was a terrible thought. As no Volunteers were forthcoming, Stapleford's hero, with the highest conception of duty, acted like the truest of Englishmen, and himself volunteered. The time for the attempt to bring relieve to their fellow-comrades drew near. He began to work his way from trench to trench for some considerable distance, when he was suddenly confronted and threatened by an Australian officer that if he did not return from such a forlorn mission he would shoot him dead. Regardless of this, he proceeded on his journey. To reach the goal he had to pass an open passage, upon which, day and night Turkish machine

guns were ceaselessly playing. The gallant V.C. ran through this deadly trap, and was immediately shot in two places, and, running down the hill into a place called the Valley of Death, fell into a pond at the bottom. The next thing which aroused his failing senses was the tremendous cheering of the officers and men of his battalion, which was enfiladed also. He was the first man to go down and render them assistance, using every bandage and other equipment with which he set out, so that none remained to dress his own wounds. He stayed with these troops throughout the night – a night which gained Lt. Alcock the D.S. Cross; and the same night as Lieut. Hempson, the gallant little officer, was killed. That same night the Turks made a desperate charge, which compelled the British to retire slightly. After taking cover for some considerable time, he was ultimately carried in by the stretcher bearers of his own division. After reaching the beach, Lance-Corpl. Parker was placed upon the s.s. Gendola, a temporary hospital ship, and taken from thence to Alexandria, on the journey witnessing several of his comrades die. On reaching Alexandria he was taken immediately aboard the s.s. "Letetia," an American hospital vessel. On the homeward journey, exciting and perilous times were experienced, colliding in the Mediterranean with an Italian vessel at night, in a fog, which smashed the bows, etc. They were brought to Gibraltar, and there inspected by the Governor. After the damaged vessel had been patched up, it proceeded slowly to Southampton. The wounded were taken to Netley, where they received the best attention any men could have from Japanese doctors and nurses. After a time, Lance-Corpl. Parker was taken to the Royal Naval Hospital, to be attended by Naval doctors; and on his

discharge from hospital was sent to barracks, where the gallant V.C. was taken ill with brain fever, which badly affected his sight, and he received his discharge on 17th June 1916. Many other thrilling experiences he recalls – the torpedoing of the “Minateur.” How the “Gloucester Castle” (since sunk) stood by when the “Royal George” took off the troops. The touching scene on Lenmos Quay, when the “Royal George” set out to see to bury a number of the finest men that had ever lived, there being not a single dry eye, so poignant with grief was the occasion. Lanc-Corpl. Parker has received a number of letters from officers, congratulating him on his memorable night’s work, which, however, he modestly declares was only doing his duty as an Englishman. Feelingly, he dwelt upon the fine and heroic souls he risked all with on that expedition, and recalled countless deeds of superb heroism which have never been recognised. The subject of this sketch married Olive, daughter of the late Mr. Joseph Orchard, who for many years held the position of stationmaster at Stapleford, where he was highly respected. The V.C. at various times has been associated in different directions with the Forces during the past 18 years. Prior to joining in September 1914, he was working at the Stanton Ironworks New Foundry, as a core-maker (under his foreman, Mr. Roome), where he proved himself a most competent workman. Now he is engaged at the Chilwell Works, making ammunition for those who are continuing the fight. In view of the unprecedented honour to be conferred on one of Stapleford’s inhabitants by His Majesty the King, the local authorities are also moving to make a recognition of so unique and rare an opportunity.

Ilkeston Pioneer

31st August 1917.

STAPLEFORD’S V.C. HERO PUBLIC PRESENTATION TO LANCE-CORPL. PARKER.

On Saturday evening last, the Stapleford V.C. Testimonial Committee, in the grounds of the Hall’s Road Schools, made a public presentation to Lance-Corpl. Walter R. Parker, V.C., and Mrs. Parker.

This interesting ceremony was attended by a representative assembly of Stapleford and district, who gathered to show their appreciation of the dauntless heroism of the hero of the Valley of Death. Counc. G.A. Harrison, J.P., presided, and amongst others present were; Mr. Chas. R. Crompton, J.P., Mrs. Crompton, Mr. E.J. Fox, Master Fox, and Mrs. Hooley, Rev. Crawford Hillis, Mr. Richard Parker, (father), Mr. and Mrs. Fredk. Parker, Mr W.S. Orchard, Mrs. Seaton, Mrs. E. Eaton, Mrs. and Miss Alcock, Mr. and Mrs. Foulkes, Mr. and Mrs. J. Wood, Mr. and Mrs. H. Hunt, Mr. and Mrs. Domleo, Messrs. G. Spencer, J. Palmer, J. Richards, J.J. Wallis, J. Allen, L. Hall, and E.R. Eaton (hon. Secretary).

The Stapleford Boy Scouts formed a guard of honour, under the Scoutmaster A. Rimmer. There were also on duty a number of the Special Constabulary. The Stapleford Town Prize Band was in attendance, under the conductorship of Mr. Cas. Atkin, and rendered suitable airs.

Councillor G.A. Harrison, J.P., said: We are gathered this evening to do honour once more to our townsman, Lance-Corpl. Parker. V.C. Stapleford has already shown on the occasion of his return from being decorated by H.M. the King, its appreciation of his great gallantry and bravery, and received him with

hearty cheering. On this occasion, however, we meet to show our appreciation in a more tangible manner, and the Committee have invited Mr. Crompton, (Stanton Hall) to make the presentation. We welcome Mr. Crompton into our midst (Applause.) We who know Lance-Corpl. Parker appreciate what he is, and what he has done for us, and also what his comrades have done, especially those who have gone from Stapleford. We honour all those brave men – (cheers) – and whilst honouring these brave men, we do not forget the large number of our local heroes who have fallen and made the great sacrifice.

In remembering Lance-Corpl. Parker in the form we do now, we never will forget the fallen brave. Their names and heroic acts are deeply enshrined upon our memories. (Cheers.) Before asking Mr. Crompton to make the presentation, on behalf and in the name of the residents of Stapleford and district – many do not know him personally, yet they remember it is such as he and his comrades who have bled and died for us – I have one letter to read from Mr. C.W. Thomas (Clerk to the Council), who regrets his inability to be present owing to illness at this interesting ceremony.

He adds; "I send herewith, bound in morocco case, unsolicited letters from various people, appreciating the bravery of Lance-Corpl. Parker, amongst whom are the Duke of Portland, Viscount Galway, Lord Middleton, Mr. Lief Jones, M.P., Mr. C.R. Crompton, J.P., Mrs. E.T. Hooley; also from many officers of the Royal Marine Light Infantry." The interesting letters will be highly valued, undoubtedly, by his children and succeeding generations of his, to read of his gallant conduct.

Mr. Crompton, on being introduced to the assembly by the Chairman, was received with applause and said

he felt deeply the honour conferred upon him in asking him to make the presentation. He was not a resident, but had always taken an interest in things connected with Stapleford, and he hoped to do so in the future, especially in such things as had called them together that day, when one of their residents had won the highest honour any man could look forward to. He was interested also because Lance-Corpl. Parker, prior to volunteering for the war, which he did within one month of its outbreak, was for over 16 years working as one of the employees of the Stanton Iron Co., and as at the present time he happened to be chairman of that Company, they felt that in gaining such a high honour for himself, Lance-Corpl., Parker had gained honour for all those who have gone from the Works, about 1,300 in all. (Applause.) He was especially pleased, and had been requested by his fellow directors to thank him for his heroic conduct; and also he had with him their Managing director, who would, who would also have an opportunity of congratulating him on achieving so high a distinction. The men of Great Britain and the Empire were as brave today as in years ago, and they were fighting in a war far crueller than any before, fighting an enemy who had used every cruelty and brutality, and disregarded the known rules of honourable warfare. They must themselves be brave, and see this great struggle successfully through. There were already astir in the country a section who desired peace with the German Emperor – he meant the Pacifists - an agreement which he would not value any more than the scrap of paper which he tore up at the outset of the war. (Hear, hear.) At the present moment they were doing well all round, and appeared to be on top. Let them be brave, and make every

sacrifice; and let it be the last war, and not let future generations have to wage another war.

Mr. Crompton then, on behalf of the Committee, presented to Lance-Corpl., Parker a gold Waltham watch and chain, inscribed as follows; - "Presented, on August 25th, 1917, by the inhabitants of Stapleford and district, to Lance-Corpl. Walter Richard Parker, in recognition of his being awarded the Victoria Cross, for distinguished bravery at Gallipoli, on April 30th. 1915." Also War Savings Certificates value £25, and the morocco bound case of letters appreciative of his self-sacrificing heroism, were handed to him. Proceeding, Mr. Crompton said he hoped he would live many years to enjoy the honour he had so justly won. (Great cheers).

Further, as Chairman of the Stanton Iron Co., he desired to make him a little personal present, and he desired him once every year, on the anniversary of the night he performed the heroic act, to draw a cheque upon him (Mr. Crompton) for one guinea. (Cheers.)

Mr. Crompton then presented to Mrs. Parker a gold wristlet watch and bracelet, remarking they all realised what a soldier's wife's life was, watching and waiting for his return. (Applause.) As Lance-Corpl. Parker rose to reply, he was received with musical honours by the band playing, "See the Conquering Hero Comes." Replying under the stress of deep emotion, the gallant V.C. said he appreciated highly the remarks which had been expressed to his wife and himself. He could not, however, express all his thoughts, but he thanked them all. (Loud cheers.) Mr. E. Fox (managing director, Stanton Iron Co.) said he felt very pleased that the opportunity was given him by Mr. Crompton to support him on that occasion. Speaking directly from the management of the

Stanton Co., he agreed with all Mr. Crompton had said on the subject. But he was glad to say that the employers, from top to bottom, at Stanton, were all proud of the great honour which had been brought, not alone to Lance-Corpl. Parker, but which he had also conferred upon his comrades whom he left behind him. He hoped he might long be spared to live up to the greatest honour that can fall to any Englishman, and on his return to civil life he might continue to prosper. (Applause.)

The Rev. Crawford Hillis moved a vote of thanks to Mr. Crompton.

Mr. Crompton, in reply, said it had been more than a pleasure to come. It would be something to remember, to have been able to make a presentation of that character. It was an opportunity which came in one's life so rarely.

The proceedings then concluded with the National Anthem.

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ILKESTON ADVERTISER, FRIDAY, JANUARY

12TH 1945.

P.O.W. Son's Voice Heard Over Radio.

Switching by chance to a German station on their radio recently, Mrs. N. Hardy of 52 Horace Avenue, Stapleford, heard the voice of a soldier. "It's Tom", cried Betty, her daughter, and the two were overjoyed to hear him say, "Hullo Mum and Dad, Betty and Grenville. I am a prisoner of war in Germany being treated very well. I am fit so please don't worry. Hope you are all well at home." The chance message told Mr. and Mrs. Hardy, for the first time since he was reported missing that their son was safe and well. Enlisting in the Royal Irish Fusiliers on January 28th 1942, Signalman Thomas Hardy was transferred to the Royal Irish Rifles.

Editor.

Family Butcher



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**The deadline for submission of items for the next
Spring 2016 issue of the Newsletter is 31 March 2016
Material can be given to any of the above named.
This is YOUR newsletter! We'd love to hear from you!**

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