

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE PAST AND PRESENT



Number 71 2018
Northamptonshire Record Society

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2018

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Instructions for contributors.

All contributions must be provided in hard copy and in electronic format on a CD/DVD or as an attachment to an email, preferably in Word.doc or docx. Please use the existing house style of NP&P. Normally the maximum length is 6,500 to 7,000 words, but shorter articles and small news items are also welcome. Drafts texts may be sent for discussion. The deadline for material will now be the end of May. Printed references used more than a few times should be abbreviated after the first time and referred back to the full citation. Each article should have at least one illustration and full articles at least three. All illustrations must be of good quality with copyright permission stated and obtained where appropriate. If digital illustrations are provided they should be in separate files, either JPEG or TIFE, preferably with a resolution of at least 300 dpi.

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All communications regarding articles in this and future issues should be
addressed to Wendy Raybould, Hon. Editor, Northamptonshire
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THE NORTHAMPTONSHIRE RECORD SOCIETY

(FOUNDED 1920)

WOOTTON HALL PARK, NORTHAMPTON NN6 8BQ

President

Lord Boswell of Aynho

NOTES AND NEWS

This year has been an unhappy one for historians in Northamptonshire. There have been all too many funerals and this issue of *NPEP* carries five obituaries.

Sir Hereward Wake was both a supportive president of the Record Society for many years and also a link, via his aunt Joan, to its very early history. Our current president, with other members of the Society, attended the thanksgiving service at Courteenhall in May to mark his passing and to celebrate a long life of service to his country and his county.

Peter Gordon was a historian who put his prodigious skills at the disposal of the Society for many years, serving as Council member and later, vice-president as well as writing and editing a number of well-received volumes in the NRS annual series.

Ron Greenall's passing makes many of us realise how very fortunate we were to have enjoyed such easy access to an education in local history, from village hall to university level, receiving a solid grounding in research and context from such an enthusiastic teacher. He also served the Society as both general editor and editor of *NPEP*.

John Munro's enthusiasm for history and in particular for his beloved NRS Library will be remembered by many who read his bulletins in the annual reports of the Society, which spotlighted individual treasures of the collection.

Enthusiasm also marked the work of Gren Hatton who blazed a trail for meticulous amateur research, setting a bar with his West Northamptonshire Local History website for others to reach towards.

This year's issue showcases some of those rising to the challenge: promising new writers, sharing their research in a range of aspects of Northamptonshire history, from rebels and migrants to explorers. Glimpses of a First World War diary mark the century since the gunfire ceased at the end of the war that was supposed to end all wars.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Sarah Charlton gave the May lecture this year, on manorial records. She gave an interesting account of the medieval records surviving for this county, along with a lucid explanation of how to find them. She also threw down a research gauntlet with the information that our county is unusually rich in the survival of records from Hundred Courts in the 18th century. It will be interesting to see if anyone cares to pick up that challenge.

The next lecture, in October, will be on the subject of Chester Farm, given by our County Archivist, Sarah Bridges.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The first ever meeting of the Record Society took place in December 1920, so we are fast approaching our centenary year. Various plans are afoot to mark this milestone and *NP&P* will make its contribution with a special issue. This will focus on the Society and some of its past members.

Notes on Contributors

Theo Adams is the third son born to Bert and Lizzie and is now 90 years of age. He qualified as a Chartered Accountant in 1953, practised in Northampton until 1974 and then in North Staffordshire until 1997. He was ordained as a Local Minister (C of E) in 1998.

The diaries were kept in a box with the medals until 1983 when he brought them home to stay in his desk until he transcribed them last year.

Amir Bassir is a Historic Buildings Archaeologist and freelance Illustrator, currently working at Museum of London Archaeology, Northampton. He has carried out numerous historic building projects across the country and has a specific interest in East Midlands vernacular architecture and the history of the British Gas industry. This article was submitted as an assignment as part of an Oxford University Architectural History course. *abassir@hotmail.co.uk*

Ron Clayton is a retired teacher/college lecturer who spent his formative years in Finedon and now lives in Kettering. For several years he was a volunteer with Tony Sale's team on the 'Colossus Rebuild Project' at Bletchley Park. The experience led to an abiding interest in the secret or 'hidden' history of WWII, and in particular the 'invasion' period of June to September 1940. Four years ago, while researching aspects of the Dunkirk Evacuation, he came across a French destroyer named *Volta*, this in turn prompted research into the 19th Century warship of the same name after which the *Volta* Tower was supposedly named. *ron51uk@yahoo.com*

Clifford German is a retired financial journalist. After attending Northampton Grammar School he trained as a Russian interpreter in the Royal Navy during National Service, and took a degree in Geography at St John's College, Cambridge. He co-wrote an Economic Geography of the USSR with J. P. Cole, and briefly taught Geography at the University of Michigan and Wayne State University, Detroit. He has recently completed a Ph.D on 19th century Northampton at UCL.

Murray Johnston, in parallel with a career in international finance, pursues and unquenchable interest in history. Family connections to Northamptonshire prompted deep but delightful research in medieval documents located in the NRO, TNA, BL, College of Arms, Bodleian Library and others. All that came to fruition in a book on the medieval manors of Watford parish, published in April 2018. *MurrayGJ@aol.com*

Bob Page was born in Desborough and has ancestral roots in the county going back many centuries. He is an enthusiast by nature and an amateur researcher in several fields. His main passion is the plant genus *Cistus* on which he has published a number of articles. It was the chance discovery that one of his ancestors had participated in the Midland Uprising that prompted the research that has led to his piece for this journal.

Stephen Swailes has produced a range of parish register and other transcripts for the NRO and has written previously in *NP&P* about the county Lay Subsidy of 1301 and on Wellingborough's First World War casualties after completing a project to identify over 670 names on the town memorial.

Rural Parish Registers from Sixteenth Century Northamptonshire: How good are they?

STEPHEN SWAILES

Parish registers are crucial yet sometimes frustrating sources for local and family historians. They were initiated in England through the Second Henrician Injunction of 1538 which set out various expectations concerning religious practices. Item 12 of that Injunction required ministers to record the day and year of every christening, marriage and burial in their parish in a book or register. The main purpose of keeping registers was to provide an official source of information that could be used to resolve disputes concerning age, lineal descent and inheritance. Registers were meant to be taken seriously as evidenced by the instructions to keep them in locked coffers or chests and a 3s-4d fine for non-completion of a register with fines going to the reparation of the church.

The original instructions set out in 1538 were, in essence, repeated in Injunctions issued in 1547 and again in 1559. A Canon issued in 1597 re-emphasised the importance of the faithful upkeep of registers for the benefit of future generations, admonished clergy to uphold previous Injunctions and attempted to better regulate how they were maintained. Ministers and churchwardens were to be reminded of their responsibilities towards the keeping of registers during church visitations. Records were to be entered in bound parchment books for posterity. To prevent fraudulent use they were to be kept in a chest with three locks with three keys held by the minister and two churchwardens who were to sign each completed page in the register. Entries made in the previous week were to be read publicly in church to counter fraud and neglect. A copy of each year's entries was to be sent to and kept by the diocese although these early Bishop's Transcripts have not survived for Northamptonshire.

The Canon of 1597 also called for the old paper books to be faithfully copied into the new parchment registers but in many cases this was interpreted as only being necessary from the start of Queen Elizabeth's reign in 1558. This instruction was repeated in Canons of 1604 again with the ambiguity that the 'ancient books' need only be copied up from the 'beginning of the reign of the late Queen'¹. As such, in many parishes the records covering the years before 1558, if they ever existed at the time, were not copied into the new register books.

In the years that followed, the maintenance and quality of registers were diminished by events during and after the Civil War and various Acts that effectively imposed taxes, albeit short-lived, on christenings, marriages and burials. The growth of non-conformism meant that Anglican registers became less indicative of the total population after the middle of the seventeenth century². On the other hand, initiatives such as the Marriage Act of 1753 improved the quality of record keeping for marriages through the use of a separate pre-printed register book containing a standard template to record additional information, such as the residences of the bride and groom and the names of two witnesses.

Although parish registers were initiated in 1538 the surviving registers for most parishes in Northamptonshire, in common with many other English counties, begin much later. Wellingborough's registers date from 1586, Oundle's from 1625 and Wollaston's from 1663, for instance. Bozeat's old registers were lost in a fire in 1729. Across time, the parish registers

1 The 70th Canon. See C.H. Davies, *The English Church Canons of 1604: with historical introduction and notes*, London, 1869.

2 See D. Hey (Ed.). *The Oxford Companion to Family and Local History*, Oxford University Press, 2010, p.526.

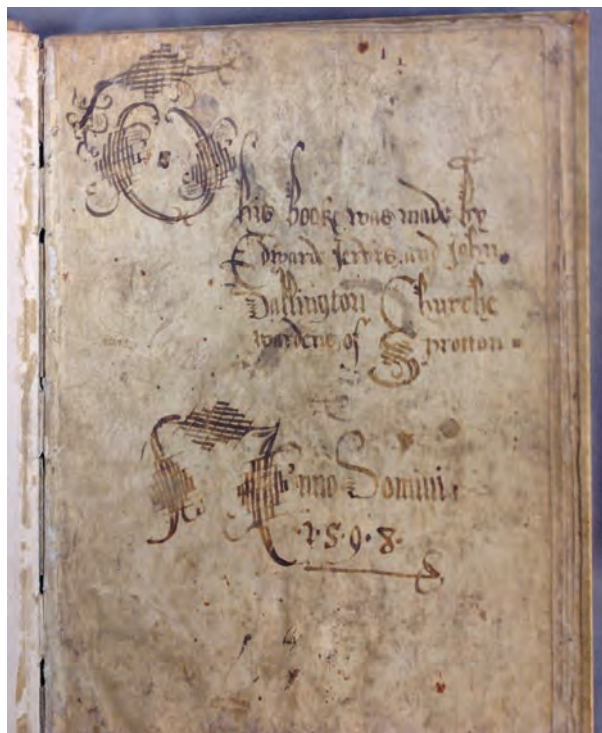


Figure 1. Cover page of the parish register of Spratton written-up by the churchwardens in 1598.

(Reproduced with the permission of Northamptonshire Record Office.)

that have survived from the sixteenth century are thought to be, on average, more reliable than later ones³. However, a recurring question is *how* reliable are they or, put another way, to what extent are they reliable accounts of the events that actually took place in a parish? While the earlier registers of Tudor England can be more reliable than registers from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, no previous research specifically on the adequacy of registers from Northamptonshire was found in the background research undertaken for this article.

As such, this article addresses two questions. How complete are Northamptonshire's earliest surviving early registers and, a much more difficult question, how reliable are they? Completeness is relatively simple and concerns the extent to which there are gaps in the recording of events (non-completion). Reliability, however, in this context concerns the extent to which the registers are accurate recordings of the actual events that occurred in past time; that is, the extent of under-registration. This is a particularly problematic question since the true occurrence of actual christenings, marriages and burials cannot be known.

3 See E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield, *The Population History of England, 1541-1871: A reconstruction*, London, Edward Arnold, 1981.

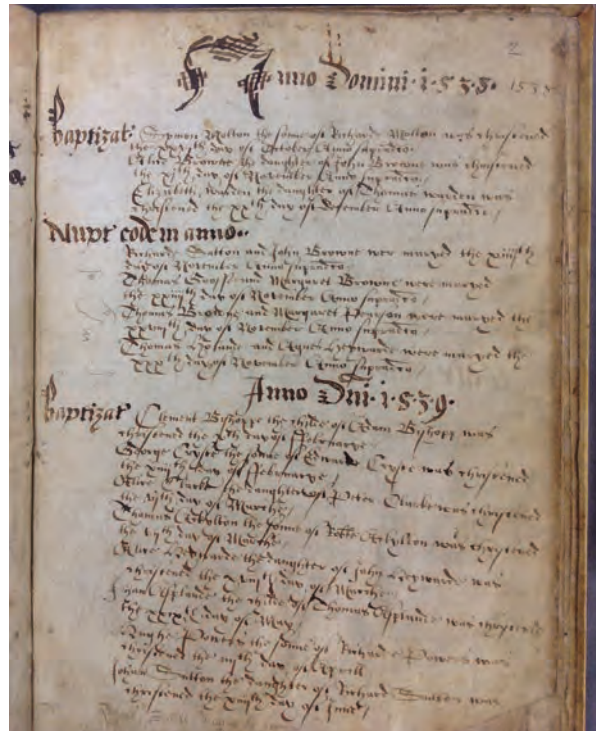


Figure 2. Spratton baptisms and marriages for 1538 and 1539.
(Reproduced with the permission of Northamptonshire Record Office.)

One factor to bear in mind is that church attendance, although required by law in the sixteenth century, was overlaid by religious changes. In the time of the registers, the prevailing theology was Protestant which troubled those who inclined towards the Catholic faith. For many, church attendance was a matter of outward conformity to the expectations of the State rather than internalisation of certain Protestant practices⁴. Without doubt, some families avoided Anglican services altogether and performed their own christening, marriage and burial services in secret and under the radar of the parish church, albeit at great risk. Registers are thus best seen as an approximation of what happened in a parish and the analytical approach taken in this article relies upon aggregate data and cross-parish comparison to look for patterns in the recording of vital events; christenings, marriages and burials. Marked differences in the patterns within registers would point to unreliability in some or all, whereas similarities in patterns of vital events and in the relationships between them would point to a level of reliability assuming life played out pretty much the same from place to place.

Short of reconstituting family groups over time, registers offer a range of analytical statistics that can be obtained from the numbers of christenings, marriages and burials and from the relationships between them. Most christenings can be gendered because entries often record the child as a son or daughter or, if not, then from the Christian name. Marriages sometimes

⁴ See, C. Preedy, *Marlowe's Literary Scepticism: Politic Religion and Post-Reformation Polemic*, London, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014, p.62.

reveal the abodes of one or more spouse. Most burials can also be gendered from Christian names and sometimes, although it varies much by parish, additional details are given that help to classify the person as a child or adult such as ‘son of’, ‘wife of’, or their status or occupation.

To explore the reliability of Northamptonshire’s oldest registers, nineteen parish registers dating from 1538 or shortly afterwards, although not necessarily for all three vital events, were included in the analysis⁵. All parishes were rural and for comparison Northampton St Giles for which the register begins in 1560 was included. Most of the parishes are located in the southern half of the county yet they span 12 of the 20 ancient hundreds from Nassaburgh in the north to Greens Norton in the south. Christenings were recorded as male, female or unclear, and burials were recorded as male/female adult, male/female child, male/female of unknown age, or unknown age and sex⁶. Burials of unknown individuals, for example, people found dead in fields or rivers or of passing travellers, and of unsuccessful pregnancies were excluded but collectively amounted to very few in the sample taken.

An initial test of reliability comes from correlating the annual average number of christenings per parish with the number of taxpayers listed in that parish in the Tudor Lay Subsidies⁷. The Lay Subsidies list the names of taxpayers on a given date and, if they were reliably compiled at the time, they should provide a good measure of relative, but not absolute, parish size. For instance, in 1524/5, 12 taxpayers were listed at Clay Coton and 53 were listed at Castor. Acknowledging that the Lay Subsidy rolls pre-date the start of the registers and that totals were correlated with annual averages for christenings stretching over 60 years following, a strong correlation between the two sources is taken to point towards good reliability simply because more christenings should occur in larger parishes assuming a similar birth rate across Northamptonshire’s rural parishes at the time. A low correlation would point towards low reliability of registers assuming that Subsidy totals are reliable indicators of relative parish size. Based on 18 parishes for which Lay Subsidy totals were available a strong correlation was observed⁸.

Table 1 shows comparative data for all the parishes included in the sample. Across all 20 parishes, 2132 marriages, 8749 christenings and 5120 burials were recorded. The wide variation seen in the proportion of child burials shown in Table 1 is simply because in some parishes the status of the person buried was not mentioned consistently. Status was often omitted in the early years, for example at Castor child burials were not differentiated until 1574. At Harpole they were never differentiated although the burials of several aborted pregnancies were recorded.

5 Rushton, Maxey and Aston le Walls begin around 1538 but were excluded because of damage or because of large gaps.

6 The Old Style Calendar in which the New Year began on 25th March was retained for this analysis; dates of events were not realigned with the modern calendar.

7 Public Record Office series E179/155. These were mostly 15 HenVIII (1523/24). See transcripts at Northamptonshire Record Office also available at www.medievalgenealogy.org.uk.

8 Pearson correlation 0.81, significance $p < .001$. This can be interpreted as the observed outcome, or a more extreme one, being highly unlikely to occur by chance given the null hypothesis of no correlation. It indicates that 65.6 per cent of the variation in annual average christenings is explained by parish size given in the Lay Subsidies.

Table 1. Comparative data for each parish, 1540–1599

<i>Parish</i>	<i>Total christenings</i>	<i>Christenings annual average</i>	<i>Christenings per 100 marriages</i>	<i>Christenings per 100 burials</i>	<i>Recorded burials of children (%)</i>
Blakesley	556	9.3	556	151	22
Braunston	673	11.2	423	158	32
Castor	857	14.3	406	132	39
Clay Coton	208	4.5	457	267	19
Courtenhall	374	6.2	486	227	42
Denton	315	5.3	534	260	22
Easton Maudit	577	9.6	390	194	48
Eydon	477	8.6	458	171	18
Farthingstone	186	3.1	563	274	15
Hannington	222	4.2	389	220	12
Harpole	461	7.7	456	209	0
Kislingbury	589	9.8	433	151	44
Lt Houghton	307	6.8	640	175	14
Lowick	386	6.7	255	153	31
N. St Giles	572	15.9	230	118	40
Ravensthorpe	533	10.7	353	144	9
Spratton	691	11.5	476	182	39
Thorpe Malsor	225	3.8	274	115	40
Wakerley	221	3.7	409	156	9
Weston Favell	319	5.3	483	255	57

Note: Ratios adjusted for runs of missing years where appropriate in some parishes; St Giles begins in 1560, Ravensthorpe christenings begin in 1550, Easton Maudit burials begin in 1561, Lowick burials begin in 1558.

In terms of completeness, for 20 parishes analysed across 60 years there is a maximum of 1200 ‘parish years’ in which events could have been recorded. Only Braunston, Easton Maudit, and Wakerley show christenings in every year, and in six other parishes there is only one missing year for christenings. Across all parishes there were 83 ‘parish years’ in which no christenings were recorded. In small parishes a nil annual return is viable, and sometimes was noted in the register, and thus 83 is probably a little higher than the true number of missing years. Burials, however, were not recorded in 241 ‘parish years’ with every parish showing at least one missing year. In some cases there are obvious gaps in record keeping, such as at Clay Coton where there are no christenings or burials from 1547 to 1559 and at Hannington there are no christenings from 1541 to 1547 or burials from 1541 to 1549. Little Houghton is deficient in the 1550s and Lowick does not record burials before 1558. The register for Northampton St Giles contains a contemporary note that no records were kept from 1584 to 1587.

As a percentage of all parish years for all parishes from 1540, christenings are absent for about seven per cent and burials are absent for 20 per cent which gives us an accurate estimate of the non-completion rate. Adjusting to account for burials starting after 1540 in some parishes, for example Lowick starting in 1558, the proportion of years in which burials were not recorded was 21.3 per cent. However, a point to remember here is that, in addition, a level of under registration must be acknowledged to account for an unknown number of christenings and burials that may have been omitted due to tardiness. The figure of 21.3

per cent is close to the 26.1 per cent of burial under-registration observed in Bedfordshire from 1543 to 1599 derived from matching probate and burial records⁹.

On the face of it, it does look as if burials were not recorded as diligently as christenings. This calls for caution when comparing ratios between christenings and burials, but does not compromise examination of patterns within christenings or burials, for example, the ratio of male to female burials. Missing years were not examined for marriages since they were less frequent and more sporadic and long gaps in registers are more likely to be indicative of the true patterns of events that occurred.

In reporting outcomes below, calculations were adjusted to account for missing years where necessary to give comparable data, for example burials starting later than christenings in the same parish. The annual average number of christenings ranged from 3.1 at Farthingstone to 14.3 at Castor and 15.9 at St Giles. For a variety of reasons¹⁰ more males are born than females, typically about 105 males per 100 females. The ratio of male to female christenings ranged from 87 per 100 at Wakerley to 119 per 100 at Clay Coton but these were small parishes and random variations in conception easily explain departures from the ratios that would be expected in larger populations. The overall male/female ratio for all parishes shows 103.2 males for every 100 females thus there is no evidence, overall, for differential christenings.

Decadal totals for christenings across all parishes fell by 7.1 per cent in the 1550s, but rose by 17.8 per cent in the 1560s, 9.9 per cent in the 1570s, 13.5 per cent in the 1580s and 2.0 per cent in the 1590s. The annual average increase in christenings across all parishes from 1540 to 1599 was 0.65 per cent which is very close to the 0.80 per cent per year growth reported for the population in England in the second half of the sixteenth century¹¹.

Set against a background of a rising national population, more christenings than burials would be expected and the ratios of total christenings to burials ranged from 115 per 100 at Thorpe Malsor to 274 per 100 at Farthingstone. Farthingstone, which had the highest christenings to burials ratio, provides a good illustration of the difficulties that small parishes can present in analyses of this type since there are three periods of four or five years in which no burials were recorded and only one burial from 1555 to 1565 which covers the influenza epidemic of 1558¹². Either the parish escaped the epidemic or, perhaps much more likely, there was under recording of burials which would explain the relatively high ratio. Weston Favell and Denton also show high christening/burial ratios although at Weston Favell burials were recorded in most years but only for children up to 1558 and Denton records only two burials from 1548 to 1556. Some under recording of burials seems likely in these parishes.

The ratio of christenings to marriages ranged from 2.30 to 1 at St Giles and 2.55 to 1 at Lowick to 6.4 to 1 at Little Houghton but was typically between four and five to one and the average across all parishes was 4.1 to one. The figure for St Giles may be low because it was a popular urban venue that attracted people from surrounding villages to marry but, if

9 P. Razzell, C. Spence, and M. Wollard, The evaluation of Bedfordshire burial registration, *Local Population Studies*, 2010, pp.31-54.

10 Recent research suggests this is because of differential foetal survival rates during pregnancy. See, S.H. Orzack and colleagues, The human sex ratio from conception to birth, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 2015, Vol. 112, No. 6, pp. E2102-E2111.

11 P. Laslett, *The World We Have Lost - further explored*, Routledge, 1983, p. 107, and P. Williams, *The Later Tudors, England 1547-1603*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1995.

12 See, C. Creighton, *A History of Epidemics in Britain*, Cambridge, 1891, p.401.

it did, this was not recorded. Prior to Hardwicke's Marriage Act of 1754 people, with some exceptions, had to be married by Anglican clergy but did not have to marry in a church and the extent to which this occurred and whether such marriages were included in registers is not known. Clearly, not all the couples who married in a parish stayed there, but assuming that this outward migration effect was matched by inward migration of couples already married and was broadly the same across the rural county, the overall average of 4.1 live births per marriage fits with research on fertility that puts the viable christenings per marriage ratio at between three and five¹³. This range may seem low, but needs to be seen in the context of high mortality at the time and of course it was common for people to marry more than once. Furthermore, the age at first marriage for most people was in their mid twenties¹⁴.

If the christenings to marriages ratio is unlikely to have been above five and assuming that marriages were not significantly under-recorded, then it is possible to estimate the maximum number of unrecorded christenings. This works out at 1911 which across 60 years and 20 parishes is equivalent to 1.7 omissions per parish per year which certainly seems within the bounds of negligence and forgetfulness that may have occurred at the time. However, in small parishes, one to two omissions a year would be a large percentage of the total. Furthermore, if each marriage was producing five live births then the rate of christening under-registration was 17.9 per cent. Thus we have seven per cent from missing years (non-completion) and up to 17.9 per cent from under-registration if the birth rate was much higher, which it probably was not. The data used in this analysis point to a minimum of seven per cent omissions from non-completion and an absolute maximum of about 25 per cent omissions taking under-registration and non-completion together. Given that five live births per marriage would have been very high, the true figure for the loss of christenings in these registers is more likely nearer seven than 25 per cent and is mostly caused by non-completion rather than under-registration.

From 1540 to 1599, the average annual number of burials across all parishes¹⁵ was 85.3 peaking at 135 in 1546, 149 in 1557, 239 in 1558 and 191 in 1597. The 1546 burial peak coincides with a bad harvest the year before. The peaks in 1557 and 1558 were felt in most of the parishes sampled and the ability of registers to track sudden rises in mortality is another pointer to a level of reliability. Thorpe Malsor, for instance, records one burial in 1555 and 1556 and 22 in 1557. Castor increased from 10 burials in 1555 to 61 in 1558. Increased mortality in the 1550s was felt nationally and is thought to have been caused by an influenza epidemic that followed the two 'appalling' harvests¹⁶ of 1555-1556 that compounded the problems brought about by food shortages. The burial spike in 1597 corresponds with the dreadful harvests of 1596 and 1597 and is presumably causally related. Although crisis mortality¹⁷ can overwhelm and curtail the recording of burials in towns, it

13 E.A. Wrigley notes that the christening/marriage ratio usually ranges from three to five, with higher ratios unlikely as fertility could not have been so high. See E.A. Wrigley, 'Baptism to marriage ratios in late seventeenth century England', *Local Population Studies*, Autumn 1969, No. 3, pp. 15-17.

14 Wrigley and Schofield, p. 255, estimated the mean age at first marriage for men at 28 and 26 for women in the first half of the seventeenth century.

15 Includes all years for all parishes. Clay Coton reported few burials before 1560, Easton Maudit none before 1561, Lowick none before 1558, and St Giles' registers did not start until 1560. Excluding those parishes gives an annual average total for burials of 84.7 pre-1560 and 85.5 for 1560-1599.

16 W.G. Hoskins, 'Harvest fluctuations and English Economic History, 1480-1619', *The Agricultural History Review*, 1964, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 28-46.

17 Often interpreted as a burial rate at least twice the average. See R.S. Schofield, 'Crisis' Mortality, *Local Population Studies*, No. 9, Autumn 1972, pp. 10-21.

does appear that the smaller size of Northamptonshire's rural parishes meant that burials continued to be recorded for the most part. Furthermore, from 1540 to 1599 the highest number of marriages recorded in a single year was 71 in 1559 against an annual average across the period of 35. This is an indication that the preceding bad harvests and epidemics had caused some people to delay marriage until conditions improved.

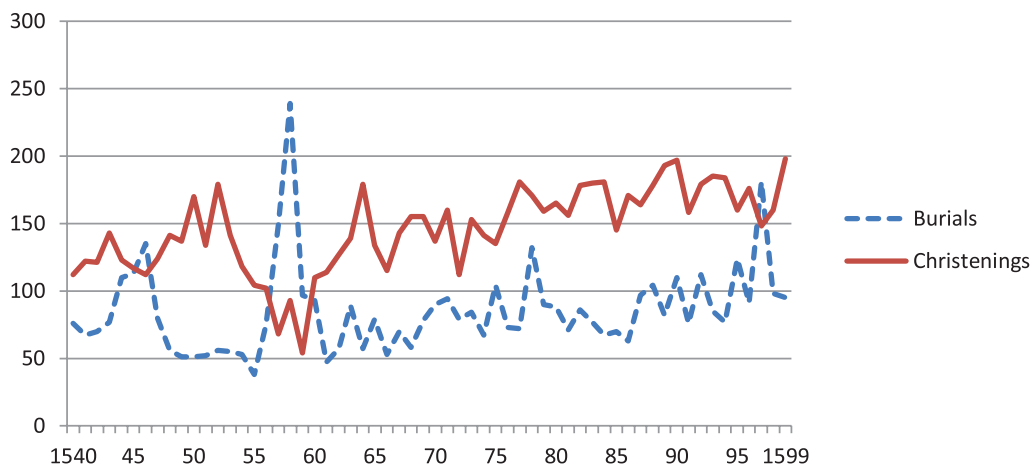


Figure 3. Total burials and christenings, 1540-99

Looking specifically at child burials across all parishes, compared to an aggregate christening ratio of 103.2 boys for every 100 girls, 100.3 boys were buried for every 100 girls¹⁸. However, in the eight parishes in which child burials were differentiated throughout the recording period¹⁹, the proportions of male and female children that were buried were not significantly different and as such there is no statistical evidence that boys or girls received better care in infancy or childhood²⁰. Put another way, there is no evidence that the proportions of boys and girls not reaching adulthood were different. In these eight parishes, the burials of infants and children averaged 40 per cent of all burials (from 32 per cent at Braunston to 48 per cent at Easton Maudit). At the time, infant mortality is thought to have been much higher in towns²¹.

At this point it is worth considering that not all the children that were buried had been christened and this seems more likely with new born infants that died aged only a few days. However, since christening in the sixteenth century is thought to have usually occurred within one or two weeks of a birth²² the overall effect, which will act to depress the christenings to burials ratio a little, is likely to be small. Furthermore, the registers sometimes record a burial in the form, 'A child of John Smith was buried' without giving the name of

18 Children here probably means up to teenage years.

19 Braunston, Courtenhall, Easton Maudit, Kislingbury, Little Houghton, Northampton St Giles, Spratton, Thorpe Malsor.

20 466 boys were buried out of 2033 christenings, 476 girls were buried out of 1964 christenings, $p=0.33$.

21 See R. Woods, 'Infant mortality in Britain: A survey of current knowledge on historical trends and variations', In, A. Bideau, B. Desjardins and H.P. Brignoli (Eds), *Infant and Child Mortality in the Past*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1997, p.74.

22 See Wrigley and Schofield, p.96. In the sixteenth century, baptism was encouraged on the first Sunday or holy day following the birth unless there was good cause not to.

the child. This may have occurred because the child had not been christened although there are other explanations such as the minister's forgetfulness.

The annual average number of christenings from 1540 to 1599 across all parishes was 145.8, approaching twice the annual average burial rate (85.3) which as noted above may be an underestimate. Coinciding with the spike in burials around 1558, christenings fell across all parishes from 141 in 1553 to 102 in 1556, 68 in 1557, 93 in 1558 and 54 in 1559 before rising again. This coincidence of a sharp decrease in childbirth with unusually high mortality is to be expected and has been observed elsewhere²³. Harvest failures cause a drop in real incomes and lowered food consumption exacerbates diseases associated with malnutrition. The mirroring of burials and christenings at this time is another indicator that registers were being recorded dutifully in this period, although probably not without some omissions.

As was noted above, many of the original registers dating from 1538 were written-up in later time and a further question that can be asked of the registers is how conscientious was the writing-up of records pre-dating 1558 in particular? Comparing the numbers of events in the 15 years from 1540-1555 and 1561-1576, and thus avoiding distorting comparisons through the mortality crisis that intervened, it appears that, where it occurred, there was no neglect in the transcription of records pre-1558²⁴. However, this has to be set against the reality that in many other parishes the records of vital events pre-dating Elizabeth I were probably discarded.

As well as statistical interpretation, it is worthwhile taking into account some impressionistic feelings about the quality of a register and three areas deserve comment. First, many of the registers dating from 1538 are late sixteenth century transcripts and it seems likely that some of the earlier material had become lost or illegible in whole or part. Occasionally, an entry contains a blank space where, for example, a child's name is omitted but the parents' names are given and this may have been a consequence of illegibility in what was being copied at the time. There is a suggestion therefore that if entire entries were illegible or lost through damage they were excluded in the transcript, for obvious reasons, but no mention that an event had been omitted was ever made. Offsetting this, transcripts carry the signatures of the minister and two churchwardens at the bottom of each page attesting that the copy was a true record²⁵. Secondly, the registers examined for this article were very matter of fact in their recording of events. There are occasional intriguing asides concerning the manner of a person's death by accident or foul play but no mention of recusancy was noted. Thirdly, and based on the relative absence of blank years, impressionistically, the most complete registers in this sample are from Kislingbury and Spratton.

In summary, this article has demonstrated that Northamptonshire's early parish registers covering the rural county return a range of plausible relationships for male/female christenings, christenings to burials, fertility, and trends in population growth. The registers also tracked upturns in burials after bad harvests and epidemics and corresponding reductions in childbirth. Taken together, the aggregate analysis of the rural parish registers from 1540 to 1599 suggests that they are characterised by a good level of reliability. That said, and cautiously generalising from this sample, the headline for family historians is that

23 R. Humphreys, Mortality crises in sixteenth-century Dorking, *Local Population Studies*, No. 39, Autumn 1987, pp.46-53.

24 1558 was chosen as a break point because many register books were copied-up from the start of the reign of Elizabeth I. Across the two 15 year intervals, christenings fell from 2047 to 1907, burials from 1140 to 921, and marriages rose from 397 to 449.

25 This was a requirement of the 1597 Act requiring registers to be kept in a bound book.

in rural parishes there is at least a seven per cent chance that a christening is not recorded, and at least a 20 per cent chance that a burial is not recorded. Extended analysis of late sixteenth century registers including those for larger parishes in towns would help to refine these estimates for the county.

Given that the early registers included in this sample appear to be largely complete, albeit with some reservations about the omission of burials, they lend themselves to deeper analysis of rural life in sixteenth century Northamptonshire. Good quality registers open up many possibilities for local historians such as investigating the seasonality of events, infant and maternal mortality, age at marriage, life expectancy and population change, among many other topics. While relying too much on individual registers from small parishes is always problematic for historical demography, this investigation suggests that aggregate level analysis of these parishes would be worthwhile.

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New insights into the Newton Riot of 1607

ROBERT G. PAGE

Introduction

On Monday 8 June 1607 near the village of Newton-in-the-Willows, north-west of Geddington, forty or fifty people were killed in a bloody encounter which was the culmination of a period of unrest known as the Midland Uprising or Rebellion¹. This article looks at two important documents from the Montagu archive, held by Northamptonshire Record Office, which can add to what is already known about those involved in the events at Newton and offer insights which, I will argue, suggest that some ambiguities in the sequence of events at Newton can be resolved.

Background

The catalyst for the turbulent period in May and June 1607 in Northamptonshire and neighbouring parts of Leicestershire and Warwickshire was a spate of early illegal enclosures and evictions by local landowners, resulting in homelessness for some and hardship for many. The turning over of the newly enclosed lands to pasture for sheep and the consequent reduction in the acreage producing crops, especially corn, was perceived to exacerbate the problems arising from poor harvests, leading to shortages of basic foodstuffs, such as bread, which rose in price beyond what ordinary people could afford. Resentment and desperation over these enclosures and the authorities' failure to act led finally to a series of protests in which men and women converged from a wide area to tear down the hedges and fences and fill in the ditches which marked out an enclosure. Having done this, they moved on to mete out this same treatment to another enclosure. There were significant attacks on enclosures at Haselbech, Rushton and Pytchley in Northamptonshire, as well as Cotesbach and Welham in Leicestershire and Ladbroke, Hillmorton, Withybrook and Chilvers Coton in Warwickshire. Even large towns, especially Leicester, saw unrest and some of their citizens joined the protests.

The movement's charismatic leader and figurehead was John Reynolds.² Edmond Howe, in his continuation of Stow's *Annales*, describes him as a pedlar or tinker and legend has it that he came from Desborough. He acquired the appellation 'Captain Pouch', on account of a large leather pouch or satchel that he always wore and in which he claimed to have 'sufficient matter to defend them against all commers'. Howe reports that the protesters were careful to avoid stealing and violence against any person, reserving their attacks for the enclosures themselves. The credit for this restraint is given to Reynolds, who is said to have assured the protesters that their actions were justified in the eyes of God and the king, that they were simply applying a law that the authorities were unwilling to enforce, and

- 1 Gay, E. F. The Midland Revolt and the Inquisitions of Depopulation of 1607, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, new ser., 18 (1904), pp. 195–244
Hindle, S. Imagining Insurrection in Seventeenth-Century England: Representations of the Midland Rising of 1607, *History Workshop Journal* 66(1) (Autumn 2008), pp. 21–61
Manning, R. B. *Village Revolts: Social Protest and Popular Disturbances in England, 1509–1640*, Oxford, 1988, pp. 229–46
Martin, J. E. *Feudalism to Capitalism: Peasant and Landlord in English Agrarian Development* 1983 pp. 159–215; esp. pp. 166–167 & 201–202
Wake, J. (ed.) – *The Montagu Musters Book A.D. 1602–1623*. Northants Record Soc. vol. VII 1933 (esp. Introduction pp. xlvi – xlix)
Newton Rebels 1607 website: <http://www.newtonrebels.org.uk/rebels/index.htm> (accessed 28/4/2018)
- 2 Walter, J. – Reynolds, John [*alias* Captain Pouch], *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008

that, provided they refrained from violence against the person, they would come to no harm.³ Although the king's representatives confronted the protesters at a number of locations and even made arrests, there was no bloodshed.

That was to change dramatically at the so-called Newton Riot on 8 June 1607. Thomas Tresham of Newton, cousin of the Treshams of Rushton, had already been prosecuted in the Star Chamber in 1597-98 for depopulation and sheep farming. Now he had enclosed an area within Rockingham Forest known as The Brand, where commoners' rights had traditionally been shared between villagers from Geddington, Stanion, Brigstock and Little Oakley⁴. A very large group, said to number a thousand protesters, had gathered and was engaged in tearing down the fences and hedges and filling in the ditches. Despite having some sympathies with the aims of the protesters, King James I had by now become alarmed by this uprising. He was understandably afraid of any rebellion. After all, this was less than two full years after the Gunpowder Plot, when people from the very same part of England had plotted to blow him up in parliament. He therefore issued a proclamation on 30 May 1607, ordering the authorities to put a stop to the 'enclosure riots' and unlawful assemblies, suppressing them by such force as was needed, using the militia.

The Lord Lieutenant of Northamptonshire, Thomas Cecil, 1st Earl of Exeter, was away in London, so it fell to his deputy, Sir Edward Montagu of Boughton, with the support of Sir Anthony Mildmay of Apethorpe, a former High Sheriff of the county and a man with some military experience, to carry out the king's wishes in dispersing the protesters at Newton and putting a stop to their activities. There is considerable irony in Montagu's involvement here. He is known to have been opposed personally to the principle of enclosure, a stance already adopted by his father and grandfather, and this is well illustrated by the draft of a letter in his own hand, written in 1635⁵. It is addressed to the Commissioners at the Exchequer who had been appointed to settle matters in a dispute over common rights in Brigstock and Benefield. Both Montagu and the Earl of Warwick had land there and both were opposed to enclosure, but the Commissioners had proposed compensating Lord Montagu with an enclosure. Montagu writes:

[Lord Warwick] *very nobly and worthily hath protested against us enclosing, shall I be made an introducing incloser of commons? I must confess I cannot think of it without much trouble of mind. I thank God [hitherto?] I have not been a greedy incloser and I hope by his Grace that he will not suffer me to go out of the world with that [stigma?] and scandal. Therefore, I am resolved and do protest. I shall never do it willingly.*

This anti-enclosure stance was maintained by subsequent generations of the family right down to the death of the last Duke of Montagu in 1790.

The precise details of the sequence of events at Newton are not absolutely clear, but a contemporary second-hand account⁶, gives most of the following basic scenario:

Montagu and Mildmay were unable to raise a sufficient force of militia, possibly because of strong sympathies with the protesters on the part of many members of the militia (in fact,

3 Stow, J. and Howes, E. *The Annales or Generall Chronicle of England ... unto the ende of the present yeere*, 1614 (1615)

4 Manning, R. B. *Village Revolts: Social Protest and Popular Disturbances in England, 1509-1640*, Oxford, 1988, pp. 240

5 NRO Montagu volume 3, folio 217.

6 Letter from the Earl of Shrewsbury to Sir John Manners et al. Whytehall 11 June 1607. Quoted in Nichols' *History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester*, IV(1), p. 83

as we shall see later, three men who had taken part in the 1605 musters of the militia are known to have been involved in the uprising and may well have been at Newton⁷) so Montagu and Mildmay improvised by arming their own servants and estate workers and putting together an *ad hoc* force, some on foot and some mounted.

Montagu tried to get a peaceful conclusion and is known to have had negotiations with some of the townspeople of Kettering.

Arriving at Newton, Montagu and Mildmay confronted the protesters and commanded them, in the name of the king, to cease their activities and return to their homes. They read the king's proclamation to them twice to no avail. They then ordered their force to attack the protesters, who stood their ground and drove their attackers back.

A second attack was more successful and led to a rout of the protesters. Many escaped, but around forty or fifty were killed, many more were injured and a significant number were captured and imprisoned temporarily in Newton church. They were put on trial at Northampton and some, regarded as ringleaders, were convicted of treason and hanged. Their bodies were quartered and put on display in the towns most directly implicated, such as Kettering, Oundle, Thrapston and Northampton.

This is the generally accepted scenario, but additionally, at some point, two of the Newton protesters were executed by hanging under martial law. It has been suggested⁸ that they were leaders and that the hangings took place in front of the protesters at Newton before the main skirmish.

Two very significant documents in the Montagu archive, held by Northamptonshire Record Office, give us clear, first-hand insights into the Newton Riot. They may not have received the attention they deserve, although both have been mentioned, directly or indirectly, in modern treatments of the events at Newton. As first-hand accounts they should surely take precedence over deductions made from second-hand ones.

Sir Edward Montagu's draft of a reply to a letter from his wife

The first document that gives important insights is on the reverse of a letter to Sir Edward Montagu from his wife in London⁹. She, having heard of the events at Newton and fearing for her husband's safety, wrote to him the next day, on 9 June, to express her concern and also to warn him that the king was very displeased with him for having failed to act more swiftly and decisively. It is worth quoting her letter in full (spellings modernised):

Mr. Mountagu. Reports are here such as it makes me afraid of [for] you, for whatsoever your danger is there, your thanks for your service will be not like your deserts; for I hear our great Majesty use but disgraceful speeches of you. The Lord Lieutenant of your country is gone very favourably appointed yesterday out of this town and it is thought that he will be with you this night at Wellingborough, I hope his coming may and will ease you of agreedel [a great deal?] of care which I fear you will take too much, except your thanks should be more; I pray let all your care now rest to look well to yourself, for you have many heavy friends. I hear there is a great army gathered together akitrin [amounting?] to the number of 5000, God knoweth what

7 Wake, J. (ed.) – *The Montagu Musters Book A.D. 1602-1623*. Northants Record Soc. vol.VII 1933

8 Hindle, S. *Imagining Insurrection in Seventeenth-Century England: Representations of the Midland Rising of 1607*, *History Workshop Journal* 66(1) (Autumn 2008), pp. 21–61

9 NRO Montagu Vol 191; letter dated 9 June 1607 from Lady Montagu in London to her husband at Boughton and draft reply on reverse.

their intent is, there is divers reports go but there is no certainty of it. It is said that they came all to Boughton to you to speak with you but I hope it is not true, for I fear if it be true that they were there it was for no good. All your friends here wish that you had tarry [tarried?] here to see the end of the parliament, and so wish I too, Thus being desirous to hear from you I commit you to God.

London the 9th of June 1607

Your Loving wife

Eliza. Mountagu

I have not been well ever since your going down, and the stew of the country makes that my mind is not quiet

Montagu drafted his reply on the reverse of this letter. It is undated. We cannot know how long his wife's letter had taken to reach him, but this reply must have been written within a few days of the Newton Riot while the events were still vivid in his memory.

As can be seen, there are crossings out and alterations. The first sentence has been deleted and the entire draft begun afresh. It is very challenging to decipher but much of it can be read. Just a few short passages are illegible, partly because of damage to the document and partly because the handwriting is so impenetrable.

The most significant passage in the draft letter reads, I believe, as follows (with gaps that I cannot decipher):

Some men of Ketteringperswaded by the better sorte mett me on ...day in the afternoone as I went to Warkton they would desist but they forgot that the next day yet I kept my word with them for ii [two] that nyt [night] being taken I caused them to be hanged at Kettering.

Esther S. Cope quotes from this draft letter in her biography¹⁰ of Sir Edward Montagu (later Lord Montagu), but in quoting this same fragmented passage, Ms Cope omits the two words 'that nyt', which I believe are key to understanding the chronology. The legible parts of this sentence contain enough to make it clear that the day before the riot (a Sunday) Montagu had parleyed with a representative group of protesters from Kettering and made an agreement with them that they would desist [from direct action?], which some of them promptly broke by taking part in the riot. He recognised two of them among the prisoners taken alive and had them hanged at Kettering the next day or very soon after. I believe that these are the two hangings under martial law that have been assumed by some writers to have taken place at Newton itself in the early part of the proceedings prior to the general bloodshed. I believe also that this draft letter, only partially understood, is the main source for the misapprehension. Since Montagu is confiding to his wife in such detail, and clearly wanting to emphasise how decisive he has been on the king's behalf, he would surely have told her about any earlier hangings at Newton itself.

10 Cope, E.S. *The Life of a Public Man: Edward, First Baron Montagu of Boughton, 1562-1644*, Philadelphia, 1981

There is another contemporary account that has relevance to this but it is equally open to misinterpretation. This is a despatch, dated June 26, from Zorzi Giustinian, Venetian Ambassador in England, to the Doge and Senate reporting to his masters on the events in England¹¹. He states that ‘at last, though not without bloodshed, the royal troops have suppressed the rebels in Northampton. They had fortified themselves and defended themselves with arms, but being terrified by the death of some of their leaders, who were captured and hanged in their sight, they agreed to surrender.’ This account is evidently a ‘broad-brush’ summary of what he has gleaned from rumour and gossip. It is clear from Sir Edward Montagu’s account that there was no mass surrender at Newton and no other contemporary account describes one. If hangings put an end to the rebellion, we should surely believe Montagu himself, when he says that it was the two at Kettering, after the event, but before the judicial executions at Northampton.

Montagu’s same draft letter is the source of another frequently quoted and significant comment:

Our country since this execution stands quiet, only there is much muttering and murmuring at this last action specially by women who tasted the smart as well as the men.....

Montagu clearly wants his wife to understand that he has succeeded in restoring order and that this is largely due to the two hangings at Kettering. Again Esther Cope quotes this passage, but she has ‘since this occasion’ where I see ‘since this execution’, which, if I am correct, again emphasises the importance of these hangings and lessens the likelihood of there having been others at Newton.

‘The Pardon Document’

The other important document that allows us new insights is what I shall refer to as ‘The Pardon Document’. The crisis precipitated by the Newton Riot forced King James into decisive action. Being unwilling fully to condone the actions of the illegally enclosing landowners, nor to condone the protesters taking the law into their own hands, he issued a Proclamation dated 24 July 1607, which offered to

..... take and receive all the said Offenders..... to our Mercy, and of our Grace freely pardon unto them their said Offences, and all pains of Death or other punishment due for the same, and promise unto them, in the word of their natural Liege Lord and King, that they shall not be in any wise molested or impeached, in Life, Member, Lands or Goods for their said Offences..... So as nevertheless, that before Michaelmas next they do submit themselves, and acknowledge their said Offences before our Lieutenant, Deputy Lieutenant, or Sheriff in the County where they shall remain, whereof Wee will command a Note of Entry to be made and kept.

At Boughton Sir Edward Montagu carried out this duty and the three-page document on which he recorded the names, occupations and places of abode of those who presented themselves to him, to confess their guilt and receive the king’s pardon, has also been preserved in the Montagu archive¹². There were a number of other ‘*Lieutenants, Deputie Lieutenants, or Sheriffes*’ to whom protesters seeking the king’s pardon could present themselves in Northamptonshire, Leicestershire and Warwickshire and no doubt they did so. For example Sir William Turpyn, Deputy Lieutenant of Leicestershire submitted a list of

11 H.F. Brown (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers, Venetian*, vol. XI, 1607-10, London, 1904, p.8 (26 June 1607)

12 NRO Montagu Vol. 13, nos. 18a, b and c

signatories for that county to the Earl of Huntingdon in November 1607¹³, but neither that list nor the document bearing the original signatures seem to have been preserved. In fact the only such document known to have survived is that compiled by Montagu. Fortunately Boughton is very close to Newton, so, although it would not be justified to conclude that all of those whose names are recorded on this pardon document were present at Newton, it seems reasonable to assume that the majority were. They would have the strongest motivation for seeking the pardon.

Before looking at this document in detail, let us consider its significance. The names it bears are the only record of the identities of anyone who may have taken part in the protest at Newton. No-one recorded the names of those who were killed and I have been unable to trace any significant cluster of burials in any parish close to Newton immediately after 8 June 1607 that might account for them. We know none of the names of those who managed to escape but decided not to seek the king's pardon, of whom there must have been a great number. It is especially significant that no record survives of the names of those put on trial later at Northampton. There is no record of burials of those who were executed because they were not buried in any conventional way. The rector of Great Addington is known to have written an account of the Newton Riot in his parish register¹⁴, but even that register is now lost.

Thus those who sought the king's pardon at Boughton have to stand as representatives for all the rest. It is surely right that at least their names should be recorded as accurately as possible. For simplicity's sake I shall refer to them all as signatories, but only a small percentage were able to sign their names. The rest made their marks, nearly all of them distinct and individual. There are only a few simple crosses among them. Their names, occupations and places of abode were added, apparently by Sir Edward Montagu in person. The very idiosyncratic and barely legible handwriting accords with that of the draft reply to his wife's letter, which, we can be confident, is in his own hand.

There are 144 names recorded on the pardon document (not 143 as has previously been asserted and they include two women, not just one). If the estimates of the numbers present at Newton are anywhere near correct, then, given the numbers of those killed or captured and even allowing for the possibility of participants seeking the king's pardon elsewhere than at Boughton, a large percentage of those who escaped must have declined the king's pardon. No doubt some will have thought it was a trap. One can imagine the impassioned debates, for and against confessing involvement, that must have taken place in many villages. Few would have had the courage to go alone, so it is natural that almost all the signatories appear to have arrived in groups from the same village, for mutual encouragement and support. It seems likely, therefore, that the absence of representatives from some nearby towns and villages, most notably perhaps Rothwell and Rushton, does not show that no-one from those places was involved in the protest. It may simply mean that the majority were against confessing or that no individual had the courage to take the lead and form a group to go and sign. In the case of Rushton, under the control of the Tresham family, it can be no surprise that no-one was willing to confess.

It seems also that it took some time for many of the signatories to pluck up their courage. The deadline was set at Michaelmas, which gave them almost two months, but the first to sign was almost a month later on 22 August. Then one (a woman) the next day, followed

13 Letter from the Earl of Huntingdon to the Earl of Salisbury, Ashby, 29 November 1607

14 Bridges, J. *History and Antiquities of Northamptonshire* 1791

by five more men on 24th. There are no more signatures until just two on 6 September, one on 7th and two on 10th. Then another gap until 20 September, when no less than 23 signed, in groups from four different parishes. As the deadline approached, and presumably confidence grew, with signatories seen to return home unharmed after signing, the last two days before the deadline brought a veritable flood of pardon-seekers, 54 on 27 September and 55 on 28th, these last two days alone accounting for 75 *per cent* of the total.

Despite the very challenging handwriting, it is surprising that there is not already a complete transcript of such an important document in the public domain. In fact it appears that only one previous attempt has been made to transcribe it and that transcription has never been published in its entirety, although it does seem to be the source on which modern analyses of the status of the participants in the events at Newton in 1607 have relied. It was made in the 1970s by Kettering author, publisher, educator and campaigner JL Carr, in the course of gathering together and transcribing all the contemporary documentation on the Newton Riot that he could trace. A set of his papers was subsequently deposited at the County Record Office¹⁵.

Where the researcher of today has the advantage over Mr. Carr is in the ready availability online of good-quality images of the pages of all the surviving parish registers of Northamptonshire on the Ancestry genealogical website¹⁶. The pardon document gives the home parish of every signatory. Some names can be matched with individuals in the registers. Thus we can estimate their ages and trace the outlines of their lives. Many of the early registers from the relevant period have not survived, but, even so, it is often possible to match the surnames with families that continue to appear in the registers of their home parish in later times. Many surnames that would otherwise be very difficult to decipher can now be pinned down by this technique. Forenames, being restricted to comparatively few possibilities, are generally much more easily deciphered.

Pages 30–35 show the three sheets of the document on the left-hand pages, with my transcriptions alongside on the right-hand pages. I have not attempted to match the original layout precisely, but I have maintained the exact order of the names and the columns in which they were written. Those names which are personal signatures are shown in **bold**. An asterisk in brackets (*) is substituted for the mark made by each person who was unable to sign. A question mark indicates uncertainty on my part about a name that is particularly difficult to interpret. I have shown the date only at the beginning of the list for that day and at the head of a new column, although in the original it is repeated very frequently. Within each day's list blank lines separate groups of signatories from different villages.

Analysis of those who signed or made their marks

Home town or village

The greatest numbers are from Weldon (36), Corby (29) and Kettering (28), then Broughton (13), Benefield (9), Desborough, Thrapston and Harrowden (6 from each), Naseby (3), Stanion and Lowick (2 each) with just one man from each of Middleton, Thorpe Malsor, Little Oakley and Cransley. The two women were among those from Stanion and Kettering.

15 NRO ROP 1357 A collection of snippets about the Newton Uprising, made by the author J. L. Carr

16 <https://search.ancestry.co.uk/search/db.aspx?dbid=9198> (accessed 14/5/2018)

Occupations

Of the 142 men, 83 (58.5 *per cent*) may be presumed to have been wholly dependent on the land – 62 defining themselves as labourers and 21 as husbandmen. The artisans may also have depended to a greater or lesser extent on the land. There were 8 smiths, 7 butchers, 7 tailors, 6 carpenters, 5 weavers, 5 shoemakers, 4 glovers, 3 coopers, 2 bakers, 1 whittawer, 1 tanner, 1 millwright, 1 mason, 1 chandler and 1 turner. The remaining six men are perhaps the most surprising participants in the uprising, being five shepherds and a woolwinder, for whom the expansion of sheep-rearing might be expected to offer advantages. Their participation may be one of the strongest indications of the extent to which the enclosures disrupted a whole customary way of life.

Membership of the Militia

Three signatories had taken part in the 1605 musters of the militia. They were Robert Hipwell of Broughton, husbandman; Mark Haselwood of Kettering, husbandman; William Checkle of Weldon, smith.¹⁷

The contribution of JL Carr

The only surviving building that may have a significant connection with the events in Newton is the redundant parish church of St Faith, where it is reputed that the captured rioters were temporarily held. Despite its use as a field study centre, it stands almost forgotten, isolated in the fields outside the remains of the village. The credit for the fact that it does still stand is entirely due to the novelist and publisher JL Carr, author of *A Month in the Country*. The church in his novel is redolent of Newton church, transposed to another part of the country for his literary purposes, but it cannot truly be identified with it¹⁸, as some have suggested.

Carr was a Yorkshireman who, having made the move to Northamptonshire, became as committed to the county as any native. The fascinating story of his eventful life and his passionate campaigning for the causes he held dear make him one of the most intriguing of adoptive residents of our county. He had already seen and mourned the destruction of one of the county's churches through neglect and vandalism, that of the deserted village of Faxton. Here at Newton he found another redundant church serving an almost deserted village, the tiny present-day hamlet being the only vestige of what had been a thriving community until Tresham's evictions and enclosure. Despite its historic importance, the Church of England, very possibly unaware of its significance, would have preferred Newton church to be demolished and to be rid of responsibility for it, but they met more than their match in JL Carr. His determined campaign to stop the decline of the church through vandalism and cannibalisation by members of the clergy and others is well documented in his biography by Byron Rogers *The Last Englishman*¹⁹.

Carr assembled all the documentary evidence he could trace to justify his fight for the survival of the church and to enlist the support of anyone with influence who would listen. He was aware of some at least of the relevant Montagu documents at the Record Office. His attempt at a transcription of the pardon document was a part of the file of papers he duplicated and distributed to potential supporters. It seems that this transcription has become quite widely known among historians.

There is a widely-held misapprehension that Captain Pouch took part in the Newton Riot and was among those arrested there and put on trial at Northampton. It seems that JL Carr

17 Wake, J. (ed.) – *The Montagu Musters Book A.D. 1602-1623*. Northants Record Soc. vol.VII 1933

18 Bob Carr (son of JL Carr): personal communication

19 Rogers, B. *The Last Englishman. The Life of J.L. Carr*, Aurum Press, 2003

believed this or perhaps it may have suited his purpose to adopt this legend for the romance and melodrama it provided to his campaign to save Newton church. In fact Reynolds had been apprehended at Withybrook in Warwickshire several days earlier. The Earl of Huntingdon, having arrived at Leicester and assessed the situation, wrote to the Earl of Salisbury on 6 June, to tell him he had several prisoners and giving his reasons for deciding to send only Reynolds 'the chiefest leader and director of the rebellious company' to London to be examined by the Privy Council. In a postscript he confirms that his cousin had received the prisoner²⁰. We learn from Howes²¹, writing just a few years later, in his continuation of Stow's *Annales*, that Reynolds was found guilty of treason and that he was executed in an 'exemplary' manner.

Apart from minor variations of spelling, I concur with JL Carr on the interpretation of exactly two-thirds of the names of the signatories to the 'Pardon Document', but there are 48 on which we disagree. One of them is omitted from his transcript (Will Salmon of Kettering); one of his men is, I believe, a woman (Eleanor, the wife of Richard Wright of Kettering, whereas he has seen the name Henry Wright); we disagree on the occupation of Gyles Phillip of Weldon, which he has read as 'millminder' and I believe to be 'wollwinder'.

Where a group from the same parish has been recorded together, Sir Edward Montagu's standard practice is to write the name of the parish in full for the first of the group and then to put 'of the same' for the rest of them. There are several instances where this has misled JL Carr into recording men as belonging to the wrong village. There is one case where he appears to have made two attempts at transcribing the same name and included them both on his list.

There are one or two names that may never be pinned down definitively. One is the chandler from Thorpe Malsor, who signed his own name on 28 September. Although the registers here go right back to 1538, his handwriting is so impenetrable that I can match no name to be found in the register with this signature with any confidence. The best suggestion I can offer is 'Thomas Stanian'.

Social backgrounds of signatories

Now that we have a more accurate knowledge of the identities of the signatories to the Pardon Document and their home parishes we can combine this with information from other sources such as parish registers and wills to gain insights into these people and their motivations for taking part in the protests.

The six signatories from Desborough

The Desborough group are of interest for several reasons. First, and most obviously, there is the legend that John Reynolds, or 'Captain Pouch', originated from Desborough. There is, however, no firm evidence for or against this. The earliest appearance of the name Reynolds in the Desborough parish register is that of Susan Reynolds of Desborough marrying Robt. Brayne of Heyford on 12 February 1624/25. As a pedlar or tinker John Reynolds would move from village to village, so he may simply have been based at Desborough when he first came to prominence. If there is any truth in this, it can be presumed that his message would have been well known to the people of Desborough. They could hardly be unaware of what had happened to their neighbours in Rushton and Newton or be any less affected

20 Bickley, F. (ed.) *Report on the manuscripts of the late Reginald Rawdon Hastings, Esq. of the Manor House, Ashby de la Zouch* vol. IV, HMSO, 1947, pp. 193-194

21 Stow, J. and Howes, E. *The Annales or Generall Chronicle of England ... unto the ende of the present yeere*, 1614 (1615)

by the food shortage. Furthermore, the manor of Desborough was held by the Catholic Poulton family, whom the villagers probably regarded as allies of the Catholic Treshams and likely therefore to treat the inhabitants of Desborough in a similar way before long, so it is not surprising that at least six men from Desborough took part in the protests.

The earliest surviving parish register for Desborough covers the period 1571 to 1649²², so it gives us a good opportunity to build a picture of the lives of the six Desborough signatories.

They fall neatly into two groups of three, from different generations. In 1607 Daniell Rogers, Marke Alderman and Richard Launder were all probably in their thirties and all had young families to raise. William Howson and the two men called Wright (Edward and Thomas) are older, probably nearer to fifty years old. The cases of three of these men are revealing in various ways:

The parish register records the baptism of Joane, daughter of Richard Lawnder, labourer, on 13 June 1607, just five days after the Newton Riot, so she must have been born at the height of the protests. There were already three older children in the family. Sadly Joane was buried on 21 September, the very next day after Richard put his name to the Pardon Document. Her death may have been a factor in his decision to seek the pardon and the hardships of the family cannot be discounted as a contributory cause of her death.

Marke Alderman, labourer, is worthy of note in that his father, Gyles, who was buried on 16 June 1604, described as ‘an ould man’, left a will²³, dated 10 June 1604 and proved on 25 June. He calls himself a husbandman and makes Marke his principal beneficiary and executor, so it is rather surprising that just three years later in 1607, Marke is reduced to the status of labourer. Perhaps this in itself is indicative of the pressures that induced him to join the protests.

William Howson, labourer, is in fact William Houghton, his name presumably mis-heard by Sir Edward Montagu. He married Anne Cooper at Desborough on 2 November 1581, when he was described as ‘of Geddington, servant to Poule Eward’. Anne was said to be ‘then servant unto Phillippe Pulton gent.’ Phillip Poulton was the younger brother of the current lord of the manor of Desborough, Ferdinando Poulton. The 1607 Pardon Document is the last record linking the Houghton family with Desborough. They appear to have moved away. Anne’s former role as servant to the Poulton family may have made them *personae non gratae* after William’s involvement with the protests.

It has not been possible to prove any definite kinship between the six Desborough men, even in the case of the two called Wright.

A family group from Weldon

There is a readily-identified family group from Weldon. These are Anthony Checkly, blacksmith, William Checkle, smith and member of the militia, Jho Checkly, husbandman, Gyles Phillip, wollwinder and Jhon Durvile, labourer. Jho Checkly and Jhon Durvile made their marks; the other three were able to sign their own names. The surviving parish registers of Weldon go back only as far as 1595²⁴, but there are wills to supplement what the register can tell us.

22 NRO 103P/9

23 NRO NWill (1st series) Book Z fol. 8

24 NRO 347P/1

Gyles Phillip, the woolwinder, married Joan Checkley, sister of John, the husbandman, on 25 October 1598. John and Joan are beneficiaries of the will of their father, Edward Checkley, made and proved in 1588²⁵. William Checkley, blacksmith, Edward's brother, is another beneficiary of and witness to the will. Thus he is uncle to John and Joan. It is not possible to pin down the exact relationship of Anthony Checkley to these others, but, since he shares with William the occupation of blacksmith, it seems safe to assume that they were related and very possibly worked together. Anthony provides the connection with Jhon Durvile, since he married Elisabeth Devell, probably Jhon's sister, on 5 November 1607. Whether these two were brought together by the events of June that year or were already sweethearts we cannot tell. William Checkley may not have been very much older than his nephew and niece. These three all have children baptised contemporaneously in the first decade of the seventeenth century, whereas the other two appear to be a decade or so younger. In 1607 their ages may all have been within the 25 – 45-year-old bracket.

Thus we have two blacksmiths, a husbandman, a woolwinder and a labourer, all closely related, campaigning together for their common good. The involvement of the woolwinder now seems less surprising. He is supporting his wife's family, whatever his own interests may have been.

Conclusion

The Montagu archive contains first-hand documentary evidence of events during the Midland Uprising, which, as primary sources, should take precedence over other second-hand accounts. They show that two hangings under martial law took place at Kettering and give no support to the suggestion that there were hangings at Newton itself. There may yet be further insights to be had from other uncatalogued material in this archive.

We have the names of 142 men and two women who took part in some way in the Midland Uprising, many of whom were probably present at the Newton Riot. We know the occupations of the men and the parishes from which they came. We can learn much about them by correlating information from parish registers and wills. I have chosen to focus on two groups of personal relevance for me. Richard Lawnder of Desborough and Gyles Phillip of Weldon are both direct ancestors of mine. Others may like to follow this interesting line of research to find out more about the lives of signatories from other parishes and identify family relationships connecting other groups of individuals.

Acknowledgements

First I must thank Andy North, researcher at Northamptonshire Record Office and Crispin Powell, archivist to the Duke of Buccleuch and former archivist at Northamptonshire Record Office, for their help and guidance in identifying the most significant documents relating to the Newton Riot in the Montagu Archive, for their valuable suggestions in following them up and for their helpful comments on the manuscript; also Carenza Black for her assistance with the copying of the documents.

My sincere thanks are due to Prof. Steve Hindle for his kind encouragement and for making his own published writings on the Midland Uprising available to me; similarly Prof. John Walter for his insights into Captain Pouch.

I am grateful to Bob Carr, JL Carr's son, who continues to run his father's Quince Tree Press as a family business, for further encouragement in developing the work on the Newton Riot begun by his father.

Finally and most importantly I must thank the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry KT for permission to use the images of the documents.

We and everye of us, whose names are hereunderwritten, Comynge before Sr Edward Montagu knyghte, One of the Deputye Lieutenants for the Countye of Northampton, Doe moste humblye acknowledge our heynous offence, Comytted against the kings moste Excellent Maty in the late seditions, Insurrection and Rebellion within the Countye of Northampton, upon pretence of Depopulation & unlawfull Inclosure, And are moste hartelye sorye for the same, Acknowleginge with all thankfulnes, his Maty gracious and exceedinge clemencye, in setting wide open unto us, the gate of his mercye, Begginge & Cravinge moste humblye to be Receyved into his Maty gracious mercye, And to be made partakers & have the benefite of his moste large & liberall Pardon so freelye of his owne grace and mere Motion offered unto us by his Royall Proclamacion Given at his Maties Castle of Windesor the xxiiiith Daye of Julye in the Fifte yeare of his Raigne of greate Brytaine & Franncce & Ireland,

God save the king

22 August

John Medowes of Kettering: baker

23 August

Winifred Turner (★) her marke of Stannion

24 August

Robert (★) Middleton of Kettering: butcher his marke

Richard (★) Parker of Kettering: butcher his marke

Jhon (★) Leach of Kettering: taylor his marke

Jhon Belcher of Kettering: weaver

Thomas (★) Wallis of Kettering: butcher his marke

6 September

William Peake (★) of middelton husbandman his marke

William Robinsonn of luffwick : tanner

7 Septemb.

Jhon Yule (★) of Broughton: millwright his marke

10 Septemb.

George Sal(★)mon of Kettering: laborer his marke

Will Salmon (★) laborer his marke of Kettering

20 Sept.

Jhon (★) Bellamy of Weldon: laborer his marke

Anthony Checkly of the same : blacksmith

John Woodcooke of the same : carpenter

Jhon Parnell of the same : shomaker

Edward (★) Roodin of the same : taylor his marke

Daniell (★) Rogers of Desborough: butcher his marke

Thomas (★)Wright of the same: laborer

Edward (★) Wright of the same: husbandman

Marke (★) Alderman of the same: laborer

Richard (★) Lawnder of the same: laborer

William (★) Howson of the same: laborer

Jhon (★) Coles of Benefield: shepheard

Edward (★) Coles of the same: shepheard

Henry Rowland (?) of the same: taylor

Oliver Rowland of the same: laborer

27 Sept. (contd.)

20 Sept. (contd.)

George (★) Bull of Corby: cowper
 Robert (★) Bull of the same: cowper
 William (★) Bull of the same: cowper
 William (★) Coles of the same: laborer
John Blunket of the same: shomaker
 William (★) Tanner of the same: laborer
 Thomas (★) White of the same: laborer
 Thomas (★) Peach of the same: laborer

27 Sept.

Thomas Johnson of Broughton: tailor
Thomas Chambers of the same: husbandman
 Robert (★) Hipwell of the same: husbandman
 Edward (★) Lilly of the same: smith
 Abraham (★) Freeman of the same: laborer
 Richard (★) Shred of the same: laborer
 William (★) Parker of the same: taylor
 Robt (★) Sumpter of the same: husbandman
Roboart Llyllye of the same: smith

Gilbeart Collier of Corby: shomaker
 Jhon (★) Andrew of the same: laborer
 Thomas (★) Philips of the same: whittawer
 Richard (★) Heathcoke: laborer
Robert Latimer of the same: carpenter
 William (★) Bullivant of the same: laborer
 Richard (★) Risby of the same: husbandman
 Anthony (★) Judde of the same: laborer
 Henry (★) Clark of the same: laborer
William Setchell shomaker: of the same
 Jhon (★) [surname omitted] of the same: laborer

William (★) Morrice of Weldon: laborer
 Thomas (★) Cooke of the same: laborer

Edmonde Smythe of Kettering: laborer
 Rich (★) Astell of the same: laborer

Will (★) Larrett of Weldon: laborer
 Rich (★) Rowlett of the same: laborer
 Jhon (★) West of the same: laborer
 Will (★) Taylor of the same: laborer
 Henry (★) Laxon of the same: glover
 Wilm (★) Lamly of the same: laborer
Thomas Rowell of the same: glover
 Jhon (★) Browne of the same: carpenter
 Tho (★) Seamarke of the same: laborer
William Checkle of the same: smith
 Saunders (★) Lamly of the same: carpenter
John Larratte of the same: husbandman
 Rich (★) Browne of the same: carpenter
 Tho (★) Checkley of the same: husbandman
 Jhon (★) Coles of the same: laborer
Obadia Godfree of the same: shomaker
 Rich (★) Elmer of the same: laborer

Thomas (★) Stille of Corby: laborer
 Thom (★) Rowlett of the same: laborer
 Jhon (★) Bayly of the same: husbandman

Jhon (★) Hitchcoke of Weldon : mason
Gyles Phillip of the same: wollwinder
 Jhon (★) Durvile of the same: laborer
 Willm (★) Knight of the same: glover
 Henry (★) Knight of the same: butcher

Nicolas (★) Emry of Thrapston: husbandman

Reynold (★) Parfy of Benefield: laborer
 Robt (★) Taylor of the same: laborer

Richard (★) Smith of Stannion: laborer

Thomas (★) Jordan of Luffwick: husbandman

28 Sept.

Christopher (★) Borrow of Corby: weaver
 William (★) Borrow of the same: weaver
 Thomas (★) Redshaw of the same: laborer
 Richard (★) Collier of the same: husbandman
 Christopher (★) Peach of the same: husbandman

Thomas (★) Billington of Thrapston: laborer
 Robt (★) Campion of the same: laborer
 Edward (★) West of the same: laborer
 William (★) Boyce of the same: smith
 Ralfe (★) Burkit of the same: laborer

William (★) Bosworth of Navesby: shepherd
 Jhon (★) Ashby of the same: husbandman
 Edward (★) Richardson of the same: laborer

Thomas (★) Freeman of Weldon: laborer
 Richard (★) Mackrell of the same: laborer
 George (★) Wright of the same: smith
 Jhon (★) Draper of the same: laborer

William (★) Hay of Harrowden: weaver
 Thomas (★) Worlich of the same: smith
 Bennett (★) Dennis of the same: taylor

William (★) Cooy of Broughton: laborer

Thomas(?) Stanian(?) of Thorpe Malsworth:
 chandeler

Lyon Rowell of Benefield: shepherd

Jhon (★) Croft of Little Okeley: laborer

Robert Wysse of Broughton: husbandman
Robert Page of the same: butcher

Jhon (★) Baker of Weldon: laborer
 Tho. (★) Baker of the same: turner

28 Sept. (contd.)

Mark (★) Haselwood of Kettering: husbandman
 Robert (★) Binder of the same: butcher
 Henry (★) Belcher of the same: baker

Lewis (★) Love of Weldon: laborer

Henry Randes of Kettering: husbandman
 Henry (★) Baker of the same: husbandman
Edward Cave of the same: husbandman
Rowland Simones of the same: taylor
 Will (★) Cave of the same: husbandman
 Henry (★) Pichly of the same: smith

William (★) Driden of Cransley: laborer

Robert (★) Eave of Harrowden: laborer
 William (★) Abbot of the same: shepheard
 Edward (★) Paybody of the same: laborer

William (★) Jenkins of Kettering: husbandman
 Thomas (★) Parish of the same: laborer
 Thomas (★) Meadows of the same: laborer
Richard Shred of the same: weaver
 Theophilus (★) Clarke of the same: glover

Jhon (★) Meadows of Corby: laborer
 Richard (★) Scott of the same: laborer

Hugh (★) Taylor of Benefield: laborer
 Thomas (★) Coles of the same: laborer

William (★) Andrew of Kettering: laborer
 William (★) Tomlin of the same: carpenter
 Richard (★) Wright of the same: laborer
 Eleanor his wife (★)

A Northamptonshire Ox House

AMIR BASSIR

Standing at the edge of Heyford Park, with the River Nene meandering gently past, is an unusual historic building: a horse-shoe plan ox house dating to the early- to mid- 18th century (SP 65985 59318). The building is located at the western edge of Upper Park, one of three land parcels now associated with Dovecote Farm. The fields are bordered to the west and south by the River Nene and are flooded annually and considered very fertile for arable use though at present they are mixed pasture. The fields also form part of the River Nene Regional Parks meadow re-creation project, supporting a range of protected plant species.¹ Heyford Mill, a historic site listed in the Domesday Survey, is located 130m to the north-west of the ox house and the Nene passes through the mill, meandering southwards. The river forms the parish boundary between Upper Heyford and Flore to the west. The ox house has recently been separated off from the main field and has been subject to restoration and renovation work by the present owner. The area immediately to the west of the building and up to the river is overgrown with small but established trees. Inevitably, due to both its remoteness and proximity to a footpath, the building has been vandalised in the past and subject to arson.

Unfortunately, though not surprisingly, there is little archival material relating directly to the building, though the general agricultural history and development of the area is better documented. The earliest document pertaining to the ox house is a 1758 Catalogue of Sale of the Estate of William, Duke of Powys.² This estate comprised the entirety of the parish of Upper Heyford and was auctioned as 26 Lots. The ox house was included in Lot 7 along with the adjacent fields and an orchard [Fig 1]. Upper Park is described in the document as arable, “with a large well-built Ox-House in ditto for Winter feeding”. It is further noted that “The Upper Park is now Arable, but is as good and rich Ox-feeding ground as any in England; is well water’d, and may be immediately converted to that use”. The catalogue includes a map of the fields and a simple dimensioned plan of the ox-house. The plan shows that the basic form of the ox house has not changed since this time. Writing in 1712 John Morton specifically mentioned Heyford Park as well as the nearby *Floure Lake* (Flore) as being prime pieces of upland for pastoral use:

*Most of the lordships, besides the lays of greensod which are left betwixt the furlongs, and in several places betwixt each of the lands, are so advantageously situate, that they have a valley of fruitful meadow adjoining to a brook or river, which in summer yields them a stock of hay, and serves at other times for feeding their cattle, horses, cows, and sheep. The meadows on the banks of the Nyne and Weland are particularly famous, as being spacious and rich, affording great quantities of excellent hay.*³

In Northamptonshire cattle were reared for two main uses: dairy and beef. Oxen, which in medieval times were the main draught animal, began to be replaced from the 18th century by horses, owing both to economy and improvements to the breeds.⁴ The 19th-century method of cattle farming in the county comprised summer pasturing in preparation for the London markets from July to December. It is estimated that approximately 15,000 head of cattle were sent annually to London at this time.⁵

- 1 River Nene Regional Park 2017, available at <http://www.riverneneregionalpark.org/news/rnrp/meadow-re-creation-project-at-dovecote-farm-upper-heyford/> [accessed 10/4/2017]
- 2 Northampton shire Record Office Ref: ZB0587
- 3 J. Morton. *The Natural History of Northamptonshire*, London, 1712, p.13
- 4 J. Donaldson. *General view of the Agriculture of the County of Northampton*, Edinburgh, 1794, p.51
- 5 W. Pitt. *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Northampton*, London, 1809

Soon after Ladyday, the farmer begins to purchase bullocks and the breeds of Shropshire and Herefordshire are preferred. In the course of summer a few Scotch and Welsh cattle are bought in. The flock never exceeds 70 bullocks and heifers. He begins selling off in September, and by the beginning of February the whole is disposed of.⁶

It was generally intended that the full stock of cattle be sold by December except those which the grazier may “keep on in sheds for the Christmas market”.⁷ Bearn, writing in 1852, also described the process:

*The neat cattle consists often of cows kept for the dairy, bought in as heifers, milked a few years and then sold out again, down calving or made fat for the butcher. When cows are not kept in the dairy, beasts or barren cows are purchased in the winter... They are turned out in the summer on the grass land to get fat, or sold in the spring to the grazier.*⁸

Stall feeding is recorded as being uncommon in Northamptonshire and few farms were equipped with feeding-sheds. It is recorded that a large county farm, from which two to three-hundred oxen were annually sent to Smithfield market, stalled only between twenty or thirty oxen. The farm’s sheds were described as being “old, of no particular construction or contrivance, timber and thatch, and the oxen simply tied to a post”.⁹

An information board installed by the River Nene Regional Park suggests that the building incorporates re-used stone from a former manor house that stood in the vicinity. Investigation of the building’s fabric and historic background supports this notion. The location of the manor house remains uncertain. Baker states that it stood in Upper Park, thereby placing it in close proximity to the ox house.¹⁰ This view is repeated by Whellan¹¹ and is supported by the current property owner. The Heyford local history website states that Parish records indicate that the house was derelict and abandoned by the mid 17th century.¹² An alternative source of materials for the ox house may have been the quarry pits and former medieval buildings which can be seen as earthworks in fields to the east of the site, immediately to the south of Upper Heyford.

The estate at Heyford came to the Dukedom of Powis through the marriage of William Lord Herbert, son of the Earl of Powis, to the daughter of Sir Thomas Preston in 1685.¹³ Prior to this the land was in possession of the Morgan family whose manor house stood in Upper Park. Upper Heyford was enclosed in 1712 by the Duke of Powis. Enclosure by private agreement, prior to Parliamentary award was common in Northamptonshire in the 16th and 17th century, and allowed for an increase in agricultural productivity by concentrating previously dispersed holdings. Enclosure was also accompanied by improvements and repair to roads and bridleways. The county’s two main drove roads, Welsh Road and Banbury Lane, passed within a relatively close distance of Upper Heyford. Along

6 J, Donaldson. *General view of the Agriculture of the County of Northampton*

7 J, Baker. *An Essay on the Farming of Northamptonshire*, London, 1852

8 W, Bearn. *Prize Essay on the Farming of Northamptonshire*, London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1852, p.17

9 W, Pitt. *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Northampton*, p.28

10 G, Baker. *The History and Antiquities of the County of Northampton*, 1 Vols, London: John Bowyer Nichols and Son, 1830, p.183

11 F, Whellan. *History, Topography, and Directory of Northamptonshire*, London, 1874, p.322

12 Nether Heyford History, available online at <http://netherheyford.org.uk/website/html/history.html> [accessed 11/4/2017]

13 G, Baker. *The History and Antiquities of the County of Northampton*

The ox house is single-storey and primarily stone-built, with a U or horse-shoe plan with a semi-enclosed yard formed between the open-fronted ranges [Figs 2, 4 & 5]. It measures c.16m in width and 20.5m in length, and the main ranges are each approximately 4.2 x 14.5m. Access to the building is from the south where the central yard opens out between the ranges. As well as the rounded northern range, the outer corners of the linear ranges are curved, a practical design which prevents injury to cattle. To compensate for the curved corners, the gable end is projected outward on timber plates, keeping the roof edges straight.

The primary fabric is a mix of unshaped and roughly-shaped stone rubble, generally laid as courses of different size stones. The gable elevations of the linear ranges have a greater degree of regularity to the coursing and the stones are better shaped than in the long elevations which utilise more rubble, less regularly coursed. Larger, better shaped blocks are used as quoins at the inner gable edges.

The main stone type is pale-mid yellow or orange-brown, fine grained, evenly bedded sandstone with veins and concretions of iron. This is the prevalent building stone seen in the contemporary buildings of Upper Heyford. Occasional mudstone and siltstone rubble can also be found within the walls, though these make up a very small portion of the fabric. The immediate geology of the locale is described as “pale to dark grey and greenish grey, silty and sandy mudstone...weathering yellow, impersistent beds of ferruginous limestone and sandstone.”¹⁷; The ox house is more consistent with the iron-rich, sandy, calcareous stone of the Marlstone Formation, a variable stone with wide-spread use in this area. Lime and cement mortar and pointing are present throughout the building and indicate numerous areas of re-pointing and repair. The south-east corner of the eastern range shows a particularly large area of repair and re-pointing, re-using the existing stonework.

The building formerly had twelve window openings, rectangular in shape, except the pair closest to the end elevations which are half-width. The openings are variable in width, with those of the long elevations measuring between c.2.3m and 2.5m in width and those on the curving elevation measuring c.2.8m. The openings have a uniform height of c.0.8m and the sills, externally, are c.0.8m from the ground. Internally, the openings are splayed, a practical feature to accommodate the horns of the oxen and to prevent injury to the animals [Figs 3 & 7].

The half-width windows of both the western and eastern ranges incorporate moulded stonework in parts of their jambs. This detail is not seen on the other windows and appears to confirm a re-use of stonework. Other sporadic instances of moulded stones were noted amongst the stonework of the elevations. The window openings have been blocked in brick, most likely in the mid 19th century [Fig 6]. The brickwork is in English Bond and comprises hand-made, unfrosted, red bricks with skintle marks parallel with the long edges. The bricks each measure on average c.230mm x 110mm x 90mm. The same brick type was also used to repair parts of the walls.

Cast-iron pintles are located adjacent to each of the window openings. These have a circular section and are attached to thin, tapered plates that are held between the stones of the walls. The pintles are located midway to each jamb and angled towards the openings. It is probable that the openings were formerly shuttered in order to keep the building warm whilst also allowing ventilation.

17 BGS 2017, *British Geological Survey Geology Viewer*, available at <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> [accessed 14/4/2017]

The walls have a fairly uniform thickness of c.0.5m. This is increased internally at the base of the walls by a c.0.4m wide “buttress” that spans the length of the walls, except at the north-west where it has been removed [Fig 3]. In the east range, the buttress stops at the jamb of a former door opening located centrally to north range [Figs 9 & 10]. The area of walling most affected by conservation and repair is the internal face of the curving range. Repairs have been carried out in stone, brick and breeze block. The doorway has been filled in externally with stone but internally is blocked with breezeblocks. On the western external jamb are several stone blocks with moulded edges. This moulding is not continued around the remainder of the door opening and these are probably re-used stones where moulded stones are incorporated into the openings. Of interest are two opposing “niches”, roughly semi-circular full height indentations, in the outer face of each of the linear elevations. The function of these features is unknown.

No evidence of the layout of stalls or tethering posts was seen within the building and no tethering rings were evident on the walls. Given the length of the ranges it can be estimated that the structure could house around twenty head of cattle with stalls located between each window opening, c.3.5m apart, allowing perhaps two animals per stall. This number appears consistent with recorded instances of stall feeding in the county.

A modern brick partition wall is located at the north-east side of the barn in the curved range, abutting the stone wall. A short length of modern brick walling is also built at the north-west corner of the building and helps to support the roof structure.

The roof is a fire-damaged modern replacement with corrugated sheeting [Fig 8]. It is a haphazard structure comprising a number of simple trusses spanning between the walls and posts. The trusses are formed of halved lengths of telegraph poles acting as principal rafters, with rafter ties, also formed of halved lengths of telegraph pole. These elements are held together by the use of metal straps and ties.

The posts supporting the roof on its inner side are modern replacements of those shown on the 1758 plan of the building and are formed of square section, machine-sawn lengths of pine. The posts are, with one exception, placed directly onto the ground; however a single stone post-pad was noted. The pad is a roughly shaped stone with a central square slot into which the post is placed. It is unknown if all of the posts formerly had stone pads; however, it seems probable.

A brick course spans the full length of the walls, carrying a pine wall-plate. The posts also carry a plate which unlike the straight-cut timbers seen elsewhere, is roughly shaped. It is possible that these timbers are re-used from the earlier roof structure or may be re-used from elsewhere. Defunct mortise slots can be seen on several of these timbers, confirming their re-use, however it is unclear if these joints relate to timberwork in this structure.

Within the ranges can be found the fragmentary remains of a former cobbled floor surface which probably fully covered the interior of the building. The yard has a coarse concrete surface, very likely a 20th-century addition. The northern range has a partially concreted floor, a modern surface which has largely deteriorated and fragmented.

During research into this building, a number of heritage and historic building specialists were contacted in order find parallels and other examples of its type. It was concluded that the building represents a rare and possibly unique survival of its type, for which no parallels were found. This is perhaps unsurprising given the ad-hoc nature of vernacular architecture and the lack of planned or systematised farming practice at this time, as well as the generally poor survival of farm buildings of this date. Despite its unusual form and type, the building

fits the local pattern of construction, utilising locally available stone and a thatched roof, materials visible in abundance in local contemporary buildings.

At the time of its construction, in the early to mid 18th century, the county was heavily reliant on agriculture and cattle, with major drovers' routes crossing the area. Thousands of cattle were pastured during the summer months before being driven to market. Other cattle were housed at dairy farms and oxen were used as draught animals, pulling goods and produce.

The building was well-located and well-designed for housing cattle in winter, being adjacent to good pasture land and a source of water. The enclosed plan allowed easy and controlled access for cattle and the rounded corners prevented injury to them. The large splayed windows accommodated the animals' heads, and allowed air-flow in the building. Shutters allowed the windows to be closed to retain heat, and the former thatched roof would have been ideal for insulating the building. The cobbled floors prevented the animals' hooves from churning the ground, particularly in wet conditions.

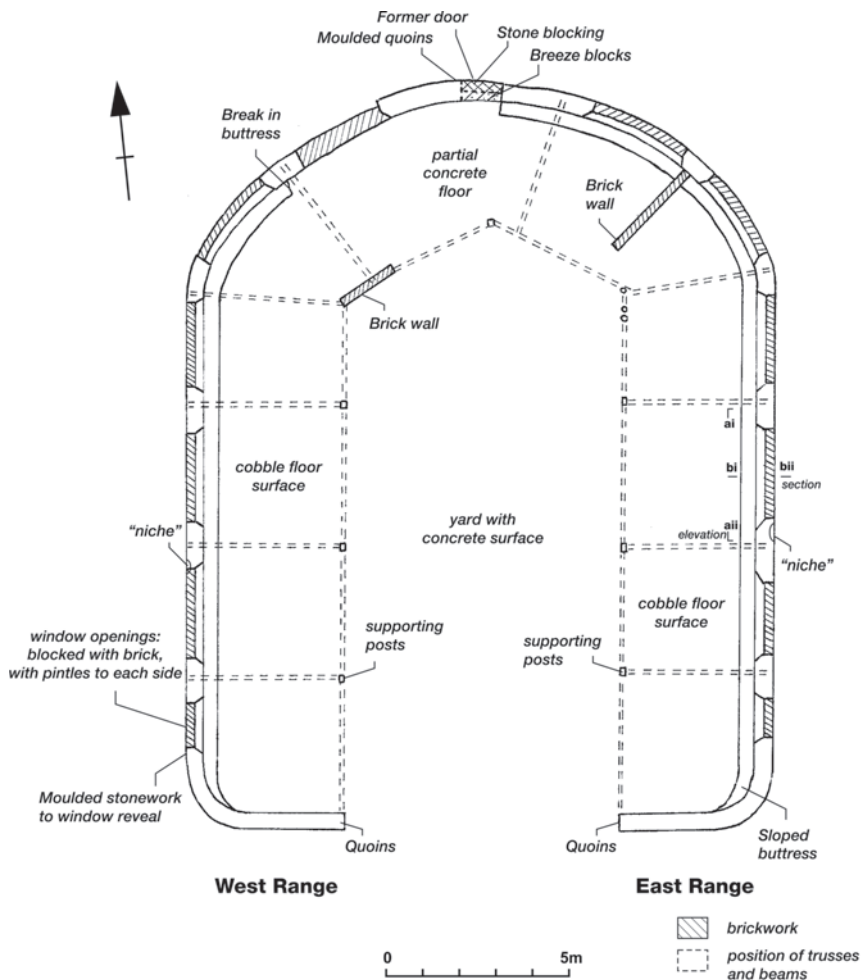


Figure 2. Plan of the Ox House
(Author's drawing)

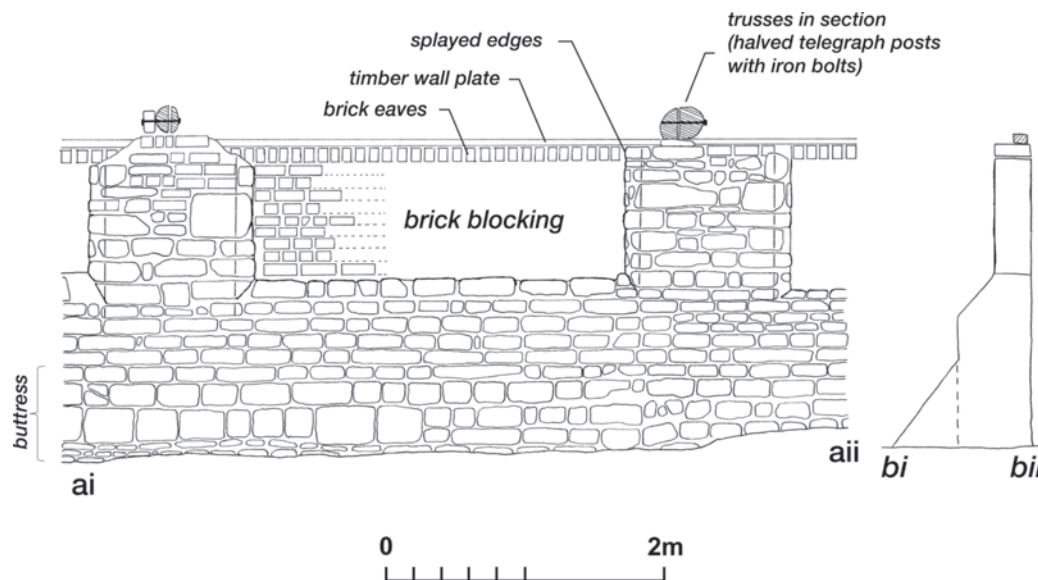


Figure 3. Internal elevation and section through the wall
(Author's drawing)



Figure 4. General view of the Ox House, looking north west
(Author's photograph)



Figure 5. View of the central yard
(Author's photograph)



Figure 6. An example of the blocked windows.
Note the 'niche' at the left of the image.
(Author's photograph)



Figure 7. Internal view of one of the blocked windows
(Author's photograph)



Figure 8. View along the western range, looking north
(Author's photograph)



Figure 9. The curving north range
(Author's photograph)



Figure 10. Blocked doorway at the centre of the north range
(Author's photograph)

John Bridges at the Bodleian

MURRAY JOHNSTON

Anyone researching Northamptonshire in the medieval period will have delved into some 1,300 pages of John Bridges' *History and Antiquities of Northamptonshire*. Bridges' research was completed some 300 years ago, although the *History* itself was published much later in the 18th century. Perhaps not so well-known is that his editors based the published work on a huge collection of material, all carefully hand-written into volumes within Bridges' lifetime.



Figure 1. Portrait of John Bridges by Kneller as the frontispiece to *The History and Antiquities of Northamptonshire*.

The original volumes of research completed by or for John Bridges (1666-1724) were passed through the hands of his heir, his brother, a stationer and bookseller, an editor, William Cartwright of Aynho, and finally to the Rev Peter Whalley. In the last years of the 18th century, the volumes were given to the Bodleian Library at the University of Oxford where they have resided ever since under the name, 'Bridges' Northamptonshire Collections'. Today, the Collection resides at the Bodleian's Weston Library.

My own interest in the collection was piqued upon becoming aware of its existence. While researching Watford parish I found a reference to Belcher's Collect in Coll Armor in Bridges's *History*. Upon inquiry, helpful staff at the College of Arms in London revealed that the College did not possess a collection by Belcher. However, further research at the College indicated an inquiry at the Bodleian Library might be fruitful.



Figure 2. The Weston Library, Oxford.

(Photograph by James Brittain. WilkinsonEyre, architects for the renovation of the Weston Library, formerly the New Bodleian.)

That led to the Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford (vol 3, 1895) from page 642 onward. The relevant pages are available on the internet at <https://books.google.ca/books?id=T-UtAAAAIAAJ> or <https://archive.org/details/ASummaryCatalogueOfWesternManuscriptsV3>

Armed with ten pages from the catalogue, access to the collection was granted, for a specific period, with a reader's card obtained after a short interview on the ground floor of the Weston. There was no cost for the card or for permission to photograph pages within the volumes. On the other hand, permission to publish any of the images in any form involves a fee. I took away over 600 photographs from the collection, all relating to Watford. Images from four pages found a place in my book, *The Watford Knight's Fee*, a narrative of the manors and lands of Watford parish through the medieval period (see www.watfordmanors.com).

The collection comprises 52 volumes. These volumes now carry three different series of references. Bridges' own references are still marked on the volumes. Secondly, the Bodleian's original reference numbers, 16618 to 16669, are the sequence included in the Summary Catalogue. The references necessary to request a viewing of any of the volumes were added by the Bodleian when the collection was merged into MSS Top Northants in about 1885. At a rough guess, the collection contains about 19,000 pages.

The first and third of the aforementioned references reveal three subsets of the collection's volumes. One is MS Top Northants c1 to c39 – these volumes all measure approximately 12" by 8". Volume c39 is an index to the whole of set c, although as the Bodleian notes, this index appears incomplete. Secondly, the volumes MS Top Northants e1 to e8 are slightly

smaller, at approx. 8" x 6". The third set is MS Top Northants f1 to f5 of approx. 7" by 4" in size. Many, but not all, of the individual volumes include an index that is essential for research of a specific name or place. As names of people or places occurred in the text, Bridges commonly wrote them into the left and right margins of each page. These were the names used for indexing.

**16627. (K. 10). In Latin and English, on paper: written in about 1720:
12½ x 8 in., viii + 572 pages.**

Northamptonshire collections, among which are :—

1 (p. 5). A copy of a survey of the river Nen from Northampton to Peterborough, 1606.

2 (p. 15). Names of barons and knights in about 1190–1415, collected from the Fees and Scutage Rolls.

3 (p. 49). Lists of the sheriffs of the county, 1155–1642.

4 (p. 61). Arms and pedigrees of county families, chiefly from MSS. belonging to John Anstis.

5 (p. 341). Extracts from ecclesiastical records, such as grants of church lands after the Reformation, and taxation of churches about 1220 (p. 421).

Indexes of persons, arms and places follow.

Now MS. Top. Northants c. 10.

Figure 3. One of the 52 catalogue entries for the Bridges Collection at the Bodleian.

So what do these marvellous volumes contain? A quite dazzling array of extracts from sources of obvious interest to anyone researching medieval and early-modern Northamptonshire. Examples include: inquisitions, cartularies, visitations, rolls such as the Fine Rolls and Close Rolls, arms, pedigrees, charters, fines, church registers and inscriptions within churches, lists of vicars and sheriffs, the holdings of abbeys and monasteries, and more. Bridges' research encompassed notable libraries such as Cotton's Caligula, Tiberius, Cleopatra, Vespasian, and Nero, as well as the collections of Augustine Vincent, George Brudnell, John Anstis, William Belcher, Hatton, and Dudley.

The extracts from inquisitions (post mortem or special) are much more detailed than the calendar summaries made a century or two later. These extracts, made 300 years ago, may also allow comprehension of original records since lost, faded, or otherwise rendered unavailable. The extracts appear to represent an unbroken series from 1210 to the 1630s of any person with holdings in Northamptonshire. The valuations caused by Henry VIII at the Dissolution were also included. Together, these inquisitions fill about nine volumes (of about 500 leaves each). Quite wonderful to see so many inquisitions all at one sitting, without needing reference to other repositories, as well as IPMs for which no Calendars are yet available on the internet. My reward was gaining valuable insight into the estates, post mortem or otherwise, for de Ardern, de Watford, de Parles, Cumberland, Spencer, and others. A 1627 IPM of Lord Spencer, for example, linked the medieval name of a large field he had acquired in Watford parish to the early-modern name of the same field.

Another feature of the collection is the extensive extracts from the cartularies of Northamptonshire abbeys. One of these is of special value to my research. The original registers of St James Abbey near Northampton were destroyed by fire only a few years after Bridges

completed his extracts. In the published History, under St James Abbey, for Watford Bridges' editors summarised:

Eustachius de Ardern the church of Watford, Eustachius his son a piece of ground called Kalendre and other lands in Watford; Simon de Thorp, Herwerd de Watford, William de Langele and others, lands, rents and messuages there.

A great surprise awaited me upon inspection of Bridges' transcriptions for St James, which had formed the basis of the aforementioned summary. Nine folios in the volume detailed 38 individual gifts of premises in Watford made under 18 original folio entries. In addition, many more individuals than previously known were named of the de Ardern or de Watford family either as donors or witnesses.

Particularly in the 12th and 13th centuries, England's abbeys and monasteries built up extensive holdings of lands and other rights. Among other records, the Bridges Collection also contains a survey of the taxation of the churches and abbeys completed about 1220.

Decanat' Saxa. Med' 1220'	
In Braunfeld praeborhien	xxv s.
In Hakeyngton Euenton	xxv s. & d.
In Hakeyngton	6 s.
In Sywell	ixl. s. & d.
In ad pectore	8 s.
In in fructu greg.	xxxij s. & d.
In redditu de Albe de Vip	Weldon xls.
In Acle	Heighm xxv s.
In Cotes & Barton	xxv s.
In Boketon	xxv s.
In Simatworth	xxv s.
In Welford	xxv s.
In Billing major	xxv s.
In Multon	xl s. & d.
In ketin Multon in Pris	Haddon xlv s.
In Billingbury	xxv s.
In flora	xxv s.
In minor Branyton	xxv s.
In Billing minor	xl s. & d.
In Herleston	8 s.
In Wirmington	Oundle xix s.
In Stotisbury & Sulgus	Brak 6 s. & d.
Sm. lxx	

Figure 4. One of many pages detailing church taxation about 1220;
Bodleian MS Top Northants, c. 10 fol. 461.
(Courtesy the Bodleian Libraries, the University of Oxford.)

The example pictured (**Figure 4**) is one of several pages recording the holdings of St Andrew, Northampton. One of the temporal holdings of Haddon Deanery was in Siwellworth, or Silsworth township in Watford parish, rendering 20s rent per annum to the Priory. These lands had been given to the Priory by one of the de Watford family some years before – that deed of gift also recorded by Bridges elsewhere. A half-century later the Silsworth lands were held within one of the four manors of Watford created for one of Eustace de Watford's four daughters. With the passing of another several decades, the Silsworth lands became an enduring feature of the quarter knight's fee given as a fee-farm to another of Eustace's four heirs.

In several volumes the reader will find family pedigrees, often with the associated arms. These include a series of pages with exquisitely drawn arms in trick, a dozen per page, from the collection of John Anstis, Garter King of Arms in 1718. One of the many arms in trick is that of Washington. The family obtained the manor of Sulgrave at the Dissolution and a descendant, ancestor of America's first president, left for the New World only 50 years before Anstis came to his high office. One of many pedigrees is that of the Catesby family, recorded

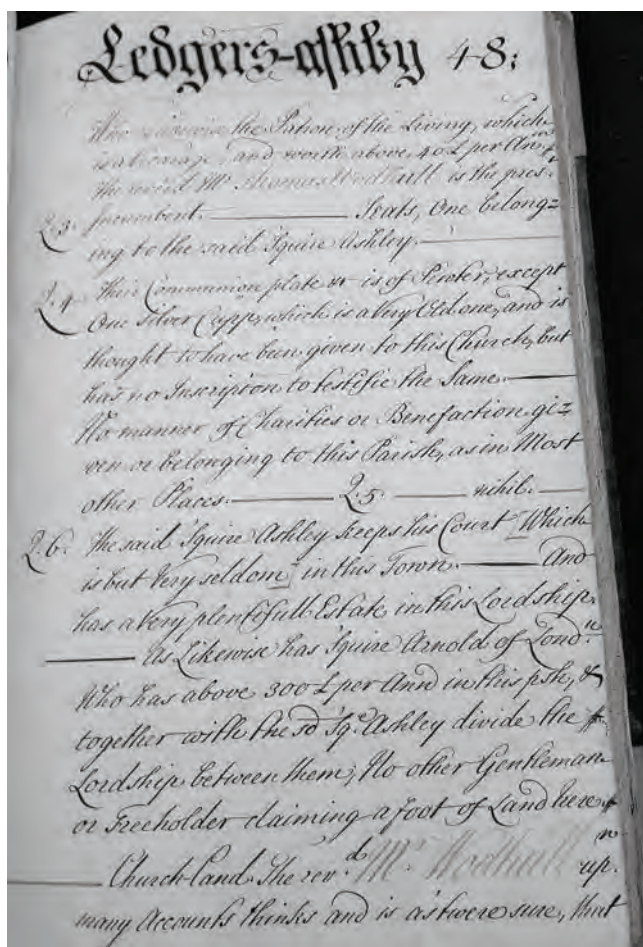


Figure 5. One of four pages describing the parish of Ledgers Ashby;
Bodleian MS Top Northants c. 33 fol. 48.
 (Courtesy the Bodleian Libraries, the University of Oxford.)

by the Visitation of co. Warwick in 1619. Most of this pedigree was published in the Harleian volume in 1877 (pp 125–27).

Other volumes contain descriptions of, and information about, each parish. Much of this did find its way into the published volumes. Sometimes aspects of a parish were detailed more than once in different volumes, by different persons. One writer detailed the lord(s) of the parish, the number of houses and/or families and ‘odd’ larger houses naming the resident. Extracts were taken from the church registers, albeit only entries with a note of ‘Gentility’ were deemed worthy of copying. Nonetheless, these entries may fill a few gaps in registers perhaps now unreadable for whatever reason. In another volume, the interior of each parish church is described, and the inscriptions on walls and floors were added, often in the same script as existed on the original surface.

The Dissolution is documented in several ways in the collection. Valuations of the abbeys are a feature. Furthermore, the reader will find the deeds of dissolution, ending with the names of the respective abbots, priors, and followers. The transcriber added careful drawings of the abbey’s seal attached to each deed. The prior and supplicants of St Andrew, Northampton saw fit to write, in English, eight and a half (transcribed) folios of rambling entreaty to King Henry VIII, as well as the separate, formal one-page deed in Latin surrendering the monastery’s holdings. One finds difficulty in discerning an intended message in the former document, amongst what appears to be an excess of obsequiousness, bordering on sarcasm. Ultimately, however, there seems to be a request for maintenance consequent to giving all the sources of income of the monastery’s inhabitants to the king. The following is the opening of the petition [Bodleian MS Top Northants c. 19 folios 176–84] providing insight into the state of mind of the Prior and his followers in the political environment of the time.

Most Noble and Vertuous Prince our most Rightuous and Gracyous Sovereign Lorde and undoubted Founder and in Erthe next undre God Supreme hedd of this Englyshe church We your gracys pore and most unworthie subjects Francys Priour of your gracys Monastery of Saint Andrew the Apostle within your gracys Towne of Northampton And the hoole Convent of the same being steryd by the gryffe of our conscience unto greate Contricion for the many folde Negligences Enormytes and Abuses of longe tyme by us and other our predecessors undre the pretence & shadowe of perfight Religion usyd and comytted to the grevous displeasure of Allmyghtie God the craftie Decepcion & subtell seduccion of the pure and symple myndys of the good Cristyan People of this your gracys noble Realme ...

Walking through the doors of the Weston – clutching my trusty camera – certainly opened new opportunity for me. The result was some excellent contributions to the Watford story. But there is no end to discovery. While I could easily return to the Weston and take or re-take glances at the same or other documents, there remain other institutions and their repositories yet to encounter.

Locals and Migrants in Northampton Town and County, 1841–71

CLIFFORD GERMAN

Well into the 19th century rural Northamptonshire had a well-deserved reputation for peace and quiet, and a slow pace of life fashioned by tradition and the seasons. John Clare's numerous poems and H. E. Bates' nostalgic review of the life of a village shoe-maker evoke memories of a now vanished world. But beneath the surface the 19th century was a time of unprecedented change brought about by the progressive enclosures of common land from around 1750 onwards, by the consolidation of farm holdings, the introduction of new technology and the conversion of large areas of once labour-intensive arable land into permanent pasture that followed. Communications also improved, outside competition increased, and reduced demand for traditional village crafts.¹ Young girls also found job opportunities diminished. Which of these factors were dominant is a matter for debate and varied from parish to parish, but newer methods made large numbers of farm labourers redundant, and many families were evicted by landlords in an attempt to reduce their liability to pay the parish poor rates. At the same time however many towns began to grow, and created job opportunities with higher wages for labourers, craftsmen and factory-workers, while women could find work in industry and in domestic service, as well as social opportunities unknown in their home villages.²

The traditional trickle of men and women from the villages to the towns quickened and became a flood. Northampton itself grew rapidly from 7,000 at the time of the first census in 1801 to 41,000 in 1871, rising by more than 40 per cent between 1821 and 1831 alone and 38 per cent in the next decade. The rate of growth then slowed to around 25 per cent each decade between 1841 and 1871 but numbers increased in absolute terms every decade for the rest of the century and beyond and the expanding shoe trades increasingly dominated the town's economy. The industry also spread as employers took advantage of cheaper wages to outsource work and expand production by undercutting labour costs in Northampton itself. Wellingborough and then Kettering also began to grow rapidly, along with Rushden, Raunds and Irthlingborough and other smaller centres in the Ise Valley, thanks to the expansion of the shoe trades and the improved transport links provided by the Midland Main Line. A number of other industrial villages also prospered on the back of the industry, including Long Buckby and Earls Barton, Wollaston and somewhat later Rothwell and Desborough. But not all the county's towns prospered. Daventry, Towcester and Brackley were by-passed by the main rail lines and their trade and populations stagnated, while many rural village populations peaked and began to fall (Fig. 1).

This is the basis of the social history of Northamptonshire, but in order to put flesh on the bones it is necessary to look more closely at the numbers. Little has survived from the earlier censuses, but fortunately for social historians the record books compiled by the enumerators in successive censuses from 1841 onwards survive and indicate more precisely what was going on. The census of 1841 recorded only whether or not individuals had been born in the county, but from 1851 onwards the enumerators' books indicated the age, status, occupations and places of birth of every individual in every house.

- 1 See A. Redford, *Labour Migration in England, 1800–1850*, (ed. W. H. Chaloner), Manchester, 1976, esp. pp. 67–80.
- 2 See R. J. Dennis, *English industrial cities of the nineteenth century; a social geography*, Cambridge, 1974 for a comprehensive review of the process of urbanisation.

In Northampton alone in 1851 almost 47 per cent of the entire population had been born in the town, including 90 per cent of the children under 12, but barely a third of the working population. By 1871 the proportion born in the town had actually risen to 49.3 per cent of the total and 35 per cent of the working population, indicating a slight slackening in the contribution of inward migration. The birth rate was also high because of the increasing numbers of adults, males and females of child-bearing age, who had already gravitated to the town. Death rates were higher than in the countryside but a gradual improvement took place in earnings, housing standards and medical knowledge as the century progressed.

It follows that just over half the population and two thirds of the adults had been born elsewhere and made their way to the town. The censuses show where they came from. In 1871 over 18 per cent of the total population had been born in rural villages within a radius of about 15 miles of the town, (an area that roughly coincides with the county boundaries but includes part of the Ouse valley from Stony Stratford to Olney and excludes the north of the county beyond Oundle). Another 8.4 per cent came from the towns and large industrial villages within the area, (defined as parishes with over 1,200 inhabitants in either 1851 or 1871). The remaining 23.7 per cent came from outside the area, especially from the contiguous counties, from Leicestershire, Rutland, Huntingdon and Bedford round to Bucks, Oxford and Warwickshire, which supplied several hundred migrants, men and women, to Northampton. Rather more men than women came from the eastern counties of Huntingdon, Bedfordshire and Bucks, with more women than men moving in from Warwickshire, Rutland and Oxfordshire. Further afield numbers dropped off steadily with distance, to under 200 coming from Lancashire and 300 from Yorkshire, down to a couple of dozen from the distant and less-populous counties such as Cornwall and Cumberland. Another 320 individuals had been born in Ireland, 170 in Scotland and almost 1,400 in the London area. In general long-range migrants were less likely to come from large cities than from their surrounding counties, indicating that migrants generally tended to move up the scale rather than down.

It is possible to exaggerate the frantic state of flux in rural communities. A survey of a broad sample of rural parishes in the county shows that while 49 per cent of the population of Northampton itself had been born in the town in 1871, beyond the town only fast-expanding Wellingborough had more incomers than locals at the time. Elsewhere over half the inhabitants of Daventry and Towcester, and 58 per cent of the inhabitants of Kettering were born and still lived locally. In most of the rural parishes over 60 per cent of the population had been born in the same parish, rising to more than 70 per cent of those living in Long Buckby, Earls Barton, Desborough and Rothwell, all of which were still growing. In some villages off the beaten track more than 75 per cent had been born in the same parish, reaching 81 per cent in Yardley Hastings. Percentages born locally were often lower in villages where a number of large houses employed many servants, a surprising number of whom were recruited outside the parish. Railway workers were also largely recruited from outside the county.

On balance it seems that while many moved away from home, more clung on, perhaps in the hope of better times. In many places one third or more of the incomers had moved only from the next parish. Out of the 1,280 people living in Burton Latimer on census night in 1871 for example, 827 had been born in the parish and 346 in the rest of the county including 144 in eleven adjacent parishes. There is overwhelming evidence that most of the movers to Northampton also came only a short distance (Fig. 2). If the numbers born in a parish and living in Northampton in 1871 are compared with the total population of the source parishes 20 years earlier, (assuming an average age of 20 for incomers) between 15 and 20 per cent of the population of the adjacent villages of Kingsthorpe, Hardingstone, Duston and Weston Favell in 1851 were to be found in Northampton in 1871. The

percentages varied from parish to parish but generally declined with distance, to 10–12 per cent at a distance of five or six miles and down to low single figures 15 miles out from town. Relatively high figures can be seen for villages such as Holcot and Walgrave, which experienced strong outflows of shoe workers to Northampton. A relatively low figure for Brixworth may reflect the survival of local services, supported no doubt by the presence of the union work-house and the kennels of the Pytchley hunt. But relatively higher numbers had come from the larger settlements and from places with a tradition of shoe-working. For example 11.48 per cent of the totals for Wellingborough in 1851 were living in Northampton by 1871, compared with only 5.42 per cent of the people from the parishes adjacent to Wellingborough. Equivalent figures were 7.66 per cent for Kettering and 3.95 per cent for its surrounding parishes. For Rushden 7.39 of the 1851 population were living in Northampton in 1871 compared to 5.02 per cent for the parishes round Rushden, For Daventry and its surrounding parishes the equivalent figures were 8.01 and 2.99 per cent, for Towcester 14.22 and 4.15 per cent, and for Long Buckby 10.89 and 6.53 per cent.

Many of those who moved to Northampton were juveniles (aged under 18). They accounted for 20–30 per cent of all incomers from most parishes in the catchment area, and especially from adjacent parishes such as Kingsthorpe and Hardingsstone (Fig. 3). More females tended to come more from the closest parishes and more males from distant parishes (Fig. 4). The numbers coming into town were partially offset by reverse flows of Northampton-born individuals who had moved out into the county, with higher percentages moving to the towns, including Wellingborough and Kettering, and shoe-making parishes such as Long Buckby and Earls Barton. But outflows were everywhere much weaker than the inflows into Northampton, and tailed off more rapidly to virtually zero at the edges of the catchment area. The highest reverse flow of all however was into Duston and Dallington, where the town population by 1871 had already begun spilling out into adjacent parishes and especially into Far Cotton and St James's End, marking the start of a process that has continued ever since.

Further afield juveniles were significantly more common among incomers from urbanised northern industrial counties such as Durham, Lancashire, Yorkshire and Staffordshire than from rural and southern counties or from East Anglia, which may mean more northerners brought their families. Over 23 per cent of incomers born in London however were still juveniles and many of them had parents, one or both of whom had been born in Northampton. This may mean that many Northamptonians, especially shoe-makers, went to London to try their luck before returning to their home town. Only the Welsh, Irish and Scots appear to have arrived almost entirely as single adults.

Women and girls made up more than 53 per cent of the town's inhabitants in 1871, but this proportion rose to more than 55 per cent of short-range migrants from the surrounding villages and declined with distance to 51 per cent of incomers from contiguous counties, 48 per cent of incomers born in more distant counties, and only 35 per cent of those who had been born in Scotland. These figures tend to confirm a theory first put forward by the 19th century statistician Ernst Georg Ravenstein that women were actually more migratory than men over short distances, but males increasingly dominated the inflows over longer distances.³ Men were also more numerous among incomers from larger cities, with the exception of Birmingham, where mainly male-dominated metal-working trades flourished and provided local jobs.

3 See D. B. Grigg, 'E. G. Ravenstein and the 'Laws of Migration'', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 3, (1977), pp. 41–54.

Figure 1. Population change by parish, 1851 - 1871.

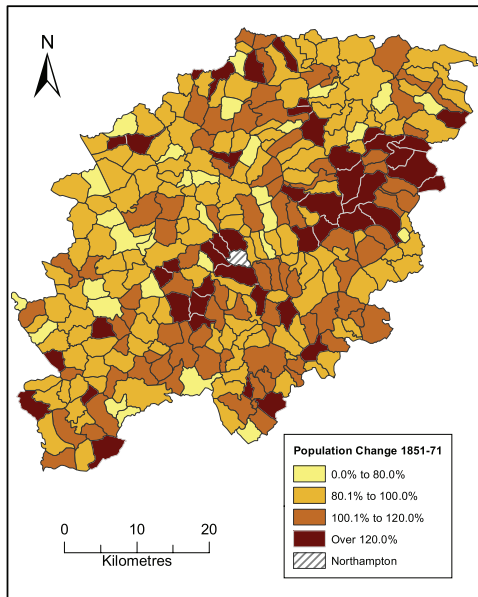


Figure 2. Migration Quotients. 1871 migrants as a percentage of 1851 population

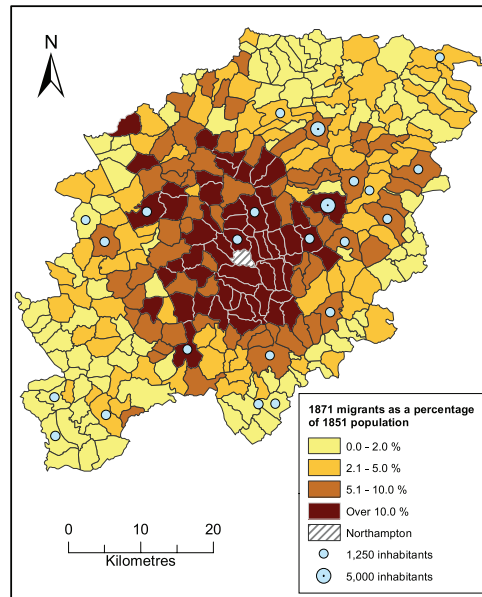


Figure 3. Percentage of juvenile migrants by parish, 1871

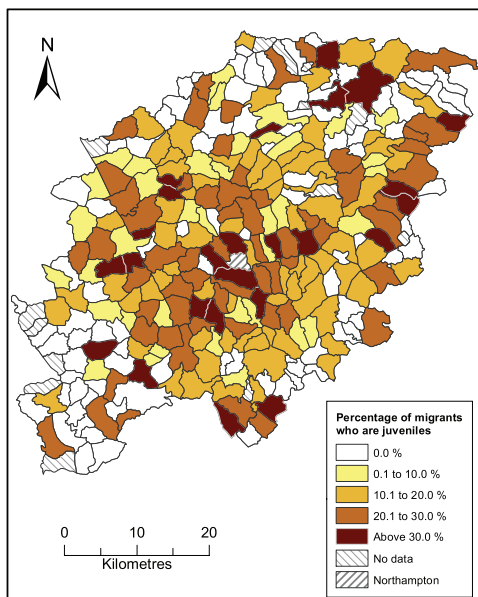
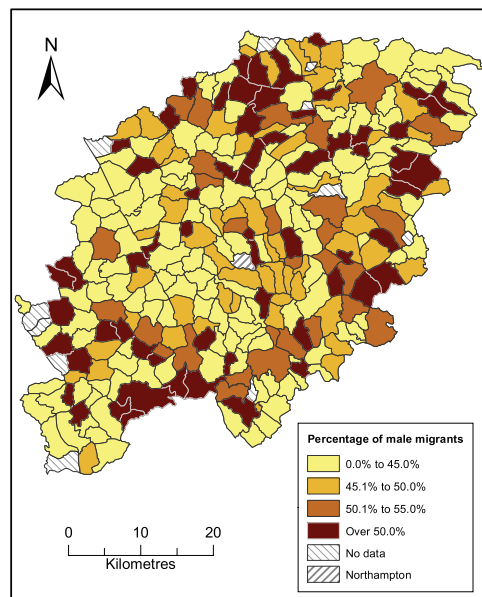


Figure 4. Percentage of male migrants by parish, 1871



Population pyramids (Figs. 5-8) showing the age, gender and birthplaces of the inhabitants are instructive. In a 10 per cent sample covering a representative range of streets one in six of the population of Northampton was aged five and under, and less than 10 per cent were aged 55 or more. Infant mortality rates were still shockingly high; the sample records 150 infants under the age of one, falling to under 100 aged five and 60 at the age of ten. Most juveniles were born in the town, but incomers became increasingly numerous from the age of about 16 for boys and 12 for girls, and exceeded those born locally in all age groups from 18-20 upwards.

Across the town adults and children, males and females, were unequally distributed. Over 40 per cent of the total population in most of the back-streets and courts were aged under 16 in 1851, but in the main streets the proportion fell as low as 20 per cent (Fig. 9), and this pattern was repeated in 1871. Men and women were also very unequally distributed across the town (Fig. 10), with males making up more than 60 per cent of the inhabitants in most of the older, poorer streets (which included many single men, and especially shoe-workers from outside the town who were unable to afford their own housing but were useful in augmenting the earnings of individual households). In Upper and Lower Harding Street and Harding Terrace for example, only 24 per cent of adult males and 44 per cent of adult females had been born in the town, although this was partly offset by the numerous juveniles who had been born in Northampton. Elsewhere males made up barely one third of the totals in the central core streets and the upmarket residential housing along the Kingsthorpe and Billing roads, which contained large numbers of female servants as well as wealthy widows and spinsters.

The working population was also unequally spread. In 1851 about 55 per cent of the entire population was classed as employed, including significant numbers of children as young as seven or eight, although this fell to just under 50 per cent by 1871 when Forster's Act made schooling widely available for children up to 13. Males outnumbered females in the labour force by two to one in both 1851 and 1871, but a distinctly higher proportions of males and especially females who had been born in the more distant counties were not working. This suggests that longer-range movers were on average slightly better off and their womenfolk could afford not to work.

Northampton was a classic example of a single-industry town. In 1851 44 per cent of the working population, including 46 per cent of working males and 40 per cent of working females, were employed in the shoe trades, and by 1871 the shoe trades employed almost 47 per cent of the labour force. Shoe-workers were even more unequally distributed across the town. Fig. 11 shows they made up 60-70 per cent of the working population in the streets around Grafton Street, rising to over 80 per cent in Arundel, Compton and Cromwell Streets, Fitzroy Terrace, and in Fort Street, Horsemarket Gardens, Little Cross Street, Market Street, and many of the poorer courts and terraces in the town. But there were fewer shoe-workers on the south side of the town near the river, railway and canal, where labourers and porters were concentrated, and only 30 per cent in the courts off Bridge Street. At the other end of the scale in the central core and most prosperous residential streets barely 5 per cent worked in the shoe trades, and many of these were actually substantial employers.

Footwear was a notoriously poorly-paid trade, reflecting the piecework rates paid by employers and middle-men and the prevalence of home-working and handicraft methods prior to the gradual introduction of machinery in the 1860s, which was of course fiercely resisted by many traditional shoemakers. There is no way in which living standards 150 years ago can be measured precisely now, but it is generally accepted that housing standards are as good a proxy as it is possible to find, and the availability of rate-books for Northampton combined with census details make it possible to calculate rateable values

Figure 5. Born in Northampton

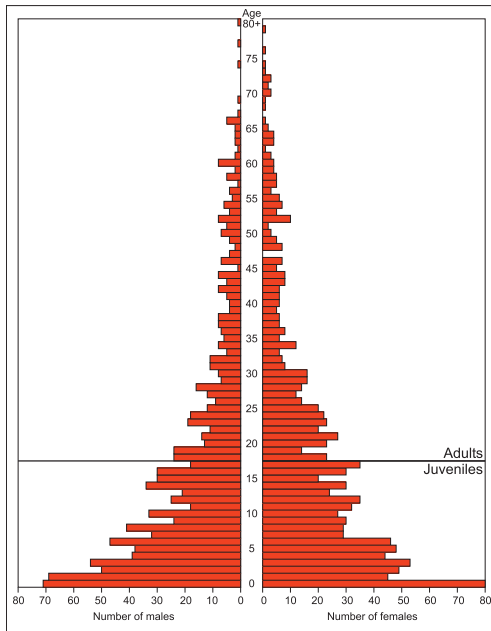


Figure 6. Born in Villages

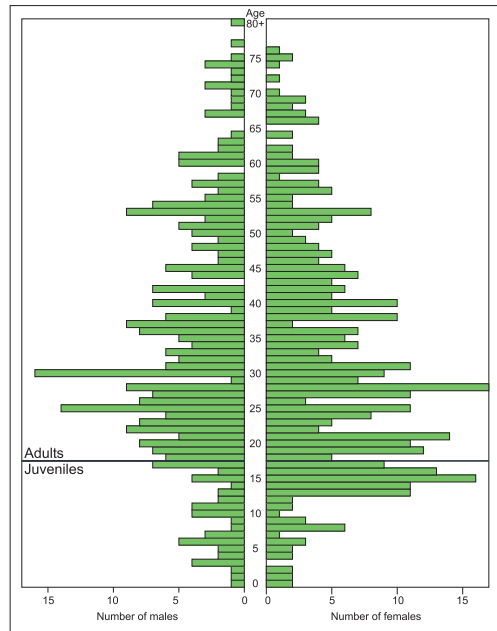


Figure 7. Born in Local Townships

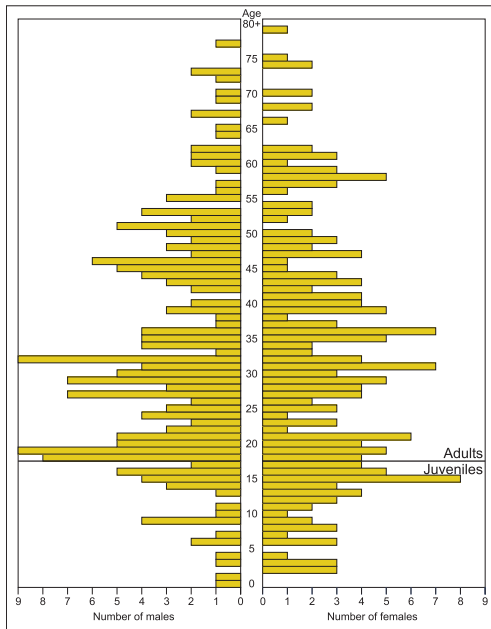


Figure 8. Born Elsewhere

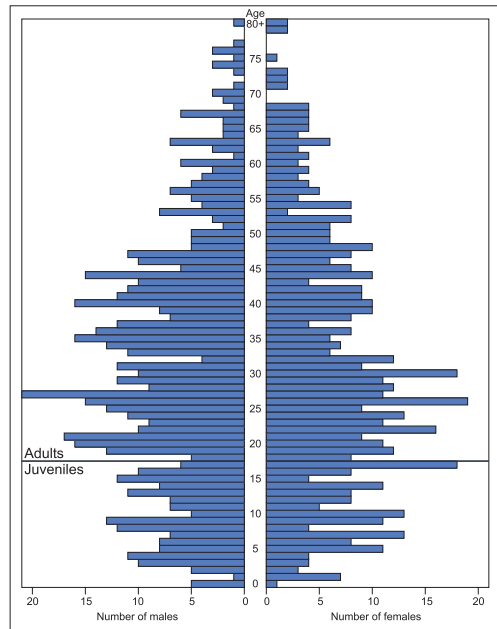


Figure 9. Northampton population aged under 16 years, 1851

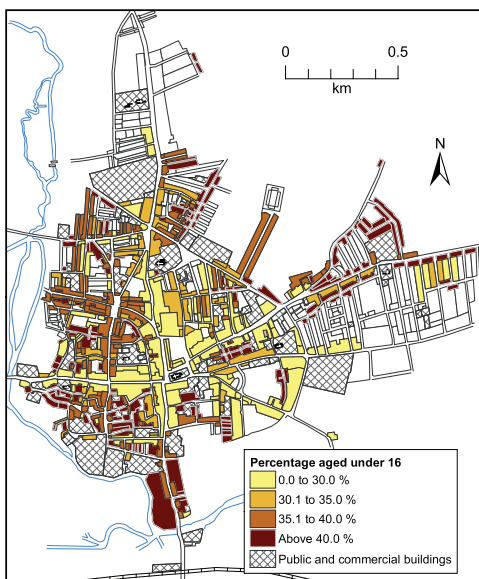


Figure 10. Gender balance, 1871

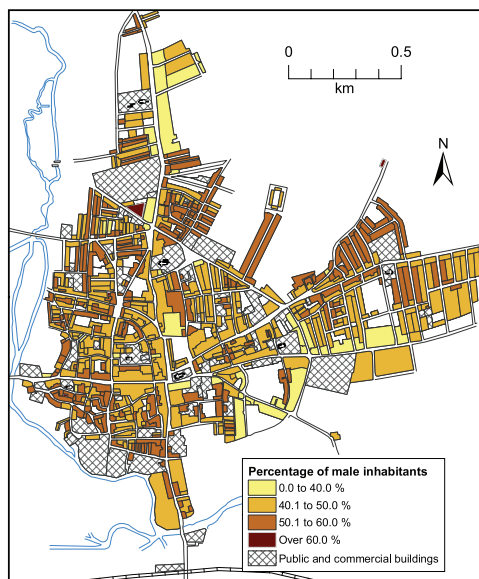


Figure 11. Shoe workers as percentage of all workers, 1871

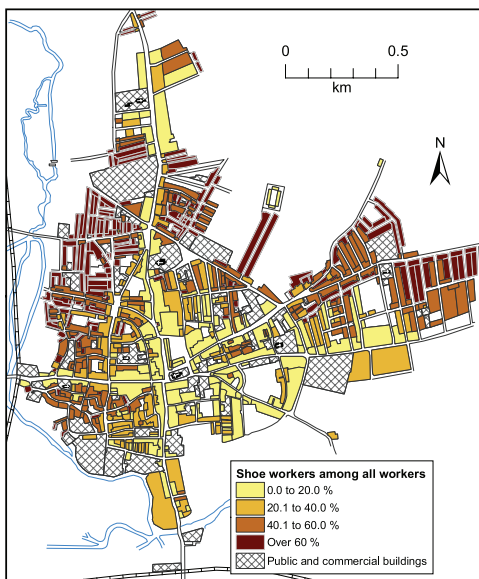
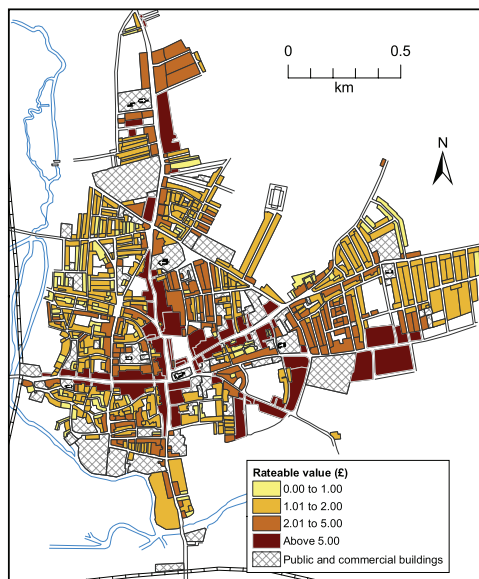


Figure 12. Rateable value per head 1871



per head of the population throughout the town. They show that in the older back-streets and courts where large numbers of children, males, and shoe-workers were concentrated rateable values per head averaged under £1 a head in 1871. But values rose progressively towards £2 in the side-streets and in the newer streets that sprang up along the Billing Road in the 1860s, rising to £5 in the commercial streets and more than £10 a head in the residential streets, including Spencer Parade, Cheyne Walk and the villas along the south side of the Billing Road (Fig. 12).

The local-born population and incomers were also unequally distributed across the town, in 1851 and again in 1871 (Figs. 13–16). Locals made up over 60 per cent of the population of the courts and houses in Scarletwell Street and Bath Street, built in the early years of the century and inevitably showing their age by 1871. Locals dominated the population of most of the tightly-knit communities who lived in the small streets and courts off Grafton Street, a much narrower street then than now, and the core of the town's main shoe-makers' "rookery". Over 80 per cent of the inhabitants in Todd's Lane along the north side of Grafton Street itself had been born in the town. Another "island" of locals was to be found in the cluster of tiny houses in Ratnett's Row and Johnson's Row on the corner of Grafton Square, that were rated at no more than £2–3 each in 1871. Local-born inhabitants also made up more than half the population of most of the streets on the western side of town running down to the river and in the small streets around St Peter's church. Locals predominated in the streets on either side of the Mounts, in the islands of poor housing in the Riding, in Chapel Place and Chapel Gardens off Abington Square, and along Brier Lane to Market Street. All these houses were swept away in the great clearance of working-class housing in the 1970s. Surviving photographs in the public domain are regrettably few and their appearance must be fading from the memories of even the older readers as well as that of the author. Locals by contrast were in a minority in the newer housing in the streets along the Kettering, Wellingborough and Billing roads, and also in the emerging industrial quarter along the river, the canal and the railway line. Roughly half were locals in the overcrowded and insanitary complex of court dwellings on either side of lower Bridge Street, and locals fell below 40 per cent in the commercial core and the up-market residential streets.

Incomers made up half the total population but were not equally spread across the town. The highest proportions were to be found in the more prosperous streets, where the proportions of (local-born) children were lower and shoemakers were virtually absent. Incomers also tended to concentrate in the newer streets where housing standards and certainly rateable values were higher. Assimilation would have been relatively rapid and the evident fact that most incomers were relatively young, married early and had children born in the town would make the process even faster. But the sheer volume and persistence of the inflows continually refreshed the supply and they continued to dominate the adult population and the working population of the town. It is fair to assume that then as well as now immigrants arriving in a strange town where they had no experience of the availability of basic human needs such as housing and employment initially found lodgings wherever possible with family or friends who had previously made the move, leading to local concentrations of extended families, friends and members of their home communities. Frequent subsequent moves would quickly blur the pattern but birthplace patterns show that significant levels of segregation did develop. Altogether in 1871 just over half the inhabitants of the older streets built before 1851 were born in the town, compared with 44 per cent of the newer streets built in the previous twenty years.

Incomers born in the surrounding villages and towns were relatively widely scattered but they made up 30 per cent or more of the inhabitants in the commercial core and up-market residential streets, where most of the domestic servants, mainly young girls from the county,

Figure 13. Percentage of population born in Northampton, 1871

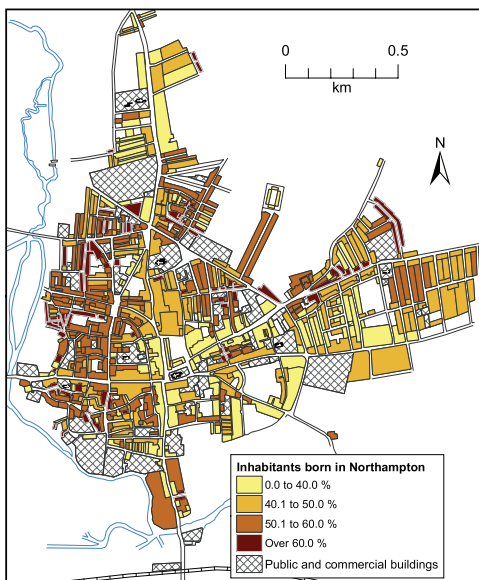


Figure 14. Percentage of inhabitants born in villages, 1871

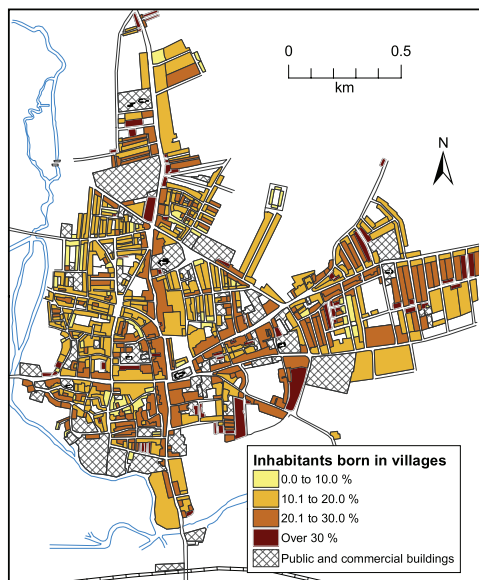


Figure 15. Percentage of inhabitants born in local towns, 1871

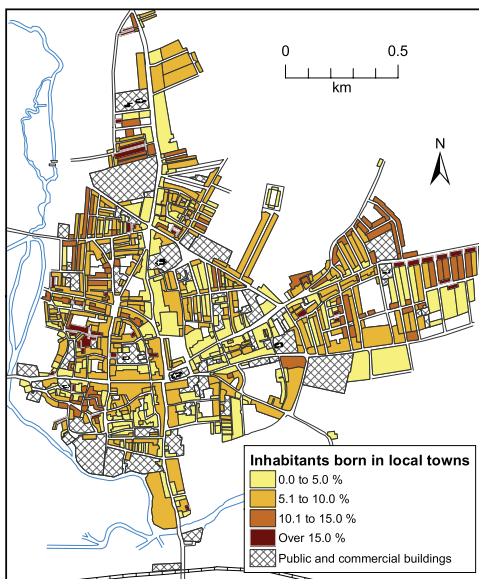
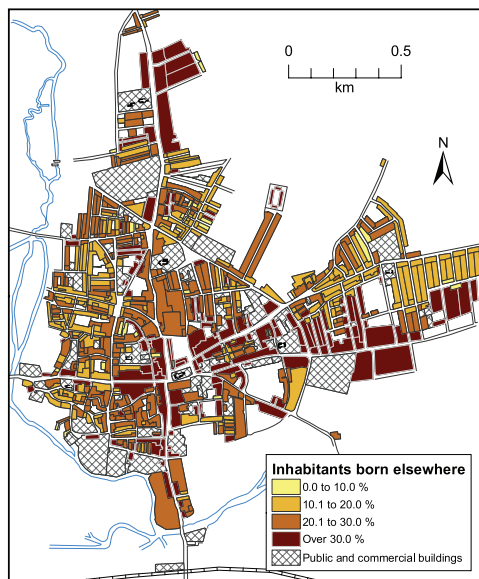


Figure 16. Percentage of inhabitants born elsewhere, 1871



were to be found, The town as a whole contained over 1,300 domestic servants in 1871, virtually all of them female and aged between 12 and 25, and more than 900 of them came from the surrounding countryside. A close look at their birthplaces shows that they were largely drawn from the villages within a radius of just five or six miles from the town, including 20 per cent or more of all females coming from Kingsthorpe, Wootton, Moulton, Dallington, Flore and the Heyfords. Incomers from the local towns and industrial villages accounted for around 15 per cent of the totals in a number of streets on the western and eastern sides of town.

Incomers from further afield showed a very different pattern of distribution both to locals and to incomers from the catchment area. In the commercial core including Sheep Street, Gold Street and the "top" end of Bridge Street, the proportion of longer-distance migrants ranged from 25 per cent to 35 per cent, rising to almost 50 per cent in the Market Square and the Drapery, and over 60 per cent in Mercers Row. In the more highly residential up-market streets such as Abington Street, Derngate, Castilian Street, Spencer Parade and Cliftonville long-range incomers accounted for 30-40 per cent of the inhabitants. It is also notable that incomers made up relatively high proportions of individuals living in properties built on land developed by the Freehold Land Society (soon to become the Northampton Town & County Benefit Building Society, a lineal ancestor of today's Nationwide), with the express intention of promoting thrift, abstinence and the vote. By inference the opportunities attracted the more ambitious and upwardly mobile members of the population. In 1871 32 per cent of the inhabitants of Freehold Street were longer-range incomers, and they also made up over 30 per cent in the evocatively named Upper and Lower Thrift Streets.

The Scots in particular made up a high proportion of the inhabitants of the better streets. They were often drapers, provision merchants and tea dealers. The Irish by contrast made up a distinct sub-class, reflecting the ongoing effects of the disastrous potato famine of the 1840s. They made up a high proportion of labourers, higglers and street traders, and many still lived in lodging houses in Broad Street and lower Bridge Street. Small numbers of individuals had been born abroad, especially in Canada, India, South Africa, Malta and Gibraltar where their fathers were presumably originally in British garrisons, and a sprinkling of other foreigners included jewellers, toy-makers and pork butchers born in Germany. Another dozen or more were born at sea and 79 were recorded as "place unknown".

The censuses tell us that Northampton was less crowded than many larger industrial towns and cities. It was spared the reeking slums that disfigured many large industrial cities, but throughout the 19th century five to six people lived in every occupied house. In the older courts and back-streets as many as eight or ten could routinely be crammed into houses with only two or three rooms. Barely 7 per cent of the householders were owner-occupiers, rising to about 30 per cent in the Town Centre, and in 1871 just over 5 per cent of the housing stock, 427 houses, were shared by two or more families. The town also contained over 2,800 boarders and lodgers, mostly single men and shoe workers. Many families were forced to take in lodgers to eke out earnings, help pay the rent and augment the household labour force at a time when most shoe-workers still worked from home. Poverty was also widespread. But the town showed considerable differences in the distribution of men and women, children and adults, workers and shoe workers and locals and incomers from nearby and from further afield according to the quality of their housing. If the distribution patterns shown in Figs. 9-16 are compared the higher proportions of children, males and shoe-workers and people born in the town living in the poorest streets with the lowest levels of rateable value per head are too strong and consistent to ignore.

So much for the overall numbers. What can they tell us about why, when and how the incomers came, how they differed from those who had been born in the town and chosen to stay, what they did for a living, and where in the town they went to live? Ten times as many people worked in the shoe trades in Northampton compared with the country as a whole. Nearly half the working population and well over half the juveniles at work in the town were shoe workers. But the census returns make it clear that the local-born population was twice as likely to work in the shoe trades as incomers, and incomers born in nearby towns and shoe-making villages were more likely to move to Northampton and to gravitate to the shoe trades than incomers from rural villages. In 1871 61 per cent of the working population born in the town worked in the shoe trade, rising to 63 per cent of working women born in the town. By contrast only 30 per cent of the working population born in rural villages, including 36 per cent of the men but only a quarter of the working women, were in the shoe trade, but 61 per cent of all workers and 66 per cent working women born in parishes with a shoe-making tradition, including Wellingborough, Kettering, Long Buckby, Earls Barton and Rushden. Between 40 and 50 per cent of workers born in towns such as Brackley and Towcester where shoe-working was absent or declining had also gravitated into the Northampton shoe trades. Almost half the working population born in London and 40 per cent of the Irish but only 30 per cent of the Scots-born were shoe workers.

Many incomers from shoe-making centres in the county and from shoe-making centres elsewhere including London, Leicester and Stafford were shoe-makers trying their luck in Northampton. Many other incomers especially those born in towns, went into the footwear trades, where work was readily available and the basic skills were relatively easy for newcomers to pick up and start earning. But 60 per cent of the working men and 80 per cent of the working women from the countryside did not become shoe-workers, and must have come to the town for other reasons, the unskilled men often as general labourers, and the young girls to find basic work as domestic servants, en route to attracting a husband. A significant number of the town's police force had been born in rural villages, which may well suggest men from the countryside were taller and stronger than town dwellers. Longer-range incomers were more likely to have brought their skills and abilities with them, and made up a relatively large proportion of the merchants, shopkeepers, craftsmen and professional workers, doctors, lawyers, teachers and clergymen.

When they all came is more of a puzzle. Ravenstein claimed that incomers from longer distances came in by stages, but although plausible, this is hard to prove.⁴ Even now with the aid of computer databases it is hard to track more than a handful of individuals from census to census and even harder to track females, who changed their surnames on marriage. The population pyramids show that incomers came largely in their twenties and thirties and they exceeded locals in every age cohort from around 20 upwards for men, 16 for women, including the very old, who by the standards of the time included everyone aged 55-60 and above. That suggests regular long-term flows but in the absence of data between the decennial censuses, it is virtually impossible to make more than educated guesses. The handful of family histories available are instructive but too few for generalisations.

How they came is also largely guesswork. Dot-maps showing the distribution of the population born in specific parishes (Figs. 17-20) make it clear that incomers from the adjacent villages such as Kingsthorpe, Hardingstone and Weston Favell were concentrated in the adjoining parts of the town, and may simply have walked into town and taken lodgings either with friends and relatives or wherever they could find work. Most incomers

4 D. B. Grigg, 'Ravenstein', p. 47.

from Kingsthorpe were living in the northern half of the town, with the highest concentrations of all in the small streets in Kingsthorpe Hollow, built on land just inside the boundary of Kingsthorpe parish. Likewise incomers born in Duston were more heavily concentrated on the western side of town and incomers from Hardingstone in the southern half and especially in the industrial quarter, while incomers from Weston Favell were heavily biased towards the east, with substantial numbers living on the New Town estate. The distribution patterns for incomers from beyond walking distance are not so concentrated. Most of those who came from distant villages and towns will have come by coach or cart and dropped off near the centre and dispersed. Incomers from Kettering and Wellingborough for example were widely spread. An increasing number of long-range incomers will have arrived by train and looked for lodgings as close to the station as they could find them, but these samples are not big enough to generalise.

Whether movers to Northampton were individually better off as a result of their move cannot be known for sure, but they must have hoped they would be, and the balance of net movement into the town from all but the largest cities suggests they soon were. It is very clear that the very poorest streets contained the highest numbers of people who had been born in the town, and lower numbers of incomers, and especially incomers who had been born outside the county. In 1871 out of 71 streets where the local-born were over-represented in the population (defined as ten percentage points above the average), properties in 41 streets were rated at £6 or less. This compared with 25 out of 50 poor streets where incomers from the catchment area were over-represented and just one out of 45 streets where longer-range incomers were strongest.

Assessing the living standards and social standing of individuals, in life and in death, 150 years ago is of course fraught with risk. Only a small minority paid income tax or made wills, generalisations for social classes and occupational groups are patchy or non-existent, and there is no way of distinguishing whether individuals spent their money wisely or frittered it away on drink, as Northampton's male shoe-makers were notoriously liable to do, working on the Sabbath "in order to have more to lush on" on 'St Monday'.⁵ Victor Hatley produced a number of informative papers including the much quoted reprint of an important commentary on the shoe trade in Northampton in 1869, which gave a poor impression of the habits of shoe workers at the time. Standing in the community was however much more important then than now, and not just among the town's elite who aspired to become councillors and aldermen, and supporters of good causes, religious and secular. Status was also valuable among the working classes, the virtues of hard work, thrift and temperance were widely praised, and if the Victorians did not invent the term "deserving poor" they certainly employed it.

How far then the link between poverty and being born in the locality is a reflection on the abilities and ambitions of the locals who stayed in the town rather than the result of larger numbers of local-born children and the dominance of the poorly-paid shoe trade is a moot point. It is undeniably true that most native Northamptonians lived in the poorer streets. It is also true that shoe workers were poorly paid and struggled to make ends meet even with the use of whatever their wives and young children could earn and lodgers could bring in to augment the household incomes, and most workers who had been born in the town were shoe workers and their living standards suffered accordingly. How far they were shoe workers by choice or in default of other opportunities is itself also a moot point. Equality

5 See R. Rowe, 'Toiling and Moiling: Some Account of our Working People and How they Live: VI - The Northampton Shoemaker', in N. Macleod (ed.), *Good Words*, vol. 10, London, 1869, pp. 758–64, reproduced in full with commentary in V.A. Hatley, *Snobopolis*, Northampton, 1976.

Figure 17. Incomers born in Kingsthorpe, 1871

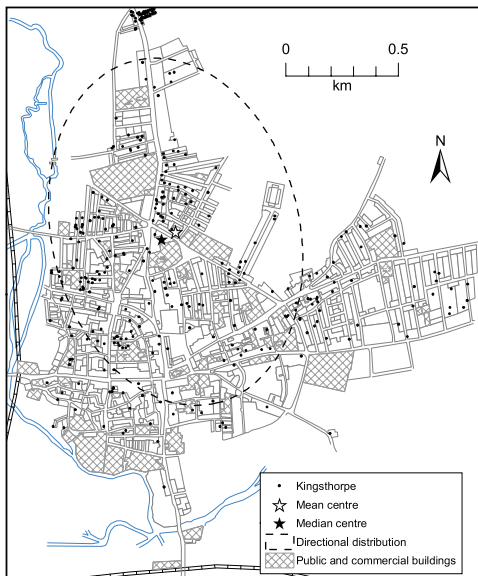


Figure 18. Incomers born in Weston Favell, 1871

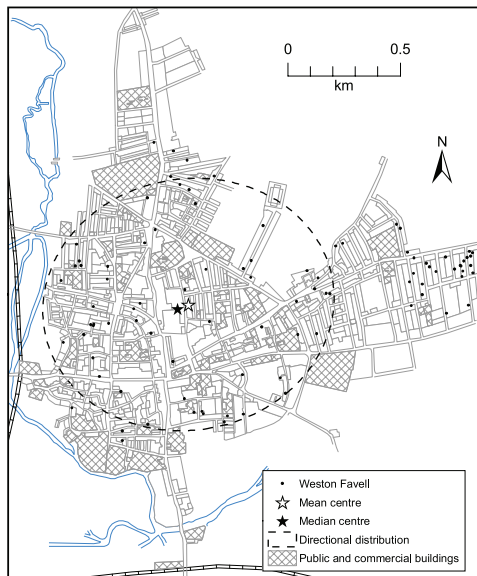
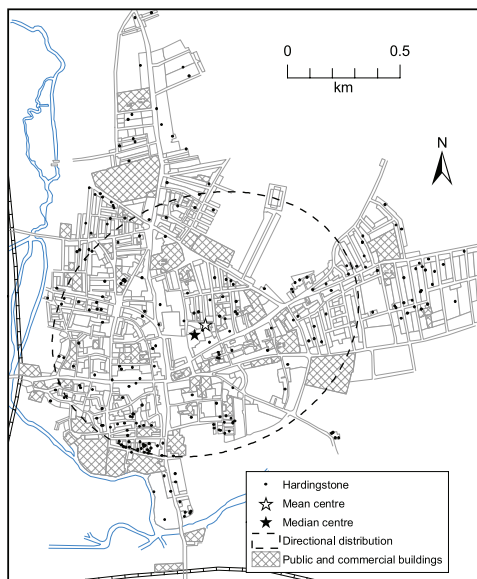


Figure 19. Incomers born in Duston, 1871



Figure 20. Incomers born in Hardingstone, 1871



of opportunity was a concept entirely unknown to Victorians, vanishingly few young people, men and especially women, had the chance of an education as we now understand it, or the contacts or the access to capital to set themselves up in business. The records of self-made men like Moses Philip Manfield, the Bristol-born shoe manufacturer, William Arnold, another shoe manufacturer, born in Everdon, who rose through the ranks, and Thomas Adams, the journeyman baker from Flore who through thrift and flair set up a chain of baker's shops that lasted into the second half of the 20th century are notable for their rarity rather than their frequency.

The question may well also be asked why so many of those born in Northampton stayed and worked in the shoe trades, which were notoriously affected by fluctuations in demand both seasonal and cyclical. Periodic surges in demand for boots for the Army and Navy and for exports at times of foreign wars and gold rushes were welcome but unreliable. The strikes that followed the forced introduction of machinery in 1859 had a devastating effect on the town and even two years later at the time of the 1861 census over 7 per cent of the properties in the town were empty. In the circumstances most shoe workers may have taken up the trade because the opportunities were there and their families pressed them into service at the earliest opportunity rather than by choice, or through any lack of skills or initiative to do anything better. Once established they became members of a community far more tightly-knit by ties of kinship and custom, resistant to change, and more restricted in opportunities to escape than now. These forces must have affected those who were born in Northampton more than those who had already made one major move. Is it possible then to argue that a strong sense of community actually held back the more able and ambitious individuals who had been born in the town, while incomers simply felt freer to explore and take opportunities that became available? Maybe. Or to go further and suggest that movers were and perhaps still are inherently more able and potentially successful? Perhaps.

Many locals must have stayed in the hope that things would somehow get better, which they did, but over decades. Some did escape of course, socially or physically, and Northampton-born people did move in search of work or other opportunities, especially to larger centres such as Leicester and London, while others emigrated to North America and Australasia, perhaps depleting the local-born talent base still further in the process. Females slightly outnumbered males in the working-age population born in the town, suggesting that men were more likely to leave than women.

Not all the Northampton-born were poor, but they were heavily under-represented among the town's elite. The town's leading citizens listed in the Post Office directory of 1869 included no less than 14 shoe manufacturers and two leather-sellers as well as a cross-section of the occupations to be found in Victorian market towns, including a newspaper proprietor and an editor, bankers, surgeons and physicians, lawyers, auctioneers and a variety of retailers, mainly wine and spirit merchants, tailors, outfitters and drapers, book and music sellers, ironmongers, printers, jewellers and a china dealer. A significant number of merchants, doctors, lawyers and dignitaries also still lived in the town centre. In 1871 the town contained 197 houses rated at £50 a year or more. The occupiers of 160 of these properties can be traced and identified by name, age, occupation, place of birth and the rateable value of the houses they lived in.

Once again this is not an infallible guide to prosperity. In 1871 Manfield, who was already a substantial shoe manufacturer, lived in a house rated at only £31.50 in Royal Terrace and did not even make the cut. Innkeepers and private school-masters may have lived in premises rated above their actual pay-grade. But it is a better guide than contemporary trade directories alone, which give no indication of the size of the operations carried out. While

the local-born population was heavily over-represented among the poorest populations and included the highest proportions of shoe workers, just 40 (25 per cent) of the best houses were occupied by stayers who had been born in Northampton, well below their 37 per cent share of the working population. Among the top families those who had been born in the town included the miller and current mayor of Northampton in 1871, Pickering Phipps Perry and James B. Smith, retired shoe-manufacturer and substantial property owner, who both lived in Waterloo Place. Philip Abel the music-seller lived at his premises on the Parade, Benjamin Brettell the iron-founder on Mercers Row, Thomas Presland, draper in the Drapery, and the corn merchant Rand E. Greenough in lower Bridge Street. Frederick Muscott, a tailor and John Camp, an upholsterer, John Whiteman, jeweller, and George Greenough, butcher, were all living in Gold Street, and John Macquire, alderman and auctioneer, in Cheyne Walk. Arthur B. Markham, attorney and one-time owner of Markham's Court, a collection of houses rated at £2 a year or less in St Giles Street, Edmund Law, bookseller, and William Percival, general practitioner, all lived in Abington Street. Samuel Walker, tailor and clothes dealer, and a substantial property owner, lived in Castle Cottage by the station, Richard Phipps the brewer lived in Spencer Parade and John Phipps junior, a draper, lived in Cliftonville.

Henry Billington Whitworth, who was born in the town and owned Whitworth's Farm on the north side of the Wellingborough Road, was variously described as a banker and as the Treasurer to the Borough Council, and also owned a portfolio of smallish properties. In 1871 he lived in George Row in a house rated at £144, together with his mother-in-law, Esther Wilson, a property owner in her own right. Other prominent members of the town establishment included four Northampton-born shoe manufacturers, Henry Marshall who lived at The Poplars, opposite the Barracks and backing onto the Racecourse, Everard Betts in the Drapery, George Turner of shoe manufacturers Turner & Hyde who lived in Derngate, and William Jones, living in a house rated at £100 in Cliftonville. But they were in a minority here too, just four out of the 15 shoe manufacturers living in the town who can be identified and located.

Rating incomers from within the catchment area is complicated by the large number of village-born servants living in the best streets. Other incomers from both towns and villages in the catchment area lived in more recent housing and were therefore slightly better-off on average than the poorest locals. But they were even less well represented in the town's establishment. High-status individuals who had been born in the surrounding villages and towns included Thomas Tebbutt, boot and shoe manufacturer, born in Earls Barton and living in Spencer Parade, William Adkins, a prosperous farmer who was born in Greens Norton and lived in Cheyne Walk, James T. Sibley, retired shoe manufacturer from Wellingborough and living in the Vigo, William Colson, a butcher from Raunds, William Clarke, a saddler and whip-maker from Towcester, James Smith, baker, born in Hackleton, and all living in Gold Street. But just 23 of the best properties were occupied by individuals born in local villages, accounting for 14 per cent of the elite, compared with 24 per cent of the working population. Another 12 came from local towns and industrial villages, 7.5 per cent compared with 12 per cent of the working population. Whether they were less talented or less ambitious or less successful as a group than long-range migrants is a moot point, but most of these short-range incomers may simply have been driven off the land by economic necessity or drawn into Northampton by the prospect of an ordinary job in the shoe trade.

But the dominant position of long-range migrants in the best housing and among the most prosperous citizens cannot be denied. How and why they arrived in Northampton is impossible to say from the censuses, but 86 or 54 per cent of the highest-status properties were occupied by those who had made the longest journeys to reach the town, almost twice their (27.8 per cent) share of the total working population. Among them were Luke

Shipman, the wine merchant and Frederick Bostock, shoe manufacturer, both living in the Drapery and both born in Nottingham, and Norman Sheppard, draper in the Drapery, who was born in Little Bowden, then in Northamptonshire but now part of Market Harborough. They included eleven individuals born in London, including James Acklam, the local tax collector and Colonel Chaplin, George de Wilde, editor of the *Northampton Mercury* and Martin Boeme, resident manager of the Union Bank, (formerly Percival's Bank, and after many incarnations now the Natwest Bank, part of the Royal Bank of Scotland) in the Drapery. William Allchin, an engineer who made steam engines, lived at his premises in Augustin Street, Delina Blunt, a jeweller, and Joel Moss, a baker, who both lived in Bridge Street, James Klitz, music-seller on The Parade, and William Shoosmith, solicitor and Town Clerk, who lived on the Billing Road were all born in London.

Acknowledgement

The author would like to thank Paul Stroud, of the University of Northampton, for his work in producing the maps for this article.

The Volta Tower

RON CLAYTON



Figure 1. Postcard of the Volta Tower.
(*Author's collection.*)

On the morning of Friday 16 November, 1951, the Volta Tower at Finedon collapsed without warning, and in less than a minute a piece of the small town's history vanished from the landscape, taking with it the life of Mrs. Florence Northen, who along with her husband had lived in the tower for many years.

Until its collapse this notable Northamptonshire landmark had, for over 80, years stood in a dominant position alongside the New Cemetery on Finedon's Station Road. Today the site is occupied by a bungalow and farm buildings; all that remains of the tower itself are a few pieces of masonry displayed in the Wellingborough Museum; the door, which is said to be the entrance to a private house in Geddington¹, and, thankfully, the many photographs.

But what exactly had been the origin of this strikingly ornamental and unique piece of Victorian architecture often, though erroneously, referred to as a 'folly'?

It was in fact fairly common knowledge that the tower had been built by the last squire of Finedon, William Harcourt Isham Mackworth-Dolben, as a memorial to his eldest son, also

¹ Geddington.net People and places of Geddington – Lee's Way, part 4, accessed 19 September 2017.

named William, a Lieutenant in the Royal Navy, who had drowned off the West coast of Africa in 1863. It was also widely believed that the name 'Volta' had been taken from the name of a warship on which Lt. Dolben had once served.



Figure 2. Believed to be a photo of Lt William Mackworth-Dolben.

(From the collection of the late John Bailey.)

Extensive details surrounding the tower had first appeared in print in Reginald Underwood's book, *The Pageant of Finedon*, published in 1942; and for many years this book remained virtually the only available source of information regarding the tower's origins.

In Chapter Four, referring to Squire Mackworth-Dolben, the author states the following:

His eldest son, William an officer in the Royal Navy, was drowned off the coast of Africa on 1 September 1863. The Volta Tower is built to his memory, Volta being the name of the man-of-war on which he had served at the time of his promotion. According to a private log book, kept by his servant Henfrey, we learn: "The young Commander Mackworth-Dolben was under orders to proceed to the River Niger and was anxious to see the Commodore for his final orders. He went aboard the Rattlesnake, received his orders and was returning, bringing with him Lieutenant M'Kinson and Mr Embank, a midshipman, when a seal struck the boat and capsized it. Commander Mackworth-Dolben, wearing a frock coat, sword and revolver, kept afloat for some time, but sank exhausted before aid could be got."

Further on in the book, there is a very early photograph of the tower and a brief description in which the author once again reiterates the claim that the tower was named after a warship:

The Volta Tower . . . is a lofty circular tower in mixed ironstone and limestone. It was put up in 1863 in memory of William Mackworth-Dolben, drowned at sea, and named after the man of war on which he had served. The mullions are cut in a heavy Norman style which gives it the appearance of a much greater age than it can claim. High up it bears the legend: With Duty Meet Death: and below, the date 1863. Below that is a shield bearing the Mackworth-Dolben Arms. Over the door of the entrance porch is carved: In Memoriam, and below, carved in a circle: A.D. 1863, Fidelis In Extremis (faithful to the end). At a later date a wing was added and this tower too turned into a dwelling house.



Figure 3. A very early photograph of the Volta Tower.
(Author's collection.)

The supposition that the Tower had been named after a warship had most likely been in circulation long before *The Pageant of Finedon* was published, though where or how it originated is uncertain. The story gained credibility, becoming firmly embedded in the folklore of Finedon (even to this day the story still appears on the notice boards of the local Pocket Park) and was certainly well established at the time I was growing up in the town

during the late 1950's. I can in fact remember sitting at a desk in the Junior Boys School while our Headmaster, Mr. Jack Wells, related the tale of the 'seal' overturning the boat and thinking, 'that must have been either a big seal or a small boat'!

However, as revealed by the late John Bailey in his first book: *Finedon Otherwise Thingdon* (published 1975) the part of the tale concerning the 'seal' isn't true. Reginald Underwood took this account of events from the hand written journal of Lt. Dolben's servant, Henfrey, and misread 'seal' for what was in fact 'sea'; meaning that the boat was in fact capsized by a rough sea. Underwood also got the names of Dolben's companions wrong; Embank was in fact Ewbank and Lieutenant M'Kinson was Lt. Atkinson.

Nevertheless, despite these discrepancies the story of the tower's origin is in essence true; Lt Dolben did drown off the coast of West Africa in September 1863, and his bereaved father, Squire Dolben, had the tower erected as a memorial. However, the claim that the tower was named after a warship is, as I discovered, another matter.

Around four years ago, while undertaking some totally unrelated research, I came across a French WWII destroyer named Volta, which in turn led me to pursue - in an idle moment of curiosity - research into the HMS Volta believed to have been the origin of the tower's name. And that is how this story begins.

To cut a very long story short, there was no record of an HMS Volta to be found (in fact, as it transpired there never has been a Royal Navy warship of that name).

Intrigued, as I'm sure any researcher would be, I pursued another avenue of inquiry and eventually dug out a copy of Lt. William Mackworth-Dolben's service record at the National Archives, Kew². It is evident that he packed a great deal into his eleven year service with the Royal Navy.

He joined as a Cadet in August 1852, at thirteen years of age, and rose through the system going from Midshipman to Mate, eventually being promoted to Lieutenant in November 1859. Along the way he was 'gazetted' for operations in the Gulf of Bothnia, Finland (June 1854) during the Crimean War, and, just discernible on the record, it is recorded that he was badly wounded in the 'Benin Rivers expedition' of March 1863. Finally, and rather tersely, it is recorded: 'drowned crossing Lagos Bar, 1st September 1863 on full pay' (meaning while on active service).

In all of this time he had served onboard or commanded around a dozen ships, not one of them named Volta. So where does 'Volta' come into the story if there was no ship of that name?

Further research into his naval service, particularly the last three years, was to reveal the answer.

Dolben had been dispatched to Lagos onboard *HMS Prometheus* towards the end of November 1860; the *Prometheus*, under the command of Capt. Bedingfield, having been sent to join the Royal Navy's West Africa Squadron.

To go into the details surrounding the history of the West Africa Squadron would mean digressing too far from the subject of Lt Dolben and the Volta Tower; but it should suffice

to say, that following the Slave Trade Act of 1807, the British Government actively attempted to suppress the Trans-Atlantic slave trade by patrolling the West Coast of Africa and in particular the Gulf of Guinea, the major ports of which, including Lagos, were at the hub of this trade. Britain had annexed Lagos as a Crown Colony in 1861; by that time around 25 Royal Navy ships and 2,000 personnel were involved in patrolling over 3,000 miles of coastline in an effort to prevent the illegal trade in human cargo. Despite its humanitarian objectives the operation was not universally welcomed, and was met with some resistance by the rulers of the African Kingdoms for whom the trade had proved highly lucrative.

Research into the ships on which Dolben had served during this period yielded a reference to a file dated 1861³, held in the archives of the Royal Geographical Society, South Kensington, and headed: *Proceedings of the boats of HMS Bloodhound up the River Volta. Lieut. and Commander Dolben. Ghana, West Africa.*

The file contains the details surrounding a small expedition led by Lt. Dolben, consisting of 'four well-armed boats manned by thirty-nine men', that had entered the estuary of the Volta on 28 October 1861, and ascended the river for 120 miles before their progress was halted by shallow rapids impassable to the boats.

The file also includes Dolben's original two-part sketch map of the river, from which, following the expedition, and Admiralty chart of the Volta was produced.



**Figure 4. Admiralty chart 397. River Volta – sketch survey 1861. WDM Dolben
Lt. RN & T Stringer Act. Sec. Master RN.
(Courtesy UK Hydrographic Office.)**

Following the expedition, Dolben submitted, via a referee, a report of the journey to the Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society. The covering letter reads:

H M S Bloodhound Cape Coast Castle Nov 7th / 61 Sir, I have the honour to enclose for your acceptance a journal of the proceedings of the ship, under my command, during an expedition up the River Volta. . .

If he had hoped that his report would be published in the prestigious *Journal* of the RGS he was to be disappointed. He received a less than encouraging response, the reply stating:

The geographical information in this letter is very scanty, it is chiefly a personal narrative of no great interest. I think a short abstract in the Proceedings will fully suffice.

The 'short extract' appeared in the *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (1861 - 1862), on 27 January 1862. Dolben's account begins by saying:

The author, conveying his Excellency the Governor of Cape Coast Castle, steamed to the mouth of the Volta, a river near Lagos, with a view to ascending it, - a feat that had never before been accomplished by white men. . .

After going into brief topographical details the 250-word report concludes:

The climate appeared healthy; for none of the party suffered for the five days they were in the river. . . The principal products were cotton, palm oil, Indian-corn, and cassava. The water of the river was palatable and the fish abundant.

There arose an error; the RGS accredited Dolben as a Lieutenant-Commander when in fact he was a Lieutenant AND Commander of *HMS Bloodhound*. Dolben never rose to the actual rank of Lieutenant-Commander.

From all of this it seems, without fear of contradiction, that The Volta Tower takes its name, not from a warship but a West African river. However, the story doesn't end there, further research revealed the fascinating story of Dolben's subsequent career.

Following the expedition and submission of the report and sketch map, Dolben was awarded fellowship of the RGS, appearing on the list of 1862/63 alongside such eminent Victorians as Charles Darwin, David Livingstone, Henry Morton Stanley and two men who would, to a greater and lesser extent feature in the unfolding story:

One was Dr W B Baikie, Scottish Naval Officer, and explorer, who in 1854 had been involved in a successful expedition to the Niger River during which he had pioneered the use of quinine to combat malaria. He led a second expedition in 1857 consequently establishing a settlement at Lokoja, at the confluence of the Niger and Benue rivers. The purpose of Dolben's planned Niger expedition of September 1863 was in fact to establish contact with and re-supply Dr Baikie's settlement.

The other, who would feature more prominently in the story, was one of Victorian England's more colourful sons, Sir Richard Burton: explorer, diplomat, linguist, writer, noted for his translations of *the Arabian Nights*, *The Karma Sutra*, and *The Perfumed Garden*, but primarily famed for his exploits with John Hanning Speke in their quest to find the source of the Nile, and discovering Lake Tanganyika.

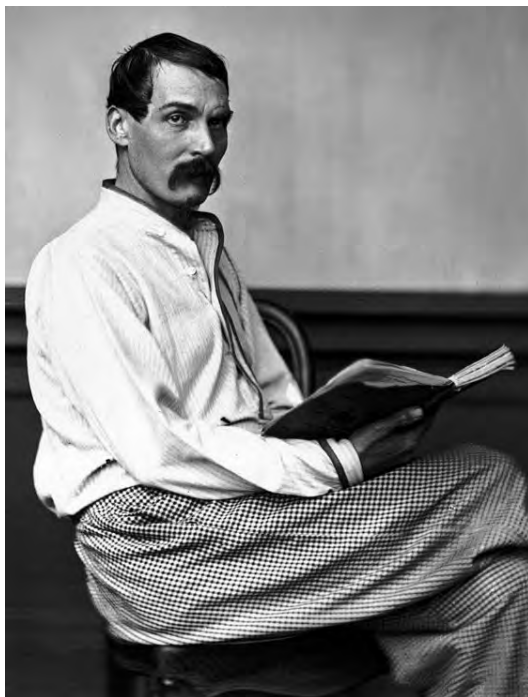


Figure 5. Sir Richard Burton 1864, by Rischgitz.
(Wikicommons)

Burton joined the Consular Service (Foreign Office) at the beginning of 1861, and shortly thereafter was appointed British Consul to Fernando Po (modern day Bioko), a Portuguese possession in the Gulf of Guinea. In fact he arrived in the Gulf of Guinea just two months after Dolben and would spend the next four years exploring the rivers of West Africa and would on at least two occasions be assisted by Lt. Dolben.

On November 21st 1861, less than a month after the Volta expedition, *HMS Bloodhound*, with Dolben in command left Lagos taking Burton to explore the Oil rivers of the Niger Delta. Burton's journal records:

...On the 21st ult. I left Lagos in HMS Bloodhound, Lieut.-Commander Mackworth Dolben, which Captain Bedingfield kindly detached for the purpose of visiting the Oil rivers. We entered the Nun river on the 24th November, passed through the Akkassa Creek, whose waters for the first time saw a man-of-war; visited Brass and Fish towns, and we are now proposing to sound the bar of St Nicholas river. . .

An Admiralty chart of the Brass and St Nicholas rivers was produced following the expedition. Although the chart bears the names of both Dolben and Burton it was quite possibly drawn up from sketches made by Lt Dolben.

Less than three weeks later, on 10 December 1861, *HMS Bloodhound*, still under Dolben's command, took Burton to the port of Victoria (modern day Limbe), from where Burton would carry out his ascent of the Cameroon Mountains.

The following month Dolben accompanied his Commanding Officer, Captain Bedingfield, on a minor diplomatic mission to Ode (Nigeria), leaving Lagos on 12 January 1862 and travelling by canoe and then overland on horseback. The object of the expedition was to induce the local chiefs to put a stop to inter-tribal conflict, and make their fiefdoms more open to European traders.

Between June and the end of December 1862, his service record reveals that he was 'paid off', i.e., took leave. Where he went and what he did during this six month period is unknown, he may have returned to England for a time. Whatever the case, by the beginning of 1863 he was back at Lagos and, shortly after, appointed to the command of *HMS Handy*, a shallow draught steam and sail powered gunboat, originally built for service in the Crimean War.

In mid March 1863 he took part in a punitive action against the stockade of an African chief at Eppé (a settlement 40 or so miles east of Lagos), during which he was badly wounded and praised for his 'gallant conduct'.

While leading a landing party comprising sailors and men of the West India Regiment he came under heavy fire and was hit by a bullet in the thigh. Though wounded he pressed on, leading the assault with fellow officers, then, having set fire to the huts in the enemy stockade, he covered the re-embarkation of the soldiers, being one of the last to leave the beach hanging on to the rudder of a boat.

At the end of August 1863 Dolben assumed command of *HMS Investigator*, a steam paddlewheel gunboat of the type built to explore the rivers of West Africa. At about the same time or shortly after his appointment, *HMS Rattlesnake* arrived off Lagos on 29 August, carrying the commodore of the West Africa Squadron, Arthur Parry Eardley-Wilmot R.N.

Three days later, on the morning of Tuesday 1 September, Dolben crossed Lagos Bar in a whaler crewed by native sailors (Kroomen) and was rowed out to the *Rattlesnake* to receive his orders; those orders were to proceed to the Niger in *HMS investigator* and establish contact with and re-supply Dr Baikie's settlement at Lokoja.

He left to re-cross the bar, taking with him midshipman Ewbank and Lt. Atkinson. What happened on the return journey was recorded by Ewbank in a letter he wrote to his father⁴.

On the morning of the 1st September Lieut. Dolben came on board in his whaler to see the Commodore, as he had only just received his appointment to the 'Investigator,' and was to command the expedition. He came out over the bar without shipping a drop of water, about 8 a.m., and after making arrangements with the Commodore he asked for a midshipman, and I volunteered to go with him, with one of our Lieutenants, poor Atkinson, who also asked that I might be allowed to accompany him. Lieutenant Dolben seemed to think nothing of going in, no more than pulling on shore in a harbour, so we shoved off from the 'Rattlesnake,' and pulled in about a mile before we approached the bar, talking about it, for we had all heard that it was very dangerous. But he assured us that there was no danger, and that it was quite smooth, and as he had come over quite safely we never dreamt of any dangerous accident. . .

We arrived on the bar at 1.15 p.m., having left the ship at 12 o'clock, and the very first breaker we met capsized the boat, and rolled her with tremendous force over and over. I just heard poor

4 Midshipman Ewbank's father had the letter published in *The Evening Mail* (Bournemouth) 16 December 1863.

Dolben say, before the boat capsized, "Here it comes," and being in the bottom of the boat, I put my head over the gunwale and looked, and saw a towering sea curling down upon us; . . .

The next sea washed us off for a third time. I was the first to regain the boat, and saw Dolben a little distance away from the boat, but unable to swim from exhaustion and the weight of his clothes. One of the Kroomen succeeded in pushing a mast to him, to which he clung for a time, and then all of a sudden disappeared. . .

Dolben's obituary, including the name of *HMS Investigator* was reported in several local newspapers, the *Lincolnshire Chronicle* being among them:

Deaths - On the 1st September, drowned in crossing the Bar of Lagos, West Africa, Lieutenant - Commander William Digby Mackworth-Dolben R.N., of HMS Investigator, eldest son of Wm Mackworth-Dolben, Esq., of Finedon Hall, Northamptonshire, aged 24.⁵

A promising life cut short by an act of fate, and an unfortunate end not only to a promising naval career but also that of an explorer; who knows? had he lived perhaps we would have read about him in our history books; perhaps he would have accompanied Burton on his later exploration of that most mysterious of Africa's rivers, the Congo.

Following Lt Dolben's death his father commissioned a tower to be built as a lasting memorial. That tower would bear the name of the West African river his son had charted.

The tower itself was designed by the noted Northampton architect Edmund Francis Law; Law had previously undertaken a number of commissions for Squire Dolben at Finedon Hall and on the estate, some of which are still in evidence today.

The tower was not erected in 1863 as many sources claim (this was the date of Lt Dolben's death). The original drawings, now residing at Northamptonshire Record Office⁶, are dated 1865 and are listed as a: 'Memorial Tower at Finedon Hall, for Mr. Mackworth-Dolben'. For all its age the fragile paper still reveals a beautiful drawing showing the front, side and plan elevations of the proposed tower, with the front, or 'West' elevation coloured in by the warm tones of an ink wash.

Perhaps it's my imagination, but the design of the Tower with its corbelled roof seems to resemble a broken column surmounted by a laurel wreath; a monument, symbolizing 'a life cut short', that is to be seen in many older cemeteries.

That aside, when viewing the drawing two things immediately stand out: Contrary to the notion that the tower was a 'folly', the original design clearly shows that as well as a memorial it was clearly always intended as a dwelling, and therefore a 'living memorial', which indeed it was for much, if not all, of its existence. Also, and even more noticeable is the size, the drawing depicting a much shorter building. According to the scale, the tower was originally designed to be approximately 63 feet high, which contrasts sharply with the actual tower's height of 90 feet.

Precisely when work commenced on the tower is not known, but at the very earliest would have been sometime in 1865, and from what little is known, it appears to have been constructed over the following years with significant alterations from the original design.

5 *Lincolnshire Chronicle*, 23 October 1863.

6 NRO. Law & Harris. Box 5



Figure 6. Broken column headstone.
(Photo, author's collection.)

Some, albeit brief, details of the tower's construction appear in a short article from the *Wellingborough News* of 15 September 1939, where it is stated that the builder was Mr. F Henson (a Finedon firm), Mr Mackworth-Dolben took personal interest in the erection, and that: 'The tower is 90 feet high, thirty feet higher than originally intended, which made it necessary to strengthen the foundations whilst it was being built.'

The article also alludes to the long-held myth that the tower had been built entirely without mortar: 'the outer stones, as can be observed close to, being interlaced with each other.'

From this it seems the squire's 'personal interest' was the reason why the tower ended up being much higher than originally intended.

The tower was quite probably still under construction when Lt William Dolben's youngest brother, the poet Digby Mackworth-Dolben drowned in the River Welland on June 28, 1867. Squire Mackworth-Dolben himself died five years later in November 1872, all of his sons having predeceased him (his second son, Herbert, had died of consumption at Bournemouth in 1870).

The tower had in all probability been completed by the time of the squire's death; it was certainly standing during the later 1870's. The *Northampton Mercury* of Tuesday 26 August 1879 states that the Volta Tower was open to the public for 'observation' during a 'village holiday', or sports day, in aid of Finedon Church organ.

When it was first occupied also remains unknown but the National Census of 1881 lists Elam Cooper, age 37, as living in the Volta Tower along with his wife, Mary aged 34, and children: William, 16; Alfred, 13; Annie, 11; Harriet, 9; Harry, 6; Ernest, 3 and baby Eliza.

Eleven years later in November 1892 the field to the south of the tower, listed on some older maps as Tower Field, was opened as the town's New Cemetery.

Throughout this time the tower was still evidently occupied, being described by an article appearing in *The Leeds Times* of 22 January 1898 as: '... perhaps one of the quaintest dwelling houses yet devised or inhabited by civilised persons.'

Following the death of the Lady of the Manor, Miss Ellen Mackworth-Dolben, in 1912, Finedon Hall and other estate properties, including the Volta Tower, were sold off by public auction at Wellingborough on 28 June. The tower is listed as lot 34 in the sale catalogue:

'The Artistically Stone Built and Tiled Cottage called The Volta Tower. Situated near the village, containing 4 bedrooms, parlour and kitchen, woodshed also a valuable meadow adjoining. The cottage is let to a Mr. H Durden, on a monthly tenancy, subject to a month's notice, at a rental at £10 per annum. Landlord paying rates.'

Apparently the tower was sold for less than £400.

The tenant mentioned was Mr. Harry Durden, a well known undertaker and joiner who continued to live in the tower until 1919 when it was once again put up for sale, being purchased by Mr. John Edgar Northen, a farmer of Great Oakley, for the princely sum of £680.

Mr. Northen would own the Tower until its collapse but must have let it for several years, because from what is known he and his wife didn't move in until 1938 or 39.

If this is the case the Northens would have taken permanent residence at roughly the same time that Richard Thomas and Co. extended Buccleuch quarry, and began excavations in the near vicinity of the tower. The front page picture of the *Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph* of Tuesday 23 May 1939 shows the gigantic Ransomes & Rapier excavator at work within what seems an alarmingly close proximity to the Volta Tower.

Quarrying ceased in 1946 but briefly resumed for a short period during the summer of 1951 during which blasting took place. Work had however stopped two months or so before the tower collapsed.

The collapse occurred shortly after 9:40 a.m. on Friday 16 November 1951, the only other witness to the catastrophe besides the Northens was the cemetery caretaker, Mr. Fredrick Coles. Four days later, when giving evidence at the Coroner's Inquest, Mr. Coles said the collapse had been briefly preceded by a rumbling noise: 'then the whole thing collapsed. Just simply crumpled. The top of the Tower dropped through the whole thing.'

Mr Northen managed to escape but the body of his wife was discovered under the rubble by rescue workers two hours later.

There are still those in Finedon who remember hearing the deep 'rumble' that reverberated around the town as the tower fell. I was in fact in a pram being pushed by my Mother near to our home in Kenmuire Rd, about half a mile distant, and she often recalled hearing the tower's collapse; I suppose I did too, but being 5 months old I have no recollection of the event.

During the Coroner's Inquest Harry Durden, who had lived in the tower between 1907 and 1919, told the court:

'It was not true to say that there was no mortar between the stones. Two or three inches [back] from the front of them there was mortar. The walls were 2ft. 9ins to 3ft. thick.' The coroner then asked if the tower had been a good strong building, to which Mr. Durden replied, 'yes'.

In essence this means that contrary to myth the stones of the tower had been bedded with mortar after all, but the outer face of the structure had been left 'un-pointed'.

In his summing up the East Northants Coroner, Captain Parker, said:

'[He] did not think anyone was grossly negligent so as to cause it [the collapse] . . . Something went wrong without giving any particular warning. I don't think that it was realised how serious it was.'

The following month Mr. Northen examined the possibility of bringing an action for damages against the quarry owners, but in January 1952, after approaches to several government bodies, and with little prospect of a successful outcome, the action was abandoned.

Why did the Volta Tower collapse? Despite the myth that there was no mortar the truth was that the stonework had not been pointed; for over 80 winters water would have collected in the gaps between the facing stones, expanding as it froze and widening cracks and fissures. Ultimately, the cumulative effect of 'frost' damage would have proved detrimental to the fabric of the building. The tower was also built over its designed height, adding 50 per cent more masonry, possibly making the structure 'top heavy' and unstable.

These two factors alone would have compromised the structural integrity of the building; then there was the nearby quarrying and blasting. However, for all the speculation the absolute truth behind the collapse will probably never be known.

Whatever the cause, it was a sad and tragic end to an outstanding Northamptonshire landmark and wonderful memorial to Lt William Digby Mackworth-Dolben, RN, FRGS; the first European to chart the lower reaches of the River Volta. Ghana, West Africa.

A Private Soldier

THEO ADAMS

Bert Adams came of age in July 1914; four weeks later England declared war on Germany. Herbert William George Adams was living with his parents and his two younger brothers in Byron Street on Kingsley Park in Northampton. He had a job as a wood-worker at a small business close to Abington Square and, more importantly for him, he was an active member of the congregation of St. Matthew's church. He enjoyed the fellowship of the Men's Bible Class and he taught in the Sunday School as well as joining in the services. Through these church activities he had met his beloved Lizzie. She lived in a parallel street, worked in a small factory, taught in the Sunday School and went to the same services.

His churchmanship carried with it a very strong sense of duty and so he volunteered for armed service in the August of 1914 only to be rejected on medical grounds; other men from the Bible Class were accepted and left the town for the Army, leaving Bert behind. The war was there; he read about it in the newspapers – Mons, Ypres, Jutland, the Somme; the lists of the casualties, the return of men wounded; the presence in the town of soldiers from other parts of the country; the political unrest; – and yet Bert was not really involved. Life for him carried on more or less as it always had.

After two years of war the government introduced conscription requiring all men up to the age of 51 to register for military service and Bert expected that he would be included notwithstanding his poor eyesight, knowing that he was in general good health. He married Elizabeth King Rawlings in October 1916, he moved in to her parents' home, Christmas came, and on 28th December 1916 he reported for duty at Woolwich Arsenal. From that day he began to keep a diary, a small book with about two square inches for each day, written night after night in indelible pencil and continuing down to January 1919 and his demobilisation.

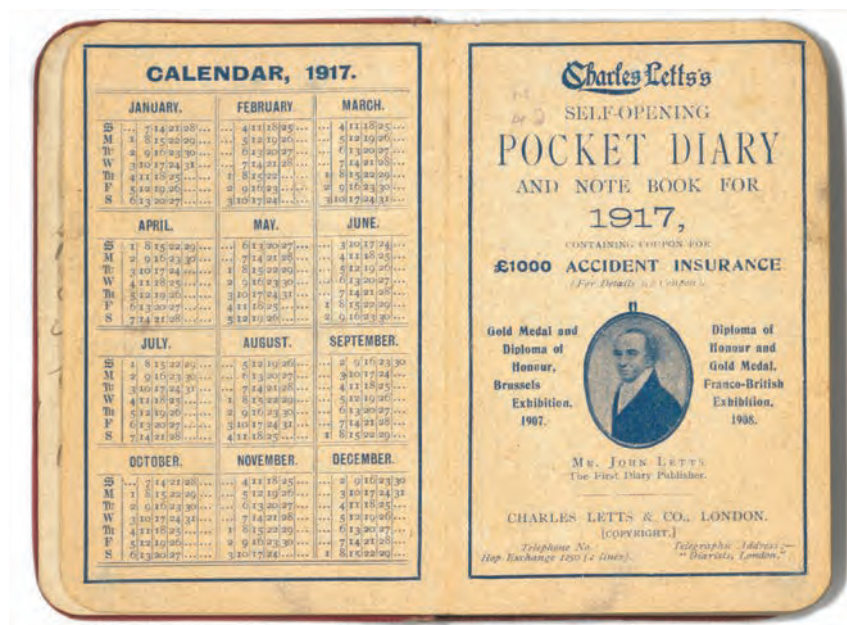


Figure 1. 1917 diary

It was not until the sixth day after his enlistment that he was issued with his uniform; until then he had been given various cleaning duties but under very light discipline and allowed out of the camp for visits to the neighbouring cafes. Drill began on 6th January with route marches following a day or two later. In his second week he was called to be a member of a funeral party but whether this came about because of his religious beliefs – he'd already made himself known to the chaplain – or because his name began with 'A', is not recorded in the diary. What the diary did show was that the exchange of letters between himself and his wife had begun; she continued to write to him pretty well every day for the whole time that he was in the Army and although he couldn't match her efforts, he must have spent a lot of his free time in writing to her and to other folk back home in Northampton.

His time at Woolwich ended on 14th January 1917 when he was moved, with other new recruits, to a camp on the southern edge of Salisbury Plain. He now had a number, 181458, a rank, Driver, in the Royal Field Artillery; his medical classification was B1.

There is still a strong military presence on Salisbury Plain where the Army has had camps since the beginning of the 20th century. Bert was ordered to Boyton Camp which appears to have been one of the 15 close to the village of Codford standing a few miles to the south-east of Warminster; he would walk into the village on his free days, he had his photograph taken there on Saturday 10th February and collected the prints some 10 days later. AYMCA hut had been established at Codford and this was a very useful refuge, since the conditions in the camps were spartan.

He worked with horses on most of his days at Boyton. There was the daily routine of cleaning the stables, seeing that the tackle was in good order and that the animals were fed, watered and groomed. He was also instructed in horsemanship but he doesn't seem to have been a good pupil! He stayed at Boyton until 6 March when, apparently without warning, he was transferred from the Royal Field Artillery to the Devonshire Regiment, given a new number (58336) and moved to Plymouth. It would seem that he wasn't the only man to be moved; he'd made a friend during his time on the Plain, a man named Bibby; they were together not only in Plymouth but also in France. It was a friendship that continued – Bibby was a Londoner and he and Bert would exchange letters every Christmas and would occasionally meet each other when Bert was in the capital.

His transfer to the Devonshire Regiment carried with it the change of trade from driver to labourer, a man without status, and whilst he was at Plymouth there was not even the satisfaction of useful work. The food served to the men was not good: he describes it as poor on both 7th and 9th of March and like swill on the 12th. They were free to go into the town and this Bert did on six of the ten days that he was there; he was glad that the mail caught up with him. Then, after 24 hours warning, the men were mustered at 8 p.m., put on a train to travel all night to Folkestone where a good breakfast was given prior to boarding the ship *Onward*; she sailed at 11 o'clock and made the crossing to Boulogne. After a night in a temporary camp under canvas, and another good breakfast, Bert went into the town before joining a train which travelled through the night. So he reached his destination on 19th March 1917; he records that he was billeted in a former German camp which would have been close to the River Somme and within walking distance of a town named Bray. The German buildings were probably constructed during the first few months of the war, since by the end of 1914 the front line had been established to the east of Bray and remained static until the Battle of the Somme began in the summer of 1916. The result of that battle was to advance the line a few miles eastwards and during the Spring of 1917 – the time of Bert's arrival – the Germans retreated from the Somme to what became known as the Hindenburg line. The sketch map may give an idea of his whereabouts.

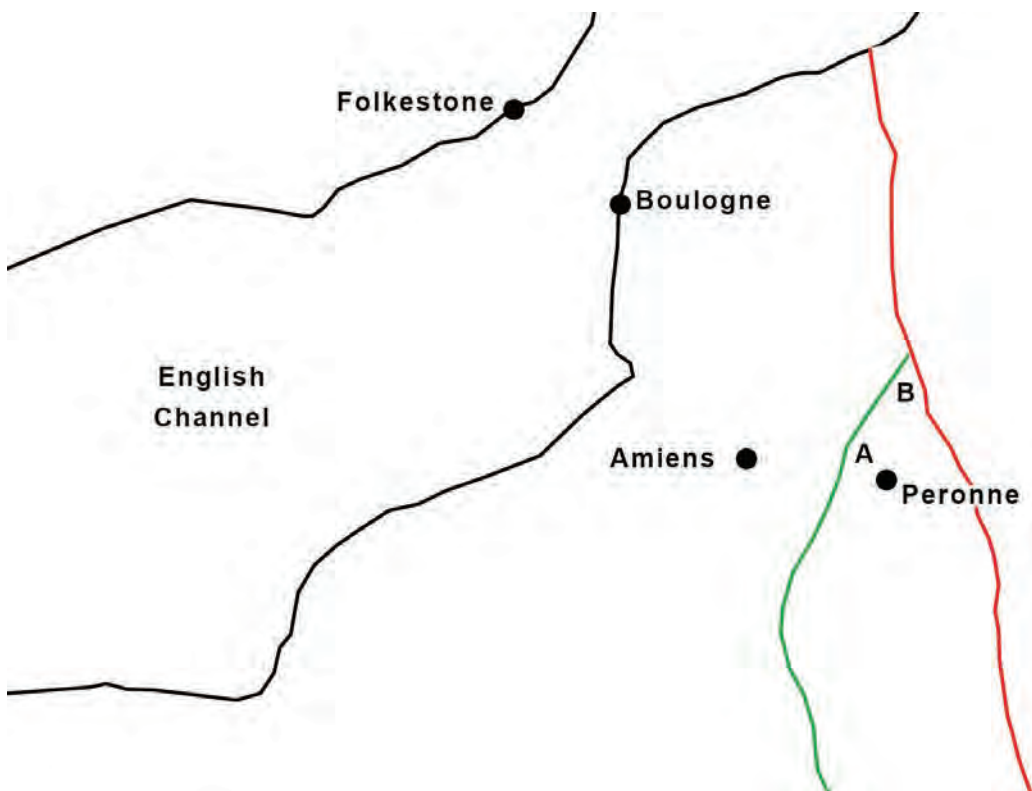


Figure 2. Map

The sketch map shows the towns of North-East France and Belgium together with the Hindenburg line and, to the west, the furthest extent of the German advance in 1918. The letters A & B indicate the first camp near Bray and the second camp at Fins, respectively.

Bert was put to work, with other men, in the Carpenters' Shop – a part of the Royal Engineers' depot. The work was varied: making stretcher trestles, trench boards, drain boxes, notice boards, latrine seats, horse troughs and so on; occasionally there was nothing for them to do whilst from time to time they were taken to other sites to load or unload motor lorries and railway trucks. The weather during that Spring was very mixed; a glorious day could be followed by a day of heavy rain, there was snow on one or two days and a thunderstorm on another. Occasionally the men were given a half-day free of duties with the opportunity to wash personal clothing or to take a bath. Bert became acquainted with the local villages close to the camp, sometimes finding the shops unfriendly to British soldiers, and he was able to join in church services at the YMCA. He also found it good to find peace and quiet in the fields where other men would join him and he speaks of giving talks on questions of the Christian faith.

On 14th May 1917 came the final change in his army mustering. The Labour Corps was established as a separate 'organisation' within the Army and Bert ceased to belong to the Devonshire Regiment: it meant a new number, 103327, and a new cap badge. He was a member of 173 Company and in the 10th section. Shortly afterwards came another move; the camp near Bray was required for German prisoners and No. 173 company was moved north-eastwards to a place called Fins on 7 June.

treatment together with a modification of his duties. One of his mates was not so lucky: on 8 February 1918 Pte Beale had both his legs cut off by a train and he died the next day.

On Thursday, 21 March Bert records, 'Big push starts at 4.30 a.m.' This was the offensive by the German armies under Ludendorff aiming to break through the allied lines and included a strike south-westwards towards Albert. Now the depot at Fins was under heavy fire with shells landing in the middle of the tents, the British retaliating with their heavy, rail-mounted gun, balloons coming down in flames; it lasted for 36 hours until No. 173 Company retreated from Fins along the roads. They slept by the road-side as best they could and re-started their retreat at 10 o'clock on the Saturday morning, keeping going until past midnight when Bert rested in an old stable. His diary reads: 'Hear that Jerry has got in Fins and on to Peronne. Tired out, sore and raw feet, exist on bully and biscuits, water from shell-holes and radiators.' They rested for most of the Sunday but re-started in a hurry in the early evening to be ferried across a river on the Monday and to continue until they reached a place named St. Gratien very late on the Wednesday evening.

The company was there for some time. Rations were poor to start with, the mail began to get through, trenches were dug, rain soaked them to the skin, they slept where they could. On 6 April, a Saturday, Bert writes: 'Capt. reads us a letter and talks to us'. So much for Earl Haig's Order of the Day (though this could have been nearly a week later) and his message:

Many of us are now tired. To those I would say that victory will belong to the side which holds out the longest... There is no course open to us but to fight it out... With our backs to the wall and believing in the justice of our cause each one of us must fight on to the end. The safety of our homes and the freedom of mankind alike will depend upon the conduct of each one of us at this critical moment.

Although the German offensive brought them within five miles of Amiens, that town remained in British hands. No. 173 Company moved from place to place but always within the same vicinity from April to August 1918. Bert's friend Bibby went sick on 6th May and ended up at a hospital in England; the two friends exchanged letters from time to time but were never again back on active service together. Another member of the company was accidentally drowned whilst swimming in a stream – he was buried in France and Bert visited his grave a few weeks later. Bert himself went sick with his eyes on 19th June and was treated at a Field Dressing Station before being sent back to his unit after being officially told that he had no sight in his left eye. Two days after his return the whole company was inoculated and laid off from duty for 48 hours; Bert suffered from severe pains and, on going sick, was hospitalised. His milk diet was no hardship when set against his sleeping in a proper bed and being looked after by nurses!

He was discharged after a few days and given a new uniform before being ordered back to the company, a journey which required a five mile walk. Soon he was back at work digging cable tracks before being detached for training on an anti-aircraft Lewis gun; he was very keen about this, taking notes during the training and saving the various papers, though he seems to have fired only two practice rounds and never a shot in anger. The company came under German fire from time to time but there is a sense of greater optimism in his diaries especially during the latter part of July. He met his first American soldiers on 23 July: he would not have realised the significance of this, but the German High Command had sought to achieve complete victory through the Spring offensives and before the arrival of the American forces. Their initiative was lost when the second battle of the Marne turned against them and the German Chancellor knew by the 18 July that all was lost.

On 1 August 1918 Bert began his only time of leave. He travelled by rail and ship to reach Northampton at 5.30 in the late afternoon of Saturday the 3rd only to find that his wife was out. He changed into civilian clothes and noted in his diary, 'It all seems like a dream to be home after 20 months.' The next day he went to the 7 o'clock celebration of the Holy Communion at St. Matthew's, almost certainly his first communion since March, and enjoyed a full day of wearing ordinary clothes. During that week the British offensive, the Battle of Amiens, began: it was the beginning of the 100 days which ended with the Armistice. Bert, of course, knew none of this: he was busy making visits – a train trip to London to see the sights and to visit his friend Bibby, a cycle ride to Burton Latimer to see his grandmother, calls on friends and on his old employer in the town, a visit to the Opera House and walks in the countryside with Lizzie. He began his return journey on Friday, 16 August and rejoined the company on the following Tuesday.

The work of loading and unloading continued, gradually giving way to the repair of roads as the company moved behind the advance of the front-line troops, passing through villages seen as pictures of misery and destruction. By 3 October the men were at Vermand to the east of Peronne and they moved again in early November as the news came in of country after country seeking peace and leaving Germany in isolation. For a few days they were billeted in French houses with beds, tables and chairs. Finally, the Armistice was declared to begin on 11th November. No.173 Company downed tools on a 'no war, no work' policy and it took a good deal of military discipline to get them re-started. By 17 November the company was in Belgium where they worked on the roads.

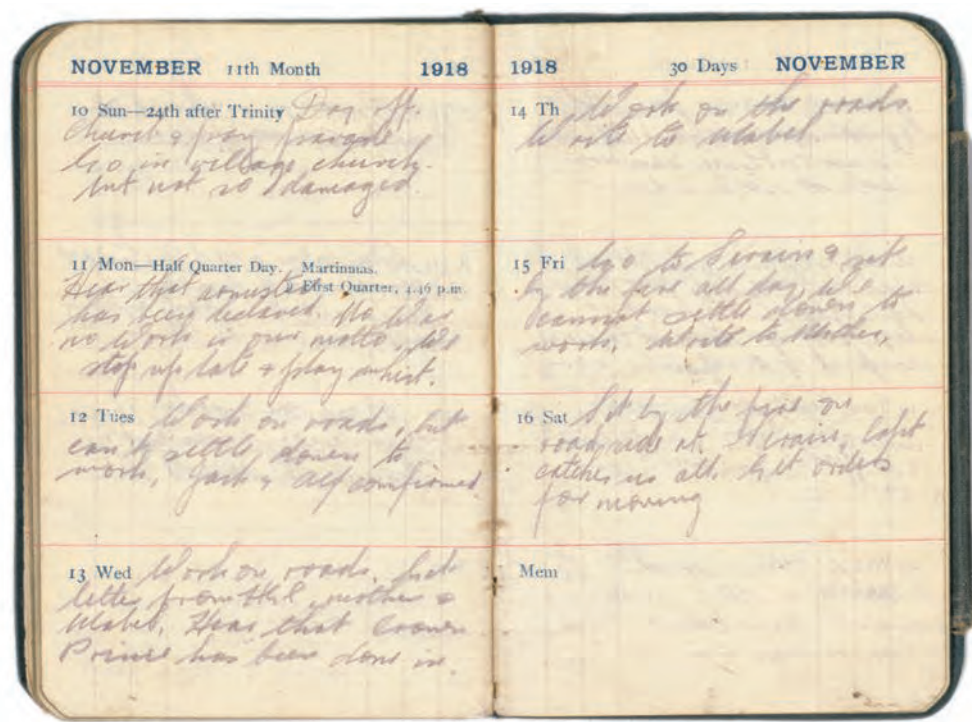


Figure 4. Diary entry for 11th November – no war, no work.

The year 1918 drew to its close as the company enjoyed a less intensive time with road work being interspersed with sight-seeing, a concert and a very relaxed Christmas. Bert cast his vote in the General Election held in mid-December, he had many opportunities for worship, and he continued to receive and write letters. On 8 January 1919 he received a letter from his former employer and because he was offered re-employment at home, Bert was able to apply for demobilisation. He was not alone; No.173 Labour Corps was broken up and Bert started the long journey home on 19 January, a journey which took a full week. In time, he duly received his two medals and he kept his steel helmet which he wore as German bombers passed overhead in the winter of 1940.

He never regretted his time of service with the Army.



Bert Adams

Book Review

JUNCTIONS AT BANBURY: a town and its railways since 1850

by Barrie Trinder

Banbury History Society Volume 35 2017

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Hardback, 266 pages

Price £19.95

Banbury is very close to Northamptonshire, and when first opened the town's two railway stations were actually located in that county, the parish of Grimsbury being on the eastern side of the Cherwell, which then formed the boundary with neighbouring Oxfordshire. Even after later boundary changes had put Banbury firmly in Oxfordshire, the 'Banburyshire' hinterland still extended into Northamptonshire, and so this book is of relevance and interest to local historians of our own county.

The railway first arrived in Banbury from the east, as a branch from the London & Birmingham Railway main line at Bletchley. This early tendril, initially known as the Buckinghamshire Railway, extended to Oxford, to head off the march of Brunel's broad gauge Great Western Railway (GWR), which had ambitions of reaching the West Midlands. The GWR did reach Banbury in 1850, but were just beaten into the town by a branch from the Oxford line terminating in a small station by Merton Street, the two stations being just a few yards from one another.

It would be some years before further railways would appear in the Banbury area, with the Northampton & Banbury Junction Railway from Blisworth and Towcester sharing the Merton Street station from 1872, and the GWR influenced Banbury & Cheltenham Railway opening in 1887 from a junction at Kings Sutton.

However the next development was much more significant for Banbury with a connecting line to the new Great Central Railway at nearby Woodford Halse bringing new traffic flows to and from the East Midlands and the north after 1900.

Finally, in 1910 the GWR opened their 'Bicester cut-off' line from Aynho Junction which provided a shorter route, and faster trains, to the capital, avoiding the detour via Oxford and Didcot.

The GWR side of Banbury had by then become a considerable railway centre for both local and long distance passenger and goods traffic, with extensive marshalling yards and improved locomotive facilities. However, by comparison Merton Street station still slumbered alongside as a terminus of rural branch lines.

The nationalisation of the railways in the aftermath of the Second World War inevitably brought economies, and the services to Towcester ceased in 1951; others soon followed, and Merton Street was without trains by the mid sixties. The controversial closure of the Great Central route in 1966 also further reduced Banbury's status, although the GWR station received a long-awaited facelift.

After a fallow period during the later British Rail era, privatisation then brought a welcome renaissance with the entrepreneurial Chiltern Railways introducing fast services to London Marylebone and Birmingham.

The author has recorded all of these changes in some detail, and has positioned them carefully in both a local and national context. This is also a book that manages to appeal to several groups at the same time; those interested in the local and social history of the Banbury area are well catered for, the serious railway historian will find much useful detail, and particularly in the later chapters, there is also much of interest for the more traditional railway enthusiast.

The book is well written and illustrated, although the photographs, some of which lack contrast, do tend to perhaps lean towards locomotive portraits rather than historical views. Pleasingly the publishers have opted for the traditional format of binding with a dust jacket, instead of the growing trend for laminated pictorial covers, which always seems to lessen the appeal of a volume. That said, the choice of two modern image photographs on the jacket does seem a little unbalanced for a book that spans the period from 1850 to the present day; an historic view on the front cover would possibly have been a happier choice.

A few errors have inevitably crept in; for example on page 34 the Northampton & Bedford railway opened in 1872 and not 1862, and passenger services between Towcester and Olney began on 1st December 1892 and not the previous year. Through services to Stratford from the Great Central started in 1899 and not in 1908 as stated on page 35, and the statement on page 37 that 'Banbury's railway from the east arrived in 1872' is somewhat ambiguous; although this was the date of opening of services from Blisworth and Towcester, the line from Bletchley arrived some two decades earlier. In addition the photograph on page 195 was actually taken at Stratford-upon-Avon SMJ station and not Bicester.

However this should not detract from what is an enjoyable book, and one which succeeds in having a much wider appeal than most traditional Historical Society productions.

Barry Taylor

OBITUARIES

Sir Hereward Wake Bart. MC DL 1916 - 2017: Soldier, Countryman and lifelong friend of Northamptonshire



There can be few men who had devoted more of their life to their native county than had Sir Hereward Wake, who died peacefully at home on 11 December 2017, a few weeks after his one hundred and first birthday. Together with his family and his estate at Courteenhall, Northamptonshire *was* his life.

Born in London on 7 October 1916, the eldest son of the 13th baronet, Major General Sir Hereward Wake, and Lady Margaret Wake, Hereward Wake took much pleasure in tracing his family history as far back, it is thought, to Geoffrey, an 11th century Norman knight. The Wake Baronetcy was created by James 1 in 1621 and soon after the Wakes moved from Somerset establishing the family seat at Courteenhall. Sir Hereward succeeded, becoming the 14th baronet on the death of his father in 1963.

After Eton and Sandhurst, he was commissioned in 1937 into the King's Royal Rifle Corps, serving for a period in Burma and then in Egypt where his Battalion was equipped with light armoured vehicles. His distinguished service in the North Africa Campaign is well known; following orders to carry out one particularly difficult and hazardous counter-attack in August 1942, which he brought to a successful conclusion with only a small platoon and a handful of Bren-gun carriers, he was awarded an immediate Military Cross. In the spring of 1943, during the battle for Tunis, he was wounded in the shoulder and had to spend a period of convalescence in England, which he did not find at all agreeable. Later, after returning to the King's Royal Rifles, he saw action in the drive through Europe, commanding a Company in Normandy. He retired from the Army in 1947.

In 1952 Toby Wake, as he was more usually known, married Julia, daughter of Captain G W M Lees, a Northamptonshire girl. There are a son and three daughters of the marriage; Hereward Charles has succeeded to the baronetcy.

In order better to equip himself for the post-war management of the Courteenhall Estate, Sir Hereward studied Estate Management and Agriculture. From boyhood, he had loved the countryside, and was in his element gradually restoring the Estate after the ravages and changes that war-time England had wrought upon it.

And it is hardly surprising that, as the nineteen forties gave place to the fifties, his interest in the Northamptonshire Record Society began. Perhaps he had little choice; the Founder Miss Joan Wake (whom he always affectionately called Aunt Joan) would doubtless have seen him as her natural successor, a role into which without fuss he quietly slipped upon her death in 1974. Thus began a relationship which would endure until his death; first as Chairman, then President (for a time holding the dual role) and from 2008 as Patron, a position created especially for him. But his was no detached interest; a searching and totally unexpected question about some aspect of the Society's affairs would call for immediate celerity of mind.

As the Society looks ahead to its centenary in 2020, it is with a sense of pride and gratitude that for nearly a hundred years there has been a member of the Wake family at its helm.

But perhaps one of the most important of Sir Hereward's interests was the Northamptonshire Association of Youth Clubs which he co-founded with the late Reverend Harry Whittaker in 1961. From a humble office in Northampton, the Association has become one of the largest autonomous Youth organizations in the country, with headquarters (appropriately named Hereward Wake House), a large Conference centre and sports facilities at King's Park in Northampton, and outdoor activity centres in Shropshire and Staffordshire. Sir Hereward served as the Association's first Chairman, later becoming President and then Patron, a position he held until his death. He was never happier than when surrounded by young people; Annual Meetings, traditionally staid affairs, were never so under his Chairmanship. One could not of course know what he might say next, or do – for he was no mean hand at suddenly producing conjuring tricks – but inevitably one would leave one of his meetings – and his company – 'feeling better' – whatever one's age.

One evening two young men, hitch-hiking the country and seeking a bed for the night, appeared on the doorstep at Courteenhall. They had heard that there was a Youth centre in Northampton. 'Is this Hereward Wake House?' they nervously enquired, having traipsed up the long drive. 'Well, yes, I suppose it is' came the reply. And of course the lads were immediately asked in. Recounting the story later, Sir Hereward and Lady Wake declared that they had had a wonderful time. A simple example of their welcoming and generous nature.

Sir Hereward's many other interests in the public life of the County were numerous. He was High Sheriff in 1955, a Deputy Lieutenant from 1969 and Vice-Lord Lieutenant from 1984 to 1991; a Governor of St Andrew's Hospital, President of Northamptonshire branch of the Country Landowners' Association; a sometime Governor of the Northampton College of Education and later a member of the Court of the University of Northampton, being awarded an Honorary Fellowship in 1997; for a time he served on the Northampton Rural District Council, was Patron of Northampton Grammar (later Pitsford) School, and held office as Chairman or President in several other organizations including the Northamptonshire Natural History Society, the Parish Council, the Roade and Courteenhall Branch of the Royal British Legion and the Lamport Hall Preservation Trust. To all of these activities he brought wise counsel, sound judgment and an enthusiasm that was infectious.

He was no mean sportsman, in his younger days playing tennis and squash for the County, and he also enjoyed other outdoor activities including fishing and shooting.

A lifelong Churchman, he saw it as an inherited duty to care for the village and family church in Courteenhall, sometime simultaneously holding office as Patron, Churchwarden, Treasurer and Secretary, a situation which, with a disarming smile he described as 'being a scandal which ought to be referred to the Consistory Court.' As with many churchwardens, he struggled with bureaucracy, faculties and endless form-filling, on more than one occasion authorizing some repair or other work and then applying for permission when the job had been done. Or perhaps not, but it is doubtful whether anything he did was aesthetically displeasing or out of keeping with the natural and ongoing maintenance of an ancient building.

Whilst the upkeep of the Courteenhall Estate and its house were seldom far from his thoughts, his abiding passion was in its trees and woodland. Much troubled by the new M1 motorway which in the late 1950s drove its carriageway through the Estate, he began an extensive programme of new planting in an effort to hide the road and reduce the noise levels. Many of the rare specimens he subsequently collected on his travels, and today the Arboretum is an extraordinary example of what with planning and careful maintenance can be achieved. One of his delights was to lead Autumn Arboretum sallies, during which he would without hesitation name various specimens, their Latin names and land of origin, and very possibly the year in which they were planted, and then escort the party back to the Hall where Lady Wake would be waiting with afternoon tea or, on colder days, hot punch. In his later years when his walking became less easy, he would direct the group from his Golf buggy – which he was still using until well into his ninety-ninth year. And still remembering the names of trees.

Sir Hereward and Lady Wake were kind, gracious and generous hosts. Members of many organizations with which they were connected have enjoyed their hospitality. Afternoon tea-parties and evening receptions, often in the garden, were always fun. Lunch before the Spring and Autumn lectures of the Record Society became an almost permanent fixture, and the procedure was unchanging; at a quarter-past-two Sir Hereward would rise from table explaining that he had a meeting in half an hour, telling his guests that 'they could stay for as long as they liked' – sure sign that the assembled company should also begin to make their way. And his charming but always genuine ability to persuade brought eminent visitors to the County; visits by members of the Royal family were frequent; the Queen Mother came on several occasions invariably lunching at Courteenhall.

He loved parties and his last was on a glorious October Saturday afternoon a year before he died when his family, local villagers and friends from the County and beyond gathered to celebrate his one hundredth birthday. And he made it his own, warmly welcoming his guests each by name and thanking them for coming.

Since he died, Sir Hereward has more than once been described as *unique*. That is surely so; Northamptonshire will not see his like again. Nor would it wish to. His vision, his duty and his steadfast service to the County, his leadership, his wise counsel and sense of humour, but above all the warmth of his companionship and generosity which he so freely shared with us all is a memory that will live on – and for long be cherished.

Sir Hereward Wake: born London 7 October 1916, died Courteenhall 11 December 2017

John Ford

Professor Peter Gordon 1927 – 2018

Peter Gordon, a member of Council since 1977 and a Vice-President since 2015, died on 23 March 2018. He wrote to me (then in America) after his first Council meeting to say that he had ‘found it a very friendly gathering. The business was despatched with great alacrity and it was all over in an hour, a record for the course I’m told!’ (8 Nov. 1977) Among those at the meeting were our President, Sir Hereward Wake, and the recently-appointed editor of *Northamptonshire Past & Present*, Ron Greenall. Peter would come to enjoy close contact with both of these men, as also with John Munro, and their loss in a few short months is a heavy one for our Society.

Peter was born on 4 November 1927, appropriately in Gordon Street, Kingston upon Hull, the youngest of three children of Louis Gordon, who ran a chemist shop, and his wife Annie (née Schultz), a hairdresser. After schooling which was interrupted by the war, and after National Service in India during partition, when he nearly died of typhus, he trained as a teacher at Dudley Training College. Here his abilities were first recognized. He moved to London, teaching first at a primary school in Anerley and then at Chandos Boys’ School, Stanmore. He studied part-time at the LSE for all of his degrees, B.Sc. (1957), M.Sc. (1964), and Ph.D. (1970).

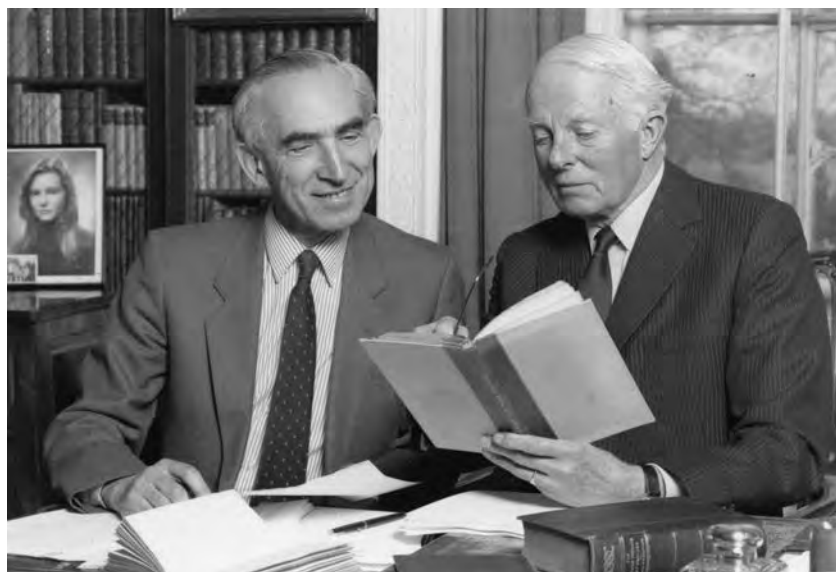
In 1965 Peter was appointed one of Her Majesty’s Inspectors of Schools, with particular responsibility for Sociology. In this post he would hone a prose style which was clear, concise, identifying the main points, developing an argument, all of this with some grace but without embellishment. It would stand him in good stead.

In 1973 Peter joined the prestigious Institute of Education, University of London, as a lecturer in curriculum studies. In the following year he published a version of his doctoral thesis as *The Victorian School Manager: A Study in the Management of Education 1800-1902* (London: Woburn Press, 1974). Thereafter, to quote the appreciation in the Festschrift published in his honour in 1996, ‘a veritable torrent of books and articles ... flowed from his pen’: *In History and in Education: Essays Presented to Peter Gordon*, ed. Richard Aldrich (London: Woburn Press, 1996), p. 1. He was awarded a personal chair in 1982 and became Head of the History and Humanities Department. He retired in 1993. Peter was an excellent administrator. He did not waste time and so he could always make time.

What came to preoccupy Peter’s research time was his work on the archives of leading landed families in Northamptonshire. The introduction to the book on school management gives an indication as to how he had come here. He had used a wide range of family papers. And he had made a ‘national survey’ of managers’ minute books, most of which were to be found in county and local record offices and municipal libraries. Such a comprehensive survey was a remarkable achievement for a doctoral student, particularly one working part-time. It gave him a grounding for all his subsequent historical work.

The proposal for an edition of the papers of the 5th Earl Spencer came in a characteristically comprehensive and businesslike letter from Peter on 18 Feb. 1976. He had done a certain amount of work. ‘I have read through the 390 boxes of general correspondence (1847-1910), 23 boxes between him and his wife, 9 boxes to and from his half-brother, later 6th Earl and the 74 boxes of letters to and from his Cabinet colleagues. ... In addition I have obtained many letters from Spencer in other collections.’ He was able to point out that he had a house in Naseby. It was quickly apparent that the work would need two volumes and these appeared, exactly when promised, in 1981 and 1986: *The Red Earl: The Papers of the Fifth Earl Spencer 1835-1910*, volumes 31 (covering the period from 1835 to 1885) and 34 (from 1885 to 1910) in our series.

The two volumes were enthusiastically received. (Sir) Roy Foster, reviewing them in the *Times Literary Supplement*, 25 September 1987, said that the 'immaculate editing of a wide range of Spencer material has provided a genuinely important new source for the 1880s and 1890s'; this was 'an indispensable edition'. It is nice to be able to note that not only was the quality of the editing praised but the standard of production also. Vol. 1, noted J P Parry, 'is produced with lavish care (and in an attractive edition) ... it is also magnificently well-researched and a model of scholarship in every respect': *The Historical Journal* 26 (1983), p. 474. In the days of metal type these standards came at a price but we were able to match them in Vol. 2 with the aid of a generous grant from the Benham Charitable Settlement.



At the time of the publication of Vol. 2 I had a characteristically supportive letter from Sir Hereward, with a slightly enigmatic p.s.: 'I am in close touch with Peter G.' (11 Nov. 1986). I thought no more of it but then in 1992 there appeared a most handsome volume on *The Wakes of Northamptonshire*. It was published by Northamptonshire Libraries and Information Service, with the active involvement of its chief officer, John Munro. The work is a considerable feat of scholarship, taking the story of the family from the twelfth century to the twentieth. It would not have appeared without the sense of history that Sir Hereward embodied and the photograph from it, taken on 18 April 1991, showing him in discussion with Peter, is a suitable record of their collaboration. Of particular interest to members of the Society is an excellent chapter on Joan Wake, drawing on the copious records left by a very businesslike lady.

Peter was then able to resume work on the papers of Louisa, Lady Knightley of Fawsley, which he had had in hand since 1975. He had been attracted to them, he said, 'by their lively style and the insights they provided into country Toryism in Northamptonshire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They also present a rare picture of the burgeoning women's movements at this time'. His edition was published in 1999 as *Politics and Society: The Journals of Lady Knightley of Fawsley 1885 to 1913*, vol. 40 in our series of publications, then under the General Editorship of Ron Greenall. The volume is carefully but unobtrusively edited. Lady Knightley is left to speak for herself, something which she always did very capably.

Peter enjoyed the love and support of a close family, his wife Tessa and their children, Pauline and David. A memoir by David gives an admirable review of the many interests of a many-faceted man. He recalls him as ‘a walking encyclopaedia of architectural history’, exploring the countryside with the relevant Pevsner in hand, on one occasion visiting 22 Lincolnshire churches in a day; as an accomplished musician and ‘an inveterate concert goer ... lieder, chamber music, opera and ballet were a part of the fabric of his life’; and yet with all this as a man who remained true to his Yorkshire roots, following rugby league and cricket and the mixed fortunes of Hull City F.C.¹

Edmund King.

1 I am grateful to Tessa Gordon for her assistance and encouragement in the writing of this memoir and to David Gordon for permission to quote from his memoir of his father, published in the *Guardian* in June 2018. Peter’s letters to me are from my files as General Editor of the Society and cited by the kind permission of his family.

Ron Greenall 1937 – 2018: inspirational history teacher.



Ron Greenall with Leicester colleague, Prof. Marilyn Palmer and former student, Dr Wendy Raybould.

My friend and colleague Ron Greenall taught his last history class to undergraduates at the University of Leicester in 2009. The course was the tremendously popular ‘Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution’ and Ron was doing *The Classic Slum*, Robert Roberts’ account of Salford life at the turn of the century. As he put it in his diary: “this meant I’d done 50 years of history teaching (& never got sick of it)”.

Ronald Leslie Greenall was born in Salford on 4 February 1937. His father was a police officer; his mother had been a mill-worker. It was not long since Orwell had been in these parts but Odessa Avenue, where Ron was brought up, was not *The Road to Wigan Pier*. Semi detached in stucco with a neat little garden at the front and a great scrubby field to the back, it was the other sort of northern life: not rich but not poor either, and free to roam.

After a good war spent, among other things, badgering American soldiers and their dates to take him and his mates into ‘A’ rated films, Ron went to Salford Grammar School in 1948, and in 1955 he went to the LSE. This was the time when Angry Young Men from the North were going south to bleat and to pillage (as the mood took them), but apart from once seeing Shelagh Delaney on the train home and Albert Finney at the bookies, Ron made nothing of all that kitchen sink stuff. He hated the ‘Econ’ in BSc (Econ), but he loved everything else London had to offer.

Saturday afternoons saw him captaining the London University First XV on some suburban battlefield. In 1958, playing second row, he led a tour to Tredegar (lost 3-8), Bridgend (won 8-0), and Stroud (won 9-3), but ended it with four nights in hospital. It was concussion or humiliation or, as his diary put it: “Playing rugby. Can’t dance”. He was a great sportsman.

People would stop him on campus and remind him of a great innings he'd played years before. Professor Brian Simon once stared at him in a full lift and said he played just like Botham. Ron, needless to say, was the only one who demurred.

Saturday nights saw him watching French and Italian at the NFT and strictly English at the National where he saw only the best including Joan Littlewood's 'Oh What a Lovely War' (twice) and John Osborne's 'Look Back in Anger'. I don't know what he did on Sunday mornings. Not the ironing that is for sure.

In 1959 he met and married Rita Gibbs, a student nurse. Two sons followed, Pete in 1960 and Stephen in 1962 and, after living in Wallington and teaching history at Mitcham Grammar, the Greenall caravan moved north to Northamptonshire in 1965 where Ron took on the job of embedding Leicester University in the county.

University adult educators defined themselves by their students, not their subject. New town, new centre, young family, planning and organizing, class visiting and preparing, research and publication, Ron's diaries are a blaze of student-centredness. Notwithstanding all this and his blacklist of "five useless committees", he taught over 100 classes a year for over 30 years at University Centre Northampton, and at Vaughan College in Leicester, but also on the road at the university's network of outlying centres across the two counties, and nearly all in the evenings and at weekends.

A slew of books on Northamptonshire followed (1979, 1981, 1999, 2003), as well as 26 years as editor and contributor to *Northamptonshire Past & Present*, plus a hefty piece for *Northern History* on 'Working-class Conservatism in Lancashire' – somewhat against the 1970s leftist *zeitgeist* it has to be said, but Ron's politics were *Manchester Guardian* old style: factual, dissenting, and just a touch contrarian. In 1972 he wrote and presented a 10-part series for BBC Radio 3. With his good looks, he should have been on the tele.

A local historian in the classical mould, Ron turned his classes into research groups. Long Buckby was a favourite. So too were Kettering and Daventry. But his masterpiece is *The Making of Victorian Salford*, published by Carnegie with a fabulous book launch in the Lowry Gallery in 2000 with Ron in great droll Mancunian form.

In 1978 he was promoted to the deputy directorship of the Leicester department of Adult Education, and in 1996 he took early retirement. He didn't like the way universities were moving, and feared the end of the great extra mural tradition. Cocksure vice chancellors, it is fair to say, were not to his taste.

For all his sociability and joy in his family, Ron was a private man who liked to catch you out and pull your leg. We were once at a History Workshop Conference staying with a leftist family from Manchester Polytechnic. There were posters of Luxemburg in the bathroom and Lenin in the breakfast room where, up early on the Saturday, we encountered the youngest eating his toast and reading *The Times*. Ron's eyes lit up. Knowing full well the colours and the badge, he asked the boy about his school uniform. "Oh this is Manchester Grammar" said The Youngster, "We work Saturdays". "And what are you reading?" asked The Ron. "Oh just my stocks and shares" came the reply. "Granpa left me them". The next morning, beneath Vladimir Ulyanov's sternest features, Salford pulled Manchester's leg (ever so gently).

Ron loved sport and history but above else he was a bookman. As familiar with Elmore Leonard and Dick Francis as with Edward Thompson or Eileen Power, his range never

ceased to amaze me. He knew as much about the Soke of Peterborough as Kingsley Amis and could gossip about both. By and large he liked writers who were dry and to the point. Sentiment or verbosity were off limits and you won't find any in his writing. Ron didn't like anything 'phoney', and could spot it a mile off.

A liver infection, caught in 1978 and never properly diagnosed, dogged him to the end. He went into Glenfield Hospital in 2016 with yellow jaundice, deepest ochre but no complaints (never any complaints), followed by a heart attack which he beat off at any rate until 13 May last when he died at Arbour House care home.

I knew him well. He checked every word I wrote. We worked together for 27 years and stayed strong friends thereafter, he with his stick, and his *Leffe*, and his leg pull, me in a bar with a man I was privileged to be called his friend.

Ron is survived by his wife Rita, his sons Peter and Stephen, and his four grandchildren Nick and Will, Alex and Elinor.

Ronald Leslie Greenall, born Salford 4 February 1937, died Leicester 13 May 2018.

Robert Colls

John Alexander James Munro.

I first met John in 1978 when I was commissioned to write a biography of the 18th century minister the Revd Philip Doddridge of Northampton. For the next year or so John and I met regularly to go through with a fine-toothcomb every dot, comma and word that I had written. 'Check your sources', he would say, 'and check and check again'. Initially, I found the process extremely irksome as he was quietly persistent and unrelenting yet out of it we produced a volume of which I am very proud. A few years ago at a Northamptonshire Record Society meeting I sat next to him and took the opportunity of thanking him most warmly for teaching me how to research, edit, design, plan and write a book. I am ever in his debt for the service he rendered me. In conducting his funeral service I was able to speak about a man whom I greatly admired.

John was born and grew up in the Richmond area of West London with his parents and older sister Mary. They moved to Melton Mowbray during the war and returned to Richmond afterwards. In 1965 he married Jean whom he met in Portsmouth Library where they both worked. By 1970 they had bought a house and had moved to Northampton. They didn't have any children and were a private and devoted couple, although visitors remarked that he was a connoisseur of a good wine and was an entertaining host. Jean passed away in 2016; John had lovingly cared for her for as long as he was able.

He was the last Borough Librarian of Northampton before local government re-organisation in 1974. He was then Deputy County Librarian for about 14 years during which he supervised the publication of a series of excellent works of which the County is rightly proud. For a couple of years he was County Librarian. He was well-respected by his colleagues and, as convenor for libraries for Nalگو, everyone found him to be a fair and courteous negotiator. He was a very good boss to work for.

John was a member of Northamptonshire Record Society from 1977. He was appointed to the governing Council in 1981 and played an active part on both the Library and Publications Committees where his background and knowledge were invaluable. He was the Library Committee chairman between 2005 and 2010.

He was a very committed and principled Labour Party member with a wealth of experience that he called on from his working history and Party membership. He was an active member of St. Albans / Eastfield Ward in Northampton and is remembered by many as quietly spoken, gentle, well-mannered and polite.

I found John to be a dignified, thoughtful man with an air of calm reserve about him. He wore his knowledge and experience lightly yet was quietly principled and resolute. It was a privilege to conduct his funeral service, and I must admit that in writing my tribute to him I felt I had to check my sources and every dot, comma and word as he wouldn't expect anything that was less than perfect. John passed away at the Northampton General Hospital on 29 April aged 88 years.

Malcolm Deacon

Gren Hatton: amateur historian and archaeologist.

Gren Hatton died on 11 July 2017 after a long illness. He was an amateur in the true sense of the word. He researched for the love of it. His interest was first sparked by talks given by E W Timmins of Lilbourne, to whom his first book, *Kilsby: the story of a village* was dedicated in 1988. Since his interests embraced both archaeology and history, an archaeologist and a historian contribute their memories of working with him:

I first met Gren at the Community Landscape Archaeology Survey Project Open Meeting at Paulerspury Village Hall in 2010 when he attacked my brain with his theory on paired settlements across the boundary of the Danelaw! By then he already had a strong reputation in Northamptonshire for his historical and archival research which had culminated in his own website on West Northamptonshire history. This encounter immediately made me aware that here was a well motivated and driven person of high intellect who CLASP had to have onboard. After some discussion he quickly became a member and then, after further gentle persuasion, a Trustee. He very quickly made his mark both with stimulating research and discussion on various archaeological and historical topics.

Commencing with discussions late in 2010, he saw a need to archaeologically investigate a hill in his neighbouring parish of Barby. This hill, known as Barby Hill stands to the north-west of the village overlooking the Rainsbrook which marks the county boundary with Warwickshire. This boundary was a very important factor in Gren's developing research into the Iron Age tribal activity in the area and his beloved King Street. This interest led to the formal creation of the Barby Hill Project Group in early 2011 that, after his determination in obtaining funding and local volunteers, subsequently undertook an investigation on the Hill. The results of this work, coupled with commercial work on the adjacent reservoir, revealed a significant metal working settlement on the Hill. An intriguing result that was complementary to commercial work being undertaken in the wider area. Our understanding of the Iron Age peoples in north-west Northamptonshire has been enhanced by 100 percent thanks to Gren.

In 2014 I discussed with him a forthcoming national project to compile an atlas of all the hill-forts in Britain and Ireland, we agreed, after further discussion in committee, that CLASP should research and record those in Northamptonshire. He led the project producing outstanding results both for local history and the content of the Atlas itself. Gren's work led to a spoken thank you from the platform at the final conference for the project in Edinburgh and it also made a significant contribution to the Atlas project's receiving an Oxford University's Vice-Chancellor's award for public participation in research. Unfortunately he was unable to attend either of these events as they were just a few days before his death, however I attended both and ensured his contribution was recognised on each occasion.

His remarkable contribution to CLASP will never be forgotten, those of you who attended his funeral will understand when I say, 'rest well in that burying ground', you fought the battle well and kept going until the end.

Dave Hayward

Occasionally, you meet someone who has a profound impact on the way you think; Gren was such a person. His ability to mentally juggle historical facts and snippets of information and form relationships between them was inspiring.

I was privileged to be able to carry out some research with him and Jim Aveling on the medieval village of Throp. Although physically limited through bouts of chemotherapy, Gren retained an enthusiastic mental agility and a capacity to churn out countless theories and hypotheses which promoted stimulating academic debate. As he weakened, he was frustrated that he could not get to his beloved archives and records offices to examine and photograph primary sources of information.

Gren was forward looking and had a vision that one day historical research material should be freely available on the internet. He had started this in a small way with the West Northamptonshire History website. His legacy to us is the blueprint of how to do it and the challenge to make historical research accessible to all.

Jackie Hibbert.

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Cover illustration:

Driver Bert Adams, Royal Field Artillery, 1917.

(Photo courtesy of Theo Adams.)