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All contributions must be provided in hard copy and in electronic format on a CD or as an attachment to an email, preferably in Word.doc. Please use the existing house style of NP&P. Normally, the maximum length is 6,500 to 7,000 words. Shorter articles and small news items are also welcome. Draft texts may be sent for discussion. 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 TIFF, preferably with a resolution of at least 300 dpi.
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All communications regarding articles in this and future issues
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Northamptonshire Record Society,
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NOTES AND NEWS

At the AGM in May, the Chairman, Mr C.G.V. Davidge, referred to the outstanding work of Canon Geoffrey Carnell who had been a member since 1966, and a council member from 1975 to 2011. Acting as running mate to Sir Hereward Wake and, as Speaker Secretary between 1972 and 1995, Canon Carnell had brought a series of eminent nationally-known speakers to address the Society, among them Max Hastings; The Rt Hon Norman St John Stevas; Sir Philip Magnus; Victor Hatley; Owen Chadwick; Gervase Jackson-Stops; and the current President, Lady Juliet Townsend. In recognition of this service, the council had agreed to recommend that he be made an Honorary Life Member of the Society. This was supported unanimously and Canon Carnell replied accordingly.

* * * * *

Jacqui Minchinton, Library Committee Chairman, greeting members at the Library Open Morning to view a Photographic Exhibition reflecting a History of the Society held on 15 October 2011. It is hoped to arrange similar events in the future.

* * * * *

From Martin Marix Evans we have received the following on Naseby: Since 2008 it has been possible to visit the scene of the decisive battle of the English Civil War at Naseby and follow the events of that fateful day independently, using the Battlefield Trail described and mapped in a leaflet or downloaded from the www.naseby.com website. In 2011 that trail was augmented, through the generosity of the landowners, by opening up the western
flank of the battlefield with a permissive footpath. The next possible development, given the success of the application for outline planning permission, is the drive to fund and build a visitor centre. The task so far has taken 12 years. Early in 2008 land was acquired by a private group of supporters with a view to selling it to the charity for a visitor centre. Feasibility studies have now been completed for a Living History Centre which will act as the visitor facility, and funds are being sought. The Centre is planned as a group of buildings inspired by seventeenth-century examples, each to be a gallery devoted to a specific topic. They are:

- The Great Hall – based on Naseby tithe barn, to provide an auditorium, a cafeteria, offices, toilets and reception area.
- The Naseby Battlefield Gallery – the campaign and the battle, including the evidence: contemporary writings, archaeological finds and terrain analysis.
- The Royal Armouries Gallery – arms, armour, armies and tactics of the seventeenth century.
- The People, Politics and Religion Gallery – The Stuart kingdoms, Parliament and religion, leading to political reform, religious toleration, the role of women and the impact of the new mass media in literature and propaganda.
- The Care and Healing in the Seventeenth Century Gallery – medicine and nursing in peace and war; healthcare in village life and animal welfare.
- The Craft, Countryside and Wildlife Gallery – Landscape, agriculture and stock-breeding and associated crafts and wildlife in the seventeenth century and today.
- The Study and Resources Centre – the Library, with remote and real access, seminar rooms, visitor re-enactment facilities.

As usual I would like to thank the authors and reviewers for the excellent material, and David Hall and David Harries for their support. Remember to consult the website for the latest about the Society: www.northamptonshirerecordsociety.org.uk.

Barbara Hornby

Notes on Contributors

Omitted from last year’s biographies of the authors was one for Margaret Hawkins who wrote the article entitled ‘The Impact of the Grand Junction Canal on Four Northamptonshire Villages 1793-1850’: Margaret Hawkins worked for many years as a librarian in Northamptonshire and elsewhere. She undertook an MA in English Local History at the University of Leicester as a retirement hobby. For her dissertation, she looked into the relationship between the Grand Junction Canal and some of the communities it passed through. This article is based on that work.

Ian Addis was born, raised and educated in Kettering. He taught for over 30 years in local schools. After almost 20 years as a headteacher, he joined the staff of the School of Education at the University of Northampton. He has written several books for use in primary schools and a number of publications related to his two great interests – literature and sport. His latest project researching Kettering’s parks and playing fields unearthed numerous previously unpublished personalities, most notably William Cattell. ianaddis@btinternet.com

Douglas Arden is a criminal lawyer with an abiding interest in fourteenth-century Northamptonshire, especially in a cluster of military families holding lands in Spratton, Holdenby and Brixworth.

Rosie Garwood, after a career teaching History at a Sixth Form college in Cambridge, decided to change direction by studying for a Masters degree in The Country House: Art,
History and Literature at the University of Leicester. This article is based on her dissertation. Rosie is planning to continue her research by embarking on a PhD. rosie.garwood@ntlworld.com

R.L. Greenall first came to work in Northamptonshire in 1965 as resident tutor in Northampton for the University of Leicester’s Department of Adult Education. He has since lectured and written extensively on the history of the county. For 26 years he was successively editor of this journal and general editor of the Society’s main series volumes. He is presently working on a history of Chartism in Northamptonshire. ron_g@tiscali.co.uk

Mark Rothery is Lecturer in Modern British History at the University of Northampton. He was previously a Lecturer in History at the University of Exeter. He has published numerous scholarly articles on the history of English landed society and recently published a major monograph, ‘Man’s Estate: Landed Gentry Masculinities 1660–1900’ (Oxford, 2012), which he co-authored with Professor Henry French. He is currently working on an AHRC project entitled ‘Consumption and the Country House’ with Professor Jon Stobart. Mark.Rothery@northampton.ac.uk

Jon Stobart is Professor of Social History at the University of Northampton. His research interests centre on leisure and consumption in 18th-century England, and he has published widely on retailing, shopping, the second-hand trade, and the cultural infrastructure of English towns. He has just published a major book: ‘Sugar and Spice. Grocers and Groceries in Provincial England, 1650–1830’ (Oxford, 2012). He is currently working with Dr Mark Rothery on an AHRC project which explores the consumption practices of provincial elites. jon.stobart@northampton.ac.uk

Stephen Swailes is from Wellingborough and has completed a range of local history projects. He is currently based at the University of Huddersfield. s.swailes@btinternet.com

Sylvia Thompson continues with the 1830s theme in last year’s paper on the Swing Riots by now looking at the 1836 Royal Commission questionnaire on policing. She maintains that what makes the 1830s so exciting is that major events in this decade were the catalyst for the social, economic and political changes that we take for granted today. sylvia.thompson@norbert-dentressangle.com
The Spratton Livery Collar of SS: the Earliest Example of a Prime Lancastrian Honour

DOUGLAS ARDEN

The Derbyshire alabaster effigy of an armed knight in St Andrew’s church at Spratton in Northamptonshire represents late medieval funerary sculpture of the highest quality. Generally identified as a memorial to Sir John Swinford installed in 1371,¹ this figure is of national interest well beyond its considerable local importance. (Figure 1) Among the knight’s attributes is a livery collar of linked ‘esses’ or SS, the medieval symbol of Lancastrian affinity, which survives in the twenty-first century as chains of authority worn by heralds, Lords Chief Justice, and officers of State.

This paper questions conventional dating of the edifice, but affirms that the sculpted representation of a Lancastrian collar worn by the Spratton knight remains the earliest existing physical example of the accoutrement. Relevant considerations are the identity of the knight, his entitlement to display this form of livery collar, and the actual date of the monument with its peculiar remaining heraldry.

Dating the Spratton edifice

Since the late nineteenth century, the date of 1371 for the Spratton effigy has been regarded as secure, giving its collar substantial primacy in time, and trumping all others by several decades. (Figure 2) As detailed below, a new study of local knightly families during the latter half of the fourteenth century suggests that the Spratton effigy is unlikely to have been commissioned before 1385, but precedence can nevertheless be claimed for the knight’s

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¹ The date of 1371 was proposed by the antiquarian Albert Hartshorne in his Recumbent Monumental Effigies in Northamptonshire (1876) at p.133, and has been followed without question by most writers on the subject.
livery collar. Doubt obscures its only rival, a collar once depicted in a group of armorial windows lost in the Great Fire of 1666, but recorded in a herald’s careful drawing.

The lost Collar of SS in Old St Paul’s Cathedral
As the historian Ian Mortimer notes, the French king in 1378 granted his chamberlain a collar adorned with broom-pods, the first written reference to any sort of livery collar. English civil and ecclesiastic garments bore the letter ‘S’ single and doubled in the early fourteenth century, but no clear description of a collar of SS is found before 1391, as discussed below. Identification of the earliest example or visual rendering is a different enquiry, and the Spratton collar seems to predate any other, with a single possible exception.

The SS motif’s Lancastrian significance is confirmed in a drawing by Nicholas Charles, Lancaster Herald, of an assemblage of armorial windows in Old St Paul’s cathedral, one panel of which shows John of Gaunt’s arms impaling those of his first wife Blanche of Lancaster, encircled by a buckling collar which bears five single letters ‘S’. The herald’s note describes these windows as mounted in a chapel opposite the monument of John duke of Lancaster, an intricate Gothic construction in a chantry dedicated to Gaunt and Blanche, in which their effigies reclined under a huge canopy. The 13-year-old Blanche married her cousin Gaunt at Reading abbey on 20 May 1359, and having borne five children in nine years, she was just 22 years old when she died in 1368.

Gaunt’s manifest affection for his lost love Blanche was never displaced in the course of two subsequent marriages. In 1372 he wed Constanza, elder daughter of the murdered king Pedro of Castile, by her right claimed the succession, and in pursuit of that throne campaigned on the Iberian peninsula from 1386 to 1389. Evidently untroubled about inflicting public indignity upon Constanza, or his sometime mistress and eventual third wife Katherine de Röet, Gaunt was disdained by some as ‘the great fornicator’, who fathered 11 natural children, but he remained devoted to Blanche’s memory. When he died in 1399, his express desire to be buried at her side was honoured by their son Henry IV, after seizing the English throne in the summer of that year.

Chapel and Chantry
Pre-Reformation ecclesiastical practice allowed for a chantry to be established within an existing chapel. It has been suggested that John of Gaunt’s chantry might have been installed in a chapel which had been a part of Old St Paul’s fabric long before Gaunt’s death in 1399, and already incorporated a window honouring his marriage to Blanche. If this armorial glass could be dated prior to her death in 1368, or within a decade or so afterward, the Lancastrian collar enclosing their marital arms would certainly qualify as the earliest image of such an accoutrement to have survived. (Figure 3)

4 Both persons were fourth in two lines of descent from Henry III. Their only son was the future Henry IV.
An early date for the Gaunt-Blanche panel is supported by the rudimentary form of the collar, with just five widely spaced ‘esses’, in contrast to the close-set sequence of letters on later examples. It also appears significant that unlike the classic livery collar, this object is not mere decorative insignia but is instead a buckling collar, a functional item securing armour to the upper body. Regrettably, and fatally to precedent status for the collar depicted in the lost window, the letters patent endowing Gaunt’s chantry, dated for 1402-3, describe the chapel containing that foundation as ‘newly built’.

Livery Collars in the records
Development of the various forms of livery collar has been described in detail by C.E.J. Smith, who notes that the earliest description of a livery collar bearing the SS motif appears in an account rendered in 1391 by the future Henry IV’s wardrobe master:

…one gold collar for lord Henry of Lancaster, Earl of Derby, with 17 letters of S. in the manner of feathers… with a swan in the tiret.5

In 1394, Richard II confirmed before Parliament that in 1389 he had removed a livery collar from the neck of his uncle John of Gaunt and hung it around his own.6 The Duke had just returned from three years overseas pursuing his claim to the Castilian throne, and probably acquired this collar prior to departing in 1386. Livery collars displaying the SS motif occur with increasing regularity thereafter, and while the king’s statement does not expressly support him, Mortimer suggests on eminently reasonable grounds that the object appropriated from Gaunt was probably… composed of a series of esses.7

The Year of Sir John Swinford’s death
The Northamptonshire antiquarian Albert Hartshorne was convinced that the Spratton effigy represented Sir John Swinford, and assigned both his date of death and the effigy to 1371.8 The jury at Swinford’s inquisition post mortem at Northampton in February 1372,9 returned that he had died on a Thursday, on the feast of St Stephen in 44 Edward III, corresponding to 26 December 1370, a precise date reinforced by the fact that this feast fell on Wednesday in 1369, Thursday in 1370, and Friday in 1371.10 The discrepancy is trivial,

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7 Mortimer, op. cit., p.384.
8 Hartshorne was not alone in his error. George Baker in The History and Antiquities of Northamptonshire, v.1, p.67 mistakenly assigns Swinford’s death to 1372, the year of his belated inquisition post mortem.
9 TNA, C135/229, m.57 (No.11), an entry summarized in Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem, v.13, p.174.
and construction of the Spratton tomb in 1371 is by no means impossible. However, as a practical matter considerable delay must nearly always have intervened between the subject’s death and dedication of a funerary effigy, while for the Spratton example the evidence excludes a date earlier than 1385, as discussed below.

The Heraldry at Spratton
Of two altar tombs in Spratton church, one is said to have borne a wooden effigy, now lost and unrecorded. The other tomb-chest supports an effigy, and bears three shields on each side, carved in relief within reversed trefoils. (Figure 4) Painted arms are still faintly discernible on four of the carved shields, one almost certainly the coat borne by John Swinford, and two assumed to represent the Spratton Ardernes, while a second Swinford coat is painted on the east end of the tomb-chest. Retouching is possible, and the surviving tinctures might not be 600-year old original pigments, but a convincing piece of evidence indicates that the heraldry itself is unchanged.

A shield on the south side still bears Sable, a lion rampant Argent, recently identified as the coat of the Northamptonshire knight John Verdon of Brixworth. In October 1337, Thomas Arderne III of Spratton had mustered for the king’s army with his near neighbour Verdon, and his elder son Thomas IV would subsequently marry Sir John’s daughter Joan. Forgotten for centuries, this marriage was rediscovered in 2007 in a pedigree entered on a plea roll, and the couple had a daughter Joan, who married Sir John Swinford about 1357. Recovery of the Arderne–Verdon alliance, and recognition of a Verdon shield on the Spratton tomb, with those of Arderne and Swinford, suggests the effigy was intended for a member of one of the latter two families, but as discussed below a later exigency may have required the edifice to represent both.

In the 1830s, the county historian George Baker noted tinctures on the Spratton tomb-

11 The coat of this Verdon family is noted in Dictionary of British Arms, vol.1, p.122.
13 TNA, CP 40/787, m.462 names Joan, daughter of Sir John Verdon, as wife of Thomas Arderne (IV) of Spratton.
chest shields now partly erased, which are unrecorded variants for these families. The Swinford coat was Argent, on a fess Gules a boar statant Sable, and that for Arderne was Ermine, a fess counter-compony Or and Gules. The Warwickshire Ardernes of Parkhall bore Ermine, a fess counter-compony Or and Azure, the coat inherited by Sir Thomas Arderne II of Spratton (d.1316) eldest son of Sir Thomas Arderne (d.1297), head of the Parkhall line but known as ‘of Hanwell’. If the arms at Spratton with a fess tincture varied from Azure to Gules are indeed those of the Spratton Ardernes, the new form must have been adopted by Thomas III (d.1361) or his son Thomas IV (d.1370).

The Spratton effigy’s crest
A lion crouches at the feet of the Spratton effigy (Figure 5) but the knight’s crest set upon a tilting helm is a boar’s head couped. Since the mid-1300s, the Parkhall Ardernes of Warwickshire and all their descendants have borne their crest of a boar statant on a chapeau, but for that family the beast is always entire, never a decapitated head as in the Spratton example. Although not authorities, Fairbairn’s Crests and Burke’s General Armory canvassed many sources, but each found only one crest for Swinford, borne in Huntingdonshire in the rather odd shape of …A weaver’s shuttle threaded proper…

The Parliamentary Roll of Arms c.1310–12 assigns the arms Argent, three boar’s heads couped Gules to Sir John Swinford of Huntingdonshire. This pedigree is unstudied, but John appears to be second in four generations of his name in Huntingdonshire and Essex. His grandson John IV was a minor in 1346 when deprived of his inheritance, but would restore his fortunes by marrying Joan Arderne of Spratton. These Swinfords bore arms by ancient right, but adopting a crest, which implies tournament rank, was a potentially expensive upgrade in status uncommon among middling gentry before the sixteenth century. The arms of the Huntingdonshire Swinfords are faintly echoed at Spratton on shields for John Swinford displaying Argent, on a fess Gules a boar statant Sable. Should the boar’s head crest on the Spratton helm also belong to him, John presumably made this choice unaware or regardless of his one available ancestral precedent.

Military service 1356–1370
The Gascon roll of 8 February 1356 notes the issue of a protection writ for Sir Thomas Arderne IV, gone with Sir Thomas Felton in the Black Prince’s expedition, which would

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14 Burke's General Armory, p.991; Index to Fairbairn's Crests of the Families of Great Britain and Ireland, p.464.
16 CIPM, v.8, p.307, No.423; v.9, pp.143–4, No.134; v.15, p.275, No.672: CCLR 1330–33, p.511. These Swinfords held mesne tenancies in Huntingdonshire at Little Stukeley of the Abbot of Ramsay, and Hemingford Turberville. Until betrayed by a treacherous aunt who was their guardian, John and his brother Thomas were heirs expectant to lands held of the king in chief, at Brendehall in Bumsted ad turrim, Little Chishall, and Gernouns, all in Essex.
17 Sable (black) on Gules (red) breaches the heraldic Rule of Tincture which forbids placing a colour upon a colour, but the Sable boar could easily result from oxidization of a pigment intended to represent Argent (silver).
culminate in the English victory at Poitiers in September of that year. In April 1367, Thomas IV served in the coalition led by the Black Prince, seconded by John of Gaunt, when the Castilian usurper’s army was crushed at Nàjera. In January 1369, protection writs issued for the English force raised against new French intrusions into Ponthieu, and one block for the Earl of Pembroke’s war retinue includes Thomas IV, followed by a first notice of military service by his son-in-law John Swinford. During 1369-70, John of Gaunt held a discretionary command operating from Aquitaine and Gascony, leading detachments of seasoned cavalrmen such as Arderne, whose son-in-law Swinford was now riding with him. In February 1370, fresh protection writs were issued to Thomas de Arderne miles and Johannes de Swyneford, in terms which confirm they were still serving in south-west France, in the campaign begun the previous year.

Earning a Lancastrian collar
Accordingly, Arderne and Swinford twice soldiered together overseas in the company of John of Gaunt, and while neither man is recorded as distinguishing himself in the field, their relatives must have been aware of their service in the Duke’s command. On that ground alone, the sponsor of the Spratton tomb would have been justified in equipping the effigy with a Lancastrian collar. The record suggests that both Arderne and his son-in-law Swinford belong to a broad category postulated by Pauline Routh, to which she would assign another Lancastrian veteran Sir Robert Waterton, whose effigy at Methley in Yorkshire bears a collar of SS alternating with crowns:

Possibly this merely signifies his long service to the House of Lancaster without representing an actual collar...

In sharp contrast, the image of a livery collar granted to an individual for personal merit survives at Dodford in Northamptonshire, among the accoutrements of an armed effigy of Sir John Cressy (d.1444). As a field commander and later as Captain of Lisieux, Orbes, and Pont l’Eveque, he served three Lancastrian kings with honour, and received his livery collar

18 Rymer’s Foedera, v. III, pt.1, pp.323, 325-6. Given their respective ages in 1356, this is almost certainly Thomas IV rather than his father Thomas III, who served with the Earl of Northampton in 1337, and died in 1362.
19 Arderne’s attorneys raised his protection writ against a complaint by the Earl of Warwick: CClR 1367-70, p.374.
21 Ibid., p.888. The same block of writs mentions Henry viel de Swyneford, unidentified but possibly John’s uncle.
22 Pauline Routh, Medieval Effigial Alabaster Tombs in Yorkshire, p.250.
of SS from Henry VI as a particular mark of approval. *(Figure 6)*

*Did the Spratton knight serve as a hangman?*

The Spratton collar is secured by a cord, terminating in a structure regularly described as ‘a hangman’s knot’. Kenneth Branagh’s splendid 1989 film version of Shakespeare’s play *Henry V* includes a scene in which Bardoloph is hanged for stealing church silver by no less a person than Thomas duke of Exeter.²³ It has been suggested that the peculiar knot on his livery collar recalls some comparable service as hangman performed by the Spratton knight, but close examination casts doubt on this fantasy, as lacking any trace of a loop the Spratton appendage is incapable of functioning as the fatal slip-knot.

*Elizabeth Swinford*

Sir John Swinford’s marriage to Joan, only child of Sir Thomas Arderne IV of Spratton and his wife Joan Verdon, produced a daughter Elizabeth in 1358, who was just seven years old and in wardship in January 1366, when her guardian John Osbern began legal proceedings in her name.²⁴ The writ in *formedon* laid claim to the manor of Drayton in Oxfordshire, held by the descendants of Sir Robert Arderne (d.1331) a younger branch of the Warwickshire family. Elizabeth’s statement of claim adduced a pedigree naming four generations of Sir Thomas Ardernes, holding in Spratton and Holdenby, where the last three had settled.²⁵ In 1368 the case was adjourned for an enquiry, but Elizabeth’s mother died in that year, while in 1370 her father and grandfather died within months of each other, leaving her as a 12-year-old orphan with an attractive dowry, and now she was launched upon what would become a busy matrimonial career. *(Figure 7)*

*Elizabeth’s three husbands: (1) Sir Thomas Broughton*

By Easter 1371, just three months after her father’s death, Elizabeth’s guardian Osbern had married her off to Sir Thomas Broughton, a widower in his fifties with two married daughters.²⁶ Frequently a knight of the shire for Oxford, Broughton held some lands in Buckinghamshire, and three full knight’s fees of the Duke of Lancaster in Oxfordshire, including North Newington and Broughton. He was certainly aware of Elizabeth’s claim for Drayton in his home county, but unlike her guardian and her two later husbands he showed no interest whatsoever in pursuing the case. The marriage was childless, and by 1374 Sir Thomas lay with his ancestors in Broughton church, where an effigy believed to be in his memory has been placed on an altar tomb bearing the Fiennes arms.²⁷

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²³ Merely foreshadowed in the play in Act 3, at Scene 6, lines 100-115, Bardolph’s death is depicted in the film.

²⁴ TNA, CP 40/253, m.52.

²⁵ The first was Sir Thomas Arderne (d.1297), called of Hanwell, but head of the Warwickshire line at Parkhall.

²⁶ TNA, C135/229, m.57 (No.11).

²⁷ Bodleian Library, ‘Bradford Papers’, MS notes by D.T. Powell and C.F. Wyatt. The tomb chest is thought to be a century later than the effigy.
(2) William Abberbury
Elizabeth was 15 years old in 1374, when she was party to a settlement by fine with her second husband William Abberbury, a surname derived from the vill of Adderbury. Unlike her first husband, William was keen to pursue his new wife’s claim for Drayton, joining her as co-plaintiff on the hearing of fresh proceedings in 1375, but once again no order issued and the case was adjourned sine die. Aside from this disappointment, the landless William Abberbury acquired landed substance by marriage to Elizabeth, which would last ten years and produce a daughter, but he had died by 1385 when the Spratton and Holdenby estates were in the hands of his successor.

(3) Roger de la Chambre
In 1385, Elizabeth and her third husband Roger de la Chambre presented an incumbent to the living of Holdenby. Having a daughter Alice Abberbury by her second husband, Elizabeth now bore Roger two sons, Thomas and John, both of whom were brought up as men-at-arms and would serve abroad with their father. Sheriff of Northamptonshire in 1383, 1385, and 1388, Roger de la Chambre was an active politician, often appointed a knight of the shire between 1384 and 1395. Immediately upon their marriage, he prompted his wife to reinstate her claim for Drayton, unsuccessfully litigated in 1366–8 and 1375, and he joined her as co-plaintiff in 1389, when this claim failed yet again.

The death of his wife Elizabeth in 1395 coincides with the abrupt and unexplained end to Roger’s burgeoning career as a royal official and parliamentarian. However, he was born to the military caste, and years later would follow his king to a foreign battlefield, despite advancing age. Together with his sons Thomas and John, Roger de la Chambre is named in muster rolls of Henry V’s knights and men-at-arms for Agincourt in 1415, but he disappears from the record thereafter, and may not have survived the battle. He was certainly dead by 1428, when his eldest son Thomas was returned as mesne tenant of the entire vill of Spratton, holding both the former Arderne manor and one other, which had been held for several centuries by the Roys family.

An armorial tomb as legal propaganda
Elizabeth Swinford’s sole claim to Drayton lay in her descent from Sir Thomas Arderne of Hanwell, through his eldest son Sir Thomas Arderne II who had settled at Spratton, and two more generations of Thomases, the last her maternal grandfather. All hearings of her case were at Oxford, before judges who were strangers to Northamptonshire, and every scrap of evidence emphasizing Elizabeth’s lineage would be indispensable.

A semi-public edifice, the Spratton tomb was readily accessible to substantial villagers for whom recognition of heraldic seals on documents would routinely compensate for illiteracy. Their sworn evidence of her descent as manifested on the tomb–chest shields, perhaps supported by the incumbent of nearby Holdenby, where Elizabeth was patron of the living, would strengthen her claim. As sole survivor of the Spratton Ardernes, she was unacknowledged heir to a senior descent of the Parkhall Ardernes of Warwickshire, and as such held a good claim to the manor of Drayton.

28 John Bridges, History of Northamptonshire, v.1, p.464. This was Adderbury in Oxfordshire.
29 TNA, CP 40/191, m.46.
32 TNA, CP 40/514, m.139d. The defendants here were Louis and William Greville (Gryvel) and their wives, the daughters and heirs of Giles Arderne II.
34 Feudal Aids, v.4, p.37.
35 Her case appears to have been sound, and its repeated rejection a miscarriage of the English law of succession.
Who installed the Spratton effigy?
Elizabeth’s estate passed through the hands of successive husbands, and she was never in a position herself to pay for a monument to her father or grandfather. Common to her last two husbands William Abberbury and Roger de la Chambre was their evident enthusiasm for her claim to Drayton, a prosperous manor of one full knight’s fee. Each of them stood to benefit as joint plaintiffs if the claim was successful, and both ensured that proceedings were renewed soon after they married Elizabeth.

Improbable patrons: Broughton and Abberbury
Elizabeth’s first husband Sir Thomas Broughton held broad estates, and he might easily have underwritten the Spratton monument, but he had no incentive to memorialize his wife’s forebears, and was clearly indifferent to her claim for Drayton, which remained dormant throughout their brief marriage. Already in late middle age and lacking a male heir, Sir Thomas is likely to have been preoccupied by his own monument in Broughton church, which he probably commissioned himself. Shards of an armorial window once displaying Broughton’s arms survive at Spratton, but they are not among the surviving coats on the tomb-chest, a reasonable expectation if he had paid for that structure. By his marriage to Elizabeth, her second husband William Abberbury gained control of his wife’s estate, but he came to her landless and never held an official position, so that the formidable expense of the Spratton tomb was undoubtedly beyond him.

The Likely Sponsor: Roger de la Chambre
Before and after their marriage, Elizabeth’s third husband Roger de la Chambre served repeatedly as an MP and sheriff of Northamptonshire, political activities which would have allowed him to accumulate wealth by way of fees, bribes, and other gratuities. Of Elizabeth’s spouses, only Roger combined a manifest interest in his wife’s claim for the manor of Drayton, with the means to finance an expensive tomb in support of the case.

Who is the Spratton knight?
After some 600 years, no decisive identification is ever likely to emerge, but the original tomb contractor was probably instructed to provide an effigy representing either John Swinford or his father-in-law Thomas Arderne. The letters *I*S* engraved three times on the Spratton effigy’s belt have long been assumed, not unreasonably, to identify the soldier as John Swinford. However, there are also compelling grounds for an argument that these are not personal initials after all, but rather a pious call for the protection of Jesu Salvator. Invocations of divinities and saints on behalf of an owner in harm’s way are surprisingly common on fourteenth-century military equipment.

The ambiguous evidence does not exclude a variety of interpretations of the surviving heraldry on the tomb. By its nature, a funerary effigy represents a single individual, but it is possible that the function of the Spratton figure was changed and extended after its installation. The sponsor, while doubtless keen to advance Elizabeth’s claim, may have balked at providing tombs for both her immediate forebears. Instead, heraldry seems to have been applied to change a single edifice into a joint memorial to John Swinford and Thomas Arderne IV, both vital links in Elizabeth’s descent from the Parkhall Ardernes.

A competing theory
The Spratton effigy’s armour is a fully developed example of the late Camail and Jupon style (c.1360-1420) and the livery collar of SS is the mature form which survives today, unlike the primitive specimen in the lost window at Old St Paul’s. On those grounds, it has been suggested that the figure was installed during Henry V’s reign, in 1415 or even later. The present writer is unconvinced, but the theory is not without merit.
It is very odd that no surviving shield on the Spratton tomb-chest bears the Chambre coat Gules, a chevron between three pierced cinquefoils Or, although a blank shield on the south side of the edifice must once have displayed painted arms. In any event, the dissenting theory argues that the arms Ermine, a fess counter-compony Or and Gules appearing three times on the north side do not represent the Spratton Ardernes, but are instead a new coat adopted by Roger de la Chambre or his son Thomas.

The Chambres knew that Elizabeth’s death in 1395 had extinguished both the Ardernes and Swinfords of Spratton, leaving her sons by Roger de la Chambre as representatives of all three families, and they may have felt entitled to bear arms reflecting the Arderne element in their lineage. In 1580, the herald Robert Glover discovered among College of Arms archives an old claim by ‘Chamber’ to the arms Ermine, a fess compony Or and Azure, borne by the Parkhall Ardernes of Warwickshire from at least as early as 1279. It would seem that either Roger or his son Thomas approached a herald for permission to bear Arderne arms, possibly in a mistaken belief that the entire family was extinct.

Disappointed in their claim because the Parkhall Ardernes were still flourishing, it has been proposed that the Chambres settled for a similar coat, with the fess varied from Or and Azure to Or and Gules, and applied examples to the Spratton tomb-chest, although there are objections to such a scenario.

The Swinford coat undoubtedly belongs in this armorial group, as does that of Verdon, both by intermarriage with the Spratton Ardernes. However, expunging the Arderne arms in favour of a freshly-minted Chambre coat distorts the relationships of these families, leaving a clumsy hiatus in the tomb-chest heraldry as a recital of the recent Chambre ancestry. A far more radical version of this theory would circumvent any such obstacle by having Thomas de la Chambre commission the Spratton monument in or after 1415, to memorialize his father Roger, a fellow veteran of Agincourt, at the same time adorning the monument with a display of his family’s new arms.

The hidden meaning of the Lancastrian SS or ‘esses’
The word soverayne (sovereign) has been offered as a plausible interpretation of the SS cipher. However, livery collars so embellished appear in the record early in Richard II’s reign, and as Ian Mortimer observes, use of that Anglo-French word as a motto by any of his subjects would be seen as treasonable, especially by that self-obsessed monarch. Mortimer suggests that the ‘esses’ refer to souveignez from the phrase souveignez vous de moi, ‘remember me’, known to have been a Lancastrian motto and which may even preserve dying words of Blanche of Lancaster, beloved first wife of John of Gaunt and mother of Henry IV. Mourned by her family and Lancastrian descendants long after her early death, Blanche was joined by Gaunt in 1399 in their impressive tomb in Old St Paul’s, where they lay together until the cathedral burned in 1666. (Figure 8)

An Amended Date for the Spratton Effigy and its Livery Collar
Installation of the Spratton effigy by Thomas de la Chambre does seem unlikely, but is nevertheless an interesting possibility. Otherwise, his father Roger was the only person with a demonstrated interest in Elizabeth’s claim for Drayton, who had the resources to finance

36 It appears significant that the surviving arms on that side of the tomb-chest are those of Verdon and Swinford, both intermarried with the Ardernes, so logically the blank shield would have borne the arms of de la Chambre.
37 Joseph Edmondson, A Complete Body of Heraldry, (1780) 2 vols., v.1, ‘Glover’s Ordinary of Arms, Augmented and Improved’, p.84. Glover notes a similar groundless claim by a member of the family of ‘Daventre’.
Figure 8. As he directed, John of Gaunt was buried with his beloved wife, Blanche of Lancaster, in a massive tomb, displaying his lance and shield.

(© Ian Mortimer, The Fears of Henry IV, 2007)
a costly monument. Married by 1385, they must have begun immediately to prepare the case, which was decided at Oxford in Trinity term 1389, an early listing for final determination of a civil claim in that litigious period. Such expedition allows a narrow but feasible window of time for Elizabeth’s attorneys to finalize all the pre-trial proceedings, oversee publication of her descent by judicious application of heraldry to the tomb, coach witnesses, and assemble proofs.

Whether or not forensic leverage developed as a primary function of the Spratton tomb as it survives today, crude financial practicalities appear to confine its construction date from 1385 when Roger de la Chambre married Elizabeth to 1389, when her last attempt at law to recover Drayton was dismissed, followed by her death in 1395. Such a range of dates for the edifice aligns closely with the earliest literary references to livery collars of SS as displayed on the Spratton effigy.

The unique status of the Spratton livery collar
Shadowing John of Gaunt’s adoption of his livery collar of SS in or about 1386, while predating the first description of such a collar in 1391, Gaunt’s lost armorial window in Old St Paul’s framed by its buckling collar of five esses, and actual specimens from the first quarter of the 1400s, the Spratton effigy’s collar stands pre-eminent as the earliest representation of this ancient honour to have come down to us from the middle ages.

Acknowledgements
The writer is grateful to historian Ian Mortimer for permission to reproduce a rare engraving of Gaunt’s lost monument in Old St Paul’s; to Michael Heaton of the Spratton Local History Society for a fresh set of photos of the Spratton effigy, and for obtaining permission from English Heritage to publish some 1984 images; and to Christian Algar of the British Library Rare Books Reference Team for valuable assistance.
On 7 April 1798 Lady Elizabeth Dryden (1753-1824), the widow of Sir John Turner Dryden (d.1797), heiress of her uncle and adoptive father, Sir John Dryden (d.1770), and the owner of Canons Ashby House and estates, wrote to one of her creditors, Mr John Tritton Esq., of Lombard Street in London. In response to one of a number of requests for the settlement of her late husband’s debts with Mr Tritton, she explained that her finances were in ‘… the most dangerous and embarrassed state imaginable’. She continued by expressing her fears that the estate may soon enter chancery proceedings, that her rents may be ‘seized’ and that, in the meantime, she had ‘… hardly a bare subsistence left for herself & a large young family’. She evidenced this parlous state of her affairs as proof that Mr Tritton was acting under the ‘erroneous idea’ that she was ‘… in possession of a large income …’ Furthermore, she attested that the debts owed to him were not hers at all, but her late husband’s. She had been instructed by her solicitor, Mr Brookes, that she should not sign anything with regards to his debts because she had ‘… acted entirely by Sir John’s absolute command and authority’.

The year following the death of Sir John Turner Dryden had been a tumultuous one in which Elizabeth had been forced to write a long series of letters such as this, pleading poverty and abjuring responsibility for her late husband’s debts. Sir John and Elizabeth had, in 1791, taken full possession of a healthy if small landed estate with a fine, if modest, country house. The former owner, Sir John Dryden, had lived a cautious lifestyle, never exceeding incomings with outgoings and augmenting the estate income through well-considered purchases of land and other investments. This good work and careful management had continued under the stewardship of Elizabeth and her mother. Yet the position changed dramatically in just a few short years. Sir John Turner Dryden died leaving debts of £10,680, on an estate that was receiving rents of £2,577 per annum. The marriage of Elizabeth and John on 14 May 1781 had quickly led to a period of retrenchment and financial embarrassment for the family.

The story of John Turner Dryden and Canons Ashby, although limited as all case-studies are by particularities, is instructive and has broader implications for those studying other landed families. It illustrates the importance of marriage ties for changes and continuities in the wealth and status of landed gentry families. Although high status and wealthy matches were considered prudent, the success of marital alliances often depended on the personality of the dominant spouse (generally the man) and the dynamics of the marriage. Landed estates were protected by legal measures such as strict settlement. However, these factors of personality could, and often did, override such protective measures.

1 This research forms part of a larger project, ‘Consumption and the Country House, c.1730-1800’ funded by the AHRC (AH/H008365/1). We are grateful to Michael Emmerson at Canons Ashby for making available his notes on the early eighteenth-century owners of the estate and for his helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.


3 N.R.O. D(CA)/364/2, Valuation of the Dryden estates, no date, 1797.

useful as it could be for aggrandising estate fortunes, was one element of landed life that served to make their fortunes quite volatile during the eighteenth century. This article begins with a brief description of the history of the Dryden and Turner families, before turning to consider in more detail the merger of the two families through the marriage; Sir John’s period of ownership; and, finally, the impact this had on the fortunes of his widow and of the Dryden family.

The Turners and the Drydens: a Brief History
The Dryden family had been seated at Canons Ashby since the sixteenth century. William Dryden and his son, David, both of Cumberland, are the first of the family to appear in the historical record. It was through the marriage of David’s son, John, to the daughter of Sir John Cope, knight, that the family acquired Canons Ashby House. Originally a simple L-shaped farmhouse, John set about gradually extending it, work that was followed up by future generations up until the early eighteenth century. The house served as a basis for the growing fame and fortune of the Drydens. John’s son, Erasmus (1553-1632), brought the first titular honours to the family when he was created a Baronet, in 1619. He had earlier served as High Sheriff of Northamptonshire (in 1599 and 1618) and was elected MP for Banbury in 1624. His son, Sir John (d.1658), Second Baronet, followed this political career, serving as High Sheriff and later MP for Northamptonshire. Sir John was succeeded by his son, Sir Robert (d.1708), Third Baronet, who died unmarried and without children and divided the estates between family members: the Warwickshire estates were given to his nephew, John Seyyd, and the Northamptonshire estates (centred on Canons Ashby) to Edward Dryden, his first cousin once removed. Neither of them inherited the Baronetcy, which passed instead to Sir Robert’s cousin, Sir John Dryden (d.1710), who became the Fourth Baronet.

Before inheriting the Dryden estates Edward had pursued a successful career as a grocer in King Street in Westminster, on the site where the Cabinet and Foreign Offices now stand. His family rented a house in Bolton Street, Mayfair, and had a half share in another in the Poultry, off Cheapside. A wealthy man in his own right, he had married the daughter of another rich London merchant and, even after inheriting Canons Ashby in 1708, continued his trade as a grocer until 1715. It seems that Edward did not reside at Canons Ashby at first (none of his nine children was baptised there), but he was responsible for a number of changes to the house. He also recorded the rents he was receiving from the estates which, at the time of his death, in 1717, amounted to £1,100 per annum, and he left £4,300 in other securities along with rents for his London properties. Meanwhile Sir John, Fourth Baronet, had taken rooms at Canons Ashby and contested Sir Robert’s will, a move that ended in failure. When he died in 1710, the title (but not the estates) passed briefly to his cousin, Sir Erasmus Henry Dryden (1669-1710), Fifth Baronet, a priest who died shortly after Sir John, and then to Edward Dryden’s father, Sir Erasmus Dryden (d.1718), Sixth Baronet. Sir Erasmus and his son’s wife, Elizabeth, lived at Canons Ashby following Edward Dryden’s inheritance, managing the estates in his name. It was during this time that the house was modernised, the south face being refaced and more fashionable sash windows replacing the old mullioned windows. (Figure 1)

It was after Edward Dryden’s death, in 1717, and the death of Sir Erasmus, in 1718, that his son, Sir John Dryden (d.1770) inherited both the estates and the title of Baronet, Seventh in his family line, thus bringing titular honours and landed income back together. Sir John and his fellow executor, John Shaw, faced a significant challenge in terms of debts on the

5 Burke’s Peerage and Baronetage (London, 1965), p.816.
6 Burke’s Peerage, p.816.
7 Burke’s Peerage, p.816.
estates since Edward had left over-generous provision for his younger sons and daughters. This problem was solved through the sale of Edward’s London properties; £1,000 and income from the estates of Frances Ingram (Sir John’s first wife, who died in 1724); a win on the lottery to the tune of £590; investments in the South Sea Bubble, and some thrifty spending habits. Like many other gentry landowners faced with debts on their estates, Sir John succeeded through prudent investments, the use of wider familial resources and sheer good luck. By the time of Sir John’s marriage to his second wife, Elizabeth Rooper, in 1726, the estates were in credit and the future looked bright for the Drydens in comparison to the demographic and legal problems the family had faced over the previous generation. Although this period witnessed a greater stability in ownership at the estate, more problems were to develop. Sir John and Elizabeth produced no children of their own, and ended up adopting their niece, Elizabeth Dryden (see below), the future wife of John Turner (Dryden). The Seventh Baronet died in 1770, whereupon the title was extinguished. The estate passed to his adoptive daughter Elizabeth who continued living at Canons Ashby with her mother and later her sister until 1781, when she married John Turner and moved to 10 Upper Seymour Street, off Portman Square in London. In 1791, the dowager Lady Elizabeth died and Elizabeth moved back to Canons Ashby with her husband, who added Dryden to his name.

In some ways the Turner family had a similar history of interaction with business and trade as the Drydens, although of a very different kind. The first of the family recorded in the lineage was Richard Turner (m. 1567), a barrister, originally from Sutton Coldfield in Warwickshire. Richard’s descendants were, like him, businessmen and professionals, rather than wealthy landowners, and were generally centred on London. Thus Richard’s great-grandson, John Turner (1622-94), was a London merchant, as was his son, John (1650-1708). It was not until the life of Sir Edward Turner (1691-1735) that the Turners

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8 Burke’s Peerage, p.815.
9 Burke’s Peerage, p.816.
began to make a name for themselves amongst the country gentry and to accrue wealth from land. Edward rose to greater heights in the business world than his forbears, becoming the Director and Chairman of the ‘Honourable East India Company Service.’ He was created Baronet in 1733, at the age of 42, and married Mary, the eldest daughter of Sir Gregory Page, Bart., of East Greenwich. The Page family also owed their fortune to trade and were described as living with ‘great splendour and hospitality’ and acquiring significant estates in Bedford and Kent. The marriage between Sir Edward and Mary, like John Turner Dryden’s, turned out to be a fortuitous one for the family later in the eighteenth century when John’s elder brother, Gregory, inherited the Page Kent estates, adding Page to his name to become Sir Gregory Page-Turner.

Sir Edward purchased a landed estate centred on Ambrosden in Oxfordshire, which included a house built in the 1670s by the then owner, Sir William Glynne. Edward moved into this house, but his son, Sir Edward Turner (1719–66), Second Baronet, and father of John Turner Dryden, built a larger house and laid out Ambrosden Park after his inheritance in 1735. The Second Baronet also inherited other landed estates from his uncle, John Turner, of Sudbury, Middlesex, and further fortunes from another uncle, Edward Turner. By the time of John Turner Dryden’s birth in 1752, the Turners were in possession of substantial estates and a significant fortune which placed them in a more than equitable position with regards to the Drydens. It was, in some ways, a merger between a family of rising wealth and social standing, and one with a longer pedigree, but of more modest means. In this sense, John and Elizabeth formed a good match for each other.

**John Turner and Elizabeth Dryden: a Decisive Match**

We have no exact details as to the circumstances under which John Turner and Elizabeth Dryden met. There were no obvious family connections between them. John Turner was related to a family with connections in the Midlands, the Leigs of Adlestrop in Gloucestershire, cousins of the Leigs of Stoneleigh Abbey in Warwickshire. His mother, Cassandra, was the daughter of William Leigh, of Adlestrop. However, this did not tie him into the county society of Northamptonshire, where he may have met the Drydens. Sir John Dryden (d.1770) had invested in East India shares, a company closely tied to the fortunes of the Turners, but then so did many other gentry and aristocratic families. In the absence of any direct evidence we can only surmise that John and Elizabeth, or other members of their families, met at one of the centres of sociability during this period, either at a spa or county town, perhaps at races held at Warwick or Northampton or in London.

Elizabeth was the daughter of Sir John Dryden’s younger brother, Beville, and his wife, Mary. She was adopted by Sir John and Lady Elizabeth in 1760 at the age of seven, following the death of her father and the impoverishment of her widowed mother – a situation not improved by the decision of Sir John’s mother (d.1761) to leave her estate to his sister Mary and her daughter Maria Puleston. In a letter from this period Sir John noted that young Elizabeth was ‘amiable’ and that he was ‘as well pleased as if it was a boy’, perhaps indicating that Elizabeth was, even at this age, destined to inherit the estates. Certainly, there appears to have been a great deal of affection between young Elizabeth and her adoptive parents. She wrote to her mother that she liked living at Canons Ashby, ‘uncle brought me play things from Northampton and promises me more. I have got a pretty puppy and am to

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11 Burke’s Peerage, p.816.
12 N.R.O. D(CA)/971, Letter from Revd D. Burton to Sir John Dryden with regard to Sir John’s investments in the East India Company, 1764.
13 N.R.O. D(CA)/1032, Letter from Sir John Dryden to his Sister-in-Law, Mary Dryden, 6 April 1761.
have a fine new Coat and dressed Linnen … Uncle hopes soon to get me a little Horse’. 14
Whilst relatively modest treats for the daughter of country landowner and just the kind of
thing that might excite the interest of an eight-year-old girl, it is perhaps significant that
Elizabeth enumerates in such detail the material possessions acquired for her comfort.

John was certainly much enamoured of material goods. As a boy he went to Harrow and,
after receiving a ‘liberal education’, he made his Grand Tour under the guidance of Dr
Nugent, father-in-law to Edward Burke and author of a descriptive and instructive account
of the Grand Tour.15 The precise duration and itinerary of John’s own tour is uncertain, but
he certainly visited France and parts of modern-day Germany.16 In his journal, a common
appendage to genteel travel,17 John repeatedly complained about the accommodation he
and his friends were reduced to, as well as the ‘indolence’ of many of the landlords he
encountered. In his entry on 21 July he noted the poor state of his room in a lodging house
in Brighthelm, the former name for Brighton, where he was staying before setting out for
Dieppe. He had been given a ‘bad bed hard as a stone & not room enough for a
consumptive monkey.’18 He did manage to acquire the best cabin on the packet ship for
the journey, paying six guineas for the privilege – a significant sum compared with the two
guineas he paid for a week’s stay at the l’Hotel d’Gorch Foucault, in Paris.19 This
combination of care and extravagance was not unusual amongst young men on the Grand
Tour – at once constrained by the allowance provided by their fathers and the desire to
keep up appearances and enjoy all that the Tour had to offer.20

John’s time in Paris was filled with strolls along boulevards, observations of the fine bridges
of the city, meals in hotel restaurants and Italian comedies in the evening. He appears to
have stayed there for around three weeks, noting in his journal costs amounting to around £150 – not a huge sum, but quite significant in terms of the length of his visit. After Paris,
we know little of his movements, but he was reported as receiving a ‘friendly welcome’ at
the court in Mecklenburgh Strelitz, where he ‘dined daily with the Duke’ who presented
John with a letter of introduction to his sister, Queen Charlotte, the consort of George III.21 Whilst this honour reflected well on John and his tutor, this tour was less complete
than that undertaken by his older brother, Gregory, who inherited the Turner estates in
1766 and became the Third Baronet. These estates included the great fortune and lands that
his father, Edward, had inherited from his uncle and great-uncle, along with a separate
fortune which Gregory inherited directly from his great-uncle, Sir Gregory Page, Baronet.22
Combined, these made Gregory an extremely wealthy young man. His Grand Tour was
extensive and lavish, following the prescribed route from the ‘cold south’ in the Netherlands
and Germany, down through France and Switzerland to the ‘warm north’ and into Italy.23
In 1768, when in Rome in the later stages of his Tour, he sat for a portrait. Pompeo Batoni

14 N.R.O. D(CA)/1081, Letter from Elizabeth Dryden to her mother, 4 May 1761.
15 T. Nugent, The Grand Tour, or A journey through the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, and France (London, 1756).
16 N.R.O. D(CA)/347, John Turner Dryden’s Tour of France, 1774; Betham, Baronetage of England, p.279; The
Gentleman’s Magazine, Vol.67, Part 1 (1797), p.521. It is impossible to work out exactly how he was in France
since John left several date entries blank and stopped entering information into it on 15 August, either to
return home or to travel on to Germany.
20 French and Rothery, Man’s Estate, pp.141-2; p.147.
22 Burke’s Peerage, p.816
23 H. French and M. Rothery, ‘‘Upon Your Entry Into the World”: Masculine Values and the Threshold of
Figure 2. Dress coat in velvet and silk, with silk embroidery and appliqué work, c.1775. Probably worn by Sir John Turner Dryden for his presentation to Queen Charlotte. (©National Trust)
By far the most popular and esteemed artist with Grand Tourists of this period, painted Sir Gregory with his left hand on a map of Rome, in front of a bust of Minerva and with the Coliseum in the background. He is dressed in a lavish suit of scarlet silk with gold braiding and lace cuffs. A sword hangs at his side. This kind of dress suit was the height of fashionable good taste in the third quarter of the eighteenth century. Placed alongside the archetypal images of classical Rome, they showed Sir Gregory to be a man of expensive but refined taste – qualities to which his younger brother also aspired.

On his return to England, John took a commission in the 1st Regiment of the Foot Guards, the most senior regiment in the Guards and a prestigious and costly position to secure. With significant resources at his disposal, John socialised with other well-connected young officers and became ‘one of the most fashionable officers about town, both with respect to dress and equipage’. Something of this can be seen in the exquisite and expensive suit he commissioned for his presentation to Queen Charlotte (Figures 2 and 3). Court dress held great significance in the eighteenth century, despite widespread recognition that the Georgian monarchs were far from being fashion leaders. It was important to dress appropriately, because appearance was one of the key factors in gaining admittance to the public rooms of the London palaces; but clothes also held great symbolic importance. Fine

24 This portrait now hangs in the Manchester City Art Gallery. To see an image of this portrait go to www.manchestergalleries.org/the-collections. For a broader discussion of portraits and the Grand Tour see the website devoted to the National Gallery’s exhibition on Pompeo Batoni at www.nationalgallery.org.uk /the-grand-tour, an exhibition that included the portrait of Sir Gregory.
26 N.R.O. D(CA)/206, Commission as lieutenant in the 1st Regiment, Foot Guards, 25 March 1776.
28 The precise date of this event is unknown, but probably occurred fairly soon after his return from the Grand Tour.
clothing showed respect for royalty and the purchase of new clothing to wear at court signalled loyalty to the crown.29 Given this context, Sir John was clearly anxious to conform. He wore a coat made of dark blue cut velvet into which white silk was interwoven; a delicate leaf pattern being embroidered and appliquéd down the front and matching details added to the cuffs. The fronts were cut back and curved away, the better to show a white silk waistcoat, exquisitely embroidered with blue and gold floral designs. The suit appears French in design and may have been purchased whilst John was in Paris, although there is no mention of this in his journal. Another possibility is that it was imported in pieces and

finished to John’s specifications by a London tailor.\(^{30}\) We might see this suit as an attempt to emulate his older brother and the expensive tastes illustrated in the clothes worn for the Batoni portrait a few years earlier. Certainly it signalled John’s desire to make a good show at court, demonstrating his wealth, taste and loyalty.

This particular suit forms only the most lavish example of John’s conspicuous consumption which increasingly ran beyond his considerable income. We have no bill or accounts to give us the exact cost of the clothing. It did not come close to the £500 reportedly paid in 1790 by the Duke of Bedford for a brown striped silk suit embroidered in silver and diamonds. Conversely, it must have been considerably more than £16 3s 11d which James Henry Leigh laid out on materials for a fine black broadcloth suit in 1813.\(^{31}\) Perhaps it cost in the region of £100-150 – indicative of a more general taste for lavish spending. Other suits belonging to John Turner and apparently dating from a similar period are more sober, being dark velvet; but they retain extravagant and showy touches, including on one a series of diamanté pendants no doubt designed to catch the light and sparkle. Indeed, such was John’s ability to spend that Betham reports that he ‘dissipated a large sum of money’ and ‘contracted debts, which the short possession of a large fortune did not enable him intirely [sic] to liquidate’.\(^{32}\)

Perhaps this helps to explain the match to Elizabeth, described in John’s obituary as a ‘very amiable lady’.\(^{33}\) She had a steady and reliable income from the estate, albeit one that was relatively modest in comparison with John’s family. We know little about their early married life in London, but John clearly maintained his military interests, being commissioned as a captain in the Oxford Militia in 1782.\(^{34}\) Moreover, they were apparently living well, if not to John’s previous lavish standards, and rented a second house near Margate in Kent. They clearly needed to raise cash and, from 1783 onwards, took out a number of loans against the security of their future estate income, mostly with George Brooks of Green Street, Grosvenor Square.\(^{35}\) The capital was due for repayment on the death of the dowager Elizabeth Dryden and they took out an insurance policy with the Society for Equitable Assurance on Lives or Survivorships ‘That Elizabeth, wife of John Turner (aged 30) of Margaret Street, Cavendish Square, will survive Dame Elizabeth Dryden (aged 76) of Canons Ashby for £500 in favour of George Brooks’.\(^{36}\) Unsurprisingly, they won their bet: the dowager Elizabeth died in 1791 and the estate passed into John’s possession. Yet this did not spell the end of their financial problems, not least because John’s elevation to the lower ranks of the aristocracy involved significant direct and indirect expenditure. He was knighted in 1793 and had to lay out £108 on servants for the ceremony when he received his title. Shortly afterwards he was commissioned as a captain in the Northamptonshire Yeoman Cavalry.\(^{37}\) He also took advantage of the sale of honours during William Pitt’s first ministry and purchased a Baronetcy at a cost of £350 – an honour linked to his display of loyalty in

30 We would like to thank Dr Miles Lambert, the Senior Manager of the Gallery of Costume at Platt Hall, in Rusholme, Manchester, for his advice on the origins of this suit.
31 Greig, ‘Faction and fashion’, p.78; Shakespeare Central Library and Archive (SCLA), DR.18/5/6994, receipted bill from Joseph Smith to James Henry Leigh, July 1813.
34 N.R.O. D(CA)/207, Commission as captain in the Oxfordshire Militia, 30 September 1782.
35 Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (H.A.L.S.) 2348, bond of John Turner to George Brooks, 18 February 1783; N.R.O. D(CA)/222 Memorial inrolled at Chancery of a bond, warrant and indenture, 22 April 1790.
36 H.A.L.S. 2349 Insurance Policy, 2 April 1783.
37 N.R.O. D(CA)/1011, Receipt for payment of the total costs of servants during the award ceremony, no date (1793); Betham, Baronetage of England, p.280; N.R.O. D(CA)/219, Commission as captain of a troop of the Northamptonshire Regiment of Gentlemen and Yeomanry Cavalry, 9 May 1794.
raising a troop of the Yeomanry. All the while, they retained a London residence in Upper Seymour Street. Although apparently a reformed character (his portrait of 1795 shows a man soberly if fashionably dressed in a dark coat with a white silk cravat), Sir John was clearly a man to dispense public duties and ceremonies in style. (Figure 4)

These outgoings were by no means ruinous in themselves, but their cumulative effect – perhaps in combination with problems in servicing Sir John’s earlier debts – was clearly enough to place considerable strain on the estate, despite the c.£2,500 per annum derived from the Canons Ashby estate. In 1792, John wrote to the Revd Thomas Leigh at Stoneleigh Abbey in Warwickshire apologising for the delay in repaying a loan. Moreover, letters to Elizabeth after Sir John’s death in 1797 provide some clues as to their outgoings and their problems in paying the bills accrued. These were sent by a range of different suppliers, from drapers to coal merchants. One of these, written in July 1800, was from the lawyer J. Ribblewhite, who was representing a coal merchant. Ribblewhite asked for immediate payment of a bill for ‘coals delivered in Sir Johns lifetime’, suggesting that many of his debts were bills that had been left unpaid over a long period. This is confirmed by another letter, in which a coach-maker asked for the payment of a bill totalling £35, which had been outstanding ‘upwards of seven years’.

One area where they appear to have laid out significant sums was on furniture for their newly acquired home. The structure and design of Canons Ashby had been laid down by 1710, after which very few alterations took place, other than changes to the furniture and furnishings. John and Elizabeth were very active in creating a new arrangement of domestic space at Canons Ashby, most obviously in fitting up a billiard room in the old dining parlour and changing the first floor dining room into a drawing room. These and other changes involved acquiring some new pieces, including a billiard table, maces, cue and balls; a grand piano for the new dining parlour; and a suite of satinwood tables for the drawing room. There were also more pictures hung on the walls and a burgeoning number of decorative items, such as a pair of globes and a bust of Dryden (their poet ancestor). It is hard to put a cost against these items or the more general growth in the number of items within the house, but comparisons across to contemporaneous spending at Stoneleigh Abbey suggest that the satinwood furniture might have cost a total of around £100, depending on their size and quality. This was a significant outlay, to which must be added many other sums for a range of mahogany pieces which appear for the first time in an 1819 inventory. It seems likely that the couple spent several hundred pounds overall, although it is clear that much of the change they affected at Canons Ashby resulted from moving furniture among rooms. Moreover, the sums involved pale in comparison with those needed to change the fabric of the building and there is no indication that either John or Elizabeth had such intentions.

Quite apart from investing in new furniture, the everyday running costs at Canons Ashby

40 N.R.O. D(CA)/364/22, Letter from J. Ribblewhite to Lady Elizabeth Dryden, 7 July 1800.
41 N.R.O., D(CA)/364/37, Letter from Mary Ann Wheatley, of Northampton, to Lady Elizabeth Dryden, 15 March 1804.
42 A rare mention of these comes in a 1764 letter from Rev. D Burton to Sir John Dryden, commenting on Sir John’s new blinds at Canons Ashby: N.R.O. D(CA)/971.
43 What had been the Best Parlour was made into a dining room. N.R.O., D(CA)/903, 1791 household inventory; D(CA) 904, 1819 household inventory.
44 SCLA, DR/18/5/6999, receipted bill from Chipchase and Proctor to James Henry Leigh, January 1814.
grew significantly during the course of John and Elizabeth’s marriage. They had nine children in total, five sons and four daughters.45 Big families were not unusual in landed families of this period, but large numbers of children placed a significant burden on landed estates of such modest proportions. None of these children entered into costly marital alliances, but then neither did they bring wealth into the family through marriage, as had been the case when the Turners married into the Page family. The debts, and the large family left to Elizabeth to care for were a burden. They determined to a large extent the lifestyle of Elizabeth and the children in her widowhood.

*AfterShock: the Later Life of Lady Elizabeth Dryden*

The letter we quoted from at the beginning of this article, and those described in the previous section, are a few examples of many others that passed between Elizabeth and her creditors after the death of her husband. There is a total of 40 letters in the Dryden archive relating to the debts owing on Sir John’s estate, mainly from creditors, and these undoubtedly only scratch the surface in terms of the correspondence generated by this problem. Elizabeth was not alone in her dealings with these people. In 1805 she was remarried to Godfrey Scholey, esquire of London, who neither inherited the estates nor assumed the name of Dryden. Indeed, much of their lengthy marriage settlement was concerned with managing and protecting Scholey’s estate from the debts of £10,980 left by Sir John.46 To make matters worse, Elizabeth was not in full ownership of the estate, a trust having been set up in order to deal with her first husband’s debts. Her exact position was set out in a letter from a solicitor which was undated but was probably written soon after Sir John’s death and referred to her situation in relation to one of the senior trustees, Sir G. D.47 Elizabeth had control of the estates for her life, but no provision had been included in John’s will for the next heir. Elizabeth was expected to settle the large debts on the estate and to reduce her own debts in order to provide for the ‘education and benefit’ of her family. She could do this by settling a charge on the estate.

Elizabeth was advised by the trustees that she should sell timber off the estate and land to sitting tenant farmers. Later correspondence to an unknown individual shows that Elizabeth intended to follow this advice by selling land to the value of £3,000.48 Despite these sales and directions in John’s will regarding the ‘education and benefit’ of their children, the debts he left caused her considerable problems in caring for them. In 1799 she wrote to a Mrs Hammond apologising for the removal of her daughters from her care, but explaining that she did not have the funds to continue paying for their education since she owed ‘large sums to several persons both in law expenses & on other accounts’.49 Later, in 1810, one of her daughters (the exact identity cannot be established) received a letter stating the money she could expect to receive upon coming of age. The money, it was explained, was at that time held in chancery. The total sum of £800 should be invested, Lady Dryden suggested, in 10% stocks, a risky form of investment for a life’s income and one that would yield just £80 per annum. Since this was not sufficient for her to live by herself, Miss Dryden was to be a ‘parlour boarder’ with a Mrs Marmaris for two-thirds of the year, and then stay with Lady Dryden for three months each year, from the summer to Michelmas. In addition she could spend each Christmas with Elizabeth.50

45 John Edward (1782–1818), Henry (1787–1837), Leopold (1792–1846), Lempster (1794–1866), Charles (1796–1883), Eliza, Harriet, Caroline (d. 1792) and Matilda (d. in infancy).
46 N.R.O. D(CA)536, Marriage settlement of Godfrey Scholey and Dame Elizabeth Dryden, 19 March 1805.
47 N.R.O. D(CA)/364/11 Statement of Affairs of Lady Elizabeth Dryden as they related to Sir G. D., no date. The identity of this individual remains unclear.
48 N.R.O. D(CA)/364/13, Letter from Lady Elizabeth Dryden to an unknown correspondent, 14 April 1805.
49 N.R.O. C(CA)/364/17, Letter from Lady Elizabeth Dryden to Mrs Hammond, 15 June 1799.
50 N.R.O. D(CA)/364/10, Statement of the Affairs of Miss Dryden, 7 February 1810.
The debts also had a major impact on the future destiny of Sir John’s and Elizabeth’s sons. The eldest son, John Edward Dryden, inherited the title of Baronet from his father and was to receive the estates via his mother’s will. He died unmarried in 1818, aged just 36. Most landed gentlemen would have married before this age and it is possible that the debts on the estates were a factor in his lack of a marriage. This may also have been the reason that none of the three daughters who survived into adulthood married. Two of John Edward’s younger brothers, Henry and Lempster, entered the clergy, whilst Henry and another brother, Leopold, married the daughters of clergymen. Henry was Rector of Ambrosden in Oxfordshire, the home of the Page-Turner family. This might signal ongoing relations between the two families in terms of patronage, although Henry resided at his other living, Leek Wootton in Warwickshire, in the gift of Chandos Leigh of Stoneleigh Abbey. On his brother’s death, he inherited the title and estate in 1818, becoming Revd Sir Henry Dryden, Third Baronet. His son, Sir Henry Edward Leigh Dryden, Fourth Baronet and famous antiquary (and currently at the centre of the National Trust’s presentation of Canons Ashby), inherited it in 1837. Some 37 years later, Sir Henry also inherited the Page-Turner estates, in Ambrosden, from his kinsman Sir Edward Henry Page-Turner, thus adding the title Seventh Baronet of Ambrosden. This later merger between the two families proved far more successful than that arising from Elizabeth and John’s marriage, continuing down to the present Baronet, Sir John Dryden.

Conclusion

The inheritance of Canons Ashby brought together two notable families in the south-east Midlands. However, it signalled a recession in the fortunes of the Dryden family, ongoing financial problems for Elizabeth after Sir John’s death and, in particular, a more troubled and less honourable lifestyle for their children than they might have expected. In many ways, their children returned to the kind of levels of status and wealth that Sir John had to tolerate earlier in his life. In some ways, this story is a specific one, the result of the particular circumstances and character traits of Elizabeth and John. The lavish and perhaps reckless spending of his youth was somewhat moderated in middle age, but the couple seem to have lived well beyond their means at Canons Ashby. They were unable or perhaps unwilling to cut their cloth in accordance with their purse; Elizabeth retained a London residence in the early nineteenth century, despite her financial worries. Yet this is a story that tells us much about the broader processes of rise and decline in the wealth of landed society. It illustrates, in minutiae, the importance of marital alliances in consolidating, or preferably extending, landed fortunes. It also shows the importance of prudent and thrifty habits of spending whilst in control of the estates. Despite frequent references to landowners in this period as conspicuous consumers of expensive and luxurious products and lifestyles, the key to survival actually lay in matching spending to income, rather than in flaunting one’s wealth. Small landed estates such as Canons Ashby were particularly susceptible to spend-thrift owners and their expensive habits and tastes. Overall, though, the longer term survival and flourishing of the estates illustrates the tenacity of the landed classes and their significant survival skills across history. Whilst individual owners such as Sir John could damage the family patrimony, in the long run and with careful management, such problems could often be rectified.

52 Burke’s Peerage, p.817.
53 Burke’s Peerage, p.817.
Since it was first built in the sixteenth century, Lamport Hall has been regularly remodelled. The house was in the hands of the Isham family until 1976 when, on the death of Sir Gyles Isham (twelfth baronet who had moved back to his family home in 1941), it passed to the Lamport Hall Preservation Trust. The long association of one family with the house, and their preservation of their archives, has led to a well-recorded and documented history. In terms of its architecture, it is John Webb’s iconic seventeenth-century reception suite and Francis and William Smith’s eighteenth-century wings that have been studied in depth: by comparison, other structural additions and changes have received far less attention. In particular, the nineteenth-century alterations that have given the house its present appearance and character have been hardly studied.\(^1\)

A mass of documentary and architectural evidence including several sets of important and mostly unpublished plans and drawings lodged at Northamptonshire Record Office (subsequently referred to as N.R.O.), show that during the nineteenth century, extensive works swept away the original Elizabethan mansion and reorientated the whole house away from the Webb and Smiths’ frontage. In addition, the major service areas were considerably extended and reconfigured. All this was achieved during the baronetcies of Sir Justinian Isham (eighth baronet, 1818–1845), and Sir Charles Isham, (tenth baronet, 1845–1903). It was not, however, the baronets who were the architectural and artistic moving forces behind the changes, but their wives: Mary (née Close) Isham (d.1878), the wife of Sir Justinian, and her daughter-in-law Emily (née Vaughan) Isham (d.1898), wife of Sir Charles.

A significant reason why the nineteenth-century changes have received scant attention is the generally dismissive attitude towards them expressed in the writings of architectural historians of the last century who have written about Lamport Hall. Much of this writing dates from the period of reaction against the nineteenth century in general, and all things Victorian in particular, that was the predominant view from the inter-war years until the final quarter of the twentieth century. Not surprisingly, this general attitude even affected the views of the twelfth baronet. Sir Gyles Isham undertook extensive research into his family archive that led to his becoming a recognised expert on the history of his home. His preference for the architecture of the original Elizabethan mansion, and the Webb and Smith additions, influenced his brief and not altogether flattering comments about the nineteenth-century changes contained in his papers, ‘The Architectural History of Lamport’,\(^2\) and ‘The Historical and Literary Associations of Lamport’.\(^3\) That he was constructing his history of Lamport at a time when the contribution of women to the development of the country house had hardly been researched is also significant, although there is an acknowledgement in his writings of the contribution that the chatelaines, Mary and Emily Isham, made to the internal configuration and façade of Lamport Hall.


\(^3\) Gyles Isham, ‘The Historical and Literary and Associations of Lamport’, *Northamptonshire Past and Present* 1, 1 (1948), 17–28.
This article will demonstrate that Mary and Emily were both concerned to modernise their adopted home. Two architects of regional importance – Henry Hakewill (1771-1830) and Henry Goddard (1792-1868) – were employed by Mary; Emily also employed Henry Goddard but she turned to William Burn (1789-1870), an architect of national repute, to fulfil her ambitions for Lamport Hall and, in the process, sweep away many of the alterations made by her mother-in-law.

Mary and Henry Hakewill
Mary had been married for six years when her role as a mistress of a country house began. (Figure 1) She married Col. Justinian Isham in May 1812, seven months after meeting him at the Primate’s Palace, Armagh.4 She was 24 and her husband, referred to in Lamport

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4 Mary Isham, Journal, N.R.O. IL 3278. This document is often referred to as a diary by both Mary’s relatives and the Record Office catalogue but this is a misnomer. Judging from the handwriting, the period covering 1737-1855 seems to have been written within a consistent period of time; 1855-1857 a second consistent entry; 1857-1877, intermittent entries. Amongst other subjects, the journal records the architectural changes made to Lamport Hall during her time as chatelaine and also during the time of Emily who succeeded her. She also also wrote a separate memorandum: Memorandums taken from Old Papers, N.R.O. IL 3086 which consists of details about the house from 1558-1875, from now on, referred to as Building Memorandum.
Figure 2. Lamport Hall, South-west Front, James Blackemore (1760).
(N.R.O. IL. 3079/D63)

Figure 3. The North Prospect of Lamport Hall, James Blackemore (1761).
(Courtesy of Lamport Hall Preservation Trust)
Hall literature as ‘a man of few words known as “the silent baronet”’ was 15 years her senior.\(^5\) If an ambition of Mary’s father was for his eldest daughter to marry into English landed gentry, one of Justinian’s motives in seeking a suitable bride for himself may have been to revive the family fortunes. Mary brought a dowry of £5,000 to the union.\(^6\) This was a considerable sum of money that was greatly needed: Sir Edmund (sixth baronet, 1737-1772), had left so much of his fortune to his widow and to charity that Sir Justinian (seventh baronet, 1772-1818), and his large family, found themselves in financial difficulties.\(^7\)

In September 1818, following the death of her father-in-law the previous April, Mary Isham recorded in her journal: ‘My husband, Sir Justinian, myself and two children came to reside at Lamport Hall’.\(^8\) Two eighteenth-century drawings by James Blackemore on display at Lamport show views of the house as it was when the newly elevated Lady Isham became its chatelaine. The Webb and Smith south–west front (Figure 2), provided the grand entrance into the house via the High Room, but the main approach to the house was from the north between two service ranges of stabling either side of the original Tudor manor house (Figure 3). This was a house in need of modernisation.

During the second half of the eighteenth century, the fashion governing the exterior architecture and internal configuration of country houses had been affected by changes to the lifestyle of the upper classes: strict formality had gradually given way to informality. An increased interest in nature through advances in science and agriculture and the improved accessibility to the countryside through more reliable transport and communications made the country seat a more attractive place to visit. Previously reluctant to leave London, the upper classes began to look more favourably upon country life and transferred their social activities to their country houses. By the end of the century, a new lifestyle emerged as it became more fashionable to fill houses with visitors for house parties. As a result, the internal arrangement of houses changed to reflect the need for more social spaces and, in turn, this meant that the strict rules of external architectural symmetry need no longer apply.\(^9\) It was now agreed that architecture should provide a visual image that reflected its landscape setting: nature was irregular, so irregular groupings of buildings and broken skylines in mixed architectural styles were favoured in place of Palladian classicism.\(^10\)

Due largely to the impoverishment of the seventh baronet, these stylistic changes to country houses had mostly passed Lamport by. No new building had taken place since the 1740s. Within three years of Mary Isham taking up her role as mistress of the house, extensive building work had begun.

It is not clear why Henry Hakewill (1771-1830) was chosen to remodel Lamport although it may be that the Ishams were familiar with his work at Rugby School.\(^11\) Over the course of his career, in the climate of architectural eclecticism associated with the late Georgian period, Hakewill designed buildings and interiors in a range of styles. Apart from his work

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7 Isham, ‘The Historical and Literary Associations of Lamport’, 27.
11 School registers reveal Rugby as the public school of choice for three past members of the Isham family: John and Edward, second and third sons of Sir Justinian (fourth baronet), 1699; Charles Euseby, eldest son of Revd Mr Isham, 1783. Thomas, son of Revd Vere Isham was to go in 1822 and Mary’s son Charles, in 1834. F. Temple, *Rugby School Register from 1675-1867 Inclusive* (London, 1867).
at Rugby, other notable commissions include St Peter’s Church, Eaton Square (1824-1827) and country houses such as Coed-coch in Denbighshire and Rendlesham House, Yorkshire. His work is not generally viewed with enthusiasm: Colvin refers to him as, ‘a competent but rather uninspired architect’, and even Sir Gyles Isham refers to his work as ‘lifeless’. Mary, however, was looking for practical changes to the house. The sequence of Hakewill’s plans and drawings and correspondence demonstrate a consultative relationship between architect and client: plans were revised and changed and ideas developed during construction. Mary appears to have had very firm ideas about what she wanted. By analysing Hakewill’s work, a picture emerges of a house that was remodelled to meet the needs of a chatelaine who, within the parameters of the existing house, wanted to create a modernised domestic environment for herself and her family and provide improved accommodation for visitors.

The project began with the removal of the south stabling range on the north-west side in 1819. This opened up the aspect of the house and changed the view from all approaches. Then in 1821, Mary recorded in her journal: ‘1821, February 7th. Part of the old house at Lamport taken down. Rebuilt same year.’ This is a reference to the original Tudor north-west front that was removed as part of Hakewill’s overall design for the remodelling of the house. The detailed layout was drawn up in 1820 in two main plans of the ground floor, and a first floor bedroom plan. It is clear from studying these plans that the Ishams needed more space. Mary’s intentions for her future way of life at Lamport are shown in Hakewill’s proposed additions: on the ground floor, new accommodation for household services and servants to reflect the needs of a busy household and, on the bedroom floor, a nursery wing to accommodate her children and free up existing bedrooms for visitors. These modifications were a reflection of contemporary fashion.

Throughout the eighteenth century, servants were increasingly housed in their own wing to allow the family greater privacy. This change was long overdue at Lamport; the existing service area was not only small but also the flow of movement included the family living quarters. Hakewill’s design gave the servants their own wing.

A further development of the clearer division of the living space of servants from those they served and the evolution of the ‘moral house’ was a closer attention to the positioning of bedrooms. Before the nineteenth century, children’s rooms were normally on the top floor of the house fitted in wherever there was space. With the care taken to ensure that male and female servants slept in different parts of the house came a concern for the accommodation needs of the children. Mary’s children were to have their own nursery area above the Old Hall and the new servants’ range. There was also to be a new bedroom and dressing room above William Smith’s south wing garden room, a change that would involve the insertion of a floor.

13 Louisa Corbett, Notebook entitled ‘Miscellaneous’ (1899), N.R.O. I 1387. Louisa was Mary Isham’s eldest granddaughter. She made a few entries in a notebook about Lamport during the time of ‘Granny’ and her father, Sir Charles Isham.
16 Mary had three children by the time these alterations began: Mary, born in 1814; Justinian Vere, born in 1816; Charles Edmund, born 1819. There were no more children. Isham, Journal, 1814, 1816, 1819, N.R.O. IL 3278.
The alterations progressed in stages throughout the 1820s. Hakewill’s plans indicate that the changes involved considerable rebuilding and consequent disruption. The remodelled interior required demolition of the original Elizabethan manor house and a new frontage and porch. As this was later rebuilt by Emily Isham, it is only through Hakewill’s plans and other contemporary drawings that this can be reconstructed. Although Mary was modernising the house internally, Hakewill’s design for the frontage echoed the Tudor original except for a rather incongruous neo-Gothic porch. It seems that Hakewill was making use of an existing design for a porch that he had utilized at Rugby School for the Headmaster’s House (erected between 1809 and 1815). Although it appears out of place, Hakewill was working in the manner of his contemporaries; it was fashionable to mix styles at a time of architectural experimentation after years of being straitjacketed by Palladianism.

The first phase of change at Lamport transformed the appearance of the house. George Clarke’s drawing (Figure 4), conveys a very different aspect to the Blakemore drawings of the 1760s. But it was not the newly designed north-west frontage that made the biggest difference: it was the removal of the south stable block that had re-set the house in its surroundings. It now stood sentinel in the parkland rather than partly hidden by walls and service wings. Perhaps in acknowledgement of this transformed vista, before any further alterations to the house took place, Mary turned her attention to the main approach to the Hall with construction of an entrance gateway.

A number of drawings exist for this project and it seems to have taken Hakewill a considerable effort to please his patron. The sequence of drawings began in 1821, but the final design was not completed until 1824. The process of this project particularly demonstrates Mary’s practical approach. Sir Gyles Isham was unenthusiastic about the final choice: ‘several drawings exist for this project, and it is perhaps a pity that the most characterless of the designs was selected.’ But practicality was a driving force in Mary’s plans for her home as can also be demonstrated in the next major addition to the house, the service wing.

The plans that exist for this addition reveal progression of thinking from Hakewill’s 1820 plan. As with his scheme for the new service wing in the house, his drawings reflect the early nineteenth-century obsession with efficiency. The 1820 plan only adds an octagonally shaped dairy to the south front service range and, in 1825, a new plan was submitted for a more extensive range of service buildings. A new dairy was a necessity as the existing one was positioned in part of the original Tudor house, next to a stable – not an ideal setting. In 1820, a decision had been made to build a new one, separate from other service buildings and to a fashionable design. As dairies had to be particularly cool places to prevent the produce ‘turning’, it was the practice to place them away from other service buildings and the house. The cleanliness of these buildings made them pleasant places to visit and they often provided a particular interest to chatelaines. The fashion for the ‘ferme ornée’ espoused by Marie Antoinette, emphasised the importance of dairies as a link to a ‘rustic’ past that was reflected in the increasingly ornate designs for these buildings.

18 Henry Hakewill, Design for Park Entrance, N.R.O. IL 3079/D9 (January 1821); D10 (January 1821); D19 (1824); D20 (10 April 1824); D21 (30 April 1824).
21 Henry Hakewill, Sketch showing position of the new Service Range (1 March 1825), N.R.O. IL 3079/D23a.
Between 1820 and 1825, it seems that Mary decided that a new washhouse and laundry were required. Hakewill’s 1825 plan includes the site for this plus the repositioning and rebuilding of existing buildings and new additions. In this plan, the new dairy has become square rather than octagonal and linked to the kitchen via a scullery, dairy scullery and well room. It seems that Mary rationalised her architect’s suggestions by deciding on the new washhouse and laundry but rejecting most of the other new additions. The octagonal dairy was retained and the site of the old one converted to a brew house. This is further evidence of a practical chatelaine: a washhouse and laundry was a necessity for her family and household, Hakewill’s other suggested rearrangement of existing buildings was not, and a new use could be found for a redundant building. However, she could not ignore fashion; the ornately designed dairy was favoured over the square alternative.

Of all Mary’s alterations to Lamport Hall, her own personal contribution to design can most clearly be seen in the conversion of William Smith’s south wing garden front as part of the project to insert the bedroom proposed in his 1820 plan. Hakewill submitted a drawing for the conversion in May 1827 but before any work could begin, Mary recorded in her journal: ‘1828 March 15. My dear and lamented only daughter died at Lamport, after the effects of severe measles, aged 14.’ The impact of this tragedy can only be imagined. Mary rarely records her emotions and when she does, her expression reflects the formal constraints of her social position. Just over a year later she recounts: ‘1829 July, South Wing of the house altered. Billiard table put up.’

The brevity of this statement hides the extent of her contribution to this project. It is a more detailed account left by her granddaughter, Louisa Corbett, that gives a greater insight into the extent of the modifications and Mary’s involvement in them:

Granny designed the curved window over the garden door in order to get an entrance to the crimson room [bedroom] which up to that time had neither floor nor ceiling. She also made the Billiard room (1829) which was then an alcove. The garden door was approached through the alcove until Granny designed the garden door and the window mentioned above. Until then the present crimson room could only be approached by a ladder.25

The construction of a bedroom suite in the south wing was a considerable project as it involved the insertion of a floor and ceiling. This in turn led to Mary converting the garden room into a billiard room. Mostly considered a ‘male’ activity, the game of billiards had become increasingly fashionable by the late eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. Initially it was common to place the table in the hall of a country house, but this proved to be inconvenient because of frequent interruptions from people passing through. A separate room solved this problem and became an essential feature of the design of a house.26 Mary regarded it as an essential fashionable addition, even at the expense of the garden room it replaced.

Hakewill’s last contribution to Lamport Hall was the redesigned pediment on John Webb’s south–west front. Webb’s original design for the Reception Suite did not have a pediment but it seems that a small one was added during construction and that it was later replaced by Francis Smith.27 Judging by Hakewill’s own view of it (proffered in the correspondence accompanying his suggestions for remodelling), it was not a popular alteration: ‘The present pediment is so out of the line of proportion that it disfigures the front and should by all means be removed.’28 The sequence of sketches again demonstrates the relationship between client and architect as alternative designs are presented and adjusted: urns and balustrades are added and taken away and the pediment itself replaced by a crest.29 The outcome is a combination of designs: an enlarged plain pediment fronted by a balustrade but without urns. This neo-classical style was designed to complement Webb’s Palladian pavilion and the Smith additions but perhaps Hakewill’s instincts to remove it completely would have been more aesthetically pleasing. As J. A. Gotch has written, ‘the pediment has the unfortunate effect of not appearing to be an integral part of the structure.’30

A decade was to pass before further major building work at Lamport Hall took place. Henry Hakewill died in 1830 having completed the changes proposed in his original plan of 1820 plus the adjustments and additions made on the instructions of his employer, Mary Isham. Although in the context of the architectural history of the house his work has been viewed with little enthusiasm, his designs reflected the fashion of his time and he fulfilled the job he was hired to do; the house had been brought into the nineteenth century.

Mary Isham and Henry Goddard
In 1842, Mary embarked on another major improvement for the house that was to prove to be her last contribution as chatelaine. Returning to the garden (south-east) front, Henry

28 Gyles Isham, Historical Notes, N.R.O. I 812/1.
Goddard was employed to create a more spacious drawing room and enlarged kitchen. This involved rebuilding the Elizabethan façade.31

In contrast to Henry Hakewill, Goddard did not originally train to be an architect. The progress of his career provides an illustration of the alternative but common means by which a professional architect could emerge in the early Victorian period.32 In 1807 he was indentured as a cabinetmaker to his father, Joseph, but by 1827 he was calling himself an ‘architect’ as well as ‘surveyor’ and ‘appraiser’. Detailed records of his commissions survive from 1828 in his daybook and ledger. By the 1830s he was increasingly undertaking minor architectural work and by the 1840s, he was receiving larger commissions in or near Leicester. In about 1840 he worked for the Reverend Robert Isham and this is probably how he came to be employed to rebuild the south-east front at Lamport Hall two years later.33

In keeping with the fashion for the ‘picturesque’, Goddard’s design improved the aspect of the Drawing Room by opening up the view to the garden and making better use of the light via the removal of two bays. The rebuilt frontage also doubled the size of the kitchen on the ground floor and enlarged rooms on the first floor. The design for the façade was a neo-Tudor substitute for the existing Elizabethan range which Sir Gyles Isham describes as ‘lifeless’.34

The fact that Mary chose Henry Goddard for this work demonstrates that she did not want anything elaborate: he was a competent and capable architect not an inspired visionary. The Drawing Room in particular remains an admired room, well proportioned, ‘elegant’ and ‘homely’.35 For Mary, the alterations were a necessary and practical improvement on the original and her opting for a conservative design in keeping with the past indicates her empathy for the history of the house.

This project marked the culmination of just over 20 years of remodelling and rebuilding that had commenced when Mary became chatelaine of Lamport Hall in 1818. Whether or not she had any further plans for the house, her role in future developments was about to change: ‘1845, March 26. My lamented husband died, Sir Justinian Isham Bart. Aged 71.’36 With his death, responsibility for Lamport Hall and the estate passed to her eldest son, Justinian Vere.

Justinian’s tenure as ninth baronet was short lived as just over a year after he succeeded to the title Mary writes: ‘1846, Aug. 25. My lamented son Justinian Vere died at Cheltenham. Funeral took place at Lamport, sorrow after sorrow.’37 She does not mention that he committed suicide. Not only was the death of her second child a family tragedy – as an illegal act, it was also a source of shame. The atmosphere of secrecy surrounding his death survived well into the twentieth century, the only reference to it being a newspaper cutting lodged amongst the Isham papers at the N.R.O.38

31 Henry Goddard. Architectural Drawing of the South-east Front showing the Elizabethan Façade and Henry Hakewill’s Alterations (1842). N.R.O. IL 3079/D42.
33 Brandwood and Cherry, Men of Property, pp.11–17.
The baronetcy now passed to Mary’s remaining son, Charles Edmund. In 1847 he married Emily Vaughan, daughter of Sir John Vaughan (1769-1839). Emily’s marriage at the age of 23 to Charles, 28, would have been considered a suitable match of two people of similar status. As chatelaine of Lamport for over 50 years she, like her predecessor, oversaw many changes to the house.

*Emily Isham and the First Phase of Alterations*

Unlike Mary, Emily has not left written evidence of her life at Lamport but it is through Mary’s journal and building memorandum that her contribution to the house is documented. Mary maintains a stance of deference by crediting her son with the changes that commenced when Emily became chatelaine and this is reinforced in Lamport Hall guide books, which hardly mention Mary. Charles himself, however, makes it clear that he was not the driving force behind the further development of the house. In a poem written in Emily’s memory in 1902, four years after her death, he declares:

Since your footsteps crossed the threshold late in eighteen forty seven,
Blessings never ceased to flow abundantly from Heaven
With splendidly developed head, you deemed yourself not clever,
Could anyone have thought the same? Oh! No, indeed, no, never,
The excellent suggestions for improving Lamport Hall,
Came not from me in any way, they yours were doubtless all….39

This eulogy to his wife is a valuable source not only for conveying Emily’s contribution to Lamport Hall but also for indicating the tenor of the relationship between Charles and his wife. In contrast to the marriage of his parents, his appears to have been a genuine partnership. Unlike his father, he had a shared interest with his wife in the running of his house and estate, but his particular preoccupation was the garden (especially the rock garden that he began constructing in 1847). This was an unusual role reversal for a mid-nineteenth century landowner; the accepted Victorian view was that a natural affinity existed between women and flowers making the garden a female preserve.40 But then Charles was unusual in many ways. His belief in spiritualism; his vegetarianism; his fondness for writing doggerel verse; and his obsession with garden gnomes41 have all led to his being regarded as ‘a true Victorian eccentric’.42

Considering that Mary had been so involved in the daily affairs of Lamport for over 20 years, the traditional view of her is that she seems to have accepted her displacement without complaint, completely handing responsibility to her daughter-in-law and moving to a suite of rooms overlooking the garden.43 It is fortunate that they apparently had such a good understanding, as Emily’s alterations to Lamport must have risked offending her mother-in-law when they involved the remodelling and demolition of Mary’s earlier changes.

The period of Emily’s tenure provides a microcosm of the Victorian period. In a time of rapidly developing technology, it was hard for country house owners to keep abreast of change. An examination of Emily’s projects demonstrate that her main concern was to update Lamport. Her initial changes were piecemeal and did not affect the house itself: between 1848 and 1853, two conservatories and two lodges were constructed. Emily was

41 Charles Isham is credited for introducing garden gnomes for the first time in England.
ensuring that the house should keep up to date through these additions that were rather overdue in fashionable terms.

Conservatories, either free-standing or attached to the house, had been popular since the late Georgian period when the increased interest in nature and passion for the picturesque led to the trend for vases and pots of flowers to be placed in the house. As nature made increasing inroads into the house, a conservatory provided an additional room for the display but also for the protection of fragile plants. From the mid-nineteenth century, conservatories were a normal part of upper and middle-class life. The sacrifice of the garden room for the billiard room in 1829 meant that Lamport was in need of some sort of replacement as a necessity as well as a fashion statement.

There is little information on the two conservatories built at Lamport. They served different purposes. The first built in 1848 was located in the kitchen garden and would be more accurately described as a ‘greenhouse’ whilst the second, built in 1853 and referred to as the ‘Large Conservatory’ by Mary, was more closely connected to the house. Both were free standing. According to Sir Gyles Isham, the kitchen garden conservatory was pulled down in 1916. The large conservatory also no longer exists but a drawing by George Clarke establishes that it occupied an area beyond Sir Charles Isham’s rockery. The sketch also indicates that the building followed ‘ridge and furrow’ design that was typical of the Victorian period. This was an unostentatious style indicating that Emily was perhaps concerned not to risk the disapproval of her mother-in-law.

Similarly, the two lodges (the first, Porter’s Lodge built on Wold Road in 1849 and the second, Swan Lodge at the front gate in 1850), were not ‘grand’. As with the conservatories, no plans exist for the lodges but the architect is believed to be J. G. Bland, whose Tudor style design for Lamport Manor (Home Farm), echoes the form of the lodges. They were constructed to make a statement about Lamport Hall.

The eighteenth-century fashion for setting houses in landscape entailed moving the gates and the gatekeeper’s lodge to the edge of the parkland, making them a ‘frontispiece’ for the main house. The positioning of a lodge outside the axis of a great house at the entrance to the parkland was intended as a warning that the house was protected but also as an anticipatory foretaste for visitors of the vista ahead; ‘a symbol of the power and taste of the landowner it served.’ The absence of lodges at Lamport not only rendered the house unfashionable but also indicated that it was a ‘middling sort’, not quite important enough to require them. The building of the lodges was an act of architectural aggrandizement for Lamport Hall.

Emily then turned her attention for the first time to the house itself: ‘Back kitchen, still room, bedroom over built 1857.’ This was a reference to the last addition to the garden front and the architect of the modification in 1842, Henry Goddard was once again...

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45 Isham, Building Memorandum, N.R.O. IL 3086.
46 George Clarke, Sketch showing the Garden Front with the Large Conservatory (c. 1853), N.R.O. GCPS Book 6, p.12.
48 Pevsner and Cherry, Northamptonshire, p.289.
50 Isham, Building Memorandum, 1857, N.R.O. IL 3086.
Figure 5. Architectural drawing of additions and alterations, William Burn (10 April 1860).
(N.R.O. IL 3079/D56)
commissioned. Externally, the building matched the earlier neo-Tudor remodelled drawing room and kitchen and a key part of its purpose appears to have been to improve the aspect of the back of the house by masking the service buildings that could be seen from the garden. Internally, alterations of existing rooms took place to insert a stillroom and an extension was added to the kitchen to provide two separate sculleries. That Emily felt it necessary to have an extension built to add more rooms to the service area indicates her conformity to the Victorian obsession with order and specialisation that required separate rooms for each area of domestic work.

Following modern trends in design seems to have mattered more to Emily than to her husband. This is indicated by the addition of the bedroom for Sir Charles Isham above the sculleries. The positioning of a room here was inconsistent with the Victorian hatred of smells; however, it seems to have been specifically created for Charles so that he could look over his rockery and observe his garden gnomes.

That Emily had commissioned Goddard to add the garden wing indicates an initial cautious approach to her projects: either she did not want to, or did not dare, stray away from the external style established by Mary in 1842. However, when she decided on her major project for the north-west front in 1860, she turned to William Burn, an architect with a far greater reputation.

Emily and William Burn

By 1860, Emily was a mother of two daughters, Louisa and Emily. A further girl was stillborn that year. Another daughter, Isabel was born the following year. Significantly, the project for the north-west front involved improving the nurseries that were considered ‘too dark’. But this was only part of William Burn’s remit. His overall commission was to complete the updating of Lamport Hall.

William Burn was a Scottish architect who, by the time of his death in 1870, had the biggest country house practice in Britain. He never exhibited at the Royal Academy or published anything: his reputation had grown by word of mouth alone. His houses were recognised for sensible design rather than artistry and in particular he has been credited with spearheading the fashion for specialized spaces that is a feature of the Victorian country house.

Burn appears to have been the natural choice for Emily. He suited her ambitious nature by being well known, but he could also be relied upon to produce practical solutions to problems. The series of drawings he provided for his client reveal alterations and redesigns. Burn’s attention to detail was a hallmark of his reputation; as well as his drawings, extensive documents such as a building log and a number of bills and receipts provide a particularly detailed account of the progress of the project. Like Mary before her, Emily had changing requirements for her architect and clear views about what she liked and disliked.

The main focus of Burn’s commission was the redesign of the main entrance to the house and the interior reorganisation that ensued. In 1861, the use of Webb’s High Room as the

main entrance to the house was dispensed with when the door was changed to a floor-
length sash window. Emily was thinking ahead: the High Room was to become a ballroom
for the coming out parties for her daughters.\textsuperscript{56} A new carriage drive was designed to take
visitors past the Webb and Smith frontage and deliver them to a new grand entrance from
where they would process to the ballroom.

Burn’s initial plan, submitted in January 1860, focused on the entrance plus limited internal
alterations, but this seems not to have suited Emily as a new plan was submitted the
following April.\textsuperscript{57} This plan was for a completely new frontage that involved extensive
internal changes – a minor project was to become a major rebuild (Figure 5).

The drawing shows the frontage of the house much as it is today. Burn has moved the
whole block six feet out to be brought in line with the Smith/Webb wing, a tower has
replaced Hakewill’s porch and a Tuscan porch has been added to the Smith frontage next
to the library. Of particular interest on this drawing is the four-storey cross-section. As well
as redesigning the frontage, Burn was proposing a major reorganisation of the service area
which involved inserting a new servants’ hall beneath the dining room.

Burn’s trademark as an architect was the systemization of the living and working quarters
of country houses. Lines of communication were meticulously worked out to ensure
complete privacy for the family and, within the service area itself, clear delineation of the
various functions. At Lamport, he must have felt that the service provision was inadequate
as his sequence of drawings for the house demonstrates a particular preoccupation with the
organisation of the servants’ area. Unlike many of his commissions, he did not have the
luxury of building from new; Lamport was not a large, great house and William Burn had
to wrestle with a conversion in limited space. His solution was to build down – a new
servants’ hall was to be created in the basement, releasing the existing hall to be redesigned.

A considerable amount of discussion must have followed between architect and client before
the project was taken any further. A number of further plans and drawings exist both for
the frontage and the service area. In December 1860 a ‘Jacobethan’ façade was proposed as
an alternative to the classical design.\textsuperscript{58} This design was representative of much of the fashion
of Victorian architecture. Old families who already possessed a landed background and
liked to mark their manorial past particularly favoured this style.\textsuperscript{59} This was an important
social statement at a time when new self-made men were buying their way into country
house life. Perhaps there was some regret that Mary Isham had replaced the original Tudor
north-west block 40 years earlier.

If the façade had caused considerable discussion, so too had the arrangement of the service
area. In December 1860, Burn was still proposing to insert a basement, but rather than
making it into a servants’ hall, he divided the area into small rooms, each serving a different
function: keeping and preparing lamps and storing shoes, wood and coal. His original
suggestion that the servants should congregate ‘underground’ was a rather outdated method
of accommodating them. The Victorians generally felt a certain amount of duty of care
towards their employees and were increasingly, ‘unwilling to sink [them] in a hole’.\textsuperscript{60}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{56} Isham, ‘The Historical and Literary Associations of Lamport’, 27.
\textsuperscript{57} William Burn, \textit{Architectural drawing of Proposed Changes}, (31 January 1860), N.R.O. IL 3079/D49.
\textsuperscript{59} Franklin, \textit{The Gentleman’s Country House}, p.5.
\end{flushright}
During the early part of 1861, further discussions between architect and client must have frequently taken place. Eventually, the classical frontage was favoured over the Jacobethan design and the plan for a basement was abandoned altogether. The rebuilding of the façade six feet further out was in itself a major undertaking and the disruption this would entail was likely to have been a daunting prospect. Emily might have felt that the insertion of a basement was a step too far. Whatever the reason for abandoning this part of the plan, Burn found a way of providing the Ishams with enough rooms for the servants to carry out their specialised tasks by adding a single story extension.61

The main focus of Burn’s work was undoubtedly the new frontage. That this was a project that involved major disruption with minimal gain demonstrates how much Emily wanted to change the external image of the house. This project was only possible because nineteenth-century industrial developments had led to improved techniques in the production of wrought iron; from the mid-century, iron mills had begun to roll I-beams. Any attempt to rebuild the frontage further out before this time would have involved the insertion of numerous pillars to support wooden beams, which in a six foot space, would not have been aesthetically pleasing. Technological advances now made it possible for architects such as Burn to order girders precisely to requirements; calculations were included on his first submission for the frontage. The fact that the Northampton to Market Harborough railway opened in 1859 was also part of his planning as without it, transportation of the girders to Lamport would have been considerably more problematic.

61 William Burn, Plans for the New Extension, N.R.O. IL 3079/D57 (18 May 1861); D58 (27 July 1861).
The building took just under a year. The project for the new entrance to the house included the alteration of the carriage drive, which was finished in 1862. This ensured that visitors would no longer be taken to the old High Room/Hall entrance, although they would still pass it on their way to the Tuscan porch ensuring that the Smith/Webb frontage would continue to be admired. To further emphasise that this no longer provided access and complete the overall remodelling, a balustrade enclosing a terrace in front of the south-west block was constructed in 1863.62

In 1898, following Emily’s death, Charles compiled a book of condolences that included a photograph of Lamport Hall, which clearly shows the external changes she made to the two frontages (Figure 6). The new nineteenth-century façade, juxtaposed with the seventeenth-century and eighteenth-century wings, transformed the appearance of the house. Charles’ view that this was a successful change is expressed in the doggerel in the caption beneath the photograph.

Emily receives all the credit for replacing one of his mother’s major building projects that had only stood for 40 years. Mary, in her usual way, makes no comment in her journal other than recording that the project took place. The most inspired feature of Burn’s whole project was the decision to move the north-west frontage six feet further out to align it with the Smith/Webb block. A visitor approaching the house would continue to be greeted by a view of the much-admired south-west block but they would now be aware that this was part of a greater house.

A Lasting Legacy
The transformation of the north-west front completed the work of the two chatelaines on the external appearance of Lamport Hall – for Mary who had begun the task of opening up the aspect of the house and Emily who masterminded its modernisation. Mary and Emily viewed the house from a practical and fashionable standpoint and were less concerned than later generations would be with the retention of the Elizabethan house. They understood the importance of Lamport as a symbol of the family they had married into and were determined to enhance and protect the inheritance of the Ishams. Had Mary not taken action when she became chatelaine, the house might well have continued to decline. Not only did she bring to her marriage the money to save the house, but she also brought the necessary energy to take on the task of creating both a home for her family and a house worthy of a baronet. Fortunately, her daughter-in-law shared her passion and continued to ensure that Lamport Hall kept abreast of modern developments. Married to men who were content to leave the running of the house to their wives, it was Mary and Emily, not their husbands, who initiated the changes and directed the architects and builders who worked for them.

The importance of Lamport Hall lies in its origins and five centuries of development in the hands of one family. The continual process of remodelling is a significant reason why the house has survived, and Mary and Emily should be duly accredited for the full extent of their contribution.

Acknowledgements
Thanks are due to the staff at N.R.O and Mr George Drye (Executive Director of the Lamport Hall Preservation Trust), for facilitating my research, and to Mr Bruce Bailey and Dr Phillip Lindley (Leicester University) who read and commented on a draft of this article.

62 Isham, Building Memorandum, N.R.O. Il 3086.
Implementing a Professional Police Force in Northamptonshire

SYLVIA THOMPSON

The reform of policing had already begun in London in the eighteenth century with a unit of ‘Thief-takers’ being established in 1750, later transformed into the ‘Bow Street Runners’. Patrick Colquhoun (1745-1820) established in 1798 a Marine Police on the Thames, paid for by the merchants of the West India docks who were suffering badly from theft; two years later it became a public-funded organisation. Three years earlier Colquhoun’s A Treatise on the Police in the Metropolis, had defined what was needed in the fight against increasing crime: ‘a police force divorced from the judiciary and concerned not with punishment, but the “Prevention and Detection of Crimes”’. Sir Robert Peel, prior to becoming Home Secretary in 1822, had been concerned with police reform when he was Secretary of State for Ireland (1812-18). He set up the Peace Preservation Force in 1814, which was the forerunner of the Royal Irish Constabulary. He was one of the main protagonists in arguing for a reform of the policing system in England and Wales. In 1828 he successfully argued in Parliament for the Metropolitan Police Bill on the grounds that it would be a more efficient system than those already existing, although the Bow Street Runners were in force. However, from the moment that the new Metropolitan Police Force took to the streets of London in 1829, provincial gentlemen, magistrates, clergymen and central government increased their interest in rural policing issues.

The 1833 Lighting and Watching Act permitted a paid watch to be established who ‘strictly monitored the beerhouses and helped to implement the New Poor Law, forestalled riots, and even kept order in the new workhouse’. Kettering took advantage of this Act by appointing, two ‘standing’ constables initially to serve the parish annually, rising to three in 1834 and 1835. This practice would cease in 1842 under the terms of the County Police Act of 1839.

Under the Municipal Corporation Act of 1835, borough towns could begin to organise a police force under a local Watch Committee, which was tasked with the responsibility of its maintenance. Northampton implemented fully, Daventry partially; Higham Ferrers ignored the act completely. Initially what was seen, according to the Northampton Watch Committee Minutes, was a uniformed night patrol that received a weekly wage of 14s (70p) during the winter half year and 12s (60p) in the summer half year. The day police were only paid ‘according to their trouble and services, on a statement being forwarded to the Watch

1 For clarification, police and policing within this paper hold two different meanings. Police is seen as the structured, centrally-controlled and public organisation that would be associated with the modern police force; while policing refers to any unstructured, local and private organisation, including the old parish constable.
3 ibid. p.21.
5 The Metropolitan Police Act, 1829 (10 Geo.4 c.44). The City of London was exempt from the Act due to its historical resistance to implementing an organised police force. The City, then to the present day, has remained a separate police area with its own Commissioner under the control of the City Court of Common Council. City of London Police Act, 1839 (c.xciv).
6 Lighting and Watching Act, 1833 (3&4 Will. 4 c.90).
8 S.A. Peyton, Kettering Vestry Minutes, pp.149-50.
9 County Police Act, 1839 (2&3 Vict. c.93).
10 Municipal Corporation Act 1835 (5&6 Will. 4 c.76).
11 Watch Committee Minutes 8 January 1836.
Committee.’ The Municipal Corporation Act was ‘an attempt to rationalise and modernise, somewhat on the lines of the Metropolitan Police, the confused pattern of Improvement Act watchmen and constables which already existed in many towns.’ Northampton followed a similar pattern to that suggested by Field when discussing Portsmouth’s new force that it ‘looked remarkably like what had gone before it’.12

With this upsurge in legislation in how towns and villages could police themselves, it soon followed that in 1836 a Royal Commission, headed by Edwin Chadwick, circulated questionnaires to all counties in England and Wales, including parishes of Northamptonshire and the county Divisions of Daventry, Kettering, Northampton, Oundle, Peterborough and Towcester, in order to produce a report on the state of policing/crime at that time.13 All were asked a series of far-reaching but pointed questions that dealt with the extent of crime in the area, migration of crime, the issue of tramps and vagrants, and morality in the form

12 J. Field, Police, Power and Community in a Provincial English Town: Portsmouth 1815-1875, pp.48-49.
13 The Division questionnaire contained 48 questions whereas the parish/union questionnaire contained 34. The parish Guardians were asked: ‘Is there within your Parish or Union any Local Act in force giving peculiar Police powers?’ In all cases this question has either not been answered or ‘no’ was given. This was the only question that did not appear on the Division questionnaire.
of beerhouses as well as specific incidents, arson, cattle maiming and riot; issues that had Swing overtones. The questionnaire went on to request information on matters relating to the type and efficiency of policing arrangements within the County’s Divisions and parishes as well as the desirability of implementing a professionally paid police force and possible cost savings if a new regulated police force was introduced in place of the existing initiatives. But the Returning Officers for Northamptonshire were, at times, somewhat cautious in their response. (Figure 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Constables</th>
<th>Sworn in</th>
<th>Class of Constable</th>
<th>Use of Substitutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daventry</td>
<td>Each parish: 1 constable and 1 thirdborough 15 2 larger parishes</td>
<td>Leet Court or by Magistrates</td>
<td>Farmers and Tradesmen</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kettering</td>
<td>Each parish: 1 constable 2 larger parishes</td>
<td>Local hundred, Leet Court, Parish or by Magistrates</td>
<td>Respectable Farmers</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton</td>
<td>Each parish: 1 constable 2 larger parishes</td>
<td>Leet Court or by Magistrates</td>
<td>Farmers and Tradesmen</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oundle</td>
<td>Six Chief constables, 40 petty</td>
<td>Manor courts</td>
<td>Husbandmen and Tradesmen</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peterborough</td>
<td>Each parish: 1 constable</td>
<td>Leet Courts at Helpstone, Maxey and Peterborough</td>
<td>Farmers and small Tradesmen</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towcester</td>
<td>Each parish: 1 constable</td>
<td>Courts</td>
<td>Farmers and Tradesmen</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Shows, by Division, the number of officers per parish, where they would have been sworn in, their social class and whether substitution was permitted.

14 The Division reports for Brackley and Wellingborough could not be found in the PRO archives, therefore any calculations undertaken on these two Divisions are based on the quarterly figures submitted by the county to central government in 1854, as published in the Northampton Mercury 14 January 1854, p.4 c.1-3. Based on these figures the number of parishes each had control of was 33 and 31 respectively.

15 A thirdborough is a peace officer, an under constable, while a headborough is the chief officer of the borough.

16 Swing Riots took place in 1830-31 (see Northamptonshire Past and Present, No. 64, 2011, pp.68-80). The main contributing factor towards civil unrest at this time was rural distress.

Question 21: What is the number of Constables in your Division, and how are they appointed? Question 22: From what class of persons are they usually selected and are they permitted to provide substitutes?
Table 2. Provides an approximation of constable numbers per Division.\textsuperscript{17}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Parishes</th>
<th>Large Parishes</th>
<th>Constables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brackley</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Constables 36 ±</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daventry</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Constables 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Headborough 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Thirdborough 43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kettering</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Constables 68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Constables/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Thirdborough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Headborough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oundle</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Chief Constables 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Petty 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peterborough</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Constables 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towcester</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Constables 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellingborough</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Constables 39 ±</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How the constables were appointed and ultimately the duties they undertook were set within a local framework. Within this structure it was a democratic right of all qualifying inhabitants of a community, namely the ratepayers, to participate in discussing parochial business, voting for the election of parish officers, which was an annual affair, and serving when called upon to undertake the role of a parochial officer. The parochial officers were the churchwarden, the overseer of the poor, the constable and the surveyor of the highways. In essence each parish formed its own unit of obligation in which each reflected the economic and social order of that community, be it rural or urban.\textsuperscript{18}

The actual process of appointing and confirming officers to the various parochial positions was the same. Eligible ratepayers were voted for by their peers’, ‘the names of the candidates would be written, each followed by a long line. Each voter would come up …in turn and “scratch”

\textsuperscript{17} Source of Data, Division questionnaires, \textit{Northamptonshire 1835}, p.16 and Quarterly returns for the county \textit{Northampton Mercury}, 14 January 1854, p.4, c.1-3.

that is make a mark across the line against his candidate’s name’, or by a show of hands. Those appointed were deemed as suitable for office for the forthcoming year. Although only a few vestry minutes have been examined, there was no evidence to show that members of the community were reluctant to take up office.

As to the number of constables, this can only be estimated. Using Table 1 for constables per division and number of parishes in Table 2, there were on average 396 constables to an overall county population of nearly 180,000. The status of these constables, although respectable, was often in a lower status group, small tradesmen and farming people. Furthermore, the office of constable has been viewed by historians as creating hardship to all who undertook the role, as often it was unwaged and duties took them away from their paid employment.

However, expenses and fees via the court and the vestry were available for many aspects of the constables’ duties. ‘Paid the constables expense for taking three Boys to the Justice, and for having them Whipped at the Stocks for Robbing of Gardens…10s’; ‘taking Jane Linnel to Gaol…17s 11d’; ‘V. Baily, Constable, paid for a warrant…2s’. James Blinco, the Farthingstone parish constable paid out 2d for sending the Hue and Cry to Charlton, John Bellamy the Brigstock constable, paid 4d for a Hue and Cry from Brigstock to Gretton’.

Regulated Allowances for the Conveyance of Vagrants, One Shilling per mile only is allowed for such conveyance by Cart or Waggon, whether one or more such vagrants are at the same. While this is only a snapshot, it goes some way to counter the argument of ‘hardship’.

It would also follow that if it took the constable away from his work, then substitution would be common. When source documents for Northamptonshire were examined there was little to suggest, on the surface, that the county indulged in such practice. The response to substitution by magistrates, as shown in Table 1 ‘Use of Substitutes’, ‘...are they permitted to provide substitutes?’ the overwhelming response was ‘No’. Daventry and Northampton gave the exact same retort, that was ‘execute the office themselves’; Kettering ‘do not provide substitutes’; Oundle ‘none’; Peterborough ‘not permitted to provide Deputies’; Towcester ‘substitutes are not provided’. Overall, according to the local magistrates, substitution was not an issue in the county, therefore those appointed to parochial service were expected to undertake it along with their regular employment. But it can be argued, using the answers to other questions posed by the Royal Commission, that the Returning Officers were not completely truthful.

20 In order to establish the number of constables and Police Offices per head of county population, information had to be gleaned from a number of different areas due to the fact that statistical data collection was very much in its infancy during the period in question. While it is a fact that in 1831, according to Northamptonshire 1835, p.13, the county consisted of 336 parishes, this figure was not broken down into Divisions, therefore only a minimum number of constables covering the county can be estimated, this being 336. This figure being derived from the Division returns in 1836, see Table 2.1, which states that each parish had at least one constable. A more accurate figure can be obtained by using the 1831 data that also shows known large parishes, those that had inhabitants of greater than one thousand, the 1832 Royal Commission reports on Municipal Corporations for the county boroughs of Daventry and Northampton that stipulated their individual constable numbers, Division reports and the county’s quarterly returns sent to London in 1854 that shows parishes by Division. Using this data the estimate of constable numbers can be calculated out at 396 ±.
22 Finedon Vestry minutes.
23 R. Cowley. Guilty M’Lud!, p.94.
24 NRO D 2794 – notice to do with the conveyance of Vagrants 1820.
Question 26: Have Constables or their substitutes a competent knowledge of the law with relation to the duties of their office?

Question 26, unlike question 22, contains an element of ambiguity and therefore the answers are not as uniform as those for substitution where a yes/no response could have been given without further explanation. Kettering viewed their constables, as having ‘competent knowledge’ while at the other end of the scale Oundle voiced concern ‘very imperfect knowledge’ and Northampton just answered ‘no’. In contrast, Towcester’s return does defend the constable by stating ‘so many changes…difficult for any constable to be fully informed in the judicial.’ The answers to this question added fuel to the Commission’s report that the constable was not up to the task when it came to the law.

As to substitution it would appear that Kettering did not allow substitution, for how else would men gain a ‘competent knowledge’ other than being continually exposed to the workings of the judiciary? It must be remembered that no formal training was in place at this time. Oundle, it would appear, did not participate in the practice either. Towcester’s reaction can be best summed up by the observation that ‘by custom, the right and power of the parish to provide for its inhabitants whatever services or regulative ordinances were deemed locally expedient was so vaguely extensive as to be practically without ascertained limits’. This could explain not only the diversity of answers but also Towcester’s reaction to the question posed.25 However, none of this explains Northampton’s rather strange reply.

But this lack of knowledge did not stop the position of constable being given to the same person year on year. Etheridge, in her article on the Northampton Borough police force estimated that of 28 constables who served the borough from 1796 to 1825 the length of service averaged out at 5.4 years.26 Only eight served for just the one year, the rest continued in office from between seven and 30 years. Also, several men served for a period of time as constable and were then subsequently employed by the County’s police force.

Question 27: Are their connexions or interests such as might tempt them to connive at illegal practices or cause them to be less active then they ought to be in the performance of their duty?

The overall consensus on those men that were appointed to the office was ‘Trustworthy’. Their duties, contained within the few remaining Northamptonshire constable accounts books, local newspaper reports, and Quarter Session minutes as well as those of the vestry, were somewhat diverse.27 Some examples are of serving summons and warrants, distributing money to the poor, providing payment to those killing crop pests, namely sparrows and hedgehogs, as well as assisting with the drawing up of the local militia lists. Below are three typical different examples of local events that involved the parish constable.

i) ‘The Vestry notice…that a disposition to tumultuous behaviour has become prevalent among the younger part of both sexes of the labouring classes in this town [Kettering]. This Vestry therefore desire the Peace Officers to be careful in observing what persons are found thus offending, and to apprehend and secure all suspicious characters.’28 How this matter was dealt with is unknown, although it was possible that the constables used their authority to deal with the situation, for neither was this incident referred to again in the vestry minutes nor was there any record that offenders were brought before the magistrate.

27 NRO 273 P/47 [PC47].
28 Kettering Vestry minutes May 1815.
ii) Reverend Francis Litchfield of Farthinghoe on refusing an applicant’s subsistence on the grounds that if he had ‘not left a place which he might have retained, but [also] because the wages he received a few days before…were amply sufficient to maintain him for the present,’ requested the constable be called as the applicant became ‘exceedingly insolent and threatened Mr Litchfield in a most furious manner.’

No charges were brought against the claimant as it appears that the presence of the constable and any subsequent action that he was expected to take was enough.

iii) An account of a robbery of linen goods from a drapery shop in Oundle gives an indication of many of the stages that the constable would have been involved in when a criminal act had taken place. Information from a customer of the shop ‘led to suspicion; and a search-warrant being immediately obtained’, the constable found stolen goods. After arrest by the constable and examination by the magistrate, three members of the Smith family, the felons, were sent for trial at which the constable would have been present. Mr William Smith, landlord of the White Hart public house, was found guilty and sentenced to death for ‘burglariously [sic] stealing linen goods’. The constable would have either kept him in his own home if a lock-up was not available or transported him to the nearest jail. Smith’s wife Sarah and son George were acquitted. It transpired that William was subsequently reprieved. However, on 9 March 1827 a William Smith was found guilty and transported for life for sheep stealing. Although a common name it is possible that this was the same person.

But an explanation for the original question regarding ‘illegal…less active in the performance of their duty’ could be due to the fact that the constable would have had a symbiotic relationship with those around him. Be it through trade, living, socialising or even being related to his neighbours, therefore, he would be more inclined to turn a blind eye to their wrongdoings than to be stigmatised by his community. A returning officer was unlikely to confess this shortcoming to the Commission, especially as he would have been part of the process for voting in people to the post.

In contrast, Questions 16, 17 and 18 contained a set of significant and related questions regarding intolerant behaviour since 1829, namely riots or tumults, fires, loss of life or property and the part the constable played in apprehending the offenders or suspected persons.

Rural unrest was, to a large extent played down, especially the whole episode of Swing riots that was seen in the county in the winter of 1830. The Northamptonshire elite saw this as being of local concern, using the local tools available to them to quell the rioters without resorting to outside interference. This was abundantly clear by how dismissive the replies were. Both Daventry and Northampton gave short sharp replies to the question of rioters — ‘a few slight cases for increase of wages’. Oundle did, however, report a riot ‘with a view of destroying thrashing machines, and preventing the use of them’. We know that on Saturday 27 November 1830 the thrashing machine of Samuel Brown of Warmington became the target of Swing agitators. The end result of this debacle was that the machine was destroyed and six men were sentenced to various terms of hard labour, with one given the death penalty that was commuted to transportation for seven years. Although there were seven other farm machines destroyed (in chronological order) at Finedon, Kings Sutton, Elmington, Moulton,

29 NRO Parliamentary Papers (1834) vol.28, Report of the Royal Commission into the Administration and Practical Operation of the Poor Laws, Appendix A pp.397-411, evidence collected by J.J. Richardson on behalf of the Royal Commission on parishes in Northamptonshire.
30 Stamford Mercury, 8 June 1821, p.3, col.1, and 3 August 1821, p.3, col.1.
31 Stamford Mercury, 9 March 1827, p.3, col.1.
Upper Boddington, Overstone and Little Bowden during December 1830, only a cursory mention was given.

**Question 17:** Since the year 1829 have there been any fires within your Division? If so, specify their nature, and whether they were suspected to have been wilfully caused; and what were the effects so far as relates to the loss of life or property?

In England arson was very much a long established method of demonstrating rural displeasure. It was an act that was often undertaken as a covert action under cover of night. It was, therefore, very rare for someone to be arrested for the crime, but when they were, the full weight of the law came down on them. Northampton reported ‘One at Brixworth in December 1831 supposed to be set on fire by an incendiary but although a reward of £700 was offered no evidence could be obtained sufficient to commit any person for the offence, no life was lost but damage to the amount of £100 was sustained – Two others at Hackleton for one of which the culprit was transported for life – not much damage done.’ Daventry also reported fires, one in Long Buckby that went unresolved, while in Guilsborough Thomas Gee was convicted of maliciously setting on fire the Tithe Barn. ‘It was said that Gee set fire to it with a lighted candle borrowed from the servant girl at the farm. He was convicted for arson, and hung [sic] at Northampton on March 21st 1834’ (the crime had taken place on 27 December 1833).

**Question 32:** In the case of the occurrence of any riots or tumults, what means are available for their suppression, and for the apprehension of the offenders; and do you find any difficulty in securing the prompt attendance of a sufficient number of persons to act efficiently as Special Constables for the protection of the Division?

**Question 33:** In case of need are there any and what means of co-operation between your Division and other Divisions in the same or different Counties?

During this period members of the local communities were still expected to put themselves forward as special constables to augment the constable in times of unrest, as was the case in the 1830s when the Swing riots were at their height, or be conscripted into the militia. Unlike the role of a special constable which saw any member of the parish, regardless of age or social status sworn in at times of civil unrest, the militiamen were drawn from the community and were usually between the ages of 18 and 45. It was the responsibility of the constable to prepare the Muster Rolls of all eligible parishioners. Each parish was expected to provide at least two men and, as the burden of looking after the families of serving men fell to the parish, single men were preferred. On a payment of £10, unlike the office of constable, substitution was permitted and it actively took place. The role of the militiaman was to safeguard the community from attack from abroad but also to quell rioters.

The use of the local inhabitants as constables and militiamen was not the only policing initiative used, for others old and new, public and private, permanent and temporary systems were seen in the county. One of the earliest systems was the use of collective aid in the form of ‘hue and cry’; although spasmodic it was still in evidence in the nineteenth century. Its concept was very simple and could be very effective. When the constable raised the alarm, all citizens, on pain of a fine or even imprisonment, pursued and captured felons in order to bring them to justice. But by the second quarter of the nineteenth century ‘hue and cry’ was on the wane. Evidence for its consignment to an era past can be found in the

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records for the January 1838 Quarter Sessions. Parish constables, Westley and Whiting of Piddington were displeased with the actions of a bystander, Campion, who failed to assist them to their satisfaction in the execution of their duty. This resulted in a court case in which Campion was blamed for failing to render assistance, and through his actions a prisoner escaped capture. The jury’s verdict was not guilty, and with it the call of ‘hue and cry’ came to hold little worth.

As one form of policing was in decline another was in the ascendency, the private prosecution association. The function of an association is best summed up by King, ‘A prosecution association can be defined as a mutual subscription entered into by two or more individuals for the purposes of either sharing the costs of the prosecution and apprehension of lawbreakers and/or encouraging these events by offering rewards, etc.’ In essence they were insurance against criminal activity. Evidence can be found at Northamptonshire Record Office that since 1781 at least 33 associations had been formed in the county. This was well down on the number King cited for Essex, which had a total exceeding one hundred. But the reasons for their creation were the same in both counties, i.e. to aid crime prevention, to assist in detection and to implement litigation.

While some employed foot patrols, the majority provided the mechanism whereby the membership would share litigation and reward costs. When information leading to recovery of stolen goods or naming the perpetrators of a crime was required, the association would arrange the printing of handbills and put notices in the local newspapers offering the inducement of a reward to gain information. The main reason for their growth was that while under English law all could undertake a prosecution, in practice it was an extremely costly affair.

Unlike today, under the old system when an alleged criminal act had taken place, the victim was expected to undertake all the investigating work to bring the criminal to justice. The victim could expect to see the financial expense of pursuing the crime outweigh the cost of the property lost for the basic overheads included advertising for information pertaining to the crime, posting a reward and, if it came to court, covering the expenses of witnesses. Then there was the cost of repairing or replacing the property in question. An association ran on the principle of a subscription that would offset many of the above expenses, but its terms and conditions were defined.

Oundle Association was set up for ‘conducting and managing the Business of a Society for the more effectually preventing the Felonies and other Misdemeanours within the Town and Neighbourhood’. In 1820 the membership fee was set for the Association at 10s per annum. Four years earlier, an advert was placed in the Mercury offering a reward of £20 for the names of those who killed a sheep belonging to Mr Richard Maydwell, a member of the Association. The reward was broken down into £5 to be paid by Mr Maydwell, a similar amount by the Association and £10 under the ‘Reward allowed by Act of Parliament’.

33 NRO Northampton Quarter Sessions 5 January 1838.
36 Stamford Mercury, 13 March 1801, p.2, col.3.
38 Stamford Mercury, 6 December 1816, p.3, col.4.
39 The Parliamentary Reward system was abolished in 1818 (58 Geo. III c.70). However, provisions were made in this act for a more flexible system which allowed for payment by the court of expenses in the case of a felony and discretionary rewards.
Part of the terms and conditions of the Harleston Association was that members could use the association’s dogs, ‘any member having a Sheep or Lamb killed, may have the immediate Use of the Blood Hounds to trace the Depredators.’ Kettering Association covered just about every type of thief they could think of as the society was set up for ‘prosecuting Felons, Thieves and Depredators of every Description Particularly HORSE and SHEEP STEALERS, STOCK CATTLE also for the more effectually protecting the Gardens, Orchards, Field Barns, Turnips, Fences, &c.’ As a show of paternalistic responsibility, most of the landed gentry were members of the various associations, thereby providing an element of respectability and legitimacy, but they themselves did not call upon the society’s services. When a robbery at Elton Hall stables took place, the Earl of Carysford, a member of the Oundle Association, posted a ‘Ten Guineas Reward’ for information regarding the persons involved in the theft.

Mystery remains on how successful these organisations were, but once the new police force was established there was a steady decline in association numbers as their function was incorporated into the duties of the police officer. But of all the crimes in Northamptonshire that were seen in the Quarter Session records for the 1830s poaching far outstripped all others.

The local landed gentry used gamekeepers to safeguard the property from the poacher and were prepared to turn a blind eye to how they undertook their work. Rural Northamptonshire at the turn of the nineteenth century saw enclosure bring about a greater part of rural England than ever before farmed in severalty. However, two things were evident at this time: nationwide poverty was a constant companion of the rural labouring poor and poaching was a major problem in rural Northamptonshire. Those who were found undertaking this pastime without authority were dealt with severely as no account of necessity to provide food for them or their families was taken into consideration, and landowners therefore guarded their land well.

While the local landed gentry posted warnings in the local newspapers outlining the punishment that would be handed out to poachers, those who were not shot or maimed could expect to receive a ruthless sentence. In Deenethorpe a fight took place between gamekeepers and poachers with the result that ‘one of the poachers was found lying…quite lifeless; it was supposed he died from a blow he received on the head. The three that were taken [were] safely lodged in the county gaol at Northampton, for trial.’ But while the landowner was often a local magistrate he would not have tried his own case. Usually the sitting magistrate at petty sessions would award sentences ranging from a few weeks to several months in jail.

In other instances, outside assistance was used. The London-based Bow Street Runners were available to those willing to pay a fee to retain their services, usually in connection with a specific job. ‘Thrapston has been for a long time infested with a gang of house-breakers…it was deemed necessary to send for a Bow-street officer…through his well arranged plans…has burst upon the whole fraternity of thieves, [some were]…committed to Northampton county gaol…others

40 Northampton Mercury, 29 February 1812, NRO.
41 Kettering Association List of Rewards in 1814, NRO.
42 Stamford Mercury, 3 December 1813, p.3, col.4.
43 Northampton Assizes Reports for 1830-1839.
45 However, many forms of charitable provision were made available in most county districts.
46 Stamford Mercury, 13 January 1837, p.3, col.2.
47 NRO Petty Session records and information based on the Game Law lists reported in the Northampton Mercury.
await examinations." In the *Northampton Mercury* 17 June 1837, a year after the introduction of the police in the town, a warning was added to an advertisement for the forthcoming Boughton Green fair, for all thieves, cheats and tricksters that would be found at the fair that ‘The Public are respectfully informed that Bow Street Officers are engaged to attend.’ Henry Goddard, first Chief Constable of Northamptonshire, was not a stranger to the county for in his capacity as a Bow Street Runner he was assigned, in July 1837, by Sir Frederick Roe, the Chief Magistrate at Bow Street, to deal with a burglary.

Question 42: Supposing it desirable to appoint paid Constables to give their whole time to the performance of their duties, what other useful functions might be assigned to them?

Question 43: How many paid Constables do you consider would be requisite in your Division?

In respect of those policing initiatives in operation in the county in the lead up to the 1839 Act there was no evidence to show, at a local level, that change was called for. ‘...from 1750 to 1828, there was no section of public opinion, no group in Parliament or outside, no leading newspaper or periodical which would advocate a reform in traditional machinery for keeping the peace’. In the case of Northamptonshire it was not until the 1836 Royal Commission of Constabulary Forces questionnaire that any evidence could be found to show that local magistrates were asked to consider the efficiency of the existing system and therefore give an indication of how they perceived the policing initiatives on offer. When Northamptonshire’s magistrates were asked two very pointed questions, 42 and 43, the answers do not show a county calling for a radical change of the existing system. From Peterborough, ‘It is considered that it would not be advisable to appoint paid officers for this division if there be a constable for every parish.’ And ‘None unless the parish constable be paid a salary’ respectively. Kettering were equally dismissive of abandoning their parish constables, the answers being, ‘We are not aware of any’ and ‘If the present Constables are continued we think two or three paid constables would be quite sufficient’, bearing in mind that Kettering in 1836 had appointed paid constables under the Lighting and Watching Act. Towcester, in contrast, gave a curt reply answering ‘none’ to both questions.

So while Parliament had begun the process in the 1820s, as part of a reforming programme to implement changes within the criminal justice system as to how England and Wales was policed, from a local perspective there appeared to be no reason for change. There was no overriding evidence at this period in time; there was nothing to show that the county’s policing systems were in a state of flux.

In 1839 the Commission report put forward recommendations for wider police areas that would allow for an exchange of information and the creation of training facilities which would provide a district office that would have the ability to deal effectively with civil unrest. There was no reference in the report that a national police force was proposed. The act, which followed (County Police Act), allowed magistrates to appoint chief constables to form a professional police force, under their direction. While non-compulsory, Northamptonshire’s magistrates agreed to implement change to the existing policing arrangements in the county in 1840. However, four years earlier no indication had been given that major transformation was needed. Although a professional police force was seen

48 *Stamford Mercury*, 2 May 1823, p.3, col.2.
49 *Northampton Mercury*, 17 June 1837, p.1, c.3.
50 H. Goddard, *Memoirs of a Bow Street Runner* (Museum Press, London, 1956), pp.137-142. Although the place was recorded in his autobiography as Farming Woods, the actual incident took place at Fermyn Woods.
as desirable, it would only be considered if it sat alongside the existing constable. So what caused a sea change in attitude between 1836 and 1840?

In 1838 it was reported in the *Mercury* that there was a Chartist call for parliamentary reform, to remedy the gaps left by the 1832 Reform Act, universal suffrage. But ‘the good sense which is characteristic of Englishmen…a thorough conviction that Universal Suffrage is not the specific by which all the ailments of our body politic are likely to be cured.’ This was not the end of the matter, only the beginning, for by February 1839 an incendiary incident was reported as a Chartist uprising in Kettering, invoking memories of Swing. By March a major and worrying Chartist presence in the form of John Collins, a Chartist lecturer, was seen in the county. His high-profile visit was reported extensively in the local newspapers. He delivered a two-hour speech in the market square of Northampton to a fanfare of drums and flag waving. The Tory *Northampton Herald* commented on 30 March, ‘We think it not impossible that Collins spoke from the copy of the same old revolutionary speech. He, of course, abused everybody and everything above himself in station and respectability. But the most amusing part of his address consisted in his abuse of the Whigs and the Whig Ministry.’ Daventry, Kettering and Wellingborough were visited by Collins over the weeks when ‘the lecturer made a long speech on radical reform, universal suffrage, and the advantages of establishing a Female Society to assist him in leading the men in the right way.’

Northamptonshire was not the only county affected by the fear of Chartism. Shropshire’s elite also had the worry of a Chartist movement but this was only one of the issues plaguing them at that time. These were a fear of turbulent miners, improvement in road links between them and the expanding industrial cities, Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester, that exposed them to migrating thieves. This pushed the Salop magistrates to ask the Home Secretary (Lord Russell) for advice on implementing a police force. Shropshire Quarter Sessions sent a letter to the Home Secretary regarding the ‘legality of a county creating its own force.’ The missive was passed to all county magistrates for consideration.

At the Northampton Quarter Session, April 1839, the letter in respect of the ‘Resolution agreed by the Magistrates of the County of Salop’ was considered. The minutes reported that ‘The Court having taken into consideration a letter addressed to the Chairman from the Home Office dated the 2nd of July last on the subject of a Resolution agreed to the Magistrates of the County of Salop at the last general Quarter Sessions of the Peace [that] on the subject of the inefficiency of the constabulary force…That it is the opinion of this Court that the present parish constables constitutes a police force which is not sufficient for the wants of the County. That an organised constabulary force to be paid and of the County appointed by and under the control of the Magistrates of the County is desirable.’ It was not until August 1839 that the County Police Act would be enacted; meanwhile the hopes and concerns and the growing presence of Chartism in the county became commonplace in the local newspapers.

By May the fear of Chartism gaining a political foothold in the county became a reality. The violence that had been seen in recent months and the civil unrest that their rallies invoked had provoked the Northampton mayor to implement steps to counter any threat

52 *Northampton Mercury*, 29 September 1838.
53 *Northampton Mercury*, 23 February 1839.
54 *Northampton Herald*, 30 March 1839, p.3, col.2.
55 ibid. 6 April 1839, p.3, col.1.
57 Northampton Quarter Session April 1839.
58 ibid.
that their meetings may cause. ‘The meeting of the Chartists…was held in the Market Place…The muster was extremely small, owing partly to the returning good sense of the persons originally pledged to Chartism and partly to the preparations made by the Mayor to prevent outrage.’

About 150 special constables were sworn in, ‘with this force…aided by the regular police [under the terms of the 1835 Act] but little was to be apprehended…Two men, Collins and Jones, delegates to the Convention, spoke, and the former was elected to represent Northampton…the language on the whole was carefully guarded.’

Both Tories and Whigs welcomed in principle the implementation of a new police system: ‘we have no hesitation in saying that much as we lament the state of the English Constabulary system and greatly rejoice as we should to its amendment’.

This change in rhetoric was borne out by events in the area. Chartism occurring so closely to Swing had exposed a problem on the maintenance of social order that could not be solved by the old traditional methods of control. When ‘on the previous Friday [17 May 1839] the Mayor issued about 400 notices [to men selected for duty as special constables]…Instead of 300, only about 150 were sworn…’

Men who were relied upon to undertake the role of special constable were now seen as reluctant, either as a reaction to a professional police force established in the borough or through a show of sympathy with the Chartist movement. However small this one action was, its repercussions for an elite that had economic, political and social control over the county and its inhabitants were worrying.

After the 1839 County Police Act was enacted and its contents known, reports on the implication of a new rural police force started to appear, ‘We are happy to see that a very general disposition prevails among County Magistrates to avail themselves of the provisions of the Act of last Session’, reported the Mercury. Although in the previous May the Tory Herald had been vocal in the condemnation of the Whigs, citing them as doing away with ‘the ancient constabulary plan [and desiring] before quitting office to retain political adherents by every possible new and old commissionership, and are especially desirous of damaging the country gentlemen’s influence by changing the form of everything that has long been established’, it was a Tory who proposed change. This goes against the notion that the motive to implement reform of the policing system was instigated by the county’s Whig magistrates, pushing through Whig reform.

When the magistrates at Quarter Session came to vote on the county’s position on implementing a countywide Police Force it was a Tory, William Ralph Cartwright, MP, who proposed the motion. His son would become the first Inspector of Constabulary for the county. The feeling was so strong that it carried a majority of twenty-six for and eight against the proposal. While Independent, Tory and Whig councillors joined forces it was only Tories who were against the motion. Some of these were Henry Sawbridge, Sir Charles Knightley, T.P. Maunsell and the Reverend Francis Litchfield of Farthinghoe. Although Litchfield had been most vitriolic in his condemnation of the magistrates’ decision, the Mercury reported that magistrates were most warm in its approval: ‘most cordially do we congratulate the county upon the decision of the Magistrates last week to establish a County Constabulary force’. This was to be under the control of a local authority. The report, however, went on to single out Litchfield and his ‘utter futility of the arguments employed against

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60 ibid.
63 Northampton Mercury, 21 December 1839, p.2, col.3.
64 Northampton Mercury, 4 May 1839, p.2, cols.5–6.
65 Northampton Mercury, 4 January 1840, p.3, cols.2–3.
although arguments appeared for, in the Mercury, and against in the Herald, the majority of magistrates now believed that the county had ‘outgrown’ the old systems of policing that only reform could rectify.67

Chartism, which brought with it the fear of a return to civil unrest and revolt, was the catalyst that caused the ruling elite of the county to question the traditional methods of policing. A new sense of crisis needed a revaluation of how social control was implemented. The County Police Act provided the mechanism by which the existing system could be developed to suit the needs of a changing county, economically, politically and socially. The ability to implement a non-compulsory act early allowed the social hierarchy in the form of the magistrates to maintain, within the law, local control and hone it to best suit the needs of the people. Evolution was to be slow and calculated, hence the fact that the new force was modest in the beginning; only 29 police officers were recruited to cover the

67 ibid.
whole of the county. Although the new system would pass through a number of stages in its development, in 1842 this report appeared in the *Mercury* that held out the hope of what it could achieve:

We are no blind eulogist of the County Police system, or the policemen themselves…but we approve of a County Police, because it secures on the one hand a control over the persons employed in preserving the peace in the county to a far greater degree than any plan hitherto sanctioned by law; and on the other affords means of considerable efficiency for the prevention and detection of crime, which the parish constabulary has been shown by experience not to furnish.  

But like the workhouse, many came to see the police office as an ever-present weapon of social control overseen by the long-established rural elite.

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A Parliamentary Return of Allotments in 1873 showed that, with a total of 16,447 plots on some 4,294 acres, Northamptonshire led the way in allotments provision among English counties. Whilst this reflected the strength of the labourers’ desire for access to land, this situation had not been achieved easily. It was the outcome of decades of effort by labourers and ‘Labourers’ Friends’, against strong opposition, to secure land for men to work in their spare time. By 1873, enough landowners and clergy had been persuaded of the argument that allotments would help labourers feed their families better, have a small stake in the land and be less likely to seek poor relief. Allotments were also seen as going some way to compensate labourers for their loss of common and customary rights in the great enclosure of the landscape of the previous century and a half.

However, by that time, agricultural labourers had developed the further ambition to be able to rent land free of the often petty restrictions and insulting ‘moral means-tests’ imposed by many allotment societies. In the 1880s there also grew up desire on the part of some workers for smallholdings, that is to say rather larger plots than the typical allotment. For these, labourers and their supporters increasingly looked to Parliament to sanction provision wherever there was a demand, and to give access to village charity lands which traditionally were let to farmers rather than the poor. A new development from about 1880 was that demand for allotments was also coming from urban workers.

The Great Agricultural Depression
In 1873, British agriculture was at its nineteenth century peak. The previous 20 years had brought prosperity for farmers, landowners and most other participants in the rural economy with the exception of labourers, whose wages remained stubbornly low. Home agricultural production fed an increasingly urban Britain, enjoyed good profits and a satisfyingly gentle inflation. With Britain ‘protected by geography’, Free Trade seemed to be working nicely, allowing in cheap food, but not on such a scale as to threaten home producers. These conditions were soon to change. The era of ‘High Farming’ was to be succeeded by the Great Agricultural Depression.

The buffeting of rural England began with a run of exceptionally rainy summers between 1875 and 1879, which ruined harvests, destroyed pastures and brought animal diseases. When the weather improved after 1879, there came another blow – the failure of agricultural prices to rise, as farmers expected. A prolonged fall in world commodity prices brought in floods of agricultural produce from abroad. Britain’s ‘geographical protection’ was largely over. Soon, most sectors of the rural economy were in difficulties. Landowners found their incomes from rents declined markedly, and tenants became difficult to find. Arable and sheep farmers found competition too strong, and many were forced to give up. The incomes of the Church were hit, since tithe payment was linked to the falling price of wheat. Agriculture was forced into a period of painful readjustment. New calls for Protectionist (‘Fair trade’) policies were heard, but, because cheap food imports led to improving living standards across much of the population, it proved impossible for Parliament to abandon,
or even modify free trade. To understand how changing conditions affected labourers and allotments it is necessary not only to consider economic changes, but also political and social developments, the chief of which was a further instalment of Parliamentary Reform in 1884-5.

Politics and Land Reform

Political Reform brought numbers of rural workers on to the voters’ register for the first time. And, as Chartists had foretold, once working men had the vote, their voice would be listened to and legislation on at least some of their demands enacted. Reform also led to the creation of a more representative pattern of local government through the appearance of County Councils, Urban and Rural District Councils and elected Parish Councils. This meant that local government in the countryside passed out of the hands of unelected Justices of the Peace, manorial courts and parish vestries. These local government reforms brought some lessening in the political power of landowners, clergy and rich farmers, though of course those among them who chose to stand for office, or be active on the bench, continued to play a prominent role in rural matters. And deference did not die overnight in rural England.

By 1880, landowners, as well as being under financial pressure, came under challenge on the political front, particularly from the Liberal party. Demands for legislation on the Game Laws, long urged by politicians such as John Bright, were revived. The land system, whereby large estates were restricted from coming on to the market by the practice of primogeniture and the legal arrangements of ‘strict settlement’, also came under growing criticism. In particular, there was criticism of the way that ownership of the land in Britain was concentrated into the hands of a small number of ‘great landowners’ who were accused, among other things, of ‘locking away’ land that could be farmed ‘more productively’, by radical politicians and agricultural trade-unionists.

Although the term ‘great landowners’ was in common usage, information on precisely how many great landowners there were and what acreage qualified them for the appellation, was not known with any precision. In the early 1870s, The Return of Owners of Land, 1872-3, the so-called ‘New Domesday Book’, was published in 1874 for England and Wales and for Scotland, and in 1876 for Ireland. These were the outcome of an investigation requiring all owners of land (however small) in every county, to declare what they owned and what the estimated gross rental value was. There had been nothing like this since William the Conqueror’s Survey, and there has been nothing like it since. Even though the Return had shortcomings (excluding, as it did, urban land ownership and income derived from mineral royalties) it was grist to the mill of critics of aristocratic dominance. But with land owners great, medium and small, listed alphabetically, county by county, the data in the Return took a deal of analysing, a process started in newspapers, and then more comprehensively in book form, notably in John Bateman’s The Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland, 1883 (third edition) and E.C. Brodrick’s English Land and English Landlords, 1881.

It has to be said that, in England at least, the land question did not assume the significance it had in Ireland, where ‘landlordism’ was fought by the Irish Land League and was enmeshed in the politics of Irish nationalism. ‘Pacifying Ireland’ became the major concern in British politics between about 1870 and the start of the Great War. The land question did not even cause the same trouble in England as it did in Wales (over tithes) and in Scotland (over the Highland Clearances). But it was taken up. The formation of a Land Law

3 Bright’s campaign went back to 1845. For meetings promoted by the Anti-Game Law League see Northampton Herald [NH] 31 May 1873.
Reform League in May 1880 brought together such political figures as Charles Bradlaugh, Joseph Arch, the agricultural labour unionist, and Radicals and early Socialists such as Annie Besant, Dr. E.B. Aveling and the Rev. Stewart Headlam.\(^4\) Leading Liberal politicians also embraced Land Law Reform, wishing for ‘free trade in land.’ The cause was also taken up by the English Land Restoration League, which, in the next decade, used ‘red vans’ to carry speakers into the countryside, taking land reform ideas directly to the labourers.\(^5\) (Figure 1) In the long run, English land reformers got nowhere on primogeniture or on the laws hedging strict succession. In many cases the great estates of the late nineteenth century are still the great estates of the early twenty-first. In the years under consideration here, what hurt landowners more was the system of death duties imposed by Harcourt in 1894 (replacing those introduced in 1889), coming as they did on top of the problems caused by a second bout of agricultural depression. However, on the different matter of working men getting access to land, much was achieved in the 30 years from 1880.

**The Allotments Movement in the 1880s**

In the early years of Gladstone’s government of 1880-85 it was proposed to bring in an Allotments Extension Act, designed to make charity land in villages more easily available for labourers’ allotments. Northamptonshire villagers were particularly active in petitioning

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\(^4\) *Northamptonshire Guardian* [NG] 8 May 1880.

Parliament in support of this. Under the 1882 Act, the rural poor in parishes endowed with charitable land were to be entitled to allotments at the average rent paid for land of the same quality in the neighbourhood. The problem was that the persons charged with enforcing the law were those who had hitherto set their face against it. Despite the fact that the Act stipulated that village charity trustees could be obliged to comply if they neglected their duty, it was soon clear that the Act was being ignored. Under it, complainants had the right to appeal to the Charity Commissioners, but it took courage for labourers to take on members of village elites.

By 1885 the supply of allotments in Northamptonshire had grown. According to the Return of the Number of Allotments in Great Britain in 1885, the number had expanded to 20,627 (excluding railway plots), of which 19,534 were under one acre, and 12,697 were a quarter of an acre, or less. The Return also noted that 2,691 of the 19,269 agricultural labourers, farm servants, etc., in the county were provided with potato grounds by their employers, and 123 had ground for a “cow run.” The Return showed that Northamptonshire had a larger number of allotments than anywhere else except for the three Ridings of Yorkshire taken together.

After the extension of the franchise to many new rural voters, it was clear that legislation about allotments provision would have to be made effective. If many landowners recognised this, some still wanted land to be released voluntarily, and were against making allotment provision compulsory. This attitude was reflected in Lord Onslow’s The History and Present Condition of the Allotments System of 1886, the writer being the Hon. Secretary of The Land and Glebe Owners Association, which opposed further legislation.

It fell to the Conservative Government to pass an Allotments Extension Act in 1887, strongly influenced by the Birmingham Liberal-turned-Unionist, Jesse Collings. This was important because it placed the duty of providing allotments on rural sanitary authorities (set up in 1873), which were empowered to purchase or rent land for that purpose. It also extended the powers to allow access to charity land. The Bill was criticised on the grounds that it still depended too much on the goodwill of landowners and that purchase by local authorities would be unworkable. Certainly some landowners were difficult, and sanitary authorities were often less than helpful, a notable local example being the Brixworth Sanitary Board, which was led by men prominent on the Brixworth Board of Guardians.

Nonetheless, the passing of the 1887 Act proved a landmark in the history of the allotments struggle, and soon after it became law there were a number of local challenges to charity trustees at Spratton, Twyford, Farthingstone and Weedon Beck. In the latter place, the Allotments Association complained that existing plots were on the ‘heaviest land’ and that the charity land was better quality and ‘more suitable’. They were obstructed by the vicar and the trustees, one of whom farmed the Poor’s Land.

Some landlords and clergy were more amenable. An interesting example was at Lower Heyford. In 1888 the labourers were paying one shilling per pole, or £8 per acre, for their allotments. They applied to The Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy, which owned land

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7 Northampton Mercury [NM] 3 March 1884.
8 Horn, op. cit., p.377.
9 Northampton Herald [NH] 18 July & 14 August 1890 (Spratton), NM 6 June (Farthingstone) & 15 June 1889 (Weedon Beck), 5 Dec 1890 (Twyford).
there. The Corporation agreed to meet the men’s wishes, and by 1894 had reduced rents to £3 an acre, and had some 55 labourers working their land.\textsuperscript{10} As well as landlords, individual clergymen proved responsive to requests for land. Moved by the scale of unemployment at Lois Weedon in 1887, the vicar, the Revd Thomas Soley, let out a large field of charity land in lots of from half an acre to three acres, at 26 shillings an acre, ‘free of those miserable restrictions with regard to the manner of cultivation imposed by some landlords.’\textsuperscript{11}

Smallholdings and Co-operative Farming Experiments

From about 1885, a time of singular agricultural and industrial distress, there was much interest in smallholdings, particularly in Liberal circles. The idea was launched by Jesse Collings’ advocacy of ‘three acres and a cow’ for rural workers. In support of a Small Holdings Bill, its advocates argued that in countries such as Holland, Belgium, Germany and Switzerland, productivity was higher than on larger British farms. Opponents of the idea pointed out that it was asking a lot of labourers to work for employers and maintain a small holding (rather than an allotment), and that relying on making a living on three acres and a cow was difficult, and probably impossible. Nonetheless, small holdings were wanted by those countrymen who cherished the desire of becoming small farmers.\textsuperscript{12}

It was not just Liberals who were in favour. Landowners of all political persuasions were becoming interested in letting their farms to smallholders. In 1885 a Small Farmers & Labourers Land Company was formed under the chairmanship of Lord Wantage, a Conservative peer, a large landowner in Northamptonshire and Berkshire, who had such tenants on his Lambourne estate. In the Company’s fourth annual report, ventures in other places were noticed. However, the Company directors were disappointed that so few were in a position to purchase land, even on the ‘easy terms of repayment by instalments’ on offer. Yet, there was still optimism that tenants might become owners after a few years. The Company persisted. By 1890 it was getting the financial aid it needed to grow and appointed a travelling agent and lecturer.\textsuperscript{13} Other great landowners, such as Lord Tollemache in Cheshire, had their own smallholding projects. But successful projects were limited. A Conservative Smallholdings Bill in 1892 was criticised by Liberals for lacking a compulsory clause, that it was merely a sop to labourers, and that the hearts of the promoters were not in it.

At this time there was a revival of a type of ‘co-operative farming’. This time the initiative did not originate from below. Faced with difficulties finding tenants, landowners experimented with the idea of letting farms to working men on a co-operative basis, with smallholders working under a bailiff or agent. The most widely known experiment of the time was that of Bolton King at Radbourne Manor, near Southam, Warwickshire, and there were others. Not much along these lines was attempted in Northamptonshire, hence the formation of Harlestone Co-operative Farm, sponsored by Earl Spencer, attracted attention. The idea was proposed after discussions with the Rev. William Bury, rector of Harlestone, who found himself in the unhappy position of not being able to find a tenant for his 160 acre glebe farm. It had stayed untenanted apparently because there was no farmhouse, and Bury was unwilling to erect one. The rector saw the way forward in co-operation, to which he was a somewhat late convert. He found support from his patron, Lord Spencer, who in 1885 agreed to become tenant of the farm at a rent of £425 and they launched it as a ‘co-operative’ scheme.

\textsuperscript{10} NH 1 Dec 1894, NM 12 Nov 1897.
\textsuperscript{11} NM 24 Oct & 4 Nov 1890.
\textsuperscript{12} Joseph Ashby of Tysoe was one such (see M.K. Ashby, \textit{Joseph Ashby of Tysoe 1859-1919}, CUP, 1961).
\textsuperscript{13} NM 13 Aug 1889, 26 Apr 1890.
The land was to be worked by eight labourers from Harlestone, Lord Spencer advancing the men £3,000 at three per cent interest to provide working capital. Bury became the secretary. The men were to be paid wages, and three-quarters of the profits were to be applied to a reserve fund, the rest to be divided between them. The big problem was that profits were precious few. In retrospect, the project seemed doomed from the start. The farm had been neglected and was hard to get into shape. They were hit by a drought in the summer of 1887, and the severe winter following made it hard for the stock. Only once in its first four years did they manage a small profit. At first there was optimism about co-operation reviving Harlestone’s fortunes. An Industrial Co-operative Society was started, and a Dairy Association Ltd. set up a plant. But these experiments foundered. All those involved lost money. Few in Northamptonshire were keen to emulate the experiment.14

Landowner schemes were motivated by political as much as other considerations. The Reform and Redistribution Acts of 1884-5 widened the rural franchise and increased rural constituencies. In this step towards democracy, both established Members of Parliament and prospective candidates had to go out and canvass new voters, a process Lady Knightley of Fawsley undertook in support of her husband, Sir Rainald, who had been sitting for South Northants since 1852.15 To say that Sir Rainald lacked the common touch would be to put it mildly. Happily, his wife had it in abundance and enjoyed talking to cottagers. In 1880 she threw her support behind the search for harder strains of potatoes after the serious crop failure of 1879. Labourers and their wives must have been surprised to hear her talk of the trials she had conducted in her search for a prolific, disease-resistant potato, that would also be a good cooker.16

Urban Allotments

Another development in these years was the rise of allotment societies of town workers. Up to that time, with the notable exception of the Northampton Artisans and Labourers’ Friend Society, urban allotments were few and far between. In 1884, unemployed shoemakers in Wellingborough formed a Friendly Society (under the terms of the 1876 Act), the Wellingborough Permanent Allotment Association, and rented a 183 acre farm belonging to Mr J.C. Corrie. The project was a success. At their annual dinner in 1901, Mr Corrie said it had been ‘a great experiment’. By then, Wellingborough had more allotments than any other place in the county, with a total of 1,063 allotment holders occupying over 357 acres of land.17

Wellingborough’s example was followed by allotments schemes around Northampton. The St James’ End and District Working Men’s Allotment Association started in 1886 with an 18 acre development at Dallington, rented from Lord Spencer, who remitted £5 of the first half year’s rent to help the project off to a good start. On another side of Northampton, the Far Cotton and Cotton End Allotment Association was launched in 1888, and by the end of that year had 107 allotment holders. These Associations were welcome to landowners because they saved renting out scores of small plots individually.18

Kettering’s Garden Allotment Association started in 1887, estimating that about 100 more acres were needed to satisfy demand. By 1899 1,411 Kettering allotment holders were

14 NG 7 Nov 1885, NM 15 Oct 1887, 1 Dec 1888, 14 Sept 1889, 12 Dec 1890.
16 NG 11 Dec 1880.
17 NH 23 March 1901; A Return Made to an Order of the Northamptonshire County Council, 19th January 1899. (Printed)
18 NG 28 March, 1886; NM 8 Sept 1888.
working plots on 190 acres. Land hunger spread to other towns. By 1899 all of them had allotments, the smallest being Higham Ferrers, with 234 allotment holders working on just over 47 acres.19

Allotments and the County Council
In 1894, the duty of providing land for allotments was transferred from Rural Sanitary Boards to the County Urban and Rural District Councils. Four years later, the Allotments

19 Return of Allotments, op. cit.
Committee of the County Council carried out a survey, responded to by 95% of parishes. A detailed Domesday of allotments was produced. In the Urban Districts there were 1,443 acres of allotments and in the Rural Districts 6,366 acres, making a total of 7,809 for the county (excluding those within the boundaries of the County Borough of Northampton). The Return brimmed with statistics, and in moving that this report be accepted by the Council, the chairman of the Committee, E.M. Nunneley, summarised the main ones. The county had a population of 195,935, which meant, he said, that there were almost four acres for every 100 of the population, which he pronounced ‘a very satisfactory state of things.’ In the Rural Districts there was an acreage of 6,366 for a population of c.120,000. In the Urban Districts the figures were 1,443 acres for an estimated population of 76,845, or an average of two acres for every 100 of the population, as against five acres per 100 in the Rural Districts. Nunneley was surprised that there had not been more applications made to the authorities, which he interpreted as showing that ‘there was no general demand for more allotments’. However, he did draw attention to the fact that there were considerable differences in the amount of allotment land in different districts, and that rents for allotments per acre varied considerably, the cost being highest in the Urban Districts.

The County Council Return of 1899 may be seen as the culmination of a long struggle to gain access to land on the part of the workers of Northamptonshire. By then, if they wanted one, workers could now generally find a plot of land to rent near to where they lived. If this was a triumph (and it undoubtedly was) its achievement was deeply ironical, because it came at a time when rural workers were abandoning their long-held desire to make a life on the land. Since 1871, when the census revealed that there were 21,531 agricultural labourers in the county, by 1901 numbers had been halved, to 10,021. With the painful adjustments in agriculture, rural life in rural Northamptonshire went into a decline. The countryside emptied. What the economists (and realists such as Joseph Arch) had argued, that better pay could only be found in British towns, or in America or the colonies, was now taken to heart by the rural labourers. (Figure 2)

To many observers of Northamptonshire, the love of its people for its land, landscape and villages is marked. Possibly this is, in part, nostalgia, but in a way, the long struggle of the labourers for allotments as a means to stay on the land reflected this feeling. There is a rider. If large numbers did migrate at the end of the nineteenth century, many, perhaps most, workers moved to towns within the county, which may have been an important reason for the demand for urban allotments at that time.

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20 Ibid.
21 Return of Allotments, op.cit., and Statement made by the Chairman of the Allotments Committee, 1899
An Unsung Kettering Hero: the Life and Career of William Cattell (1852-1934)
IAN ADDIS

William Cattell, boot machinist, athlete, sportsman, marksman, pleasure-ground owner, pub landlord, taxidermist and seedsman, lived a remarkable life. He is an unsung local hero whose story bears testament to his ability to make the best of his considerable talents and to continually re-invent himself in the face of changing circumstances and adversity.

The 1851 census records that William Cattell senior, wife Sarah and their four month old daughter Elizabeth lived in the Drapery in the centre of Northampton where he worked as a fishmonger and game dealer. The following year William Cattell junior’s birth was registered in Rugby, but it’s likely that he was born in the nearby village of Swinford in Leicestershire at the home of his paternal grandparents. The family connection with the countryside and its traditions was strong and was destined to have a major influence on the younger Cattell throughout his long and colourful life.

By the 1861 census the growing family had moved to 29 Mount Street, his father’s occupation described as ‘milkman’, which would have had a very different connotation in those days when milk was delivered in churns rather than today’s familiar bottles and cartons. As the 1871 census reveals, there must have been a significant upheaval in the family’s circumstances over the next ten years. William senior is listed as a resident of Brampton Ash, near Market Harborough, where he worked as a gamekeeper. Other members of the Cattell family remained in Northampton but, with the exception of William junior, had moved to 41 Melbourne Street. On leaving school he had begun working in the boot and shoe industry and was boarding at 94 Upper Thrift Street before re-locating to Kettering where he obtained similar employment and where he stayed for the rest of his life in England.

In 1875 William married Harriet Henrietta Hopkins, a seamstress of Hazelwood Lane, Kettering, setting up home at 8 Freestone Row off Dalkeith Place, a humble terrace originally built in 1826, where he continued to work as a boot machinist in a workshop located in the yard. He was soon immersed in the town’s emergent sporting fraternity making his mark as an athlete and member of the embryonic Kettering Football Club, whose membership straddled traditional social barriers and included a rare combination of professional and businessmen and working-class players alike. It is without doubt that his sporting prowess, particularly as an exceptional athlete, earned him the respect of his team-mates and friendships made during this period were to prove extremely valuable in later life.

There was considerable public interest in athletics at this time. In A History of Kettering, Ron Greenall describes early meetings in the town, the first coinciding with the town’s Feast Week in 1871. The Feast week, which begins on the first Sunday after 29 June, celebrates SS Peter and Paul, patrons of the town’s parish church. The popularity of these events increased throughout the decade and a report in the Northampton Mercury, dated 10 July 1875, makes reference to ‘various kinds of amusements and entertainment such as athletic sports and horse and pony racing’.

Further details, relating to Feast Week 1878, are revealed in ‘Reminiscences of Kettering’, published in the Leader and Guardian some 60 years later. The correspondent recalled runners...
and mounted jockeys resplendent in bright colours, competing on a rough race-course laid out around a corn-field off Gipsy Lane.  

A popular feature of these athletic meetings was the staged race, with runners competing against the clock over measured distances or occasionally against rival competitors with a handsome purse at stake for the winner. Huge crowds gathered to watch ‘foot-races’ stimulated, not only by the excitement of the event, but also by the opportunity to bet sums of money on the outcome. One such race took place in Cambridge on Monday 13 March 1875, and elevated William Cattell to celebrity status. According to reports in the local press he and a party of supporters left Kettering by train on the Saturday before the race. Both Cattell and his opponent, Cambridge man Dick Hutchen, put up a substantial £25 stake and betting on the course was even. After leading throughout, the Kettering athlete won by 2 yards having covered the hundred yard course in about 10 seconds, which would be a very respectable time by modern standards. On his triumphant return that evening, ‘he was met off the 7.30 train at the station by hundreds of well-wishers who, led by the Albert Brass Band, accompanied him through the principal streets to the Crispin Inn.’ The hostelry in Meeting Lane, situated just yards from his home in Freestone Row, was a popular training facility for a number of local sportsmen and was where Cattell had prepared for the race.  

By 1880 he was captain of Kettering Football Club alternating, as was the custom in those days, between association and rugby codes with equal success. (Figure 1)

William Cattell’s sporting talents were not confined to athletics and football. In 1876 he had joined the Kettering Volunteer Corps, a company of local riflemen originally established fifteen years earlier to act as a ‘citizen reserve force’ supporting national defence. A crackshot, he refined his skills at the Broughton Road butts and was a regular and successful competitor in a national competition held at Wimbledon and later Bisley. Once again, his prodigious skills enabled entry to an elite body whose members included prominent local figures Walter

2 J.A. Brown, ‘Reminiscences of Kettering’ in Kettering Leader 8 September 1939.
3 Northampton Mercury, 13 March 1875, p.8, corroborated in Northampton Herald, 13 March 1875, p.7.
4 Hopkins and Brown, When Football Came to Kettering (2010), chap.4, p.2.
William Cattell’s father died at the age of 72 in January 1891. It was at about that time that William’s life took a dramatic turn when he purchased Moors Roods Meadow, a piece of land approximately ten acres in area, from Kettering boot and shoe manufacturer and land developer, John Bryan, with the intention of converting it into a sports ground. (Figure 2) He was still residing in Freestone Row and continuing to work as a boot machinist, although now, as the 1891 census informs, ‘employing several boys’. Quite how he raised sufficient funds to acquire the land for his ambitious project is open to conjecture. Moors Roods, an area of land adjoining the meadow and almost twice the size, was sold by John Bryan to developer, William Reesby at the same time for £5,000. One possible financial backer was Henry Frederick (H.F.) Henson, an active local politician, successful builder and patron of several sporting organisations in the town. The two men had played football together and collaborated as time-keeper and judge at sporting events around the town. In addition, the Henson family originated from Nag’s Head Lane, later West Street, located opposite the market-place in the heart of Kettering’s traditional town centre and adjacent to Harriet Cattell’s childhood home in Hazelwood Lane.

Over the preceding thirty years, Kettering had been transformed from a small rural market town (population 5,845) into a large urban community (population 19,454) and was continuing to expand. Much of the development was taking place at the north end of the town where rows of red-bricked terraces housed the workers who serviced the factories that financed entrepreneurs like Bryan.

A native of the town, returning in 1890 after a lengthy absence, observed that, ‘Factories have sprung up like mushrooms; houses populated before they are completed line the way, and where there were once green fields with footpaths leading to many pleasant places there are now row after row, street after street, thick as they dare put them, of working people’s houses’.6

Recreational facilities in the town were poor and wholly inadequate for the growing population. Although sporting activities took place on privately owned land in and around the town, the Ordnance Survey map of 1887 shows just four designated sites: the bowling green in London Road, the Recreation field in Northampton Road, swimming baths in Bath Road and the Victoria Running Grounds in Bowling Green Road. Earlier that year public demand for the establishment of a Peoples’ Park to commemorate Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee had come to nothing, the town ‘fathers’ opting instead for a general holiday, tea party and firework display. As the Kettering Observer reported, ‘The Golden Jubilee went up in smoke – or rather a display of fireworks followed by a tea-party for the young and a feed for the old’.7

The growing local interest in sport and recreation followed a national trend. Lillie Bridge in the Earl’s Court area of London had opened as a sports ground in 1867. Over the next 20 years it hosted boxing tournaments, hot air balloon festivals and county fairs, and football matches including the second FA Cup final in 1873 between Wanderers and Oxford University. In 1876 a crowd of 12,000 attended an athletics meeting in which Marshall Brooks set a world high jump record of 6ft 2 in. The ground was eventually superseded as a sporting venue by nearby Stamford Bridge and closed 11 years later after a riot in which the grandstand and track were destroyed.8

Kettering’s Victoria Running Grounds, a purpose-built athletics track dating from 1880 and privately owned by Tom Sims, the landlord of the Fleur-de-Lys and, latterly, Buccleuch hotels, was acquired for building development in 1890. Additionally, the Recreation field was increasingly remote from the majority of townsfolk and often unfit for purpose. The parents of four boys, summonsed for playing football in Rockingham Road, complained that the field was ‘over a mile away and knee-deep in water.’ On 13 May 1888, a correspondent to the Kettering Observer wrote, ‘Heavy showers converted the Recreation field into a swamp. Was it not time that those who pretended to do good bestirred themselves on behalf of the town’s youth and provided a proper playground?’

William Cattell realised that the stage was set for an enterprising individual to create a public pleasure ground which could accommodate a variety of events in close proximity to the new, working class areas of Kettering. His purchase of Moors Roods Meadow would provide that opportunity.

The earliest reference to an event taking place on the site is a brief report, dated 13 December 1890, of a rabbit coursing match for prizes amounting to £3 10s ‘run off at the Pleasure Grounds in Bath Road before something like 200 spectators with upwards of 60 dogs competing’.9 Whether the field was already in William Cattell’s possession at that time is uncertain, but the activity would certainly fall within his compass given his interest in rural pastimes. However, the event was not universally popular. Influential Local Board

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6 Kettering Observer, 14 June 1890 cited in Kettering Leader and Advertiser, 14 June 1940.
7 Kettering Observer, October 1887 cited in Kettering Leader and Advertiser, 8 October 1937.
9 Northampton Mercury, 19 December 1890, p.7.
member, the celebrated Charles Wicksteed, was among those local dignitaries offended by the practice and voiced his disgust in a strident letter to the local newspaper. His complaint may well have had the desired effect as there is no record of further activities of that kind and within weeks the site had been transformed by Cattell into a dedicated sports and recreational arena. As the *Northampton Mercury* of 6 March 1891 reported, the inaugural event occurred when Kettering Amateur Cycling Club elected to, ‘engage the new running ground opened by Mr Cattell, for the use of the club, and give it the designation of the North Park’.

The proprietor had an association with the club having acted as time-keeper at its events held on the Town Cricket Ground in the Headlands the previous year. The committee’s decision to move from its original base to the North Park may well have been influenced by the impending installation of a cinder track (Figure 3), surely one of the few in existence in the country at that time. As the programme for its Whit-Monday meeting reveals, (Figure 4) the facility was an important feature of the cycling and athletics tournament held that afternoon.

William Cattell’s vision for his park extended beyond its use as a sportsground and it quickly became a favoured location for a range of activities, all well supported by the general public. In August 1891 he had presided over a sports meeting which included eight separate races with generous prizes once again at stake. It was obviously a popular social occasion with fairground attractions such as shooting galleries, coconut shies and swings, a performance by Raunds Temperance brass band and dancing in the evening. Newspaper reports inform that proceeds were donated to the Cottage Hospital (later General Hospital) Fund.

In July 1892 the park played host to Kettering Horticultural Society’s annual flower show, held in a special marquee erected on the site. The event coincided with a programme of athletics held over two days, which attracted competitors from all over the midlands. William Cattell was clerk of the course, and H.F. Henson one of the judges.

On 5 November, he promoted a spectacular Guy Fawkes celebration described as ‘an elaborate entertainment’. A band and torchlight procession paraded the town to the North Park where a huge bonfire was lit, fireworks and burning tar barrels illuminated the scene.
and a sheep roasted whole, its meat distributed ‘to all who cared for it.’

However, this extravaganza was surpassed the following year when two ambitious events were staged over the Whitsun period. On Monday, 22 May 1893, it was the venue for a Grand Fête and Gala, including a double parachute descent by a Captain Orton and Mademoiselle Bassett, who would ‘ascend by balloon before leaping from the clouds 10,000 feet by parachute’. The following day the Friendly Societies Demonstration was due to take place.

Newspaper reports inform that the parachute jump did not go to plan. During the morning of the event the spherical balloon was being filled from a special gas main laid to the grounds in readiness for the ascent at about six o’clock in the evening. A sudden gust of wind caught the balloon which, to the alarm of onlookers, brought it into contact with one of the metal stakes of the enclosure. A great hole was torn in its side releasing the gas and putting an end to any hopes of the event taking place that day.

But William Cattell was not to be deterred and on the Wednesday evening the balloon ascent and parachute descent were successfully achieved. A large number of people paid for admission into the park and many onlookers gathered in nearby fields and gardens in the hope of witnessing ‘this singular event.’ The balloon, which had a capacity of 20,000 cubic feet, had been filled with gas from a tin pipe during the afternoon. Shortly after six o’clock, Captain Orton and Mademoiselle Bassett took their places on seats under the balloon, their parachutes fixed to the side, and the pear-shaped mass was freed from its moorings to ascend in the direction of Stamford Road. Having climbed to a good height, although perhaps not as high as was anticipated by some of the sightseers, the two performers disengaged themselves from their seats and the parachutes’ opening umbrella shape, and both came gradually down to earth. After alighting safely in the adjacent allotments, they returned to their tent in the park to loud cheers. The balloon, its gas escaping rapidly after the pair’s leap, drifted about in the air for some time before coming down close to Barton Seagrave.
Originally established in Kettering during the 1790s, Friendly Societies were formed from a liaison of artisans and tradesmen to provide benefits in times of sickness and funeral expenses after death. By the end of the nineteenth century they were an important part of the social fabric of the town and the Whitsun parade and fete was eagerly anticipated. The grand procession on Whit Tuesday began at the cattle market and led to the park where a programme of athletics took place, supported by a number of variety acts including a trapeze performer, Japanese jugglers, a contortionist, a slack wire walker and Professor Carl Trewar, described, enigmatically, as a wizard.

William Cattell’s sporting interests also extended to the game of golf and, as the photograph (Figure 5) depicts, the famous ‘Old’ Tom Morris of St Andrew’s accepted an invitation from his long-time friend Dr Allison, who had founded Kettering Golf Club in 1891, to participate in a demonstration match on a special course laid out at the park.10

From its inception, the North Park was used for cricket, hosting a number of local sides, most notably a team from the Working Men’s Club, which had begun what would prove a lengthy association with the site. In May 1892, the WMC team played a side representing Kettering Football Club, winning the match by nine runs. The following year the park became home to the footballers when the club relocated from its Eldred’s Field ground off London Road, which had been sold to developers, Hanger and Payne, for a new housing estate.

On 8 September 1893, the Leader & Observer, reporting a friendly match against Notts St Johns at the new venue, stated that ‘the old ground is no longer available and is marked out for building purposes, however, the North Park possesses every requirement of a football club.’

Four weeks later, Doncaster Rovers visited for a Midland League fixture. A newspaper advertisement informs that admission to the stand and the whole of the west side of the ground was 8d, unreserved places were 4d and ladies were admitted at half-price to the reserved side.

In April 1894 the North Park Working Men’s Club was founded, situated in a corner of the grounds. The Northampton Herald of 5 May reported the event in a detailed account which paid tribute to William Cattell’s enterprise and vision. Whilst his primary motivation was doubtless entrepreneurial, his energy, enthusiasm and sense of civic duty were exemplary, typifying that special group of individuals which helped shape Kettering’s development during the late nineteenth century.

In laying out and constructing the North Park, the proprietor, (Mr Wm. Cattell), has undoubtedly filled a long-felt want to the town of Kettering. In all parts it is universally acknowledged that Kettering stands to the forefront of athletics, and it was with the object of developing, cultivating and encouraging those healthy recreations that the proprietor of the ground mooted, fostered and carried into effect their construction. Many enthusiasts have wended their way to the North Park during the winter months to enjoy the various exhibitions of football given by the Town Football Club, and great has been the success of numerous fetes, athletic sports, and other holidays held in that enclosure during last summer. Since last year the bicycle track has been improved, and a large area has been levelled and new turf put down for cricket and bowls. At the meeting of the Licensing Justices last year, it will be remembered, Mr Cattell applied for a licence to sell excisable

10 Kettering Leader and Advertiser, 26 August 1927, p.9.
articles, but was refused, and from that time until Saturday last only light refreshment had been obtainable on the grounds. After taking into consideration the disadvantages of not being able to obtain anything stronger than tea or coffee, the idea of forming a club was mooted in February last by the working men who have resorted to the ground to indulge in the games of bowls, quoits and football, and the athletes and cyclists who visited the park for the purpose of training for athletic sports. A code of rules was constituted and the North Park Working Men’s Club was registered on 17 April, its objects being to afford its members ‘the means of social intercourse, mutual helpfulness, mental and moral improvement and rational recreation.

The report then lists the elected officers, naming Mr and Mrs W Cattell as steward and stewardess.

Saturday, 12 May 1894, saw the official opening of the town’s Pleasure Park, located on land a short distance to the west of the North Park. This new facility owed much to the influence of Charles Wicksteed, whose devotion to public life had begun in 1876, the year in which he established his engineering works in Stamford Road. Wicksteed was one of the main instigators in a decision by the Local Government Board in 1890 to purchase land...
for a pleasure ground to serve the expanding northern end of the town. Situated on 10.75 acres of land acquired from its owners, Board member John Bryan and E.M. Nunneley in 1891, the development was eventually financed with a loan of £2,500. A detailed report of the grand opening of the park appeared in the *Wellingborough News* the following week and its correspondent was obviously impressed by the facilities.

With the money available it must be confessed that the Local Board and its surveyor, Mr T.R. Smith, have made the best use possible of it. Trees have been planted in various parts, and in the highest portion of the ground, flower beds have been arranged, whilst the greater part of the ground has been levelled and sown with grass.

Despite the proximity of the new facility, the North Park remained one of Kettering’s most popular locations and an indication of how widely it was used is apparent from this summary of some of the events taking place there during the summer of 1895.

One remarkable happening was the annual Friendly Societies’ Fête which had grown significantly from the comparatively low key event two years earlier. Held on Tuesday 4 June, it attracted crowds estimated to be 8,000 strong. Processing from the cattle-market in Bowling Green Road, the parade included members of the Blue Violet Lodge, the Free Gardeners, the Foresters, the Nottingham Oddfellows, the Working Men’s Cycling Club, the Fire and Ambulance Brigades, the Town and Rifle bands and ‘boys and girls of the workhouse’. Their poignant portrayal of the sick ward at the Workhouse Hospital, featuring a child in bed transported on one of the Cooperative Society’s coal vehicles, was ‘well received by the watching crowds’ who lined the route to the North Park. An extensive programme of athletics and cycling took place enlivened, once again, by a variety show on a stage in the centre of the park featuring acts such as The Funny Mitchellos and Martino the Boneless Wonder.

During Kettering Feast week in July, the Trades Council held pony racing at the ground, the extensive card including The Tradesmen’s Hurdle, The Innkeepers’ Plate and The North Park Stakes and was supplemented by athletics and a bicycle handicap race.

August Bank holiday saw the Cooperative Societies’ Show, which included displays of flowers, fruit and vegetables and industrial exhibitions in which craftsmen and women demonstrated their skills in leathercraft, woodwork and plain sewing. Judging of the exhibits was followed by a programme of sports, the entertainment culminating in a spectacular firework display.

The Working Men’s Club held its annual cycling competition at the park later in the month and, on Monday, 2 September, football resumed when Kettering hosted a visit from Glossop North End. The match heralded the club’s most successful campaign to date as the Midland League title was won and a lengthy FA Cup run ended in a narrow defeat at Newton Heath, now better known as Manchester United.

1896 was the inaugural season of the Kettering and District Cricket League and three of its members, the Working Men’s Club, Britannia and Fuller, played at the park. It also remained the preferred venue for outdoor social gatherings, such as the celebratory sports meeting which followed the laying of the memorial stone at the site of the General Hospital on Saturday 9 May. Proceeds from the event, which culminated in ‘dancing until dusk’, were donated to the Hospital Fund.

On 26 April 1897, Kettering Football Club ended its brief association with the park, the 2–0
victory over Wellingborough in a United League match proving to be its final game on the ground. According to a report in the Northampton Mercury, the move to Rockingham Road, and a field in the occupation of Mr George Hall, was necessitated by 'the North Park about to be set out for building purposes.'

The north end of the town was undergoing rapid development at this time, much of it carried out by the Kettering Real Estate Company. At a meeting of the Urban District Council in June 1897 reference was made to the company’s obligation to ‘lay out the portion of Bath Road adjoining the North End Estate within a month.’

This provoked a response from councillors sympathetic to:

Mr Cattell, owner of the adjoining property, the North Park, who would be greatly inconvenienced and subject to considerable loss unless he has time to arrange fencing. It would be harsh treatment to throw it open in the height of the season by taking down Mr Cattell’s hedge.

A motion recommending postponement of the project was defeated so presumably the work went ahead. Worries about open access to the site and the difficulties in ensuring that a ‘gate’ could be taken might have contributed to the football club’s decision to relocate.

The park continued to host a range of activities including a full cricket programme and the Kettering Grammar School Sports, in which the winners of the three-legged race received pocket knives as prizes.

On 12 February 1898, the Midland Counties Cross Country Championships were staged at North Park for the first time with the ubiquitous H.F. Henson, whose dedication to local sport is evidenced by his presence on numerous committees, acting as referee. Cheap railway tickets were available for competitors and supporters and the event attracted 74 runners from such prominent athletic clubs as the Birchfield Harriers; however, the late arrival of the Leicester team meant that the race could not begin until 4.15. The North Park Club was used as dressing rooms and the starting point for the race, which extended over a nine-mile course including several circuits of the park before runners negotiated the hilly ploughed land on the other side of the brook which ran along the eastern edge of the sportsfield. The best view of the race, it was reported, was obtained from spectators in the grandstand. Sid Robinson, of Earls Barton, was the first runner home, with Kettering Cross Keys Harrier, A. Ainge, in sixth place.

Mr Henson was also present at the Kettering and District Hospital Sports, held at the park on 23 July 1898, in his capacity as president of the organizing committee. The event attracted over 500 entries, spectators paid sixpence to watch and double that if they sat in the grandstand. William Cattell may well have been absent from the event following the birth of his daughter, Ethel Maud, a week earlier. As the birth certificate indicates, he was then living a short distance from the park at 207 Bath Road but, sadly, celebrations were short-lived as the baby died, aged just 16 days. The new house in Bath Road represented a significant upward move for the Cattell family, which now comprised William, Harriet and five children.

The following April, in a rare reference to football, the ground staged a match between the town’s butchers, (‘bloodied but not bowed’) and barbers (‘razor-wielders’) which ended in

11 Northampton Mercury, 13 August 1897, p.7.
an honourable draw. Cricket returned in the summer and the park again hosted the Grammar School Sports and the annual Kettering Amateur cycling and athletics meeting. The poor attendance at the latter was blamed on a lack of publicity as the event was held just days after the town had accommodated the popular County Agricultural Show, not at the North Park but at Mr Harris’s field in Stamford Road.

This prestigious event which, in those days, had no permanent home, took place over 14 and 15 June and was a spectacular occasion. Visitors to the town were guided to the field by a hundred Venetian masts all draped with banners staged at regular intervals from the station to the Buccleuch Hotel in Stamford Road. Stands, paddocks and marquees were erected on the showground and at 5.30 on the second evening, when the agricultural parades and judging had ended, a grand fête began with music-hall entertainment, dancing, a brass band and culminating in a firework display. Thousands then returned to the town centre to view the ‘illuminations’ adorning local shops and hostleries. Later that same year Harris’s Field played host to Kettering’s Feast Day celebrations, including pony races and athletic sports.

Foremost among the events held at the North Park in the summer of 1899 was the Sunday School ‘treat’, when over 2,000 pupils from Fuller, Nelson Street and the Oakley Mission gathered after tea for sports, games and amusements. At this time, Kettering had so many places of worship it was widely known as ‘The Holy City’. Children from both Anglican and non-conformist churches were rewarded for regular attendance with annual ‘treats’ when the traditional ‘bunfight’ would be followed by an extensive programme of outdoor activities. The level of involvement can be gauged from details of the Church of England ‘treat’ held on the Manor House Field in July 1903 when tea tables set out in the shape of a wheel accommodated 4,000 children, who consumed 1,700 lbs of cake, 800 lbs of bread, 130 lbs of butter and 500 gallons of tea and cocoa, under the supervision of 470 teachers.

After several earlier applications had been refused, in August 1899 Mr Cattell re-applied for a full licence to sell liquor at ‘the house and premises about to be erected and constructed by me on a portion of land known as the North Park, of which I am the owner, being at or near the present entrance to the said land in the south-west corner thereof.’ The matter was adjourned until October when the application was again brought before the Divisional Petty Sessions. As the Northampton Mercury reported, he appeared to have a strong case.

W. Cattell, proprietor of the North Park, Kettering, applied for a provisional full licence for new premises, (a hotel), to be erected on a portion of the land known as the North Park in Bath Road. His representative, Mr W. Adkins, maintained that the district was becoming considerably enlarged since previous applications. When the application was originally before the Bench in 1897 there were 168 houses with a population of 800. At the present time the number was 469 with a population of 2,350. He put in two memorials very extensively signed by residents in the locality, amongst signatories being shoe manufacturers, a solicitor, tradesmen, and eleven members of the Urban Council. The nearest fully licensed house was the Buccleuch Hotel which was 886 yards distant. He asked if the bench would consider amending the application to a six days’ licence rather than seven if it so chose. Mr A.G. Leighton, architect, submitted plans for the proposed buildings which would cost about £2,600. There was no opposition but, after a lengthy consultation, the Chairman said that the Bench did not consider the district sufficiently developed at the moment to grant the licence.

The failure to gain a licence may have been a factor in his decision to dispose of his estate and sell the North Park in February the following year. The notice in the Leader & Observer
from 27 April 1900, (Figure 6) contains a comprehensive and somewhat drastic list of items for sale by auction. It would suggest a pressing need to raise funds but there is no record of Mr Cattell’s appearance in the bankruptcy court and precisely what provoked his decision to sell is impossible to determine.

The park was purchased by William’s old friend, H.F. Henson, who continued to stage sporting events on the site. In March 1900 the new owner presided over Kettering Cross Keys Harriers cross-country championship acting as judge and awarding prizes, but William Cattell’s name does not appear among the long list of officials. He appears to have severed all connections with the venue.

Mr Henson was similarly frustrated in attempts to develop the site by the licensing authorities. Beset by ill-health, he died in 1905 and, after a period of neglect followed by the death of Mrs Henson, the North Park was acquired by the Kettering Co-operative Society in 1908 for £2,000.

After the sale of the sports ground the Cattell family moved to the Spread Eagle Inn at Oakley Hay. The 1901 census describes William as a Licensed Victualler/employer, although later newspaper reports refer to him as the landlord. In addition to Harriet, the other family members were daughters Kate (aged 21), barmaid, Alice (20) machinist, Rose (18) pupil teacher, Gertrude (16) and son William (14). How long the Cattells remained at Oakley Hay is unknown. William Cattell’s name is not included in the records of landlords at the former coaching inn but a Levi Hobbs assumed the position from 1904 suggesting that his tenure was brief. What may be of significance is the absence of any evidence for his involvement in village life and copious documents from the period detailing those present at important local functions make no reference to his attendance. What is perhaps more surprising, given their long association, is his absence from the published list of mourners at H.F. Henson’s funeral in 1905.

When Harriet Cattell died on 7 June 1907 at the age of 51, her address is given as 2 Pollard Street Kettering. The cause of death is listed as ‘probably heart failure’ and occurred in the presence of her daughter, Rose, ‘shortly after preparing dinner’. William Cattell’s occupation is described on the death certificate, curiously, as ‘hay trusser’, which appears so remote from his previous working experience as to beg questions about his business affairs and financial security.

His name does not appear in the 1911 census but, intriguingly, there is a reference in the Kettering Cooperative Magazine of 1912 to correspondence from a W. Cattell, formerly of the town, who is ‘away in Canada. A further clue to his whereabouts appeared in a retrospective article on the Kettering Volunteers of 1877, published in the Kettering Leader...
and Advertiser in May 1928, which refers to ‘Will Cattell, the former proprietor of the North Park, which he converted into a sportsground. Subsequently he was landlord at Oakley Hay. He left for Canada some years ago, and I am pleased to add his friends in Kettering have recently had cheery news about him’. (Figure 7)

Whatever the reasons, after his wife’s death he made the momentous decision to begin a new life abroad and was later joined in the Dominion by his eldest daughter Kate and her husband. The family was among the ranks of emigrants who responded to a vigorous promotional campaign in the years before the First World War. Local newspapers bore seductive advertisements which appealed to farm labourers, agricultural workers and those with a sense of adventure.

Canada owes her greatness to tillers of the soil. Prosperity follows the plough. Put in your claim for 160 fertile acres. Canada gives her land freely to every worthy son under the Union Flag. No rent, light taxes, free schools. Good markets, splendid climate, sunny skies.

Given William Cattell’s ability to reinvent himself and a capacity for hard work it is hardly surprising that he made a success of his new life abroad. His death, on 27 August 1934 at the age of 82, was extensively reported in the Kettering newspapers from which we learn a great deal about his experiences in Canada.12 One lengthy obituary states:

He had emigrated in 1907 following the loss of his wife and settled in the vicinity of Regina, in the Province of Saskatchewan. He later moved northwards to Pathlow in the famous Carrot River Valley district, (possibly the finest wheat garden in the world), where he lived with his daughter Kate and son-in-law, Ernest Thompson, formerly an employee of Kettering electricians, Barnett and Soans. There he began the registered production of grains, grasses, legumes and garden produce which earned him national acclaim. The climax of his achievement was reached at the World’s Grain Fair of 1933, held at Regina, when he won upwards of £500 in prizes. Considering his earlier life and with little or no training of this nature, his record was an outstanding example of how a man can successfully adapt himself to changed conditions.

The funeral service was held in Mr Cattell’s home amidst pictures hanging on the walls of his native land, scenes of Wood Lane, Warkton meadows, Northamptonshire Churches and photographs of relations and friends from Kettering and district. The room also

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12 Kettering Leader and Advertiser, 28 September 1934.
contained many birds and animals he had stuffed in Canada, for he was a taxidermist of no mean ability. Fittingly, as the funeral cortège wended its way to Melfort cemetery for committal the harvest was being gathered in nearby fields and vehicles passing in an opposite direction halted to let it go by – quite a respectful custom even in those distant parts.

William Cattell, boot machinist, athlete, sportsman, marksman, pleasure-ground owner, pub landlord, taxidermist and seedsman, lived a truly remarkable life. His park, which has undergone many changes since its sale in 1900, remains. It enjoyed a revival in popularity following its purchase by the Urban District Council in 1920 and was an unrivalled venue for local cricket until the demise of the Town League in 1993 rendered it obsolete. The days when excited crowds of pleasure-seekers flocked to the North Park, eager to enjoy their leisure time, are long past. Like the man himself, its former glories are largely forgotten. (Figure 8)

Acknowledgements
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The Lost Boys of Wellingborough: Remembering Those Who Fell in The Great War

STEPHEN SWAILES

Despite the long military history of England, relatively few memorials recall wars fought before the turn of the twentieth century. In Northamptonshire, the Naseby obelisk commemorates the decisive engagement of the English Civil War, although it was erected almost 200 years after the battle. There are a few memorials to individual soldiers dating from the Napoleonic Wars, the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny located in churches across the county, as well as memorials to those who died in the South African Wars.¹

While memorials to collective sacrifice before 1900 are rare, this was to change after the First World War when, moved by the losses felt in every parish, communities across Britain created lasting monuments to their dead. The UK National Inventory of War Memorials lists 575 memorials to the First World War in Northamptonshire, including town and village memorials, memorials to individual soldiers and others situated in churches, schools and elsewhere. This total seems likely to understate the true number, given that there are upwards of 380 Anglican parishes to which can be added non-conformist churches and chapels, clubs, societies and workplaces, many of which would have erected some sort of memorial to their fallen comrades.

British fatalities in the Great War totalled almost one million, and yet understanding the social significance of war memorials is a relatively recent phenomenon,² perhaps because the people they remember were embraced by living memory until relatively recently. In this county there has been a variety of projects to discover more about the names that appear on memorials with the Rushden Heritage project being perhaps the most comprehensive and accessible so far.³ The memorial at Broad Green, Wellingborough, records 677 names from the Great War, and this article attempts to understand more about the people of the town who gave their lives in a war which, following an armistice in November 1918, finally ended through the Treaty of Versailles in June 1919. Each name on the memorial has been researched and brief biographies of every person identified have been developed. These biographies have been analysed to reveal a demographic profile of those who died and to provide insights into the events surrounding some of the casualties. The paper begins, however, by looking at the different memorials placed in the town after the war had ended.

Wellingborough’s memorials

The first public memorial was a temporary wooden structure erected in November 1919 in Market Street at the bottom of Market Place. At its unveiling it was immediately surrounded by wreaths and a large crowd, and about 1,000 former servicemen marched past to salute their fallen comrades, many deeply moved by the experience.⁴ That evening, 900 former soldiers were entertained in the town, and 900 another night. Subscriptions to fund the dinners came from individuals and companies: Mr Hedger Edwards gave £100, Ideal Clothiers gave £52/10s, W.S. Gilbert & Sons and Whitworths each gave £50. Many other contributions of £10 to £30 were received.⁵ (Figure 1)

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¹ UK National Inventory of War Memorials.
³ www.rushdenheritage.co.uk
⁴ Kettering Leader, 7 November 1919.
⁵ Wellingborough News, 31 October 1919.
In addition to the temporary memorial, many groups and societies in Wellingborough placed memorials to their fallen colleagues. These include 141 names in gold lettering centred around a figure of St George on a wooden memorial placed in All Saints church, 6 93 names carved onto slate in the entrance to the Congregational Church in the High Street, 7 84 names on a stone memorial now inside St Barnabas church, 69 names in gold lettering on oak panelling inside St Mary’s church, 33 names were recorded on a brass tablet mounted on oak in the Wesleyan chapel, 27 names are on a wooden memorial in the ancient parish church of All Hallows, 15 names are carved into the stone pulpit in the Catholic church and 11 names are on a white marble tablet placed inside the Primitive Methodist chapel.

The Ancient Order of Foresters erected a memorial of fumed oak listing 55 names in the Medical Hall in Herriott’s Lane. 8 The Independent Order of Oddfellows erected a memorial on Japanese oak in the Masonic Hall to 31 members of the Loyal Trafalgar Lodge. The Church Lads’ Brigade erected a brass memorial listing 22 names in their meeting hall and this is now in All Saints church. 9 The Victoria Congregational Chapel in Palk Road erected a brass memorial listing 21 names which is now in Wellingborough museum. The Independent Order of Rechabites erected a memorial commemorating 21 fallen members in the school in Alma Street. The Salvation Army placed a brass memorial to six members of the Wellingborough Corps, 10 which is now in the Citadel in Salem Lane, and three names are listed on the Post Office memorial, 11 which is now in the new Post Office in Midland Road. In addition, there are a few memorials to individual soldiers in All Hallows and All Saints and in churches in other counties. One hundred and seventy seven ‘old boys’ and four masters appear on the memorial in the chapel at Wellingborough School, although most of these names do not appear on the Broad Green memorial.

A stone memorial cross was erected outside St Barnabas church after the war 12 but that church was destroyed by fire in 1949 and the memorial tablet was placed in the new church built soon afterwards. A stone cross 23-feet high and mounted on an octagonal base stands in the churchyard of All Hallows. The calvary was donated by a Mrs Sotheby but a public appeal was needed to fund the addition of two gates, the laying of paths and planting. 13 It

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6 Wellingborough News, 8 November 1920.
7 Wellingborough News, 6 April 1920.
8 Wellingborough News, 8 November 1920.
9 Wellingborough News, 14 April 1922.
10 Wellingborough News, 6 May 1921.
11 Wellingborough News, 2 September 1921.
13 The Monthly Record, Number 58, October 1919.
does not list individual names but carries the inscription, ‘Pray for the gallant men who from this town gave their lives for truth and freedom in the Great War 1914. Invictis Pax’ (peace to the unconquered). A movement to erect a cross in the churchyard of St Mary’s was abandoned due to an inadequate response to a public appeal. Church authorities decided instead to place a roundel of coloured glass within a circular wreath of palm. St George is shown on a white horse transfixing a green dragon with the inscription, ‘Dedicated by the people of this parish to the memory of the men who laid down their lives in the war 1914–1918 whose names are inscribed below.’

Two other forms of memorial exist. Although the bodies of fallen soldiers were not repatriated and were buried near where they fell, there are several cases where names were added to a family memorial inscription in the London Road and Doddington Road cemeteries which also hold 34 Commonwealth war graves from the First World War. The other form of memorial adopts a utilitarian or living memorial form, and this was seen at Wellingborough when over £4,000 was raised in memory of those who lost their lives to build an extra children’s ward on the site of the Cottage Hospital. The memorial in the Wesleyan chapel, as well as listing the names of its members who died in the war, also records that a memorial cot had been placed in the National Children’s Home and Orphanage.

The site of a permanent memorial for the town was the subject of a Council sub-committee and several locations were put forward, including the Market Square, Gloucester Place and for some time the favoured location was in Swanspool gardens. The form of the memorial was debated and there was at one time support among some committee members to create

14 *The Monthly Record*, Number 59, November 1919.
15 ‘War Graves of the British Empire – Northamptonshire and Rutland’ (1930).
16 *Wellingborough News*, 30 May, 6 June and 14 November 1924.
a separate memorial to Major Edward Mannock.\textsuperscript{17} The singular attention being given to Major Mannock, who had moved to the town shortly before the war, caused enough resentment to make some townsfolk refuse to attend a meeting about the best way to honour the war dead. The view was that many other gallant officers and regular soldiers had died and that no soldier should be singled-out for special recognition. In the end, the War Memorial Committee chaired by Mr Hedger Edwards decided that the permanent memorial should be erected at the bottom of Broad Green, perhaps a more fitting location with a commanding presence at the top of the High Street looking down over the ancient heart of the town. This prominent location on the town’s main street ensured that the memorial would remain a much more visible reminder compared to the more tranquil setting of Swanspool gardens.

Building the memorial was delayed because of the high price of materials and it was not unveiled until 1924. Designed by Mr W. Talbot Brown, it was executed by stonemasons, White & Company, with Messrs Reynolds & Son of Northampton responsible for the carving. The eventual cost was over £800 and the local paper described it as follows:\textsuperscript{18}

The Memorial which is designed in a classic manner relies for its beauty upon its proportion and outline rather than any excess of ornamental features, and is executed in Weldon and Clipsham stone. It consists of a central composition rising from a base of Derbyshire grit stone, and is surmounted by a pediment enclosing a cartouche carved and decorated in gold and colours with the county rose, differentiated with the initial letter ‘W’ in gold for the town. The setting of the principal feature is greatly enhanced by the wall and piers at back, which are approached by steps and a paved area. The wall is built semi-circular and upon the Portland stone panels is inscribed the names of all those known to have fallen. The simple inscription: ‘In remembrance, 1914-1918’ is carved on the stonework immediately above the names. (Figure 2)

Identifying the Dead

The processes undertaken to identify names of the dead are unclear. A search of the committee minutes of Wellingborough Town Council has not revealed any information about the processes or anything about the casualties who would be listed. What is clear, however, is that there is very little overlap between the names listed at Wellingborough and those listed in nearby towns and villages. Given that there must have been extended family members in most surrounding towns, the lack of overlap on memorials suggests considerable coordination by the organizing committees.

With six years elapsing before the memorial was built there was considerable time to ensure that nobody was overlooked and also to check the eligibility of names put forward. Nevertheless, 25 names were added later at the end of the main listing. All names appear simply as initials and surname; no rank, regiment or year of death is shown to separate them. The inscriptions on which this analysis is based were re-cut in 2000 to replace the originals which were deteriorating. While the Council’s minutes are silent about who would be remembered, a list of ‘The Immortal Dead’ was printed in the \textit{Wellingborough News}\textsuperscript{19} and there is a very close but not exact match between this list and the names on the memorial. The 25 names added at the end appear to have been added since 1924 as they do not appear in the Roll of Honour printed in the newspaper.

\textsuperscript{17} Kettering Leader, 1 August 1919.
\textsuperscript{18} Wellingborough News, 14 November 1924.
\textsuperscript{19} Wellingborough News, 31 October 1919.
The first step in identifying each name for this research was to look for a matching casualty in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission database, which for some casualties gives an address and names of parents or spouse. Further information was taken from the Soldiers Died in the Great War database which gives basic biographic information and service history. British Army service records were also searched but a large proportion of records from the Great War have not survived. Australian and Canadian records available on line were also searched. However, the richest source of information about each person was usually the Wellingborough News, published during the war, which provided confirmatory evidence for most, but not all, casualties, and normally gives an address, parents and/or spouse, age, service unit, date and place of death. Census searches were then undertaken to locate the person across time and to cross-check and clarify other details. Additional information on each casualty’s marital status and relationships to other casualties was noted where found. Other sources of information included direct contact with family descendents where possible and memorial inscriptions in London Road and Dodington Road cemeteries. The Monthly Record covering the three parishes of All Hallows, St Mary’s and St Barnabas published during the war years carried brief notices about some men, in particular those from the parish of St Barnabas. A short biography of each person was produced from the data obtained although, despite the exhaustive search undertaken, 39 casualties remain to be identified.20

(Figure 3)

Service Units and Losses
Of the 638 casualties who can be identified, most were killed in action or died of wounds. Behind the names lie stories of heroism, of lives ended in an instant by shrapnel or bullet, of death by accident or illness and, sometimes, death brought about by plain bad luck. Of those who could be identified, 581 were British Army, 20 were Royal Navy, 7 were Royal Flying Corps or Royal Air Force, 20 were serving with Canadian forces, 8 were serving with Australian forces and 2 were nurses. Thirty nine were officers. The rate of losses increased as the war progressed; 3.9% fell in 1914, 15.5% in 1915, 20.0% in 1916, 30.8% in 1917 and 26.5% in 1918 with the remaining 3.4% dying in 1919 or later. Most casualties occurred in France and Flanders (79%). Forty nine men died on home soil of wounds received abroad, illness or by accident. Contemporary newspaper reports of casualties often gave brief details of the circumstances and where this could be ascertained; 374 (67%) were killed in action, 118 (21.1%) died of wounds, 52 (9.7% ) died of illness, although in some cases this was probably related to wounds received, and 13 (2.3%) met their death by accident.

Thirty seven men fell in the Middle East and 23 were lost at sea. Men were also lost in the Balkans, Malta, Kenya, Tanzania, India and one in Ireland. Across the entire war they died at the rate of three per week. The Absent Voters List for Wellingborough in 1918 identifies about 2,000 names of men who were serving with the armed forces. Adding to this the number already dead (about 500) and allowing for men who had served and been discharged and some who were not registered voters, the total number of men from the town who served in some capacity in the Great War must have been around 3,000.21 It appears therefore that the chance of Wellingborough men being killed in the war was about one in five. However, given that not all of those who enlisted saw action, the actual death rate of soldiers at the front was probably nearer one in four. This is similar to the loss rate for Bozeat where 39 out of the 210 men who served (18.6%) never returned.22

20 It is hoped to publish the collection of biographies in some form. Individual biographies can be obtained from the author.
21 Wellingborough News, 14 November 1924, reports that over 3,000 men from the town joined-up.
Of the seven men known to have taken to the air, only two, Major Edward Mannock and Lt Humphrey Thompson, were killed in action. Lt Harry Goosey, Lt Carey Pinnock, Lt Charles Platt and Lt Cyril Ravine were all killed in flying accidents. The fate of Lt Arthur Hill is unclear. Of those who died at sea, Torpedo-Lieutenant Frederick Cook and Able Seaman Edwin Walden were lost when HMS Hampshire, the ship carrying Lord Kitchener to a peace conference in Russia, was sunk near the Orkneys in 1916. Other sailors were lost at the Battle of Jutland or when their ships were sunk by mines or torpedoes. William Thomas was lost when his ship collided with another in bad weather in the North Sea. Harold Jones died when the magazine of HMS Bulwark exploded while she was moored in Sheerness harbour, killing almost the entire ship’s company.

Twenty men on the memorial enlisted in Canada and were killed serving with Canadian forces. Seven soldiers returned from Australia only to be killed in France and Flanders; most had been born in the town. Another Australian, Charles Wright, whose parents had at some time lived in Wellingborough, was lost with all hands on the Royal Australian Navy submarine AE1 which disappeared near Papua New Guinea in September 1914. She had been built in Barrow to support British naval actions against German forces, and the circumstances surrounding her disappearance and location remain a mystery. In total, Australian service records identify 27 soldiers born in Wellingborough who boarded the troop ships to fight in France and Flanders.24

Demographics
The average age of those who died was 26 years. The youngest to fall appears to be Private Frederick Rixon of the Northamptonshire Regiment who died a few days short of his 17th birthday. Four men died aged 17 and 22 died aged 18. The oldest person on the memorial

23 http://www.submarineae1.org.au
24 See National Archives of Australia, www.naa.gov.au
25 Pte Arthur Maycock, Northants Regiment, was also 16 and may be on the memorial.
is Nursing Sister Elizabeth Adams who was 53 or 54. The overall age profile shows that 4.6% were 18 or under, 28.8% were aged 19 to 21, 38.8% were aged 22 to 29, 21.3% were 30 to 39, and 3.6% were aged 40 or over.

About two thirds were born in or near Wellingborough and most (82%) were born in Northamptonshire. Of those who lived in the town, many came from the new developments of mid to late Victorian terraces built in the new parishes of St Mary’s, All Saints and St Barnabas. Alexander Road, Mill Road, Knox Road, Winstanley Road and Newcomen Road occur repeatedly in the addresses of casualties, although few streets in the town were spared. Although it was not possible to confirm the marital status of each casualty, and many were so young they were unlikely to have married, at least 146 were married, some for a very short time. Private Bertie Willows married on 22 January 1918 and was reported killed on 21 February. Private Frank Arnold was married for only six weeks.

There are about 50 cases of two brothers being killed and possibly a few more will be found when every name is finally identified. In a few cases, one of the brothers is not remembered on the memorial. Lieutenant Edmund Beck who died in January 1916 from injuries received while giving warning of a gas attack is named, but his brother Percy who died at Ypres in 1915 is not. Lieutenant Beck had previously had the honour of being chosen by his regiment to dine with the King and Queen. Reginald Campkin who was born in Wellingborough and who served with Canadian Infantry is remembered, but his brother Sidney who was also born in Wellingborough and served with the Canadians is not recorded.

In addition, there are at least six cases of three brothers being killed. George and Jane Aldridge lost their sons Thomas, Cyril and Leonard, all in 1917. James and Hannah Pack lost their sons William, Arthur and Frank. James and Mary Bailey lost Alfred, Austin and Walter, who are remembered on the memorial in the Catholic Church. William and Sarah Hughes lost Fred, killed in action, Harry, died of wounds and Herbert, who died of gas poisoning. Elizabeth Bird lost her sons Bernard and Samuel, and by a previous marriage her son Eric Brown. Three entries on the memorial are identified in All Saints church as Alexander, Charles and Leslie Robertson. These three brothers, all born in Peterhead near Aberdeen, sons of Robert and Penelope Robertson, were killed in 1916, 1918 and 1917 respectively. Alexander had served as a Captain in the Gordon Highlanders in the Boer War but enlisted as a Lance Corporal to fight in the Great War. Charles and Leslie were both officers in the Gordon Highlanders, Leslie winning the Military Cross for bravery at Bullecourt. Their father was at some time the Colonel commanding the 3rd Volunteer Brigade Gordon Highlanders. This family’s connection to Wellingborough is unclear, although their mother lived at 19 Castle Street and died there in 1917.

Casualties

The first man from Wellingborough to die after Britain declared war with Germany on 4 August 1914 was Private Walter Luck who died of sickness on 12 August, just a few days after he married. He was quickly followed by Private Alfred Robinson who also died of sickness on home soil on 17 August, aged 18. The first casualty from fighting was 2nd Lieutenant Edward Myddleton who died from shrapnel wounds at Le Cateau on 21 August. Another early casualty was John Arthur Hincks, Sergeant in the 1st Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment who was killed in action in September 1914. News of his death came from a German officer who sent a postcard of Hincks with his wife and two children taken outside his home which had been found on his body. On the back was written:

I am sending back this photograph, which has been found by one of my men near the body of the brave sergeant. I suppose that his wife may have already received the news of his death, but nevertheless I feel obliged to return this card. S. Fink, Captain in the German Army.
This considerate gesture by the enemy was perhaps only possible at the outset of the war before both sides became accustomed to the killing on an industrial scale that was soon to follow. Sergeant Hincks had three brothers serving, including Harold who had enlisted in Australia.

The last casualty from the town to die during hostilities in France and Flanders was Private Frank Thompson who died at 10.45 on the morning of Armistice Day.26 His brother Frederick had been killed the previous August. For some families the war continued to take its toll as men who had returned from the front died of wounds. The memorial identifies several men who died in the early 1920s, including brothers Albert and Arthur Trolley and the memorial in St Mary’s church records Edward Capon, brother of Percy, who died in 1930. He had served in the Northamptonshire Regiment and died from complications arising from the effects of gas poisoning.

The criteria for inclusion on the memorial were wide-ranging as not all were killed in action or died of wounds. Private Ralph Day died in a motorcycle accident on a bend in the road from Wellingborough to his home village of Hardwick. Private Edward Horn died after falling down the stairs at his lodging house in Old Fletton. Many others died as a result of accident or illness while on active service. Tom James joined the Northamptonshire Regiment three weeks before he died of illness.27 Leonard Sandever, whose parents lived in Oxford Street and who was a Constable in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, died in hospital in Canada of typhoid in November 1914. Private William Hendry was captured at the Battle of the Dunes in July 1917, but after his release found himself guarding German prisoners in Suffolk. He was accidentally killed in June 1919 when his rifle, which should have been empty, was discharged by a 12-year-old boy.28

Two holders of the Victoria Cross are commemorated along with several holders of other decorations. The Reverend Lt Col. Bernard William Vann of the Sherwood Foresters was killed by a sniper in October 1918 aged 31 just a few days after being awarded the VC. Originally from Rushden, he was an Assistant Master and Chaplain at Wellingborough School when he joined the Army. While there were many priests in service he was unique for being a soldier-priest who led his battalion in battle. His brother, Captain Arthur Vann was killed in 1915 but is not on the memorial. The other Victoria Cross, ‘ace of aces’ Edward Mannock, moved to Wellingborough in 1911 to work for the National Telephone Company and lodged with James Eyles and his wife in Mill Road. He was a good local sportsman who later went to Turkey to work, only to be interned at the outbreak of the war. He was repatriated to England in 1915 due to illness as the Turks assumed he would never be fit enough to fight. He later joined the RAMC and then the Royal Engineers, joining the Royal Flying Corps in 1916. Flying the SE5a fighter aircraft he was effective against the enemy by getting very close to targets before firing. Due to British secrecy during the war, and unlike the German aces who enjoyed publicity, he was not named and was referred to in the newspapers that described his exploits as ‘Captain X’. He was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross in 1919.

At least two women are on the memorial. Nursing Sister Olive Rowlett was serving on the hospital ship *Drina* anchored in Cromarty harbour in 1915. The captain of the battle cruiser *HMS Natal*, also moored at Cromarty, authorised a party on board and Olive Rowlett was one of several nurses from the *Drina* to be invited. A fire broke out on the *Natal* and within five minutes the ship’s magazine exploded killing 421 people. Sister

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26 [www.wellingborough.gov.uk](http://www.wellingborough.gov.uk)
28 *Kettering Leader*, 13 June 1919.
Elizabeth Adelaide Adams, who ran the Voluntary Aid Detachment hospital at Wellingborough, died of influenza in November 1918 and was buried in Doddington Road cemetery. Thousands lined the route of her funeral procession.29

**Letters Home**

Soldiers sent letters and cards back home regularly as a way of keeping family informed that they were still alive. They sometimes reveal the conditions in which men lived and died, and when letters stopped it was often a sign that a man had been captured or killed. Most letters stayed in private hands but some made their way into the local paper, often when a death was announced. A letter reporting the death of Arthur Creighton in 1915 says that on the day he went up to the trenches he met his brother Horace whom he had not seen for eight years. Horace was to die just a few weeks later. Alf Mayes wrote home to his sister in 1915 saying that he had found the body of their brother Frank when he was crawling wounded back to his lines. Mercifully, news was received a week later that Frank was alive and that in his confusion Alf had mistakenly identified the dead body of another soldier.

Private Percy Capon was in France for just two weeks when he wrote home to say that he was going up to the trenches the next day. That next day was his last as he died in the Battle of Aubers Ridge along with 20 others in the Northamptonshire Regiment who are named on the memorial. Private William Church of the Northamptonshires was killed in 1916, but in May 1915 he wrote home saying:

> I expect you will see in the papers in a day or two about the big ‘do’ we were in the other day. Our poor fellows had a terrible time of it. It was enough to break anyone’s heart to see the poor fellows crawling back wounded. I think we who got out of it safe are lucky. I was amongst a lot of those who lay as near to the German trench as we could get, and lay there from about 6 o’clock in the morning until about 9 o’clock at night, and then the rest of us managed to crawl back to our trench. Then the Germans kept on firing at us as we crept along, and I say good luck to all who got out of it, but I cannot help thinking of all the poor fellows that got hit. It was like hell let loose – shells and bullets flying all around and amongst us. And some of us lay there from early morning till late at night waiting for it to get dark, so that we could creep away from the front of their trench back to our own. I have never had such a shaking up like it in all my life. I ache all over through lying in one position so many hours, because we had to lie still, or else they would have us in a second.

The date of this letter and his regiment suggest that the ‘big do’ he mentions was the Battle of Aubers Ridge.

Lieutenant Stephen Coales, a solicitor and town councillor, wrote home:

> In the little dugout under the parapet of a trench where I am writing the rats run about the roof. There are 1000s out here.

Stephen Coales was killed by shellfire not long afterwards. On the day Private Oliver Fossey died he wrote home:

> Dear Mother, just a line you know I am still alive and kicking. It is rather cold and rainy at present, but I hope that will soon clear off. Please write to me as soon as you can, as I am looking for a line from you.

29 *Wellingborough News*, 15 November 1918.
Men would also write home with news about their friends from the town. Lance Corporal F. Gent wrote to say:

I am grieved to tell you Jack Brown was shot during our stay in the trenches. Altogether we have had two officers killed, one wounded and several men, but I don’t know how many. Poor Jack Brown was hit whilst we were walking down the trench. There were two or three very bad corners in this trench and the Germans marked them.

Trooper W. Papworth of Grendon wrote saying:

I was with him at the time. He was shot through the head and fell without a word. We are very sorry to lose him, as he was a great favourite with everybody, being always so cheerful and bright. We are awfully sorry for you in this great trouble.

Private A. Cowper of the Northamptonshires wrote to his comrade’s parents in Pebble Lane to say:

I am very sorry to tell you that my poor mate, Tom Cope, has been killed. That was his last wish before he died ‘Be sure and let Mrs Cope know’ because Tom and I gave each other our addresses and said if either of us got killed the other should write home.

Private Cope was one of the many who fell at Aubers Ridge.

Frederick Ulyatt, who was a stoker on the battle cruiser Queen Mary and whose two brothers lived in the town sent a letter home which was presumably written shortly after a recent action by his battle group.

We were not in at the death of some of the baby-killers, but it’s my squadron and we were not far away. You can take it from me that we shall be in the thick of it very soon now, and something is going to get shifted. … Expressing the hope to hear from home soon. It’s wonderful how a few lines cheer a bloke up after a month’s hard work in times like these. We are not in harbour often, and never know when we go out if is our turn to join the ‘Roll of Honour’. The British Navy will live on and act up to its reputation to friend and foe in peace or war and none of us will have lived in vain. I don’t wish for a better death myself but I want to live to see all the fleet of Kaiser Bill at the bottom of the North Sea.

Stoker Ulyatt died after 16 years service in the Navy along with over 1,250 other crewmen when the Queen Mary exploded at the Battle of Jutland in May 1916.

Final Resting Places
Over 100,000 bodies lying in the cemeteries now maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission are marked simply as ‘Known unto God’. In addition, the bodies of over 165,000 Commonwealth soldiers who died on the Western Front remain missing and 40% of the names identified on Wellingborough’s memorial have no known grave. How is this high proportion explained? When a soldier was removed to hospital and died of wounds he would usually be buried in a cemetery away from the fighting and his grave

31 Wellingborough News, 5 February 1915.
32 www.cwgc.org/fromelles
33 The CWGC database identifies where a person is buried if known, or the memorial on which they are listed if they have no known grave.
is likely to be known. However, some of the battlefield cemeteries created during the war were later shelled in renewed fighting over the same ground such that grave markers were lost. Bodies buried by enemy forces in large grave pits went unidentified. For those who died on the battlefield, some bodies were beyond recognition or were simply never found after being hastily consumed by a heavily bombarded landscape. Corporal Walter Ruff was buried by bursting German shells\textsuperscript{34} and Private Harry Cowper was killed by a shell burst overhead;\textsuperscript{35} both lie where they fell. Private Horace Lilley was asleep in a shelter when it was hit by a shell. His comrades were unable to remove his body due to the tangled mess left behind and he is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial. Aged 18, he had been in France for only three weeks.\textsuperscript{36} (Figure 4)

\textbf{Omissions and Mistakes}

Although 677 names appear on the memorial, the total number with some connection to the town who died is certainly much higher. Records were found of men born in Wellingborough but whose families had moved away in their early years. James Woolston, son of the postmaster, lived in Wellingborough for 20 years before going up to Cambridge and later becoming a professor of mathematics in South Africa. Serving with South African forces, he died of wounds in 1918. Wreaths placed by factory workers to their fallen colleagues identify 16 names that are not on the memorial, although some appear on memorials nearby, including Bozeat, Rushden and Kettering. ‘H. Child (nurse)’ is listed on the Wellingborough Wesleyan memorial but not on the town’s memorial; s/he has not been traced. Private Fred Massey who lived in the town for 25 years is omitted. Sidney Cobb, whose mother lived in Knox Road, enlisted in Ontario and his name appears on the United Reform memorial along with Horace Jones, whose parents lived in North Street. The United Reform church memorial lists several other names that are not on the town memorial. In addition, Private Frank Hilton of Knox Road, who was shot in 1914 and who lay for seven days on the battlefield before being picked-up by German forces, died in 1924 after 21 operations for his wounds.\textsuperscript{37} Driver Frederick Alderman is buried in Doddington Road cemetery and may have died at the Voluntary Aid Hospital. He certainly lived in Wellingborough during the war as he appears on the Absent Voters List for 1918. Although ‘W. Bailey’ is listed on the memorial there are two matches; Walter Bailey was killed in 1918 and William in 1917, whose brothers Austin and Alfred are listed. Both were born in Wellingborough, suggesting that either Walter or William is omitted. Likewise, ‘H. Jones’ is listed but this could be Private Horace Jones or Able Seaman Harold Jones who are both listed on church memorials in the town. There are three candidates for ‘A. Jones’; Arthur 1915, Albert 1917 and Alfred 1918. All three casualties were reported in the local paper. Although more detailed research is needed into this aspect of the memorial it does appear that several more names deserve to be listed at Broad Green.

The current listing at Broad Green also has some mistakes. Three names appear with no initial (Daintith, Noble and Wright)\textsuperscript{38} and over 30 carry certain or very likely mistakes. ‘Cos’ should be ‘Cox’, ‘Clays’ should be Clayson, ‘Fardent’ should be Farden, ‘Jenking’ should be Jenkins and ‘Leaton’ should be Lenton. Some names have minor spelling variations but most errors are with initials and appear to have come from mistakes made from the reading of handwritten or typed lists when they were originally compiled. Initial letters C and G are sometimes interchanged, as are F and E.

\textsuperscript{34} Wellingborough News, 29 September 1916.
\textsuperscript{35} Wellingborough News, 6 July 1917.
\textsuperscript{36} Evening Telegraph, 7 February 1918.
\textsuperscript{37} Wellingborough News, 8 February 1924.
\textsuperscript{38} This is 2nd Lt James Daintith, Royal Engineers, of Warrington, who was an engineer at the town’s waterworks. Probably Pte George Henry Wright, Lincolnshire Regt, died 21 July 1917.
The Unidentified

Of the names that remain to be identified, 20 are very close matches to others that are listed. ‘F Ealey’ is listed twice but only one match can be found. The same applies to ‘L. H. Stebbings’; there is one match to a man born in Wellingborough and who died in 1917 and the probability of two ‘L. H. Stebbings’ from the town being killed seems very low. ‘W. Eales’ is unknown but could be ‘W.J. Eales’ who is identified. Other unidentified names are, ‘F. Dix’, ‘E. Glover’, ‘H. Hill’, ‘H. Moore’ and ‘F. Wallis’, but ‘F. J. Dix’, ‘E. T. Glover’, ‘A. H. Hill’, ‘E. H. Moore’ and ‘F. W. Wallis’ are known. It must be a possibility that some of these close matches represent the same person whose name was perhaps put forward by different family members after the war.

Another problem is that where a surname is relatively common it is extremely difficult to make a positive identification unless there is a clear link to Wellingborough in surviving records. Even so, some relatively uncommon names continue to defy identification. ‘M. T. Lomath’, for instance, has not been traced and, given that there are some definite errors on the memorial, it must be a possibility that the initials of some of those who remain unidentified are incomplete or wrong. The unidentified soldiers were not mentioned in the local paper and some may not have been local; perhaps being billeted in the town at some time during the war. However, the converse also applies. Private Jacob Knight, who lived with his wife and children in the town before the war, and whose family stayed there afterwards, does not appear to be mentioned in the newspaper.

After the War

In the summer of 1919, celebrations were held in local towns and villages to mark the signing of the peace treaty, and in Wellingborough a procession led the way to a ‘great service’ in Bassett’s Close. Former prisoners of war were supported by collections in the town and in response to a call by Mr Henson, 132 former prisoners came forward. The British Legion did what it could to support the families of those who were lost. As well as organizing ‘Poppy Days’, a tea and concert party was arranged after which the fatherless children were given sweets, a threepenny piece, a bun and an orange. Their puzzled faces gazed into the camera for the local paper.39

With the war over, memorials to glorious and noble sacrifice helped to assuage feelings of waste and loss. They helped to give some meaning and significance to the suffering that those who fell and the communities they came from had endured. The memorial tells us more than just the names of the men from Wellingborough who lost their lives facing the enemy. It tells us of a wider group of people who contributed to war service in some way and who died while in the service of the war effort. The memorial commemorates the lost boys of Wellingborough who were born and schooled in the town, who played in the streets only to someday enlist and die fighting for their country. It also remembers those who had

39 Wellingborough News, 11 January 1924
moved away, some to the other side of the world, but who came back to be lost in the killing fields of France and Flanders. It remembers also the men and women who had moved to the town to find work and who were remembered by their friends and workmates when peace had returned. Memorials invite us to remember the dead, yet we should not forget the wounded who were pained for the rest of their lives. Nor should we forget the parents who lost their sons and daughters, the grieving fiancées, the widows and their children. From Wellingborough alone there were thousands.

Acknowledgements
This article has been made possible through the generous help of the many people who gave information about their relatives lost in the Great War. Special thanks are given to Nicola Bates who extracted information from the local newspaper, to Judith Lattaway for her analysis of census returns, and to Carol Beattie, Colin Knight and Linda Groom for additional census searches.
BOOK REVIEWS

A HISTORY OF DEATH AND BURIAL IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
by Peter Hill

Amberley Publishing, Stroud, Gloucestershire, 2011
ISBN 978-1-4456-0462-6
Softback, 160 pages
Price £14.99

As stated in the introduction, the subject ‘is not so much about death, but rather life itself – its hopes, joys, fear and trials’. The social background is a history in one volume of the Cradle to the Grave customs that attended life and death. One chapter encapsulates plagues, the enclosures and desertion of settlements in which the author cites as an obsession with the afterlife. In another chapter, the methods of burial from the Christian period and the vessels used and the positioning of the body are discussed. Protection against evil is noted; strength and fertility are portrayed in the foliate issuing faces of the Green Man.

Social disapproval was pertinent, and Lowbelling – ridding a parish of gossip mongers – was a likely remembered lesson. In Broughton’s own version, a Tin Can Band is still paraded in December, when the parish remembers its own method of social disapproval. This is a visual and proudly featured item on the village sign!

The marriage service today involves either the calling of banns for three weeks previous to the event or a special licence. In earlier times it was a lengthy progression of ritual. We are informed that among a number of processes there was hand-fasting, and maybe fumigation with brambles and then at a later date the actual ceremony would start with a blessing in the church porch before proceeding inside the church to the altar.

Once dead, the remains of the venerated became of great value to a church which was fortunate to possess such artefacts. Reliquaries were the money-spinners of the past and an object for a pilgrimage. Brixworth, with its early monastery, a case in point with a reliquary thought to be of St Boniface to whom the church is dedicated.

Tribute is paid to early recorders of memorial stones, both those within a church and those in the burial ground. In the case of Corby, it was the pupils of the Grammar School who completed this task in 1959. At other places it has been a WEA class. More recently it has become an object of attention for the Family History Society to systematically traverse the County recording all the memorial ledger and other stones in churches, and recording and making mapping plans of the graveyards. Even the efforts of parochial church councils who have to prepare ‘statements of significance’ for Diocesan records are lauded.

There is a wealth of illustration of fine monumental art in our County churches and of the diverse varieties of material used, be it a thirteenth-century crusader in limestone at Sudborough or a fifteenth-century alabaster altar tomb for the Greenes at Lowick.

Exterior memorials have suffered as much by weathering and erosion as from the over diligence of church officials and, where a graveyard is now closed, the local authority. Their preference is often to sweep all away to outer walls for the convenience of keeping a graveyard tidy and the latest threat is the Health and Safety Inspectorate.

The families of County stone masons are many, and prominent ones are given much attention. The Cox family of Northampton and Daventry are among the best known.
With regard to weathering, at Pytchley we have the Lewis family of Isham, whose Leicestershire Swithland slate memorials have fared well, with some fine displays of calligraphy. Weathering affects much of our local stone and even the Commonwealth War Graves Commission should look to cutting deeper into the stones being deployed for the graves of air crew from the airfields in the north of the county.

A relatively modern memorial is my own favourite – Henry Moore’s *The Hands of Youth and Age* on a bronze plaque appended to a stone above the grave of Edith Sitwell in the cemetery at Lois Weedon. But perhaps our most famous memorials and cut from Weldon Stone, are the Eleanor Crosses of Hardingstone and Geddington.

This is a thoroughly researched and engagingly written book. In the pages of six appendices on Brasses, Hatchments, Recumbent Stone Effigies, Parish Registers, Field Names and the Forgotten Burial Place there is a treasure trove awaiting discovery. It has a useful bibliography but sadly no index. Maybe this might be remedied in a future edition.

Rosemary Eady

THE ACT BOOK OF ST KATHERINE’S GILD, STAMFORD, 1480-1534
edited by Alan Rogers
Abramis Academic Publishing, Bury St Edmunds, 2011,
in association with the Stamford Survey Group
ISBN 978-1-84549-509-1
Softback, 300 pages
Price £19.95

Medieval gilds fall into three main types: those that were craft gilds involving merchants and craftsmen; non-occupational guilds that had both secular and religious functions; and gilds that were mainly religious. The late medieval gild of St Katherine, Stamford, based in St Paul’s parish, falls into the second type. It was one of the many gilds in the town, of which the most important was that of Corpus Christi and St Mary in the church of St Mary at the Bridge, which provided town plays. However, because of the survival of the text here published, St Katherine’s is the best documented gild in Stamford. The register, now part of the manuscript archive of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, records membership and other matters during the years 1480 to 1534.

The origin of the gild is not known; there was an altar dedicated to St Katherine in St Paul’s church by 1409, but there may have been a cult of St Katherine at Stamford which was the inspiration for an alliterative poem to the saint. The gild had existed well before 1480, when Alderman William Browne, wool merchant, made a list of its possessions that had been acquired before then.

A meeting in November 1480 listed 47 ‘members’ of whom only 13 were then alive, and listed a further 27 names of people who were to be invited to join. So this seems to be a period of revitalisation for the gild. The statutes state that the gild was to meet in the chapel over the parish church door of St Paul’s on the eve of St Katherine’s day (25 November), and the steward was to enforce attendance. Members paid a fine of 6s 8d in instalments of 20d over four years and an annual payment of 2d per person. Collection of unpaid entry fines became a problem, so that in 1517, only three payments were received from the outstanding entry fines that were due. A business meeting was held on 6 November, or the following Sunday, in the chapel and new members took the oath. The gild feast was held in the Gild Hall on the Sunday after St Katherine’s day, when officers rendered their accounts and new officers were elected. On the same day obits were read for all past
members, declared by the ‘bellman’ going around the town. When a member died, a mass was said within 30 days, also announced around the town. These activities, except for the obits, are recorded in the register.

Membership grew from 13 in 1480 to 49 in 1489. Between 1495–1508 admissions increased, bringing the total number to 110, which included Margaret Beaufort (mother of Henry VII), from Collyweston and Cecily lady Welles (daughter of Edward IV). Most members were local merchants or tradesmen, not all of them the richest men in town. It included shoemakers, glovers, bakers, weavers and smiths, as well as lawyers and one doctor. The membership was not directly linked to the town council, although several councillors became gild members. Some of the town’s MPs were members, and several people were connected to the estate of Margaret Beaufort. Neither was membership closely linked to the parish of St Katherine, for few of the people appointed to collect taxes in the parish were members of the gild. Some clergy became members such as the abbots of Bourne, Crowland and Spalding in 1509, and in 1532 the vicar of All Saints and the precentor of Fotheringhay. Several women were admitted as members; in 1504 there were 15 in their own right.

As well as the entry fines, there was an annual payment of 2d for waxshott. It was made for the maintenance of altar lights in the chapel of St Katherine. The sums collected would have resulted in the accumulation of much small change and at Browne’s Hospital there is a fifteenth-century almsbox that is probably similar to one used by the gild to collect waxshott. In 1866 a hoard of 3,000 groats and half groats dating from the 1470s was discovered in St George’s churchyard, possibly deriving from such a collection box.

The alderman was the chief administrative officer of the gild, and normally was appointed for life. Alderman Thomas Phillip, mercer and town councillor, built the gild up to its largest size. His successor in 1510 was William Radclyffe who endowed a free grammar school in Stamford in association with the Corpus Christi gild. The steward collected rents due from gild property and paid for most activities except the feast; the feast had its own steward or procurator. This was probably an unpopular office since the procurator put up the money for the feast and had to claim it back from the gild. Few procurators served for more than one year. A gild chaplain was mentioned occasionally; Hugh Broun of the Augustinian Friary was allowed 1s 8d deducted from his entry fine in return for the celebration of masses in the chapel of St Katherine. Repairs to the chapel were sometimes recorded.

In 1480 the gild possessed two properties, which paid rents of 18s in 1520. From these and the other fines, the offices of bedell, chaplain and clerk were paid. The gild possessed ‘stock’ such as furniture, cloths and plate which were loaned for a fee. The gild also seems to have invested money rather than hoarding it, and members paid an annual 7½ per cent interest for loans.

The document begins with the statutes (not entered until 1494) and continues with a list of the stock and real estate in the town. It records lists of payments and the names of members, the election of officers, waxshott payments, along with many items related to the themes mentioned above. St Martin’s parish, lying south of the River Welland in Northamptonshire, is referred to occasionally. The vicar of St Martin, Robert Grymston, paid 2d waxshott in 1491, 1492 and 1493 to St Katherine’s gild. There was also a gild of St Martin which received rent from two cottages in that parish, recorded in a rental of the ‘late Abbey of Peterborough’ in 1541 (Exeter Muniments 53/37).

The book is nicely set out and has a comprehensive index. Professor Rogers and the Stamford Survey Group are to be congratulated on production of the volume, which will
be of great interest to those studying the Stamford area, as well as contributing to the history of gilds in general.

David Hall

The Library

Wendy Raybould has written that there have been few visitors to the Library this year. Members are reminded that they are entitled to use this unique and eccentric collection, for casual browsing or research purposes, whenever the Record Office is open – just ask at Reception and show your membership card.

Among the additions this year is the work of one of our own members. Michael Heaton’s *A Farming History of Spratton, 1766-1914*, is an original study of the parish from the time of Enclosure, with some very interesting mapping and good use of local sources. New technology has made possible the high quality of the presentation of his research and it should serve as a beacon to other toilers in the field. Our thanks go to Michael for donating a copy of his work to the library. Visitors will find it in the Local sequence, at class mark 242/584.

Another accession is *Memories of Youth: Growing up in Northampton in the 1930s and 1940s* by Eric G. Parker. Roger Morris has sent us notice of *The Borough of Northampton: Its Guildhall and Civic Traditions* and also a copy of his *The Mayor of Northampton’s Fund for the Housebound and the Antecedent Poor Children’s Christmas Dinner Fund*.

We have had information on the Fenland Lighter Project from Mr H.J.K. Jenkins. You can find out more about the project on www.gla.ac.uk/~aj12x/flip.html. He has sent us copies of various notes he has had published in the newsletter of the Society for Nautical Research and in AMS Studies.
OBITUARY NOTICES

Canon Thomas Christie 1932-2012

Canon Thomas Christie (80), who served as Canon Treasurer at the Cathedral for 22 years before retiring in 2001, died at home on 29 February 2012. Canon Christie was a member of the Record Society Council and represented on the Council the Mellows Trust and Peterborough Cathedral.

Canon Christie is survived by his wife Audrey, his three children and seven grandchildren. On his retirement from the cathedral, Canon Christie took up a post as Priest-in-Charge of Thornhaugh and Wansford Parish, where he served until October 2011. The Dean of Peterborough, Charles Taylor, said: ‘Thomas was a man of huge energy and enthusiasm, contributing not only to the life of the church in this area, but also contributing at a national level. He was for many years a member of the General Synod of the Church of England and became well known for frequently moving the motion to close the debate when he felt discussions became too protracted. Thomas was a great friend to many and could always be found chatting in the cathedral precincts, happily giving of his time to anyone he met. He will be missed.’

A spokeswoman for Peterborough Cathedral said: ‘He was an extremely popular figure and his love for the cathedral was infectious to all who met him. During his time at the cathedral he will be most remembered for being a great character and a person of keen and enquiring mind, not much escaped him. He spent an enormous amount of time just talking to people and for many in the city the cathedral and Canon Christie just went hand-in-hand. When he preached his final sermon at the cathedral in July 2001 over 400 people, which is twice the size of a normal Sunday congregation, crowded in to hear him speak. It was a wonderful testament to his work here and how he reached out to so very many people in such an accessible, warm, friendly way. Thomas was a devoted priest and teacher of the faith, in the great liberal catholic tradition of Anglicanism as well as being a firm ecumenist.’ The spokeswoman added: ‘Tom possessed a strong entrepreneurial spirit. In his early days in the Diocese of Ely he established a vibrant new church at St James, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge, before becoming Vicar of St Augustine’s in Wisbech where he additionally made a strong and often vocal contribution to municipal affairs. Following this there was a brief interlude in Kent as Vicar of All Saints Whitstable before being appointed to Peterborough Cathedral.’

Compiled from an obituary in Peterborough Evening Telegraph, 5 March 2012

Christine Vialls 1925-2010

Born at Macclesfield, Christine studied music and became a professional singer. In 1955 she met and married Arthur Vialls, and they lived in Devon for some years where Arthur was teaching. The family moved to London when Arthur took a new job with the BBC. Now with three young, inquisitive sons, Christine looked for a book to answer their questions on how a windmill worked, but couldn’t find one. This inspired her to write one, and it was so successful that more industrial archaeology books followed, and only recently went out of print. Family history research into both their families led her to take a course, and for some years she was a professional researcher. Whilst researching Arthur’s family at Northamptonshire Record Office (NRO) she found a rare document for the Rothwell Hundred of the ‘Marriages Tax’ 1697. This was so difficult to use, Christine decided to make a transcript and index it for NRO. She also started a one name study of the Vialls families, and was member number 28 when Northamptonshire Family History
Society was launched in 1979. When Arthur retired in 1984, they decided to leave London, and after some searching settled at Kibworth in Leicestershire. Sadly Arthur died suddenly the following year, and finding time on her hands, Christine looked for voluntary work and, as she knew NRO from her research, she decided to ask for a project there. Indexing the Poor Law documents was the task allotted, and some unusual documents were found amongst them.

Christine decided to take a local history course at Leicester University in 1994, and, based on the Poor Law documents she had discovered at NRO, her tutor encouraged her to work instead for a doctorate. Knowing I was a compulsive indexer, Christine asked if I would help her by listing Poor Law cases at the Quarter Sessions. I eagerly agreed, and eventually indexed the criminals as well as the Poor Law cases. Christine was awarded her PhD in 1999.

We were friends for 20 years and worked on several projects together at NRO: the Daventry collection (un-catalogued section), Poor Law documents, Quarter Sessions records, and the Revd John Mastin, vicar of Naseby, a distant ancestor of her husband. The Memoirs of Revd Mastin, together with the History of Naseby that he had written in 1792, were published in 2004 by Northamptonshire Record Society. Christine died peacefully at Kibworth on 2 December 2010.

Kay Collins
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Cover illustration:
Lady Emily Isham (1824-1898), by Richard Buckner, c.1847
(Courtesy of Lamport Hall Preservation Trust)