# NORTHAMPTONSHIRE PAST AND PRESENT

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Domestic Service in Northamptonshire—1830-1914

In Victorian and Edwardian England domestic service provided the most common occupation for women and girls. Indeed, the 1881 Census Report concluded that ‘of females above 5 years of age, one in nine was an indoor servant... and of girls between 15 and 20 years of age no less than one in three was a domestic indoor servant’. Although in Northamptonshire this occupational pre-eminence was somewhat less obvious, thanks to the existence of a flourishing cottage lace trade in the earlier part of the period, and of the boot and shoe industry thereafter, it nevertheless remained a major employer of labour. In 1861 there were 9,071 female and 763 male indoor domestic servants in the county; by 1881 the former figure had risen to 11,076, while the latter declined to 573. By 1901, the totals were 11,022 and 564, respectively. In Northampton itself at the end of the nineteenth century about one in ten of all females over the age of 10 was a domestic servant, while the 1911 Census showed that for every 1,000 families in the county there were 142 resident female servants.¹

The vast majority of these workers were engaged in small households as maids-of-all-work. Indeed, in 1861 almost two-thirds of Northamptonshire’s female servants were classified as ‘general’, as opposed to one-ninth who were housemaids—the next most numerous category; fifty years later it was claimed that for England and Wales as a whole four out of every five employers of domestic staff kept one or two servants only.² Certainly an examination of the Census Returns for 1871 reveals that in the small town of Daventry, where about one family in eight employed resident domestics, nearly 80% of them were engaged in one- or two-servant households.³

Yet there were, at the other extreme, those working in large establishments where whole retinues of retainers constituted ‘a settlement as large as a small village’.⁴ On the Brassey estate at Apethorpe Hall, near Wansford, a list of employees prepared in 1911 revealed a permanent staff of 208—including 20 women and seven men employed inside the house, and the rest distributed among the woods and gardens, the stables, the garage, the home farms and various workshops.⁵ The employment of male indoor servants was always regarded as a sign of affluence, both because their wages were usually higher than those of the women and because a servant’s tax was levied upon them. Prior to 1869 this was fixed at £1 1s. per annum for men over the age of eighteen and 10s. 6d. for boy servants, but during that year the Customs and Inland Revenue Duties Act fixed the level at 15s. a year for all male servants.⁶ In these circumstances the heavy outnumbering of male workers by the female is scarcely surprising.

For many girls and a few boys, therefore, the question of obtaining domestic employment became a major preoccupation once they had reached the age of about 11 or 12. Usually their

¹ According to the 1861 Census Report there were 8,187 women and girls engaged in cottage lacemaking in Northamptonshire, and 4,200 in shoemaking (plus 5,320 classed as 'shoemaker's wife'). By 1881, the lacemaking figure had fallen to 3,221 and that of shoemaking had risen to 7,831. In 1901, the numbers were 454 and 12,195, respectively. See relevant Census Reports: for 1861, Parliamentary Papers, 1863, Vol. LIII, Pt. I; for 1881, Parliamentary Papers, 1883, Vol. LXXX; and for 1901, Parliamentary Papers, 1902, Vol. CXX.
⁵ Statement of Wages &c. at Apethorpe Estate prepared at the request of H. L. C. Brassey, Esq., M.P.—October, 1911, preserved at N.R.O. Ted Humphris, who was employed as a garden boy at Aynho House, at the beginning of the First World War, similarly remembered that: 'The Estate itself was practically self-supporting, for it had its own stone, gravel and sand pits which provided any building materials which were required, even the bricks were made from clay found on the Estate'. Ted Humphris, Garden Glory (London, 1969), p. 30.
⁶ The servant tax was repealed by the Finance Act of 1937.
parents would begin to look round for a 'petty' place for them, perhaps as a general servant in the household of a local tradesman, shopkeeper, farmer or clergyman. At Daventry in 1871 about half the servants were employed in the households of small tradespeople and shopkeepers, the youngest of them being an eleven-year-old girl who worked for a machinist, and three twelve-year-olds employed by a bricklayer, a cabinet maker and a music teacher, respectively. Recruitment into these small establishments was regarded as a stepping stone to better things—a place where the youngster could learn the broad outlines of her duties. For a working-class home was a poor preparation for service in even the humblest middle-class household, and training had to be given in the basic skills of cleaning, preparing food, waiting at table and perhaps the cooking of simple meals. Yet, although mistresses often worked alongside the children they were training, the effort required could prove exhausting to youngsters of only twelve or thirteen. It is significant that many advertisements for maids which appeared in the press during the Victorian era stressed the need for applicants to be 'strong' or 'active'. Others indicated a preference for girls 'from the country', who were presumably thought to be both more healthy and more used to hard work than their urban counterparts.

One girl who fitted into this general pattern was Annie Mason, who was born at Guilsborough in 1890 and entered her first place as a day servant at the Ward Arms in that village just before her thirteenth birthday. Annie was expected to start work each day at 7 a.m. She was responsible for cleaning the house and helping with the three children, as well as assisting with the cooking. 'After washing up, the children had to be taken for a walk until tea time and then at 6 p.m., there was bath time. The bath water had to be taken upstairs, along a passage into the bedroom and the children bathed and put to bed. I was allowed to go home at 7 o'clock in the evening—after emptying the bath water! My wages were the handsome sum of 1s. 6d. per week, of which I gave Mother 1s. and kept 6d. for myself.'

It was customary for a girl to remain in her petty place for about a year, and then she or her mother would begin to look round for something better. Apart from answering advertisements in the newspaper, those in search of a situation might apply to one of the servant registry offices which could be found in most of the larger towns. The Post Office Directory for 1869, for example, recorded two servant registry offices in Peterborough, two in Northampton, one in Wellingborough and one in Kettering, while the Northampton Mercury in 1882 contained advertisements from four such agencies in Northampton alone. But in the case of the younger girls, the wife of the local squire or clergyman might be approached for help and advice. If she did not know of a suitable vacancy among her own friends she would advertise on the girl's behalf.

For many country girls the obtaining of a new situation frequently meant moving into a town, perhaps London itself. Others might be taken into one of the large country houses and in the ordered, ceremonious life of the servants' hall would learn to observe distinctions of rank from butler down to kitchen maid. Here a girl would gain some notion of good behaviour and would be instructed in her duties by the upper servants who were her real mistresses. Thus at Lamport Hall in 1851, three of the junior female servants and one of the male had been recruited either from Lamport itself or from one of the nearby Northamptonshire parishes.

But for most youngsters, a fresh situation meant employment in a one- or two-servant household only slightly more prosperous than that in which they had served their apprenticeship. In these small establishments life was often both arduous and lonely. This is made clear in a letter written by a young Northamptonshire maid-of-all-work, Ruth Barrow, to her fiancé, John Spendlove of Gretton, in February, 1848. Ruth was employed by a Miss Bates of Leicester, who proved a benign mistress, but her distress at being cut off from family and friends is unmistak-
able: ‘I am almost ashamed to say it, that I feel very dull and I cannot away with it . . . it is such a great change, a change that can only be felt by those who have felt what it is to leave all they hold dear, and have sought a home amongst strangers’. 11

The loneliness was especially acute among the youngest servants—children of thirteen to fifteen—who were frightened by the solitude of the long evenings in which they had to sit in the kitchen by themselves, or perhaps remain in the house entirely alone. In Northamptonshire, as elsewhere, this was a matter of some significance, for over a third of the county’s female servants were under the age of twenty.

The range of duties expected of domestic staff was daunting. Victorian books on household management give an idea of the tasks to be performed by the mature servant in a small household, while John Walsh, in his *Manual of Domestic Economy* (first published in 1857) frankly declared of the maid-of-all-work: ‘As this servant is the general drudge, she must be prepared to do everything in order, and yet be ready at a minute’s notice to do anything else that is wanted by any member of the family’. A list of the duties of a house parlourmaid in a small household in Kettering prepared early in the present century underlines the multiplicity of jobs to be carried out:


7 o’c. Call Mrs. Roughton & take her tea & Hot water. Shut her windows & draw open blinds. Empty & wipe basin, straighten her towels. Take silver down carefully . . . Breakfast 8 a.m. Ring bell when ready. Directly kitchen breakfast is finished go upstairs—strip the beds & empty the slops. Wash up dining room breakfast china & silver—Always rub silver up after washing.

**Every Day.** Sweep & dust bedrooms in use. Turn out Mrs. Roughton’s bedroom once a week & clean her silver. Rub silver every morning. Fill up jug & clean water bottle & fill every day. Wash all crockery once a week thoroughly. Polish door knobs & knockers every day & any handles or brass work. Tidy Bathroom every morning & wash out & clean the bath & basin & polish taps . . . Stairs & passages & landings swept & dusted daily. Answer Front door bell mornings as well. Letters to be brought on little copper salver. Just before 1 o’c. go in dining room, tidy room for lunch, & clean & sweep up grate, fill coal scuttles in rooms being used. 1 o’c. get dressed. Lunch at 1.30. Ring bell. Hand the plates & vegetables. Come in in ten minutes & remove plates etc. if ready, & bring the Pudding. Clear away when rung for, & wash up. Then prepare tray for Tea & have quite ready. Tea 4.30 as a rule. When dusk, shut up all windows, blinds in drawing room—all Shutters downstairs & blinds & windows upstairs . . .

6.30 Take Can of hot water to bedrooms in use. Turn down the beds, & tidy bedrooms, & take down shoes for cleaning. Supper to be laid at 7.15 for 7.30. Wait at table. After supper go upstairs & empty slops . . . Tea in dining room at 8.45.


**Rooms to be turned out**

*Dining room.* Every Saturday morning before breakfast.

*Sitting room.* Tuesday morning before breakfast.

**Drawing room.** Thursday morning before breakfast & finish in the morning.

11 Correspondence of Ruth Barrow and John Spendlove. N.R.O., Sp.G.356.
Mrs. Roughton's bedroom Wednesday mornings.
Mrs. Roughton a little washing on Monday morning.
Darn the stockings. Clean the brass stair rods regularly. On Friday afternoons count the clean washing out, & take upstairs to linen cupboard & put out to air'.

But in larger establishments, where there was much division of labour, a very different situation prevailed, especially among the upper servants. The butler, for example, was expected to take charge of the plate chest and of the wine cellar. Where footmen were kept, he also waited at breakfast, luncheon, tea and dinner, and supervised arrangements for each meal. 'During the afternoon it is a butler's duty to remain in the front hall in readiness to announce visitors', declared The Servants' Practical Guide of 1880. 'It is his duty throughout the day to see that everything is in its place and in order, in readiness for use in the drawing-room, morning-room, and library; . . . While the footman is out with the carriage, the butler answers the door, attends to the fires in the dining-room, drawing-rooms, and various sitting-rooms; . . . and prepares the five-o'clock tea in readiness for the return of his mistress. The butler is usually allowed to go out in the morning from twelve to one, and again from half-past nine to eleven, in town establishments'.

The same household manual likewise laid down that a 'first-class cook' could not be expected to be down 'until a few minutes before eight, in time for breakfast in the housekeeper's room. . . . After her own breakfast, she attends to and superintends the breakfast for the family . . . She makes out a menu for the day's dinner and luncheon on a slate according to the contents of the larder. . . . In town the cook gives the necessary orders to the tradespeople who serve the house . . . The pastry, the jellies, the creams, the entrées are all made by her during the morning, and any dishes of this nature that are to be served at luncheon are also made by her. After her own dinner, she dished up the luncheon. The servants'-hall dinner is cooked by the kitchen-maid.

'The afternoon is very much at the cook's disposal, except on the occasion of a dinner-party, or when guests are staying in the house. Five to nine is always a very busy time; dishing up a large dinner is an arduous duty . . . When the dinner is served, the cook's duties for the day are over, and the remainder of the work is performed by the kitchen-maids'. The Practical Guide went on to point out that it was 'an understood thing that the cook had certain perquisites connected with her place, amongst others the dripping from the roast joints'.

Typical of the households conducted on these grander lines was that of the Ishams of Lamport Hall, where in the early 1850s twelve resident servants were employed, including a butler, a footman, and a gardener on the male side, and a cook-housekeeper, two lady's maids, two housemaids, a laundry maid, a dairymaid, a kitchenmaid and a nurserymaid on the female. Likewise the Elwes family of Great Billing employed in the early 1870s nine resident female and five resident male servants—comprising a butler, a coachman, two footmen and a hall boy among the men and a cook, lady's maid, nurse, two laundry maids, two housemaids, a kitchenmaid and a scullery maid among the women. Both the status and the wages of these workers varied widely. At Great Billing in 1874, the butler and the cook at the head of the household hierarchy earned £60 and £45 per annum, respectively, while the yearly earnings of the under-footman and the scullery maid, at the bottom of the scale were £12 and £8. Appendix 1 provides a more detailed analysis of the wages position in a number of households, but it is worth remembering that even the scullery maid at Great Billing earned more than many young general servants who were being paid only £4 or £5 per annum at the very end of the century.

Junior servants were always expected to show respect to their seniors and to obey their instructions. Thus when Ted Humphris, aged 13, joined the garden staff at Ayhno House in 1915, he found himself the lowliest member of a staff of seven. His hours of work were from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Mondays to Fridays and from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays. 'Wages were 6/- per week, Sunday of course being a day of rest. . . . Each Tuesday, I was detailed to assist in the

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12 Duties of a House-Parlourmaid, N.R.O., R(K) 372.
13 The servants' wages books for both Lamport Hall and Billing Hall are preserved at N.R.O. for the periods quoted.
Laundry at the Park House. My particular task was to turn the handle of the mangle . . . to the satisfaction of the head laundry maid . . . The remainder of my working week was taken up by numerous duties, such as weeding, scrubbing the staging and floors in the greenhouses, running errands and making myself useful to the foreman gardener, who resided at the gardens, in the bothy . . . I had very little to do with the head gardener, who in those days was always addressed as “Sir”, and in fact one was not permitted to speak to him unless he spoke first’. Similarly, at Eydon at the end of the nineteenth century it was said of Colonel Cartwright’s coachman, Henry Peck, that he ‘reigned over the stables, the eight to ten horses housed therein, the groom and the stable boy with an iron hand, for (he) was far more autocratic than his master’.

Yet if difference in status was one clear distinction between senior and junior servants, another was the greater likelihood of the latter to change jobs. In some cases, moves were probably made for the sake of variety but in others they were inspired by desire for promotion or as a result of unsatisfactory employer/servant relationships. At Lamport Hall, one kitchenmaid had to be dismissed because she was ‘not quick and clean’, while at Guilsborough, Mrs. Bateman, wife of the incumbent of Kibworth, dismissed her cook at short notice because she had secretly entertained a man in the kitchen. It was discovered that the man, who refused to reveal his identity, had eaten ‘all his meals for fourteen Sundays’ at the Bateman family’s expense. Nevertheless, these misdoings affected only a small number of servants, and most of the changes occurred for less dramatic reasons.

Between 1841 and 1856 inclusive there were, for example, seven different holders of the position of footman at Lamport Hall, as well as thirteen under housemaids and nine kitchenmaids. By contrast, the number of cook-housekeepers employed over the same sixteen-year period was five, and of butlers, three. Similarly, in the Elwes household between March, 1873 and March, 1878, there were three kitchenmaids, three scullery maids and three or four different holders of each of the two housemaids’ positions. And at Apethorpe, during the years 1903 to 1911 inclusive, there were seven first footmen, seven second footmen, four hall boys, five first kitchenmaids, four second kitchenmaids, and ten third kitchenmaids—some of whom stayed less than two months. Yet one butler remained with the family for the whole period.

It was small wonder that with staff changes on this scale, the loyal, long-serving employee was often rewarded with a pension or a free cottage on retirement. At Lamport Hall, Thomas Cannon, who entered the Isham family’s service in 1771 and retired in 1819, received a pension of £15 per annum and a house for life, for which he paid 5s. per annum in rent. He continued to receive the pension until at least 1832. And at Apethorpe in 1911 several former employees of the Brassey family received a pension of 8s. a week.

Yet, while wages and the range of duties to be carried out were two factors vitally affecting the well-being of domestic servants, other questions of importance were food and sleeping accommodation. Although John Walsh’s bland statement that the ‘maid-of-all-work (was) generally supposed to live on little more than the leavings of the table’ was borne out by the experience of a number of general servants, those employed in larger households were usually more fortunate. Meals were adequate in quantity, if not very imaginative in quality. ‘In some houses they would be given cold beef or mutton, or even hot Irish stew for breakfast, and the midday meal was always a heavy one, with suet pudding following a cut from a hot joint’.

14 Ted. Humphris, op. cit., pp. 36-39. S. J. Tyrrell, A Countryman’s Tale (London, 1973), p. 166. 15 Letter from Mrs. Mary Bateman, 24th Jan., 1838, at N.R.O. 16 The relevant wages books are all at N.R.O. 17 Statement of Wages &c. at Apethorpe Estate—October, 1911, at N.R.O. 18 Annie Mason of Guilsborough, who moved to a general servant’s place at Stoke Newington early in the present century, recalled that each day her mistress departed for the City at 10.30 a.m., ‘leaving me with a slice of bread and cheese and she used to lock all the food up! She would come back about 6 p.m. in the evening and bring back friends and I had to cook for about 6 people’. Mrs. Annie Mason, ‘My Life in Service’, essay written for a competition organised by the Leicestershire Local History Council and preserved at Leicestershire County Record Office. 19 Flora Thompson, Lark Rise to Candleford (Oxford, 1963 edn.), p. 173.
But the sleeping quarters were far less satisfactory, falling well below the standard provided for the rest of the household. Many mistresses found it convenient to follow the advice of Mrs. J. E. Panton, who in her *From Kitchen to Garret*, recommended that as far as possible every servant should have a separate bed, but in other respects the room was to be as simply furnished as possible: ‘A cupboard of some kind should be provided where they can hang up their dresses . . . But if this be impossible, a few hooks must supplement the chest of drawers, washing-stand, bedchair, and toilet-table with glass, which is all that is required in the room of a maid-servant’. She declared that while she would like ‘to give each maid a really pretty room’, the effort was useless as no sooner was ‘the room put nice than something happens to destroy the beauty; and I really believe servants only feel happy if their rooms are allowed in some measure to resemble the homes of their youth, and to be merely places where they lie down to sleep as heavily as they can’.20

In well-regulated Victorian households the time off allocated to servants was strictly limited. A Government survey of 1899 revealed that even in the most generous families, holidays were restricted to ‘a fortnight in summer, one day monthly, half day every Sunday, evening out weekly’.21 Girls who stayed out beyond the permitted time could be dismissed.22 On Sundays, Church attendance was usually expected, to supplement the daily prayers conducted by the head of the house for both family and maids. Exclusion from family prayers was an indication of severe disapproval by a mistress for her servant; thus Mrs. Bateman, when she had discovered the misbehaviour of her cook, refused to let the other servants call her ‘in that night ... for prayers’, as they had been in the habit of doing on previous occasions.23

It was quite common for maids to present themselves for inspection by their mistresses before they opened the back door to go out for their leisure time. They were expected always to be neatly and plainly dressed, while some employers, like Lady Knightley of Fawsley, near Daventry, were also anxious that they should spend their free hours as profitably as possible. Lady Knightley became an enthusiastic supporter of the Girls’ Friendly Society, a Church of England organisation launched in 1874 to provide recreational and other facilities for young working women who had led ‘pure and useful lives’. Within three years the Society had established branches in Brackley, Daventry, Northampton and Oundle, and had recruited nearly 600 members—most of them domestic servants. Regular meetings were held, excursions organised, and Bible classes and library facilities provided, while the ‘respectable’ status of members was ensured by the rule that ‘no girl who has not borne a virtuous character’ could be admitted. If that character were lost, then exclusion must follow immediately. Lady Knightley became involved with the Society from the beginning of 1876 and in her diary for Easter Sunday of that year she expressed pleasure at enlisting ‘four of my own maids as members of the G.F.S. . . . if it does but ever so little good, I shall be thankful’. Two years later about sixty local members held their picnic at Fawsley, the tea being preceded by a religious service and ‘a short address on Purity’.24

Concern for servants’ morals likewise led to ‘followers’ being strongly discouraged by most mistresses, and, as with Mrs. Bateman’s cook, immediate dismissal could follow the breaking of this restriction. Yet it did not prevent a minority of servants from straying from the path of virtue, and the anxiety of family and friends when a girl moved to employment in a town is clearly revealed in a letter written by John Spendlove of Gretton to his future wife in Leicester: ‘I was

22 Indeed, in October, 1871, Emma Matten, an annually-hired farmhouse servant of Tichmarsh Lodge, Northamptonshire, not only lost her place but was also required by Thrapston Petty Sessional Court to pay 10s. compensation to her employer when she stayed out beyond the time her master had allowed to visit Oundle Statute Fair. *First Report of the Royal Commission on Labour Laws*, Parliamentary Papers, 1874, Vol. XXIV, Notes on Cases, pp. 83-84.
pleased to see your Mother come home this afternoon & to hear how you was, and what sort of place you have . . . and to hear of the privileges you will enjoy . . . My dear Ruth you know I did not like the thought of your going to Leicester but I hope and pray to God that it will be for your soul's good'. In her case at least, the fears proved groundless, and within a few years the two were safely married.25

PAMELA HORN.

25 Letter from John Spendlove to Ruth Barrow, 4th Nov., 1846, N.R.O., Sp.G.354. The 1871 Census shows a sprinkling of domestic servants with illegitimate children in the county's workhouses. Thus at Wellingborough, six of the 67 female inmates were domestic servants, and of these two had illegitimate babies with them. At Northampton, with 17 domestic servants out of 106 female inmates, there was only one illegitimate child. See Census Returns at Public Record Office, RG.10.1501 and R.G.10.1485, respectively.

* * * * * * * * * *

APPENDIX 1.

The material on which the following tables are based is preserved at Northamptonshire Record Office.

A. WAGES PAID BY THE ISHAM FAMILY OF LAMPORT HALL—1830-1851
(See also 1841 and 1851 Census Returns at Public Record Office, H.O.107.807 and H.O.107.1742, respectively).

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<tr>
<td>Lady’s Maid</td>
<td>£15</td>
<td>£15</td>
<td>£18</td>
<td>£18</td>
<td>£18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cook-Housekeeper</td>
<td>£40</td>
<td>£34</td>
<td>£30</td>
<td>£36</td>
<td>£40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Upper Housemaid</td>
<td>£10</td>
<td>£10</td>
<td>£11</td>
<td>£11</td>
<td>£14*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Under Housemaid</td>
<td>£9</td>
<td>£9</td>
<td>£9</td>
<td>£9</td>
<td>£9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy Maid</td>
<td>£9</td>
<td>£9</td>
<td>£11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kitchenmaid</td>
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<td>Laundry Maid</td>
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<td>£11</td>
<td>£11</td>
<td>£11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>—</td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>£21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nursemaid</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>£7</td>
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<td>Butler</td>
<td>£45</td>
<td>£60**</td>
<td>£60**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Footman</td>
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<td>£14***</td>
<td>£16</td>
<td>£17*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coachman†</td>
<td>£52</td>
<td>£52</td>
<td>£52</td>
<td>£52</td>
<td>£52</td>
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<tr>
<td>Groom</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>£20</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>£16†</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Wage rate raised by £1 per annum to this level in October, 1851.

** Between 1837 and 1848 Dodson, the Butler, also acted as House steward; but in 1848 he reverted to being butler only. He left Lamport Hall early in 1851, and seems to have retired to a cottage on the estate.

*** Footman aged only 15 in 1841—hence lower wages.

† In addition to his money wages, the coachman received each year two suits of livery and two stable jackets.

‡ The groom was aged only 15 on this occasion, and out of his £16 per annum he had to find ‘his own clothes’.

N.B. A downward movement in the wage rate for a particular situation is often a sign that a fresh servant has taken up an appointment, as, for example, in regard to the cook-housekeeper between 1837 and 1841, and the dairy maid between 1841 and 1848.

B. WAGES PAID BY THE ELWES FAMILY OF GREAT BILLING—1873-1877

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1873</th>
<th>1875</th>
<th>1877</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lady’s Maid</td>
<td>£20</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>£30*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Lady’s Maid</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>£10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>£25</td>
<td>£30</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>£45</td>
<td>£45</td>
<td>£45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B. Wages paid by the Elwes Family of Great Billing—1873-1877—continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1873</th>
<th>1875</th>
<th>1877</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Laundry Maid</td>
<td>£20</td>
<td>£22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Laundry Maid</td>
<td>£14</td>
<td>£12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Housemaid</td>
<td>£16</td>
<td>£18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Housemaid</td>
<td>£12</td>
<td>£12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Housemaid</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchenmaid</td>
<td>£16</td>
<td>£18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursemaid</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>£16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scullery Maid</td>
<td>£8</td>
<td>£10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butler</td>
<td>£60</td>
<td>£65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coachman</td>
<td>£40</td>
<td>£40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Footman</td>
<td>£28</td>
<td>£30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Footman</td>
<td>£22</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall boy</td>
<td>£12</td>
<td>£8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groom</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>£20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Jane White, the former nurse, was appointed lady’s maid; in 1881 she became housekeeper.

C. WAGES PAID BY MRS. MARGARET WILLOUGHBY, WIFE OF A BANK MANAGER OF DAVENTRY. A TWO-SERVANT HOUSEHOLD—1859-1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1859</th>
<th>1899</th>
<th>1911</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Servant</td>
<td>£8 8s.</td>
<td>£18 0s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursemaid</td>
<td>£4 10s.</td>
<td>General Servant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Servant</td>
<td>£14 0s.</td>
<td>General Servant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Servant</td>
<td>£12 0s.</td>
<td>General Servant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Servant</td>
<td>£15 0s.</td>
<td>General Servant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. In this household deductions seem to have been made from the servants’ wages for breakages—although the practice was not strictly legal. See, for example, an entry for 1871: ‘E. Chater —Mustard Glass to be stopped out of her wages’.

D. ANNUAL WAGES OF INDOOR STAFF EMPLOYED BY THE BRASSEY FAMILY OF APETHORPE HALL, WANSFORD—OCTOBER, 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual rate of wages</th>
<th>Additional comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Butler (married)</td>
<td>£90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Footman</td>
<td>£38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Footman</td>
<td>£34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall Boy</td>
<td>£16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odd Man</td>
<td>£31 4s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odd Man</td>
<td>£65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valet</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housekeeper</td>
<td>£50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Housemaid</td>
<td>£30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Housemaid</td>
<td>£30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Housemaid</td>
<td>£24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Housemaid</td>
<td>£20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Housemaid</td>
<td>£18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th Housemaid</td>
<td>£16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th Housemaid</td>
<td>£14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still room maid</td>
<td>£26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Laundry maid</td>
<td>£32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Laundry maid</td>
<td>£24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Laundry maid</td>
<td>£18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

House rent free, also coal, firing, milk, livery.
Board and lodging free; livery and clothes.
Board and lodging free; livery and clothes.
Board and lodging free; clothes.
Board and lodging free; 1 pair boots.
House rent free.
Board and lodging free; 2s. 6d. for washing per week.
Board and lodging free; 2s. 6d. for washing per week.
Board and lodging free; 2s. 6d. for washing per week.
Board and lodging free; 2s. 6d. for washing per week.
Board and lodging free; 2s. 6d. for washing per week.
Board and lodging free; 2s. 6d. for washing per week.
Board and lodging free; 2s. 6d. for washing per week.
Board and lodging free; 2s. 6d. for washing per week.
Board and lodging free; 2s. 6d. for washing per week.
Board and lodging free.
4th Laundry maid £14 Board and lodging free.
Cook ... £60 Board and lodging free.
1st Kitchenmaid ... £28 Board and lodging free; 2s. 6d. for washing per week.
2nd Kitchenmaid £22 Board and lodging free; 2s. 6d. for washing per week.
3rd Kitchenmaid ... £18 Board and lodging free; 2s. 6d. for washing per week.
N.B. The Lady's Maid and the nurses were omitted from the list, and the valet's wage rate was left blank.

* * * * * * * * * *

APPENDIX 2.

MRS. PATTINSON'S SERVANTS' REGISTRY, 23 FORD STREET, KETTERING

Ladies' Fees (n.d.—later nineteenth century)

Booking ... ... ... 2s.
Fees after engagement as follows:
Wages up to £14 ... ... 2s.
  "  "  " £19 ... ... 3s. 6d.
  "  "  " £24 ... ... 5s.
  "  "  " £29 ... ... 7s.
  "  "  " £34 ... ... 8s. 6d. Servants' names may not be transferred.

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King's School, Peterborough

School photographs are largely, perhaps, the sort of thing likely to appeal only to those who happen to be depicted in them, or to their descendants. However, the two shown here are not without interest if only because of their considerable age and illustration of fashions (sporting and otherwise) long since passed away—except that beards and moustaches appear to be on their way back to some extent!

Both are sepia-tints and show staff and pupils of King's School, Peterborough, most of whom, presumably, are long since dead. Mr. W. D. Larrett, the school's historian and a former senior master, tells me he believes the bearded cleric standing at the back of the less populated photo (labelled “H. Marriott. Cathedral Studio, Peterboro”) to be the Rev. E. J. Cunningham, headmaster from 1882 to 1897, and the clean-shaven cleric in the other (which bears the pencilled caption “Eastward (?) Studio, Peterborough”) the Rev. E. J. Bidwell, headmaster from 1897 to 1903. This is confirmed by Mr. Percy C. Day, who was at King's from autumn term 1899 to summer 1902, and must therefore be one of the oldest (if not the oldest) surviving old boys. Although unable to provide any information about the earlier photo, Mr. Day tells me that the man on Rev. Bidwell's right is Mr. Badger, senior master, while on Bidwell's left (smaller moustache) is Mr. A. J. Robertson, a popular flat runner in those days. He goes on to say that the tallest figure at the back (clean shaven) is Mr. Robertson's brother, a racing cyclist popularly known as “Dubby”; and also that the man at the end of the second row with his hair parted in the middle is Mr. Harry Wilson, a tenor singer in the amateur operatic society.

Mr. Larrett adds that the Rev. Bidwell helped the historian T. M. Leach in preparing his article on King's School for The Victoria County History of Northamptonshire (1900), some of which information Mr. Larrett used as the basis for his own History of the King's School, published several years ago.

Both of these photos, incidentally, came into my possession at the death of a neighbour, Mr. W. E. Hance, a jobbing gardener who, so far as I know, had no connexion with the school, except possibly indirectly. I am aware that Mr. Hance worked, as gardener, for several quite eminent people in the past, notably Canon Victor Whitechurch (the novelist) and Lord Leith. Is there any link-up here? Any further information that readers may be able to give about the people depicted in the photos would be most appreciated.

Anthony Wootton
JOHN DRYDEN'S TITCHMARSH HOME

JOHN DRYDEN's parents made Titchmarsh their family home. Both were members of important Northamptonshire families. His father, Erasmus, third son of Sir Erasmus Dryden of Canon's Ashby married Mary Pickering, a granddaughter of Sir John Pickering, lord of the manor of Titchmarsh. Titchmarsh parish registers record the baptism of most of the fourteen children of the marriage, and of the burial of Erasmus in 1654 and Mary in 1676.\(^1\) The discovery that Mary Dryden is recorded on the Hearth Tax list for Titchmarsh, 1670, as paying for five hearths\(^2\) stimulated the desire to find whether the house was still standing and if so which it was of the several likely good stone village houses. It had to be large enough to accommodate the family and some servants and was likely to be dignified in design as befitting the well born couple. I could find no further clue in documentary records, but a tall well-built house, Brookside Farm, on the eastern edge of the village looked worth investigation. One day in 1972 the owner of it, Mr. E. Abbott, led me round the house and showed me the date, 1628\(^3\) clearly visible above the gable end on the garden side.

Mary and John were married in 1630. What more likely than that the house had been built for them? A visit of inspection by Mr. Anthony Fleming, expert in vernacular architecture, confirmed the possibility of the hypothesis. Basically the house consists of four large well proportioned rooms topped by a spacious attic, with rather rambling back premises which include kitchen and service rooms. The four large rooms and the kitchen account for the five hearths, leaving some of the children and the domestics to shiver in attic or back bedrooms. The house, as Mr. Fleming remarked, is of civilised design. Parents, fourteen children and staff would have filled it to capacity, but the fourteen children would rarely if ever have been at home together. For John Dryden was twenty-three and had been away at school and college for at least eight years when the youngest child Elizabeth was baptized in the year that her father died, and by then some of her elder sisters could have been married.

There is some satisfaction to the local enthusiast in being able to associate a specific house in the village with our poet laureate, for as his cousin Elizabeth Creed, born Pickering, wrote on the Dryden memorial in Titchmarsh church "we boast that he was bred and had his first learning here".

HELEN BELGION. Titchmarsh 1974.

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\(^1\) John Dryden was born at Aldwincle All Saints Rectory, the home of his maternal grandparents. According to Sir Gyles Isham a daughter frequently returned to her parents' home for the birth of her first child.

\(^2\) Hearth Tax P.R.O. E179/157/446 Membrane 48. (microfilm at Delapré).

\(^3\) Brookside was bought in 1906 by Mr. A. Abbott, uncle of the present owner from a family named King who had owned it since 1869. There exist no earlier records.
JOHN DRYDEN'S TITCHMARSH HOME

Brookside Farm, Titchmarsh

Attic Window, Brookside Farm
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DENINGTON INDUSTRIAL ESTATE WELLSINGBOROUGH
BOOK REVIEWS

BUILDINGS OF ENGLAND. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

by NIKOLAUS PEVSNER

2nd edn. revised by Bridget Cherry

(Penguin Books. 518 pp. 1973. £4.00)

Sir Nikolaus Pevsner has in the last year brought his magnificent project of recording the buildings of England to a triumphant conclusion. England’s buildings are now recorded more systematically and in greater detail than any other country in the world, thanks to the indefatigable labours of Sir Nikolaus and his helpers. When he was speaking recently to the Kettering Three Arts Club at the Grammar School, we heard about the methods he has used in assembling this vast collection of material. A research team goes into the county and, provided with their report Sir Nikolaus, chauffeured by his wife, goes over the ground himself checking, adding, and providing every so often inimitable aesthetic judgements varying from sensitive, lively and perceptive comparisons to slightly astringent and occasionally damning comments on buildings (frequently modern) which he finds objectionable. Sir Nikolaus, in describing the sculpture on the Eleanor Cross at Geddington, for instance, points out that “the naturalistic leaf is replaced by a more generally undulating bossy or nobbly leaf, comparable (accidentally) with some kinds of seaweed”. (p. 36). Again, on p. 40, discussing lucarnes, he states that they are not without aesthetic drawbacks; “for unless detailed very sensitively, they tend to come out of the smooth and sleek outlines of a spire almost like pimples or warts”. Such telling phrases make the book so much more readable than a dull catalogue of architectural details.

Every so often Sir Nikolaus draws on his vast repertoire of continental comparisons to make some illuminating parallel. He pronounces majestic judgements which put the buildings into their European context. Such are his remarks on Burleigh: “In size and swagger it can compete with any contemporary palace this side of the Alps” (p. 51); of the Peterborough ceiling “one of the most precious in Europe” (p. 33); of Brixworth “the largest and most orderly surviving building north of the Alps” (p. 27); “Stoke Park is the earliest house in England on the plan of Palladio’s villas” (p. 415).

The decision to bring out a new edition is to be welcomed, especially as there is ample evidence that thorough revision and at times complete rewriting has taken place. Bridget Cherry has masterminded the operation and she has sensibly relied largely on the labours of the local experts whom she has recruited to provide the new and up to date information.

Of the main changes in the text there are valuable expanded entries on the main towns; in particular the section on Northampton is enlarged from 27 to 43 pages. The medieval town plan is mentioned, albeit in a footnote, also the attribution of All Saints to the architect Henry Bell is discussed. The magnificent Victorian town hall not only gets a full page plate but its architecture, which was designed by Edward Godwin and influenced strongly by Ruskin’s Stones of Venice, is rightly given prominence. The itinerary through Victorian Northampton studded with references to Victor Hatley is much more detailed and it is also noteworthy that the discouraging remark in the first edition “No-one is likely to perambulate outer Northampton. The mileage covered would not be justified by results” has been left out, and indeed there is a helpful map added of outer Northampton (p. 337). The ravaging of Northampton which began c. 1960 with the demolition of the late 17th century Peacock Hotel, a key building in the market square, is deplored and a list of fine buildings mentioned in the first edition and now demolished is given. (p. 13). The other towns have had similar losses. Wellingborough now resembles one of the Ruhr
towns after the war, with acres of flattened and blitzed buildings. It is, however, covered more fully (six pages instead of four). Daventry has lost a worthwhile 17th century building in the High Street and the 19th century Police Station. Kettering has lost a Victorian Grammar School in a commanding position in Gold Street, a Queen Anne house (Beech House) and is likely to lose a fine facade of Victorian shops (Post Office buildings). Its fuller description (six pages compared with three and a half) is a witness to the increased appreciation of the town's buildings, owing to the work of the thriving Civic Society. Mr. John Stedman’s work in designing residential units at Corby New Town is warmly appreciated, but the book is rarely enthusiastic about the modern replacements. The Peacock Hotel “has been replaced by a sadly nondescript block with shops, depressing evidence of this century's aesthetic standards compared with the efforts made in the town after the 1675 fire” (p. 328) and Barclaycard House “the first really large development in the town to date, but one that heralds the scale of the transformation that is beginning to overtake much of the town centre” (p. 335).

The book shows that the country has suffered fewer losses than the towns. One or two great houses such as Fineshade Abbey (18th century) and Watford Court (17th century) have gone, or are beyond repair. The interior fittings of Watford mentioned on p. 447 have in fact been ripped out and only the Commonwealth period external shell remains. Similarly, Clay Coton church is in a worse state than the book describes, having been gutted by vandals. Aldwinkle All Saints, a fine Perpendicular building, is now green with water leaking in, but Newton-le-Willows, another redundant church, has a more hopeful future as a field study centre. The fittings, incidentally, have been removed to Geddington church.

The previous volume covered the county and the Soke of Peterborough. The Soke belongs to the county historically: for a thousand years it was an integral part of the shire; Peterborough Abbey was one of the main landowners in the county until the Dissolution; the rivers Nene and Welland which encompass the Soke to the South and North were main routeways into the county from the sixth century to the nineteenth. Is it surprising that the new edition when it tries to exclude the Soke in its survey of the architecture (and archaeology) gets into difficulties? For instance, the sections of text dealing with the Roman Nene valley potteries have been left out, and yet its products are found at practically every Roman site in the county. Since it is perhaps realised that any account of Norman architecture within the county doesn’t make sense without discussing the contribution of Peterborough cathedral, the entry in the introduction on this has been retained (p. 29). Perhaps more inconsistently the long passage on Burleigh is still there (p. 51).

The emphasis in the new edition is still firmly on churches and the great houses and mirrors the extent to which interests of squires and clergy have continued to dominate the study of English buildings. This has been at the expense of the humbler domestic architecture. R. B. Wood Jones' valuable work “Traditional Domestic Architecture in the Banbury Region” is missing from the book list. Some attempt, however, has been made to take into consideration the evidence of vanished buildings whose foundations lay beneath the ground. The Plan of the Greyfriars recently partly recovered by archaeological excavation (p. 329 fn), the excavations at Grafton Regis medieval manor (p. 227), the medieval moated grange at Badby (p. 100) and the Roman bridge at Aldwinkle (p. 25). Nothing, however, is said of the recent archaeological work at Newton or Rushden churches which has thrown light on the earlier plans of these buildings; nor is the work on Quinton medieval manor mentioned.

The illustrations have been greatly improved in the new edition. They are the same in number (64 pages) but are larger. Many are bled to the edge without wasteful margins which spoiled those in the first edition. They have also been helpfully numbered and, best of all, they have been turned up the right way so one no longer has to twist the book sideways to refer to them. Since the loss of the Soke it has been possible to include a number of new ones—such as Spratton church tower, Northampton market place, the fonts at Little Billing and West Haddon. The picture of Higham Ferrers west doorway with its roundels of 13th century sculpture is greatly improved, as are the enlarged views of church spires. There are only two bad pictures, black and obscure: those of the interiors of churches of Rothwell and Holy Sepulchre, Northampton.

The plans call for comment. There is no list of them. In subject they are confined to the
great country houses. They are simply blocked in and no attempt is made to produce an historical plan in which the building of various periods is demonstrated, as is done with such success by the Royal Commission for Historical Monuments.

There are a number of revised and extended entries on individual buildings. Here the researches of Bruce Bailey and Sir Gyles Isham are to the fore. The entries on Deene House and Rockingham Castle have been rewritten in the light of new knowledge. Harrowden Hall (p. 234) and East Haddon Hall (pp. 198-9) both have revised and enlarged descriptions. Easton Neston Hall is shown to have been influenced by Wren as much as by Hawksmoor. The Anglo-Saxon church at Brigstock has been more carefully dissected. It is a pity that more is not said about the settings of these buildings. Mr. John Cornforth recently wrote an article on the landscape of Boughton Park (Country Life 11th March 1971). This is dealt with in three sentences by Pevsner. Aynhoe park gets one line. The gardens at Lyveden (Arch. J. vol. 129, 1972 pp. 154-160) again are dismissed summarily as “remains of terracing and a regular arrangement of ponds and mounts between the two”.

The economic and social background of all this building is also strangely ignored. We learn much of aesthetic and architectural considerations but little of the economics behind them. This is again a reminder that until recently architectural subjects were written upon in the studies of the gentry and the rectories of the clergy. For instance, in discussing the fact that there are about 80 spires “of these more than three-quarters are in or near the Nene district”, it is ignored that they are near the waterways of the Nene and the Welland and connected by them to the quarries of Weldon, Ketton and Stamford which provided the freestone for the intricate masonry required in spire building. Although intellectual influences are mentioned, nothing is said about the way buildings were paid for—e.g. that the economic prosperity or decline of the county at various periods is reflected in its buildings. The phenomenon of deserted villages, for instance, which accounts for a number of isolated churches, such as Fawsley or Lower Charwelton, is unnoticed. Canalscape is given more of a write-up (p. 147) but the changes in buildings wrought by the industrial revolution receive little adequate mention.

Finally, the factual errors are few. Some of the changes owing to the deterioration of buildings have been noticed. The bearded sculptured figure at Whiston (p. 459) is no woolcomber; he has a pair of scissors. The datestones in Althorp Park date from 1567-8, not 1576-8, (p. 83). The main concentration of Roman remains at Kettering lie between North Park Drive and Blandford Avenue, which is hardly “East of hospital” (p. 274). The attributions of various buildings to Inigo Jones have been demolished by Sir Gyles Isham in a recent article (N. P. & P. 1974/5, V, 2, pp. 95-100) but Pevsner still flirts with them. Brick is first mentioned as coming to Northamptonshire in the early 16th century dower house at Fawsley (p. 46). It has in fact been found recently at the deserted village site at Lyveden dating from c. 1480.

It should be apparent from this that the volume is well worth acquiring despite its huge increase in price (15/- was the price for the paper back version of the first edition; the new hard back is £4.00). Sir Nikolaus and his capable reviser, Bridget Cherry, are to be congratulated on the effectiveness of the revised edition of Buildings of England, Northamptonshire.

J. M. Steane.

1873-1973, MOUNT PLEASANT CHAPEL, NORTHAMPTON: HISTORY

by C. W. WILSON

(1973. Unpriced)

This booklet is really a continuation of The Story of the First Eighty Years of Mount Pleasant Baptist Church (sic), Northampton, 1873-1953, written by the late Ralph Thompson just over twenty years ago. Although primarily concerned with the period since 1953, it contains in Chapter 1 a useful condensed account of Mount Pleasant during the period covered by Mr. Thompson’s book.

Mount Pleasant Baptist Chapel was strategically placed to serve a suburban neighbourhood
which came into existence during the 1870s and 1880s. Fortunate in attracting a succession of able ministers, it has flourished over the past hundred years, and one sign of its continued vigour is the fact that its story is now written right up to date. My only complaint about Mr. Wilson's narrative is that I should like to have been told more about the hiatus in the ministry which occurred in 1958-60; but I am well aware that when writing about very recent times, the historian of a locality or institution must know how to use a tactful pen! The author is to be congratulated on making a useful addition to the printed material which exists on the history of Northampton nonconformity, and which is essential reading for anybody who is trying to understand the development of the town during the past three hundred years.

VICTOR A. HATLEY.

CLASS STRUGGLE AND THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION: EARLY INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM IN THREE ENGLISH TOWNS

by JOHN FOSTER

(Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 346 pp. 1974. £6.00)

The blurb to Dr. Foster's book states that “This is a study of the forces underlying the development and subsequent decline of working-class consciousness in nineteenth century England, as revealed by the study of three English towns—Oldham, Northampton and South Shields”. Most of the book, however, is devoted to a close study of Oldham, with Northampton and South Shields used for purposes of comparison and treated in much less detail. A foretaste of Dr. Foster's research was published in The Study of Urban History (ed. H. J. Dyos, 1968).

Dr. Foster has worked skilfully and tenaciously on his sources and, in addition to the text, has provided his readers with an impressive array of notes and figures. (Some of the figures are not easy to understand, and 13b and 14 do not seem to accord with statements made in the text). At the same time he does not conceal the Marxist bias of his thinking. Thus he is prepared to state categorically that the basic task of mid-nineteenth century Northampton working-class radicals should have been: “to give overall political expression to the lessons of local industrial conflict”. Non-Marxists may be excused for wondering whether this really means: “to use Northampton shoemakers as pawns in a power-struggle”.

Class Struggle will stand or fall as a major contribution to urban history by what Dr. Foster writes about Oldham; however, so far as Northampton is concerned, I find that the validity of some of his statements is dubious. For example, to say that “Northampton only became an industrial town as a result of the crisis of rural depopulation in the 1820s and 1830s” is grotesque, unless “depopulation” has meanings other than those found in the O.E.D. Nor does it explain why Wellingborough, Kettering and Daventry, in each of which shoe manufacturing was well-established by the 1810s, completely failed to match the growth-rate of the county town after 1821.

Using Sir Frederick Eden as his authority Dr. Foster puts the weekly earnings of what he calls the “cheap shoemaker” at Northampton during the 1790s at 10s. to 15s., and then goes on to say that no observer during the 1830s and 1840s put them “much above 10s.”, an implied fall in living standards over fifty years. But Donaldson in 1794 put weekly earnings at 7s. to 14s. with a “general average” of 9s. to 10s., a Poor Law Inspector in 1834 at 18s. to 30s., and the Northampton Society of Operative Shoemakers in 1838, a slump year, at 12s. to 15s. Earnings for shoemakers at depressed Kettering were stated in 1834 to be 10s. to 15s., and at Wellingborough, a town from which many shoemakers had migrated to Northampton, at 12s.

Again, Dr. Foster tells us that between about 1835 and 1850 the Northampton shoe manufacturers, in order to cut labour costs and maintain profitability, created a novel division of labour in the production process by directly employing women and children to close (i.e. stitch together) the component parts of shoe uppers. This brought about “a mass influx of rural immigrants” into Northampton because “where previously shoemaking families had been able to work without difficulty in quite distant villages, they now had to be within daily reach of the town.
closing shops”. Indeed? Closing had developed as a separate branch of shoe production at Northampton by 1831 at the latest, the borough pollbook of that year listing the names of 31 voters as “closers”. Women and children had been employed at closing for many years before the 1830s; as early as 1817 the managers of the Northampton Lancasterian School were lamenting that their part-time senior girls worked either in lace-making (a declining industry) or shoe-closing. Few manufacturers at Northampton before about 1890 undertook their own closing, but relied on a host of small firms which specialised in the job. Much of the very big increase in the numbers of female and juvenile shoemakers recorded at Northampton between 1841 and 1851 was due to the census enumerators in 1841 not entering on their schedules the occupations of other than adult males. Finally, rural shoemaking for the wholesale market never depended on being within daily reach of facilities for closing, and in almost every shoemaking village in Northamptonshire the number of shoemakers increased between 1841 and 1851 and again between 1851 and 1861, often dramatically so after 1851 (e.g. Abthorpe and Yardley Hastings).

Read with discernment Class Struggle is an interesting and often stimulating book; but students of Northampton's nineteenth century history will do well to examine for themselves the relevant source material before accepting Dr. Foster's version of events at its Marxist face-value.

VICTOR A. HATLEY.

THEATRE UNROYAL

by LOU WARWICK

(Garden City Press Ltd., Letchworth. £3.50)

Most people in Northampton probably think that theatrical history in the town began in 1884 with the opening of the Northampton Theatre Royal and Opera House in Guildhall Road (now the home of the Northampton Repertory Company). Mr. Lou Warwick, to whom we are already indebted for an account of the New Theatre, has discovered that the Professional Theatres' history in Northampton goes much further back. From the lucky circumstance that the Northampton Mercury began publication in 1721, he has been able to establish that a theatrical company visited the Hind Inn and performed “The Spanish Fryar” and “Hamlet” in 1723. How appropriate that the first recorded play performed in Northampton should have been one by Northamptonshire's own John Dryden. By a careful reading of the past numbers of the Mercury, Mr. Warwick has been able to tell us something of the visiting companies of strolling players, who, timing their visits to coincide with race meetings, fairs, assizes, entertained the public with occasional plays. In 1735, there is a mention of a “New Playhouse in Abington St.” but as Mr. Warwick says it was “probably only an Inn Room with verbal garnish”. The first playhouse proper was a riding house between Abington Street and St. Giles Street where “it may be imagined that all would not be sweetness in the atmosphere of equestrian odours mingled with the smoke of the candles which serv'd for illumination”. Mr. Warwick, however, has rightly devoted most of his space to the new theatre erected by Robert Abbey “on the lines of London's Haymarket Theatre” in Marefair with its frontage on Horseshoe Lane. It stood next to the Shakespeare Inn, and the remains of the building were removed in 1922 when Horseshoe Lane was widened. “Northampton's new theatre must have been just about the plainest in the country, skimmed for cheapness. No pictures of it survive in use as a theatre, only of it in its latter days as shop premises”. Anyway, the Marefair theatre lasted until the opening of the Theatre Royal in Guildhall Road.

There were some unexpectedly distinguished players. The great Edmund Kean in 1820 appeared as Richard III and Shylock on successive nights. In those days, productions were—as opera performances were until quite recently—stereotyped, so that the star could with a single run-through, fit into a stock company. It is related of Kean on one occasion that when visiting Hastings, there was not even time for a proper rehearsal, and Kean gave this advice to the resident company “Keep six feet away from me and do your damndest”.

Mr. Warwick relates the sad story of G. V. Brooke’s visit to the theatre in 1863. There is a
portrait of Brooke as Shylock at the Garrick Club, but it was as Othello that he took London by storm at the Olympic Theatre in January 1848, and it was in this part that he came to Northampton. Sadly, under the influence of excessive drinking, the ruin of many of the old players, Brooke was no longer the fine actor he once was, and at Northampton, although he tried to play the part, his memory failed him, and he finally broke down, and bidding the audience “Good night” left the stage. The manager, Charles Wilstone, apologised to the audience, and prefacing the remainder of “Othello” by the farce, “Good for Nothing”, substituted the actor playing Iago for Othello, and himself read Iago.

Another famous performer was Charles Matthews, who did not suffer from Brooke’s vice. It is a measure of Mr. Warwick’s honesty that he confesses that he had never heard of Matthews when he began his researches into the Marefair Theatre. Matthews had a remarkable gift of mimicry, and he seemed (the words are Byron’s) “to have continuous cords in his mind that vibrated to the minds of others, as he gives not only the tones, look and manners of the persons he personifies, but the very train of thinking and the expressions they indulge in”. Matthews was an old school fellow and friend of the Rev. Thomas Speidel, Rector of Crick, with whom he stayed, and was also a guest of Sir Charles Knightley at Fawsley.

Especially in its earlier days, the theatre was anxious to enlist the support of the “nobility and gentry”, and on occasions there would be “patronage nights”. In 1833 there was such a performance for George Payne of Sulby, the spendthrift Master of the Pytchley Hunt, when a special backdrop of Sulby was painted for the popular comedy “Speed the Plough”. The Spencers of Althorp “were prominent over the years among those who patronized the theatre or bespoke performances”. Special programmes were printed on satin on these occasions, as happened, of course, at Covent Garden until fairly recently on “royal occasions”. I remember once appearing at the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin in 1927, when Tim Healy as Governor General of the Irish Free State attended, and there were satin programmes!

Mr. Warwick’s book is the product of enormous industry, and he has provided a feast of good things. He does not (happily) stick too closely to his theme, and there is a great deal of social history to be learnt from his pages, apart from its theatrical interest. It is to be hoped that he will be sufficiently encouraged by the success of “Theatre Unroyal” to continue his researches, and to tell us more about Northampton and its theatres.

G.I.

NORTHANTS MILITIA LISTS 1777
V. A. Hatley, ed.
(Northants Record Series, XXV, 1973)

Mr. Hatley has given us an excellent edition of the Northants Militia Lists of 1777. This is the best surviving of several series, which were drawn up in various years between 1762 and 1786, and it lacks only the records of Nassaburgh Hundred (the Soke of Peterborough).

The militia was a force raised in the counties for the defence of England, and as such was not liable for service overseas. It was first regulated by act in 1662, but a major reorganisation occurred in 1757, when responsibility was placed upon the parish to find men to meet the county quota. Able-bodied men between 18 and 45 years, with certain specified exceptions, were liable for service, and were chosen by ballot to represent the parish (although a good many preferred to pay for a substitute to serve). The arrangements made in the 1757 Act, and in adjustments made subsequently, indicate also that problems of increasing pauperism and the burdens which it placed upon the parish were held clearly in mind at both national and county level. What survives in these records is a register of able-bodied men who would stand in at the ballot, but sometimes including those exempted through poverty or having served before.

The object in reproducing the Militia Lists is chiefly to provide the historian with a specialized instrument of research, but since it is very likely that the majority of surnames found
in particular parishes were represented in these lists, the 1777 returns will serve equally the needs of the genealogist, offering many a short-cut to the family-hunter benighted in the thickets of eighteenth-century registers. Listings of inhabitants from the pre-censal period have of late become popular with historians seeking to discover demographic trends and the social structure of early modern communities. Militia Lists need to be treated with caution in this field of research, but they are of some use nevertheless. Mr. Hatley has counted 13,741 men in the lists, which perhaps represented 70% of the population in the age-group in the county at the time. Unfortunately, the constables who compiled the records varied greatly in their diligence. Beside a few parishes (notably Crick, pp. 65-67, and Welford, pp. 73-74), in which a large list (perhaps not complete) of exempted persons were included, there were many others in which only the bare minimum of liable men were returned. Despite these limitations, the lists provide a guide to the occupational structure of the county, not paralleled until 1841. 87% of the men were described by occupation or status (p. xiv). Of these 11.1% were occupying farmers, 9.7% were engaged in weaving and knitting, and 5.9% in shoe-making. No less than 19.2% were labourers and 20.8% servants, most of them "farm servants" (p. xv). Now, since the largest number of exceptions were of poor men with large families, these data of labouring men were very much of a minimum figure. The implications of these figures are interesting and many prove to be important. Mr. Hatley is to be congratulated not only upon his statistical research, so proficiently laid out in his introduction, but for his analysis of the occupational structure of each Hundred in the body of the text.

Published lists of militia enrolments for other counties are still too few for any comparative work to be undertaken. Mr. Hatley has set a standard which the editors of other county Record Series should be encouraged to emulate.

School of Social Studies, University of East Anglia. B. A. Holderness.

THE NORTHAMPTONSHIRE LANDSCAPE:
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE AND THE SOKE OF PETERBOROUGH
by John M. Steane
(The Making of the English Landscape Series: London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1974; 320 pp. £3.95 in U.K.)

Those of us who were born and bred in Northamptonshire, who have Northamptonshire in the very marrow of our bones, respond with a thrill of recognition to the words of H. E. Bates: "I spent a childhood unconsciously entranced by it, magnifying dribbling little brooks to the brave beauty of torrents, tiny nightingale copse to the deep luxuriance of woods. I grew up to know the ash and the elm and the willow better than any other tree because they were the staple trees of the landscape, and to know hardly any other type of field than pasture and the massive ploughed parallels of steel clay that would later be roots and corn". And something stirs deep down in us when he says: "This plain homely pattern of elm and grass and hedges is the basis on which the entire English countryside is built. It is the very thing that makes the English country what it is: something different from any other country in the world" and when after admiring the wonder and variety of the United States he remarks that "the country they cannot repeat and for which all Englishmen are deeply and honestly envied is the country about which I am writing".1

And now at last we have a book which shows in detail and with expertly controlled imagination how this landscape grew to be what it is. Mr. Steane makes no secret of the fact that he is a fairly recent resident in Northamptonshire: "I remember stepping out of the train on my first visit to Kettering in 1964: I raised my eyes from the soot-blackened Derbyshire sandstone and red brick of the Midland railway Station to the astonishing spire rocketing out of a tall tower crocketed up the edges like a swordfish, brilliantly yellow as it caught the afternoon sun against

a lowering storm cloud". Yet in the few years since then he has personally covered a truly astonishing amount of ground from Arbury Hill to the fens, has read all the technical literature on the subject and himself written some of it; and I am sure that he has become one of the county's true sons by adoption.

The doyen of all workers in what one might call the science of the English landscape is of course W. G. Hoskins, much of whose pioneer work was done in the villages of high Leicestershire, notably Tugby, Gaulby and Skeffington. Mr. Steane proves himself a worthy pupil of Dr. Hoskins, not least in the persistence with which he must have tramped over the ground so that he might write of it at first hand. His main interest is in the Middle Ages, and I think that the landscape of the county has a mediaeval atmosphere; but from the Stone Age onward he has not only given us the evidence but brought it to life by his imagination. Who can forget his reconstruction of the "arctic tundra-like conditions with an annual temperature below 0° Centigrade" revealed in excavations at Billing, or his description of the burial mounds at Maxey where "The wind ripples the barley over the huge, unfenced fields lined with the long, grey, squalid sheds of poultry battery farms where 4,000 years ago there echoed the cries of Bronze Age mourners"?

Northamptonshire has always lain athwart the great transport routes from London to the north, and along the primitive tracks from the south-west to the Wash, and Mr. Steane retraces the so-called "Jurassic Way" by which travellers thousands of years ago made their way from the low ground by Stamford to Rockingham, Northampton and Banbury. The extent and complexity of the Roman occupation of the county is dealt with in masterly fashion, with analyses ranging from the engineering of parts of the modern A5 road to the effect of Roman legions on local farmers and horse-breeders (one thing Mr. Steane does not tell us—why was the Roman road from Cambridge through the county to Leicester called 'Via Devana'?—did it carry on to Chester?).

In common with many modern archaeologists Mr. Steane challenges the traditional theory that the Anglo-Saxons made the river Nene their chief highway into the county, and brings strong evidence in favour of their having travelled by such tracks as the Jurassic Way, and also of there having been much more land under cultivation than we are apt to assume. Indeed, this is one of the strongest impressions left by a study of this book—that of a teeming life that has completely vanished. The comparison of the English countryside to a palimpsest is a hackneyed metaphor, but the only really adequate one. The many first-rate aerial photographs in the book enhance this impression, as one looks down as if from a great height and sees the actual patterns of long-forgotten villages and camps and forts and parks and ponds there in the ground. From the Middle Ages onwards it needs a real expert at selection to master and present the multifarious evidence. The Middle Ages saw drastic and surprising changes in our landscape: wholesale evictions and deserted villages as land was changed from arable to pasture (82 deserted villages are known in Northamptonshire alone); disafforestation; the extension and maintenance of Roman roads and Saxon trackways; the rise of towns, their shapes and the castles which dominated the countryside; the hunting and poaching that took place in the forests. This period of history is revealed only to the patient investigator in ancient charters and chronicles and to the patient digger on ancient sites; but Mr. Steane never leaves his main thesis and when he comes to a record in dog Latin or a dry statement in an early charter he always asks, What is the effect or meaning of this in terms of the landscape?

He has a very quick eye for literary evidence, too, as when he spots a sentence in Thomas Isham's diary of 1671, "Father and I went into the fields to determine where ditches should be dug and hedges planted", and relates it to the newly-acquired property of Hanging Houghton, the survey of which is still in existence. The importance and enclosure of the great parks in Tudor and Stuart times are stressed and illustrated by photographs of estate maps; and when we reach the eighteenth century there are topographical drawings made by Thomas Eayre of Kettering in 1721 to illustrate Bridges' history of Northamptonshire; several of these are reproduced.

The tale is carried on through the age of canals and railways, with the huge cutting at

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2 The Northamptonshire Landscape, p. 128. 3 op. cit., p. 186. 4 op. cit., pp. 30, 33.
Roade on the London and Birmingham Railway and the long high embankments made on the Great Central to keep its ruling gradients down to 1 in 176; to the drag-lines that remove 1,600 tons of oversoil in an hour; to the new town of Corby contrasted with the 19th-century railway town at New England, Peterborough; and to the eerie loneliness of deserted airfields and the smooth undulations of the motorways where, for example, 384 species of plants are colonising the slopes and verges of the M1 and even foxes and badgers are establishing themselves on its embankments.

These are but a few of the fascinating things of which this book is full. Its conclusions are firmly based on the very latest research, of which Mr. Steane has a commanding knowledge and to which he constantly refers the reader. Any book of this scope is bound to suffer from occasional errors but I have noted only one mistake and that is on page 267, where Mr. Steane refers to the “Great Northern line over the river Ouse at Brackley” when he should have written Great Central.

There is an excellent series of photographs ranging from the Roman bridge at Aldwinckle to Wallis & Linnell’s factory at Brigstock, and a number of diagrams and plans in the text. Altogether this book is a unique and fascinating addition to the literature of Northamptonshire and I imagine that no reader of this journal would willingly be without it.

Department of Latin, University of Manchester.

NORMAN MARLOW.

OBITUARY

Mrs. Philippa Mary Mendes-Da Costa

We regret to record the death in London on August 25th of Mrs. Philippa Mary Mendes-Da Costa (née Brudenell). She had been a member of the Society since 1953, and served for some years on the Council. She was a close friend of the late Miss Joan Wake.

Mr. John Waters

The very sudden death in April of John Waters, a member of the Council, and who had been the Honorary Auditor to the Society from 1941-1965, has caused great sadness to all his friends in the Society and to a wide circle of friends throughout the County.

Coming so soon after the death of his wife, whom he had nursed for years with a great and selfless care in spite of his own illness, made it doubly tragic.

All who knew him came to admire his immense devotion and to feel equally grateful that he always had time to spare with kindly help and advice, and with great generosity, those he felt were also in need.

During all these years, and indeed, up to the time of his death, as a member of the Society Council and at committee meetings, his quick smile and shrewd comments which went straight to the heart of the matter, made him invaluable.

The Society members, and indeed all of us who were privileged to be his friends, would wish to offer their warmest sympathy to his daughter and her family.

R. J. KITCHIN.
As night was falling last December
the saffron sky turned aniline grey
the field grasses faded sepias
melted into vandyke brown shadows
as night was closing round that Sunday
pulling the yew trees nearer the church.

We moved, one fragmented animal,
legs and arms, bobbing heads and bodies
drawing together in unity
against the vast landscape around us,
our bright clothes washed grey by failing sun,
darkening in the shadowed yew trees.

We pushed through their scurf scaled arms
rough ring,
ignored their small red succulent dots
dwindled warning stops before the porch.
We came in from wide fields with clayed boots,
had tramped far crests of woodland,
broken hedges, jumped ditches to come.

We had left behind the tarmacked road,
the hushing sound as distant cars passed.
We were in an empty wilderness.
Ploughmen and cow herds were back home
now;
distant rattle of pails; milking time;
night closing down the great blinds of clouds.

At first on opening the oak door,
past the open wire bird barrier,
we trod on owls’ droppings, straw nest falls.
We saw nothing in the sudden dark,
only smelled the cold oolitic air
bearing memories of ancient seas.

The oceanic darkness washed us,
familiarity cleared our eyes,
we saw the windows first: lighter shades;
ogeed greys on black, rose traceries;
colours dimly brown and indigo
hinting at once brilliant mozaics.

we moved further in but were pushed back
by giant forms filling nave and aisle.
Our groping fingers felt cool marble,
silken as water, taking shape now,
as white figures crowded emptiness
hundreds of men, women and children.

Here a weeping girl held a pillar,
er long marble drapes sweeping the flags.
Here a man and woman stretched their hands
in hopeless never touching longing.
Here a child held out a stone basket,
here a baby lay in swaddling clothes.

Our fingers felt along the cold walls.
We found the brass nipple, switched the light,
to flood the curious scene clearly.
No light came. Only the flapping bat,
the squeaking mouse, grasses sighed between
the windy flags as draughts blew in.

A stain glass piece fell to a black smash.
The white figures dimly stretched as far
as the altar steps. Filled the whole church.
No room for living worshippers here.
The church crumbled round the sightless eyes
of those who’d loved and paid to stay here.

We left reluctantly in silence
The bell hung in the rotting belfry
its tongue still as ours. Rain spattered us.
Spurred us back to safe warm smelling cars
Through warm wide open fields to home to
‘Songs of praise’ with television teas.

MISS JOAN WAKE

It should be explained that in this very informal tribute of respect and affection most of the quotations have, perforce, to be from memory.

I first met Miss Wake when she was well over sixty, and I never saw her at Courteenhall, so that my knowledge of her was partial and inadequate. None the less, she was a personality so remarkable as to enter into legend in her lifetime, and certain characteristics of her personality, and of the legend, I was privileged to witness over more than twenty years of friendship.

The legend was sedulously and delightfully cultivated. She made one believe that she was a brigand—how could one descended from so many Hereward Wakes be otherwise?—a schemer, even something of a witch: 'I'm off on my broomstick to Rhodesia' she wrote to me not so many years ago. She hid her own fund of kindness on occasions. I once witnessed a meeting between her and the late Helen Cam, who explained that she had succeeded in escaping from her garden to hear a historical lecture. 'You haven't taken to gardening!'—That's almost as bad as taking to good works', as if she herself had not committed that misdemeanour many years before. Yet she had all the qualities of the legend in some measure, and many more. In my early meetings with her she was the General Editor, I the contributor to her series, to be charmed, cajoled, and bullied for the task in hand; and I quickly learned appreciation, delight and awe for the artillery she commanded, nor did I fail to learn from service in her regiment much that has been useful to me since I myself became a general editor.

Her quality as editor, by the time I knew her, depended in considerable measure on her quality as scholar. Naturally her historical interests had very deep roots in the soil of Northamptonshire—when she used the phrase 'foreign intellectual' it meant anyone who had the misfortune to be born a few miles the wrong side of the county boundary. She was quick to forgive the ignorance of one born as far away as Cambridge. I once mispronounced Pytchley in her presence, and she mopped her brow; then told me a tale of Sir Frank and Lady Stenton in their early married life; of how they were bicycling in the county and came to a signpost—'That is the way to Pitchley' said she—'You mustn't call it that!' he replied, 'If Miss Wake heard you call it that, she would vomit'. I tried to rally by asking if the Pytchley had been her hunt. 'No', said Miss Wake, 'the Grafton was my hunt. The two most exciting things I've done in my life are finding twelfth century charters and hunting. I don't know which was the more exciting. Hunting, I think'.

The volume of facsimiles which revealed the charters she had hunted to the kill owed much, of course, to Sir Frank Stenton's editorial skill; yet the volume, and the whole series, is also a monument to Joan Wake, not only to her drive and enthusiasm, but to her gifts as a scholar. For she was a true local historian, in that she not only understood her own fields and hedges, but saw their relevance and interest in a wider vista; and so her own work shows how a local study can grow into a major contribution to social history. This is true especially perhaps of her book on the Brudenells, but also in its way of her last book, Dan: Eaton's letters—published in her late eighties amid many difficulties (partly of her own making) triumphantly surmounted with the help of many friends who loyally joined her flag for the last campaign.

When she retired from her position as Honorary Secretary of the Record Society in 1963, she wrote characteristically, 'Of course NRS has been enormous fun from start to finish—but what gives me real solid satisfaction is the thought that it may have really been of some use to English history . . .?'. That satisfaction, and much more, she had certainly earned; for not only are the Society, and the Record Office, and Delapré, in great measure monuments to her inspiration, initiative and hard work, but she deeply influenced local history and the movement to preserve local records far beyond the boundaries of Northamptonshire.

Westfield College, University of London.

CHRISTOPHER BROOKE.
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