



Giants of Dawley

People, places and events that helped shape Britain



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MAIN IMAGE: Young Holywell Lane residents in the early 20th century (© courtesy of Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust)

TOP LEFT: Dawley High Street and the old market hall c1950s (© courtesy of Shropshire Archives)

TOP RIGHT: 1902 view of early steam wagon with workers (© courtesy of Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust)

BOTTOM LEFT: Dawley Coronation Ground with the malthouse visible in the background (© courtesy of Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust)

Foreword

Dawley Regeneration Partnership began the Dawley Heritage Project in 2009 with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Telford & Wrekin Council. Its aim was to increase people's pride in Dawley and attract more visitors to the area.

This book is one of the results of the Project. Local research was carried out by members of Dawley History Group, Dawley Heritage Project Steering Group and Dawley History Research group. All were keen to leave a legacy to Dawley, reflecting its place in history. Written by enthusiastic amateurs, *Giants of Dawley* seeks to raise readers' awareness and interest rather than give definitive answers or deep insights into the history of Dawley. It is an eclectic mix of information collected by local contributors following their various interests in the area's unique past, rather than an all-embracing look at Dawley's notable characters, its historic sites or historical events.

One of the expected outcomes of the Dawley Heritage Project was that the Dawley Regeneration Partnership should publish research about people, places and events in

Dawley's history. We are delighted, therefore, to be able to present some of the research to you in this book. A rather more unexpected result, though, has been the encouraging amount of interest shown by local people in Dawley's rich industrial and social history.

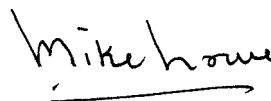
We hope that this publication is a worthy springboard to future research on Dawley and its notable characters, which others might choose to undertake. We believe that it complements the physical regeneration that is currently happening in Dawley and it is a timely reminder that the regeneration is more than physical rebuilding; it is about re-invigorating the Dawley community.

Finally, our thanks are due to the professional input of the design and editing team led by Nigel McDonald. They have helped us ensure that we have produced a book of which the Dawley community can feel justly proud.



Shirley Bruneau
Manager, Dawley Heritage Project

As chairman of Dawley Regeneration Partnership I should like to offer my sincere thanks on behalf of its directors and Partnership members to Shirley Bruneau, community consultant, who has managed the whole Dawley Heritage Project with commitment and unfailing enthusiasm and has made it such a great success.



Michael Lowe CBE, DL

Contributing authors



Pam Bradburn DL

A member of the Regeneration Partnership and Heritage Project Steering Group, Pam has had a lifelong interest in local history. As well as writing the biographies of Joseph Simpson and Samuel Peploe, she contributed to the Battle of Cinderloo account and she advised on other chapters within the book.



Shirley Bruneau

Shirley has been the manager of the Dawley Heritage Project since its start in 2009. She has lived in the area for 30 years and is an active member of the Dawley History Group. Shirley wrote the biographies of Albert Stanley, William Ball and Michael Lowe, and helped research the life of Samuel Parkes Cadman. She also wrote about Dawley's Demonstration Day.



Mark Chetwood

Mark is the grandson of George Chetwood who, as chairman of Dawley Urban District Council during the 1960s and 70s, led the fight for Dawley to become one of Britain's new towns. Mark was born and brought up in Dawley and is active in the local community. He has a keen interest in Dawley's history and was happy to write an account of his grandfather's life.



John Churm

John is a retired architectural draughtsman who started his career at Horsehay Works. He was one of the founder members of Dawley Bank History Group. As his family had close connections with Lawley Bank Methodist Chapel, John chose to write the biography of Samuel Parkes Cadman.



Ros Collins

Originating from Malvern, Ros lived for some years in Wellington. After working abroad, she returned to Shropshire, bought Hazeldene House on Southall Road and turned it into a successful guesthouse. The house was once the home of Elsie Day and the Merrington chain-making family. Ros was keen to research Elsie, whose character she found fascinating.

Rob Corbett

Rob, who has lived in the Dawley area since his marriage in 1974, spent much of his working life at Horsehay ironworks. He started there as an apprentice and ended his time there as the Works' general manager. Rob was very interested in the history of Horsehay Works and kindly penned an article for the book about this historic site.



Gill Egan

Gill is a Dawley girl who became interested in research having undertaken the Dawley Heritage Project's family history course. While delving into the history of her family members, she unearthed information about an interesting ancestor of hers, John Poole Sandlands. She agreed to write his biography for inclusion in this book.



Malcolm Peel

A local Dawley man, brought up in the potteries and on the Brandlee, Malcolm is the archivist for the Dawley History Group. He has an avid interest in anything related to Dawley history. Malcolm wrote the biography of Captain Matthew Webb and the account of the Springwell Pit disaster of 1872.



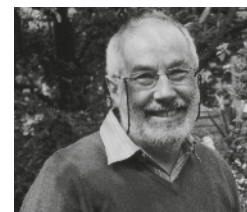
Paul Sherry

Paul is a retired principal regeneration officer for Telford & Wrekin Council. As part of his role with the Council, he was actively involved in the Dawley Regeneration Project. Paul wrote accounts of the Battle of Cinderloo, the making of the New Town and the biography of sportsman William Foulke.



Paul Wolfe

A director of the Dawley Regeneration Partnership and member the Dawley Heritage Project steering group, Paul is actively involved in the local community. He is chair of the Dawley History Group and has run courses on the town's history, and led guided walks of the area. Paul wrote about the life of Edith Pargeter, better known as the novelist 'Ellis Peters'.



Acknowledgements

The chairman, board of directors and the board of Dawley Regeneration Partnership who have given their full and active support.

The Heritage Lottery Fund and Telford & Wrekin Council for funding the Dawley Heritage Project

All the contributors to this book whose enthusiasm and hard work have made it possible.

The production team: Nigel McDonald, No Nonsense – Interpretation; Carol Thompson, editor; Lynn Bresler, proofreader; and designer Mike Ashton, MA Creative, whose inspiration, flair, expertise and patience have moulded a disparate set of articles into what we all hope is an enjoyable book.

All members of the Dawley Heritage Project Steering Group who each played a vital part in ensuring the success of the venture: Joan Noel, chair; Paul Wolfe; Pam Bradburn DL; Ken Jones MBE; Paul Sherry; Louise Scotford; Marilyn Higson; and Crawford Douglas.

Contributors from the Dawley History Research group who carried out research on Dawley's people, places and events, even if some of the articles produced do not appear in the book.

John Lenton, Methodist archivist, Doug & Chris Wright, Brian Pitchford and John Howells for information supplied on Samuel Parkes Cadman.

John Merrington and his wife for information and photographs of Elsie Day.

George Baugh, former editor of the *Victoria County History – Shropshire* for verifying our research where necessary and providing additional material.

Neil Paterson, manager of the Metropolitan Police Historical Collection, and his colleagues for information on and photographs of Sir Joseph Simpson.

Ben Simpson, son of Sir Joseph Simpson, and John Simpson his second cousin, who contributed personal reminiscences and photographs to Sir Joseph Simpson's biography.

Nick Fry, heritage and press officer at Chester Cathedral, for information and photograph regarding Samuel Peploe.

John Cuffley, former chief social development officer at Telford Development Corporation, for clarifications and support given regarding Telford new town for 'The Making of the New Town' article.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mike Lowe CBE, DL, chair of Dawley Regeneration Partnership, and the directors and board members for allowing me the privilege of managing this project and for giving me the help and support to bring it to fruition. This has been the most fulfilling engagement of my professional life.

Shirley Bruneau
Manager, Dawley Heritage Project

Introduction

Dawley helped shape the modern world

Even the briefest flick through the pages of this book should leave you in no doubt that there is much more to Dawley than you may know. Like many places of Britain's industrial past, Dawley's story has been almost forgotten and the lights of its industrial furnaces have been dimmed by time.

Dawley is the foundation of one of Britain's newest towns. Telford was originally to be named Dawley New Town. However, the addition of Wellington and Oakengates and surrounding areas caused the developers to seek a new name to represent this enlarged new town area. Thomas Telford's name was adopted in recognition of this great engineer's achievements and his association with Shropshire. This put Dawley even further from the nation's mind.

But, can the town lay claim to an even greater foundation? Have its people and places, and the events that surrounded them, influenced our modern world? This book shows that Dawley's story reaches far beyond its modest boundaries. It justifies Dawley people's sense of pride in a place that helped shape Britain.

A mighty industrial past

Shropshire is world-renowned for the diversity of its geology. As with many Shropshire towns, Dawley owes its fortunes to its underlying

rocks and clays. At the heart of the Shropshire Coalfield, with ironstone also close to the surface, Dawley's part in the Industrial Revolution was assured. The added presence of boulder clay was a further valuable resource. But for these natural riches, this industrial hotspot may not have been anything more than a typical English village.

Abraham Darby II's investment in two furnaces at Horsehay in the mid-1700s kick-started an industrial boom that would employ Dawley people for over 200 years. Iron working became a dominant industry and Horsehay Works, amongst its many achievements, rolled the hull plates for *SS Great Britain*, the world's first iron ship. The 20th century saw Horsehay Works with an international reputation for excellence, exporting bridges, giant girders and cranes all over the globe.

The huge influx of people arriving to power this growing industrial engine needed somewhere to live. The boulder clay was excavated and made into bricks for workers' housing. Brick making became an important industry and local bricks still dictate the distinctive look of the town you can see today.

The ready supply of coal close to the surface meant that anyone with land could become a mine owner. As these small drift mines blossomed, coal and clay pits, spoil and

smelting waste littered the landscape. One of the larger spoil areas, known as the Cinder Hills, became the ignition point for a different kind of industrial revolution.

The Cinderloo revolt in 1821 almost mirrored the larger Peterloo incident in Manchester in 1819. A mass protest against working conditions and wages developed into a full-scale riot that was brutally put down. Cinderloo was symptomatic of national disquiet that led to a time of social change. It and other tragic events such as the Springwell Pit disaster inspired the indomitable community spirit that survives in Dawley today. In addition, Cinderloo sparked the considerable growth of Methodist worship in the Dawley area.

Voices of conviction and demonstrations of unity

For Dawley people, religion has been a comfort, cause for celebration and, for some, a calling.

As Dawley's industries prospered, so did the career of Samuel Peploe, a local man who became a controversial Bishop of Chester and a key figure in supporting the Protestant king against the Catholics. When the industrial boom broke, Dawley's communities converted halls and built new places of worship. From this spiritually charged environment sprung other influential religious figures such as Reverend John Pool Sandlands and, later, Reverend Samuel Parkes Cadman. Reverend Sandlands published pioneering works on nutrition and public speaking. Reverend Parkes Cadman was one of the first radio preachers. A powerful

orator, he made his name in the US and drew huge audiences wherever he spoke.

The importance of Christian faith amongst Dawley's communities was cause for annual celebration for almost a hundred years. The Dawley 'Demmon' march on August Bank Holiday is a further example of the lasting closeness of this community.

Dawley's heroes

There are few places in the world that can boast so many internationally acclaimed sons and daughters. Dawley people have made their mark.

Modern attitudes to 'nationalism' would have little merit in Victorian Britain. One Dawley man from this time became an icon of national pride. John Bull, the 'Shropshire Giant', put Dawley on the map typifying the strength of the Empire. Another giant of a Dawley man won the hearts of the Nation as a professional footballer. Ex-colyer, William Foulke found fame as, at six-foot-four and 24-stone, he towered over other players of his time in his Sheffield United and England goalkeeper's strips.

The first man to swim the English Channel unaided was also from Dawley. His faith in himself and his ability to overcome difficult odds may well have been Dawley character traits. However, the acclaimed Captain Webb found that fame was hard to keep and chased its fickle ways to an untimely death. He is remembered as a brave but tragic hero.

Amongst the other Dawley giants is the author Edith Pargeter who found lasting fame. Better known by her pen name Ellis Peters, her Brother Cadfael novels opened a gateway to medieval Shropshire. Her work has brought many visitors to walk in the footsteps of this fictional cleric and super-sleuth. She died an internationally best-selling author.

Dawley's civic servants

There is one local man who it can be argued has had more impact on our lives than any other, although the importance of his life's work may be largely unknown. Joe Simpson, born in Doseley, was the first officer to rise through the ranks of the Metropolitan Police to become its commissioner. In ten years he changed the face of modern policing, ultimately affecting the lives of everyone in Britain.

Other Dawley people have also dedicated their lives to the common good. The early life of Albert Stanley as a collier and the death of his father in a mining accident, helped to forge the destiny of this champion of miners' rights. A dedicated union leader and Liberal, he became a member of parliament for North West Staffordshire in the early 1900s.

A Dawley woman, born not long after Stanley in the 1880s, went on to live a long and full life as a headteacher in Dawley. The diminutive giant, Mrs Elsie Day lived to 110 and no doubt steered many of Dawley's inhabitants to be the best they could be. One such former pupil, George Chetwood, became the 'Father of the New Town'. His vision improved the living conditions of many people and still inspires

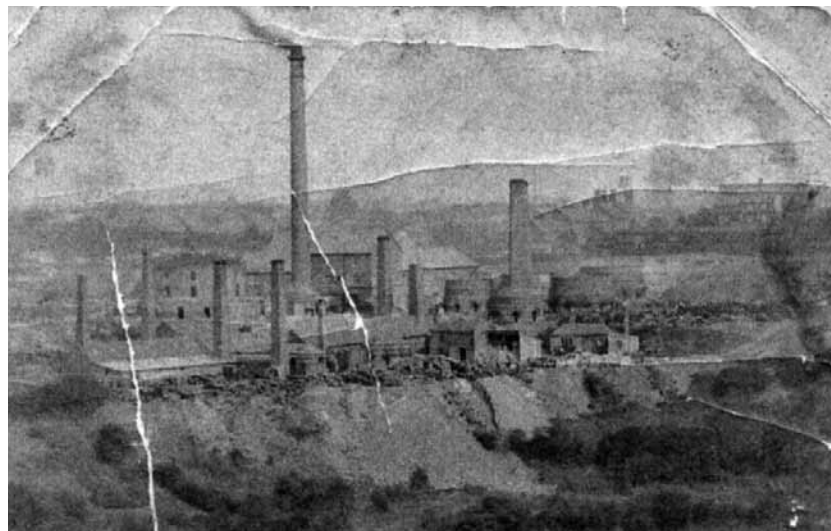
others to continue working for Telford and Dawley's future.

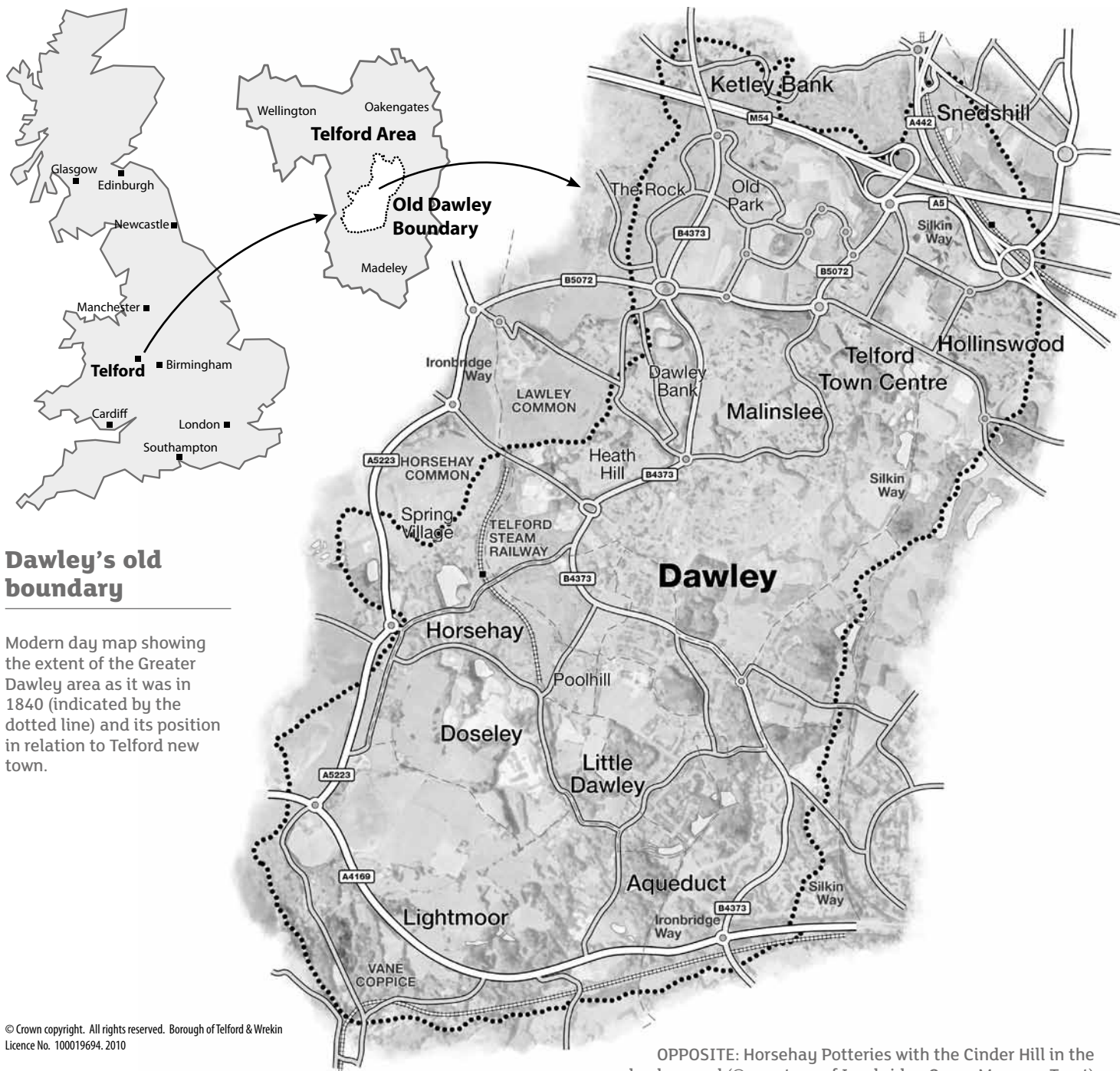
And the work goes on, led by dedicated ambassadors and business leaders like Michael Lowe who have worked all their lives for a better Dawley and continue to do so. Michael's efforts to improve opportunities for young people and his extraordinary catalogue of achievements earn him a deserved place in this book.

Giants all

How many other small towns can lay a claim to so much? To many, there is much in this book that will be a revelation, even to some that have lived in Dawley all their lives. It may be that Dawley, learning a lesson from the life of Captain Webb, has been reluctant to seek the limelight. However, this book proves that Dawley people have the right to walk just that little bit taller.

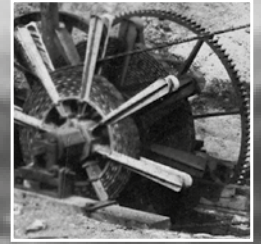
Originally
Coalbrookdale
Company's Brandlee
brick works, this
later became Day's
Automatic Waste Water
Closet & Sanitary Pipe
Syndicate Co. Ltd
(© courtesy of
Ironbridge Gorge
Museum Trust)





Dawley's old boundary

Modern day map showing the extent of the Greater Dawley area as it was in 1840 (indicated by the dotted line) and its position in relation to Telford new town.



A Mighty Industrial Past

**dominating works and
momentous events**

Horsehay Works: ‘the best heavy engineering company in the UK’

By Rob Corbett

From the mid-1700s until the mid-1980s the Horsehay iron foundry played a dominant role in the Dawley community. In its heyday the Works’ output was massive and the company earned a worldwide reputation for excellence. Rob Corbett, who worked at the site during its last decades, looks back at the shifting fortunes of Horsehay Works over its lifetime.

Horsehay Works showing the Top Bridge Yard with Horsehay Pool on the right (© courtesy of Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust)

Until the Industrial Revolution, Horsehay on the outskirts of Dawley boasted little more than a water-powered corn mill and a handful of farm buildings. In the mid-18th century, however, this was to change.

Abraham Darby II, eager to expand his capacity for making cast iron beyond his existing Coalbrookdale works, decided to build a new furnace at Horsehay. On 5 May 1755 the new blast furnace was fired. A second furnace followed in 1757.

A glowing business

Pig iron production at the Works soon averaged 90 tons per month and in 1779 a rail link was built to transport it from the Works to the Severn Wharfs at Ironbridge. Many consider this the world’s first commercial railway. A forge was added in 1781 so that the iron could be worked on site, and by 1790 Horsehay had one of the first rolling mills in the world, enabling the Works to produce rolled boilerplates.

Output had now increased to 260 tons per month and the company was making various





products, from bridges to plates for ships. Through the early 1800s, production grew to a peak of 1,300 tons per month. It was at this time that the company employed one of its most renowned workers, William Ball the 'Shropshire Giant' (see pages 42–43). Famously, in 1843 Horsehay Works rolled the plates for Brunel's SS *Great Britain*, the world's first iron ship. However, the company's heyday did not last.

Decline, redevelopment and take-overs

By 1870 the furnaces at Horsehay were blown out and a depression in the iron trade led to the closure of its forges and rolling mills. In 1886 the Works were bought by the Simpsons, who set out to develop the business's heavy engineering. The Simpsons owned the Works, which became known as the Horsehay Company, for over seventy years. During this time they built a reputation as being the best heavy engineering company in the UK, supplying products such as overhead cranes, bridges and turntables to the steel and railway industries. In the early 1960s the company was sold to Joseph Adamson of Cheshire.

By 1968, when I joined the company, the Alliance Machine Company of Ohio, USA had taken it over. Mr Percy Bullock was the company chairman at the time, and the managing director was Mr Norman James – both were true gentlemen. During the early 1980s Colin Griffiths was appointed MD and the company became part of the Slater Walker Group, which later merged with the Norcross Group. There were various name changes before the company finally became A.B. Cranes.

The word 'horsehay' is Anglo Saxon for 'enclosure for horses'. During the Industrial Revolution, the village of Horsehay was used as a staging post and feeding station for the packhorses pulling ironstone from the canal head at Ketley to the Coalbrookdale works. However, the village had had this name since at least the middle ages.

Changing markets

During the First World War, the works had manufactured landing craft, radar antennas and discs. In those days everything was assembled outdoors. The men would brush ice and snow off their tools before setting to work. It was not until the 1950s that the assembly shop was built to assemble cranes for the steelworks.

During my 17 years with the company, it focused almost entirely on supplying overhead travelling cranes for the worldwide steel industry. It supplied cranes to India, Australia,

During the First World War women were employed at Horsehay Works as munitions workers (© courtesy of Shropshire Archives)





1981: Firmly strapped to its transport, this girder for a coking crane at Immingham Docks was the longest load ever to be carried by road at that time (© courtesy of Dawley History Group)

Aerial view of Horsehay Works taken in 1980, showing the Works and Horsehay Pool (© courtesy of Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust)



New Zealand, China, Chile, Yugoslavia, Sudan, USA and South Africa, as well as every steel plant in the UK. The last riveted bridge structure – a crane for Llanwern Steels – was assembled at the works in 1971.

By the mid-1970s the UK steel industry was once more in decline. The company responded by moving into new markets such as power generation and the offshore industry. It began supplying specialised lifting equipment to Shell, Conoco and Sparrows for offshore use, and to BNFL, GEC, UKAEA and CEBG for the nuclear and power generation industries. The company also made grain unloaders for China. Also in 1970 it produced cranes for nuclear power plants, incorporating safety hoists. These were installed at Berkeley, Hinckley Point, Sizewell B and at the nuclear fuel reprocessing plant at Sellafield.

Manufacture on a massive scale

The Works now made products of a gigantic scale. Around 1980 it designed and supplied a 500-ton ladle crane to Australian Iron and Steel at Port Kembla. When laid out, the four-girder structure was exactly half the size of the playing area of Wembley Stadium. In 1981 the company supplied a coking crane to Immingham. As the Works had lost its rail link to the main line some months earlier, trucks had to transport the girders by road. The total length, including the tractor cab unit and the rear bogies, was 156ft (48m). At the time, this was the longest load ever delivered by road in the UK. Large crane girders could be up to ten feet high, six feet wide and up to 100ft long, and could weigh up to 80 tons.



A sad farewell

In December 1984, the then-owners Norcross announced its decision to close the Horsehay plant and relocate the business to Ripley in Derbyshire. In total, three hundred staff were to be made redundant. I was commercial manager at the time, effectively the general manager, and I was left to run the plant down. Former MD Colin Griffiths made strong representations to the Telford Development Corporation but they were unable to help save the company as it was not part of their responsibilities.

The majority of the employees left the works at the end of March 1985, leaving a team of around forty to finish off projects. The last of these was a specialised grab unit for Berkeley Power Station. By the end of the year everyone had gone.

It was during the Works' last months that a colleague called John Lovett and I finally persuaded the Norcross Group to leave at least a legacy to the people of Horsehay. They agreed to let the old Works canteen become the village hall for a peppercorn rent of £1 a year.

I have many great memories of my time at Horsehay Works, but one will stay with me forever. I was in a project closeout meeting at GEC in Leicester. We had supplied two specialised cranes to Hartlepool and Heysham Nuclear Power Stations. Both had been delivered on time and on budget (unusual for us). Their technical director, a tough man, came into the meeting and shook my hand. I was surprised to say the least. He then said, 'I was told before I placed this order with you, that A.B. Cranes were the Rolls-Royce of crane makers. I can now confirm that you definitely are.'

There will never be any doubt in my mind Norcross closed the wrong site.

Demolition of the assembly shop in the 1980s (courtesy of Dawley History Group)



The Battle of Cinderloo: workers' revolt in Old Park cinder hills

By Paul Sherry

On 2 February 1821, more than 500 miners gathered in Dawley and marched in protest at pay cuts and increasing poverty. The march gathered in numbers to over 3,000 and culminated in a pitched battle with the local Yeomanry, leaving two men dead, many injuries on both sides and a lasting bitterness and anger amongst working people in the East Shropshire Coalfield. This dramatic conflict took place on the cinder hills at Old Park to the north of Dawley and it has become known as 'The Battle of Cinderloo'.

The Battle of Cinderloo derives its name from two momentous events that had occurred just a few years beforehand: firstly the historic military battle of Waterloo, which took place in 1815 in what is now Belgium; and secondly, the Peterloo uprising at St Peter's Field, Manchester, which shook the nation in 1819. Like these events, the Cinderloo conflict conjures images of violence and loss of life. It also brings reminders of turbulent times in domestic life, political and economic change, social reform and, ultimately, religious revival. Events at Waterloo and Peterloo had a profound impact on whole nations. But what of Cinderloo? How much did this, less well-known, East Shropshire uprising impinge on national consciousness? Like its namesakes, did it too play a part in helping to shape the great political, social and economic movements of the time?

A backdrop of discontent

To begin to understand the events at Cinderloo, it is important to look behind the bare facts and consider them in relation to the mood of the nation. This was a time of severe distress and discontent following the Napoleonic Wars and the passing of the new Corn Laws. Tensions were running so high that many believed there was a real threat of French-style revolution.

Although the Duke of Wellington's 1815 defeat of Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo was a much-celebrated victory, the aftermath left Britain crippled. The economy, which in wartime had created employment and flourished in supporting the needs of the army for weaponry, equipment and uniforms, was plunged into stagnation. The new industrial



areas that grew during the Napoleonic Wars – Birmingham and the Black Country, the South Wales Coalfield and the textile areas of Lancashire and Yorkshire – were now in decline, and the depressed state of the national economy, particularly the iron trade, caused great hardship.

The passing of the Corn Laws, also in 1815, made things much worse. The price of bread and basic foodstuffs increased, causing massive resentment amongst workers already faced with oppression from employers. Such was their anger that, when the Corn Laws were passed, troops had to defend the Houses of Parliament from the outraged public.

A period of famine and chronic unemployment followed, fuelling the desire for political reform both locally and nationally. The mood of confrontation and revolution was gathering and in June 1817 workers in different parts of the country demonstrated against the appalling conditions they had to endure.

Then, two years later workers' discontent flared up at the Battle of Peterloo, causing a national outcry (*see right*).

Cinderloo looms

After Peterloo there were sporadic outbreaks of unrest in many of Britain's industrial communities, caused by resentment between workers and their employers. In the Dawley area, the first signs of trouble came in June 1820 when mineworkers' employers attempted a savage cut in wages. This, they said, was due to a decline in the value of iron

The Peterloo uprising

By the beginning of 1819, the cotton loom weavers of South Lancashire had reached crisis point and they were desperate for change. A group of political agitators, The Manchester Patriotic Union, organised a 'great assembly' to discuss public reform. The date was set for 16 August 1819 and the venue was to be St Peter's Fields, Manchester (now St Peter's Street), as there was no building thought big enough to hold the anticipated crowd. Henry Hunt, a well-known radical orator, would lead the meeting.

As the time of the meeting drew near, crowds began to gather in their droves – accounts talk of 50,000 to 60,000 people in all.¹ Disturbed by their numbers, magistrates called in local militia to stand ready. Some 1,500 troops assembled – Hussars and mounted Yeomanry. Magistrates, fearing insurrection and riots, ordered Hunt and the other leaders to be arrested before they could speak, although the meeting had so far been peaceful and orderly.

The peace soon broke, however. A mounted soldier inadvertently brushed past and knocked down a mother, killing the child she was carrying. Panic ensued.

Magistrates and the troop commander, misreading this as a riotous outbreak, ordered nearby Yeomanry to break up the affray. The armed cavalry, with sabres drawn, charged the crowd, cutting people down indiscriminately. Men, women and children were hacked down or trampled by horses and people in flight.

After ten minutes of havoc and slaughter, the field was deserted except for the broken hustings platform and the bodies of the dead, wounded and dying. In all, 15 people were killed and between 400 and 700 were injured. The massacre was named Peterloo in ironic comparison to the Battle of Waterloo, which had taken place four years earlier.

Shockingly, after the uprising, both the Yeomanry and the magistrates of Manchester received congratulations and thanks from the government for preserving the public peace. This unequivocal approval of the Yeomanry's actions and the lack of sympathy for those killed and injured, met with fierce anger and criticism throughout the country. For some months afterwards, the authorities feared an armed rebellion.

Old Park and the cinder hills with the Lillishall Company's Snedshill Works in the foreground (courtesy of the Homes & Communities Agency)



and a general stagnation of trade. The miners came out on strike. Their protest began as an attack on property but ended in violent conflict with the local Shropshire Yeomanry.

Fortunately, only a few men were injured. Critically, the employers backed down and the strikers were persuaded to accept arbitration by a board made up of local landowners and a clergyman. The board decided that the men were entitled to their current level of wages and the strike was halted.

However, stability did not last long. The following year, employers made it clear that they would cut wages by sixpence a day from the average wage of 15 shillings a week. Their reasons were the same as those given the previous year.

The local authorities feared rebellion. Local magistrates sent a letter to Lord Sidmouth at the Home Office, requesting military support for the local Yeomanry, which they believed would not be capable of putting down an uprising, should one occur. The letter arrived too late to have any bearing on events that followed.

The day of the battle

On 1 February, the angry colliers of Dawley went on strike and enlisted support at the ironworks in Ketley, New Hadley and Wombridge. They successfully halted production at all three works. The following day, the striking workers, many armed with sticks, left Donnington Wood to remove the plugs from furnaces at Old Park Ironworks,



their numbers swelling as they went. From Old Park, they continued on to the ironworks at Lightmoor, then Dawley Castle and Horsehay, with the intention of ending their march at Coalbrookdale.

However, by the time they arrived at Horsehay, news of their actions had reached the authorities, who had summoned the Shropshire Yeomanry and Special Constables. Instead of continuing their journey south, the miners started to return north. By three o'clock that afternoon their numbers had swelled to over 3,000 and the crowd included women and children.

The Yeomanry and constables caught up with the strikers as they gathered near the ironworks of Messrs Botfield on the steep slopes of the slag heaps, known locally as the 'cinder hills'. These vast man-made mounds had grown over perhaps thirty to forty years and consisted of production waste from the furnaces.

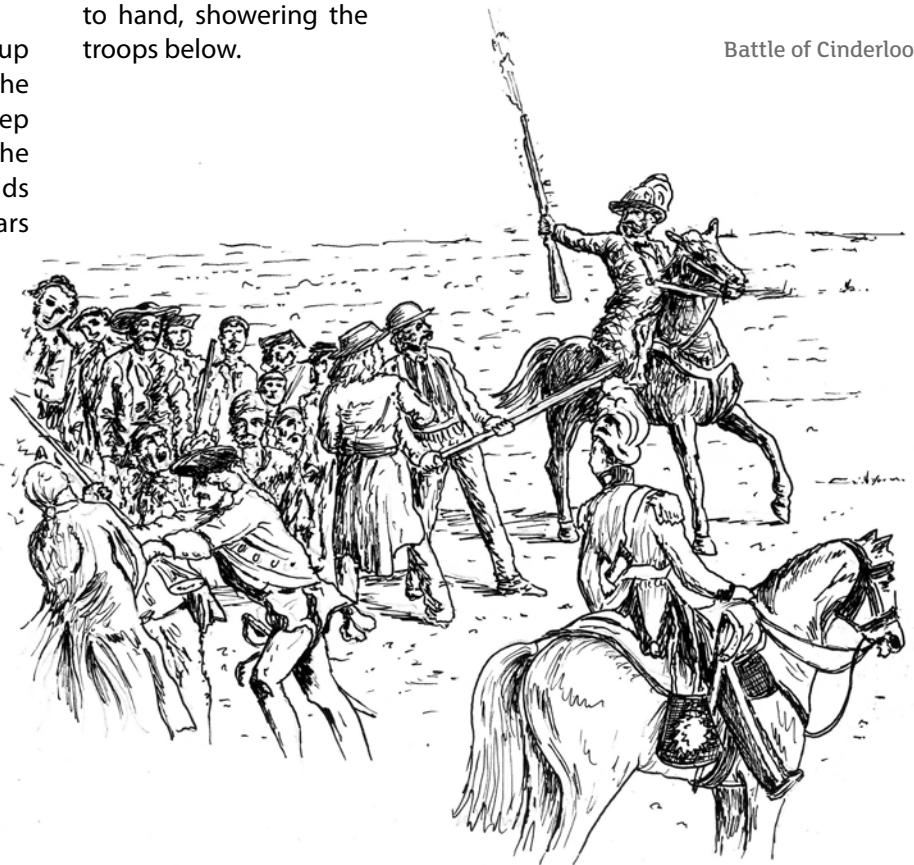
The crowd, which had armed itself with a variety of weapons – sticks, bludgeons and the raw materials of the cinder hills themselves – had the temporary advantage of elevation. They were agitated, angry and threatening. In an attempt to restore order, one of the magistrates, Thomas Eyton, read out the Riot Act and gave the crowd one hour to disperse. This had no effect. Instead, the crowd became more violent, with shouts of 'If we are to fight for it, let's all get together,' and 'We will have our wages.'

An hour later, the leader of the Yeomanry, Lieutenant Colonel Cludde, commanded the cavalry to advance, in an attempt to break up the crowd. He also ordered that the ringleaders and any rowdy protesters be taken into custody.

The violence escalates

The constables arrested two men and attempted to transport them to the lock-up at Wellington. This was the catalyst for violence. The colliers on the cinder hills nearest the road rained down stones, heavy lumps of slag and anything else that came to hand, showering the troops below.

Battle of Cinderloo



A striker named Thomas Palin successfully led a group to free the arrested strikers.

This seemed to create panic in the ranks of the Yeomanry, who were unable to pursue them up the steep, treacherous slag heaps. Lieutenant Colonel Cludde ordered his men to open fire.

The consequences were serious. One miner, 18-year-old William Bird, was killed outright. Another, Thomas Gittins, was mortally wounded. Thomas Palin who led the attacking group also received a gunshot wound, as did several other strikers and spectators. Although it was said that many of the Yeomanry were also injured from flying debris from the cinder hills, it seemed from later testaments that the majority of their wounds were insignificant.

Inquest, trials and punishment

An inquest into the deaths of William Bird and Thomas Gittins was held on 6 February. The jury returned verdicts of justifiable homicide.

A number of the protesters were arrested in the days and weeks that followed the battle, and nine of the prisoners were tried before Salop Assizes on 25 March 1821:

Thomas Palin	Christopher North
John Payne	James Eccleshall
John Grainger	Samuel Hayward
Robert Wheeler	John Amies
John Wilcox	

Thomas Palin was tried for the capital crime of felonious riot and was hanged in Shrewsbury on 7 April. Samuel Hayward was also sentenced to death but was reprieved on 2 April. The remaining men were found guilty of riot and were imprisoned for nine months.

The Salopian Journal of 11 April 1821 reported the execution of Thomas Palin:

‘On Saturday last, Thomas Palin, convicted at our late Assizes of a felonious riot near Wellington was executed in front of the County Gaol in the presence of a large concourse of spectators. The behaviour of the unhappy man to the last moment was firm and becoming his situation.

Every exertion has been made, not only by the gentlemen whose property was injured in the late tumults but by many other humane persons to obtain a commutation of his sentence but without effect, it being considered necessary, under all the circumstances, that the law should take its course; and we sincerely trust that the returning good sense and right feelings of our working population in the recently disturbed parts of the County will for ever render unnecessary the repetition of so awful an example.’



Cautious congratulations

By contrast, Lieutenant Colonel Cludde received a letter of congratulations from the government, praising the Shropshire Yeomanry for its conduct at Cinderloo. The letter had a cautious tone, however. The government was no doubt keen to avoid a repeat of the public outcry that followed its approval of the Peterloo event.

The letter from Home Secretary Lord Sidmouth to the Earl of Powis, Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire, referred to 'the patience with which the Yeoman Cavalry bore the insults of the rioters', 'the caution and circumspection used by the Officers before the men were permitted to act offensively', and their 'exemplary forbearance till the moment when they were at length unfortunately obliged to have recourse to arms.'

Lord Sidmouth's note of approval was only slightly tempered by his 'great regret' on learning of the 'melancholy consequences which ensued'. He added,

'It is some consolation to have ascertained that those who fell were among the ringleaders of the riot, and it is satisfactory to learn that the juries who sat upon the inquests were convinced that the homicides were fully justified by the circumstances.'

Portrait of Lieutenant Colonel William Cludde c.1795, artist unknown (© courtesy of Shropshire Regimental Museum)



A shaken community

The local mining community suffered the effect of the Cinderloo conflict for many months. Mining equipment had been damaged during the riot and this led to miners being laid off work, only adding to the conditions of poverty and hardship against which they were fighting. Workers were disillusioned and broken in spirit.

Cinderloo also left a mood of unease amongst the ruling class at the time, which feared an organised, revolutionary uprising. However, although there was a powerful undercurrent of discontent in the country, it seems that the Cinderloo incident was not part of any cohesive movement for political reform. Instead, it stands alone as a desperate act of expression driven by frustration and truly terrible working and living conditions.

Seeds of new faith

The despair and disillusionment felt by the people of Dawley following the defeat at Cinderloo led many of them in search of new certainties. They had experienced many years of hardship and poverty and their attempts at agitation and protest had been quickly and efficiently put down.

In this environment, Methodist preachers found a ready audience, desperate for solace. Following Cinderloo, Wesleyan membership increased in both the Wellington and Madeley circuits and in April 1821 the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* reported, 'Everywhere there is a thirst for the Word of Life.'

Indeed, in the month of Thomas Palin's execution, revivalist missionaries from the Potteries attracted large audiences from men employed in pits and ironworks around Wrockwardine Wood, Oakengates and Dawley and it is easy to make a connection with the tragedy at Cinderloo and its after-effects. Methodism in its various forms became the established religion of the coalfields during the decades that followed, with Madeley becoming regarded as the 'Mecca of Methodism'.

Some suggest that the religious revival in the coalfield after Cinderloo may have served a double purpose. Not only was it a comfort for disillusioned workers in troubled times, but it was also an aid to employers and landowners in suppressing and reducing potential for uprising.

National reforms

Cinderloo alone did not seem to have had any great effect on the speed of reform. However, it was certainly integral to the movement of working people demanding reform, which eventually led to the passing of the Great Reform Act of 1832. This brought about a period of political, social and industrial change.

In 1846, Sir Robert Peel repealed the much-hated Corn Laws of 1815, which had brought about such social and industrial unrest. The coming of free trade meant that the working classes had access to better and cheaper food and the health and welfare of the population gradually improved as a result. The reforms continued well into the 20th century and, indeed, shaped modern Britain.



The spirit of Dawley

The story of Cinderloo tells us much about the indomitable spirit of Dawley people when faced with challenge and adversity. A spirit that has enabled them to prevail through periods of uncertainty and unrest – through the turbulence of the town's industrial past and through the creation of Telford New Town. This same spirit will enable Dawley to embrace a new phase in its history as it meets new challenges.



Forge Row and the site of Old Park Ironworks and the cinder hills to its right
(© courtesy of the Homes & Communities Agency)

Notes

1. www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/PRpeterloo.htm and <http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Battle+of+Peterloo>

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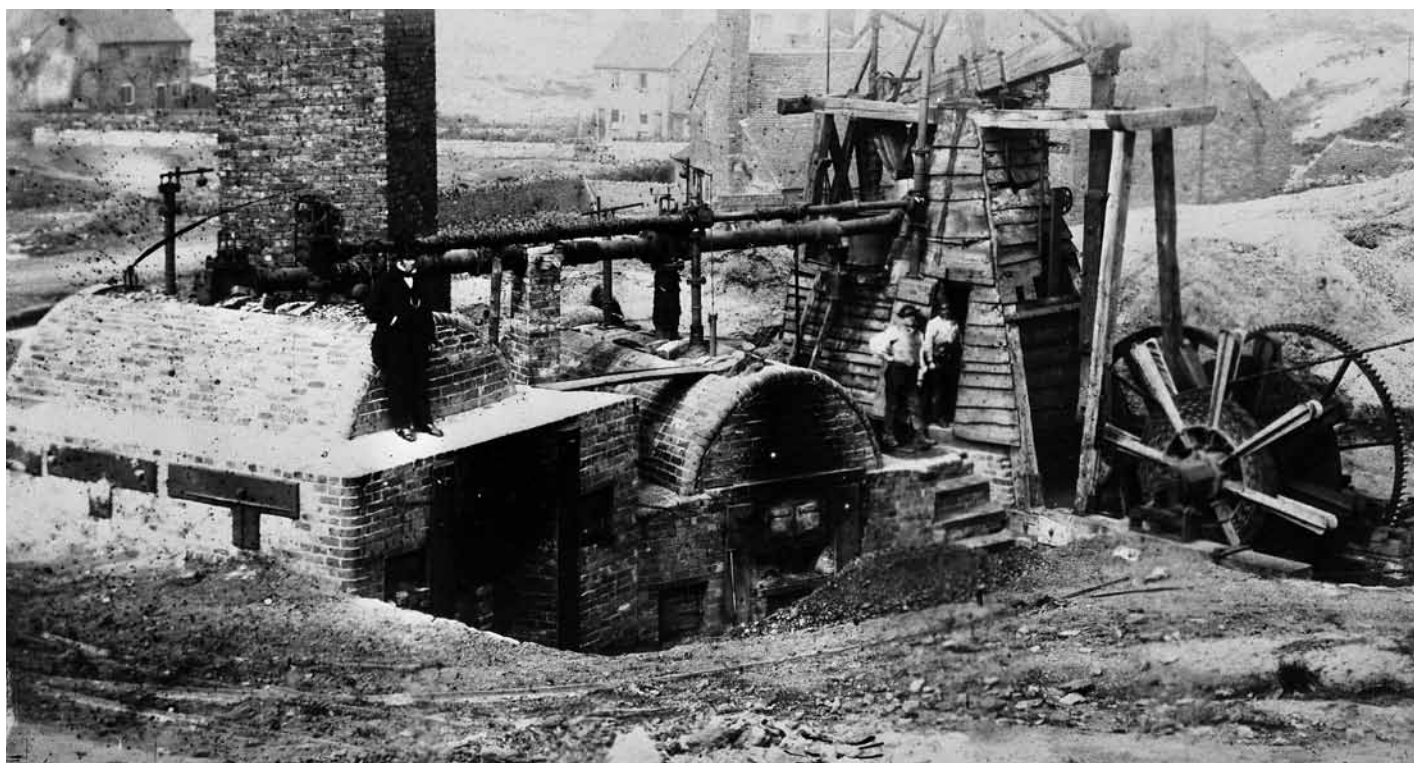
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The Springwell Pit Disaster: one of the biggest local mining tragedies of its day

By Malcolm Peel

The year of 1872 was a grim time in Dawley mining history. This was the year of a terrible accident at Springwell Pit when eight local young men lost their lives. The tragedy had a profound impact on a community still reeling from the Pelsall Hall Colliery flood of 14 November, just weeks before, which had claimed the lives of 22 men, including five from Dawley.

Typical winding gear
for a pithead in the
late 1800s (© courtesy
of Ironbridge Gorge
Museum Trust)





It was 4.30 on Friday 6 December and the end of the shift. A 'bond' of eight young ironstone miners employed by the Coalbrookdale Company grabbed, as usual, the triple-linked chain used to wind them to the surface 150 yards above. They rose swiftly through the shaft and were a third of the way up when chain links high above them snapped. The men plunged to the mine floor and almost 100 yards of heavy iron chain came down on top of them. Seven men died where they fell. The eighth died soon after he was brought to the surface.

Young men lost

The bodies of the eight men were taken to the Crown Inn, Little Dawley to be laid out and identified. They were:

Robert Smith (aged 18) a miner from Holly Hedge

John Davies (aged 19) a filler from Brandlee

Allen Wyke (aged 20) a miner from the Finney

John Yale (aged 21) a miner from Dawley

Edward Jones (aged 21) a miner from the Stocking

William Bailey (aged 21) a miner from the Finney

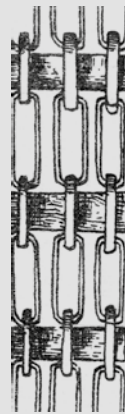
John Parker (aged 22) a miner from Holly Edge

Isaiah Skelton (reported to be 15 but actually only 14 years old) a miner from Little Dawley

All the men were unmarried except William Bailey who had a wife and child.

Riding the chain

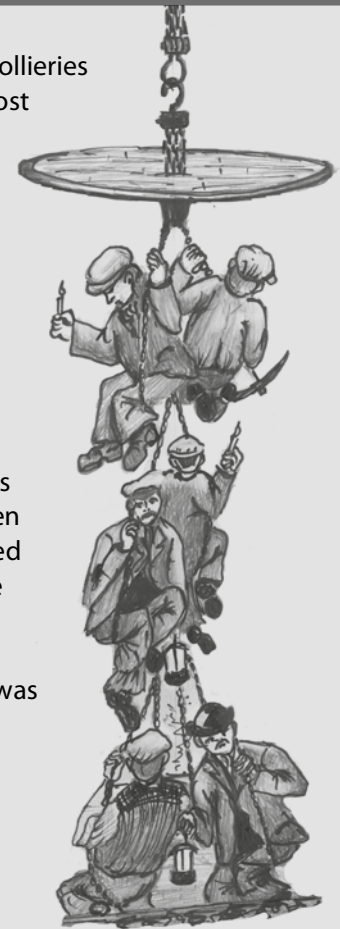
Springwell Pit was one of the Top Yard Collieries pits in Holly Lane, Little Dawley. As at most collieries in the area, men and materials were wound through the shaft by simply attaching them to the end of the winding chain. Cages and guide rails had not been adopted. The miners were carried up and down the shaft in what were called 'the doubles'. The men sat within chain loops attached to the end of the triple-linked chain. They did not wear helmets, only cloth caps, and they carried their candles



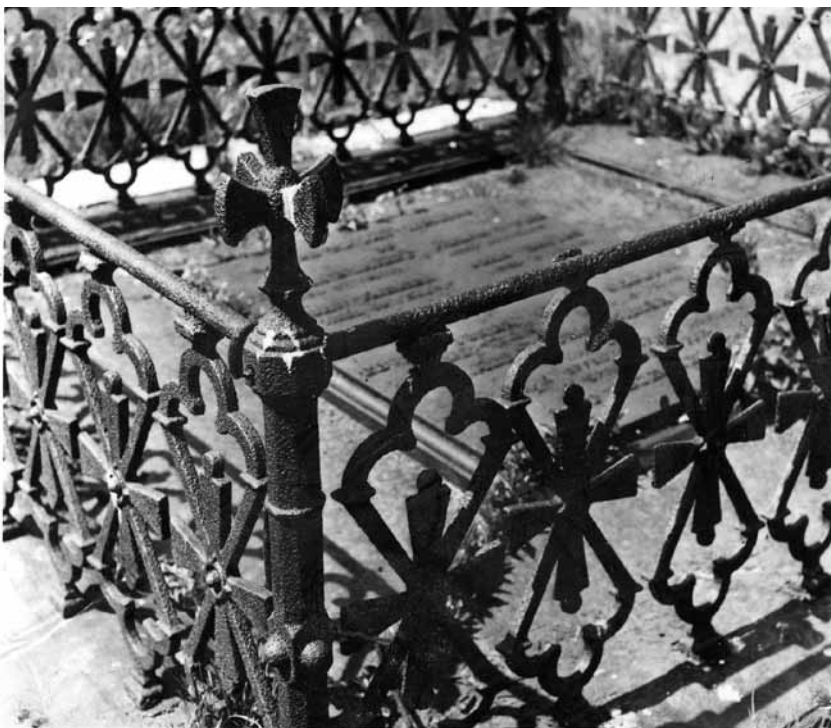
with them. A round wooden board called a 'bonnet', fixed to the chain, protected the men from objects falling down the shaft. The group of men suspended below was called a 'bond'.

Left: Sketch of a triple-linked pit chain typical of those used at Springwell Pit (courtesy of Malcolm Peel)

Right: Sketch by Kath Peel



A funeral for the eight victims was held in Holy Trinity Church the following Tuesday afternoon, on 10 December. Long before the time set for the funeral, thousands had flocked into Little Dawley. The whole of the Greater Dawley area was in mourning for the men who lost their lives. It was estimated that over 10,000 people came to pay their respects, such was the enormity of the tragedy.



Springwell Pit
Communal Grave in
Holy Trinity Church
graveyard – a memorial
to the eight young men
who died (courtesy of
Dawley History Group)

Inquest and blame

The inquest that followed found that ‘the deceased were killed by the breaking of a chain’. William Heighway, the Coalbrookdale Company’s engineer and Henry Rawson, the Company’s pit manager were highly criticised by both the coroner and the jury. The coroner said to Heighway, ‘You systematically neglected your duties.’ To Rawson he said, ‘A joint responsibility rests upon you.’ However, no criminal charges were brought against either man or the Coalbrookdale Company.

The workers earlier that week had commented on the poor condition of the triple-linked chain, which consisted of three lengths of chain

with wooden wedges to stop the chains from twisting. Some of the rivets had supposedly been replaced but, critically, a spare chain had not been fitted, although one was available. It was with trepidation that the men at the top had lowered and raised the miners that day, aware of the chain’s weakness.

Work at Springwell Pit resumed the next day, with no changes to safety rules. The mine continued to be worked until about 1880.

The disaster remembered

The eight men that died in the Springwell Pit disaster were buried in a communal grave in the grounds of Holy Trinity Church, Dawley. Today, visitors to the churchyard can still see this memorial to them.

OPPOSITE: Early photograph of women and girls taking part in the Dawley Demonstration Day parade (© courtesy of Shropshire Archives)
INSET: Rev Samuel Parkes Cadman (courtesy of Jean Bryce)

A large black and white photograph of a crowd of people, likely at a religious demonstration or rally. The crowd is dense, with many people wearing hats and coats. In the foreground, a metal railing runs across the frame. In the background, there are large banners and flags. The overall atmosphere is one of a significant public gathering.

Pillars of Religious Faith

voices of conviction and demonstrations of unity



Bishop Samuel Peploe
1667–1752

Samuel Peploe: Bishop of Chester from 1726 to 1752

By Pam Bradburn DL

In 1726 Samuel Peploe of Dawley was ordained Bishop of Chester. He remained in this post for 26 years. During his ministry he consecrated 39 churches and chapels in his diocese and built two new galleries in the choir of Chester Cathedral. A memorial to him was placed on the cathedral's north wall and can be seen there today.

Samuel Peploe was baptised in Dawley on 29 July 1667. He was the son of a yeoman farmer, Podmore Peploe, and his wife Mary. When Podmore died in 1714 an inventory of his goods amounted to a meagre 14 pounds, 13 shillings and sixpence.

However, Samuel's poor background was not to hinder him. He was a bright boy and had the opportunity to attend Penkridge Free School in Staffordshire, a church establishment that provided an education for children of little means. From there he progressed to Jesus College, Oxford, matriculated as a Battelar (commoner), and then gained his Bachelor of Arts in 1690 and his Masters in 1693. His education enabled Samuel to live a very different life from that to which he had been born.

Rising through the ranks

Given his educational background, the Church was perhaps a natural choice for Samuel

Peploe. After taking holy orders at Magdalen College, he was rapidly promoted through the ranks of the Church of England. In 1695 he became rector of Kedleston in Derbyshire, and in 1700, vicar of Preston. Peploe was known for his strong anti-Catholic views in what was a largely Roman Catholic population. However, his religious convictions and his Whig and anti-Jacobite politics made him attractive to his staunch Presbyterian patrons, the Hoghton family of Hoghton Tower, Lancashire.

When Jacobite forces entered Preston in 1715, Peploe 'mounted his pulpit' and urged his parishioners to support the newly established Hanoverian King George. It was not only this act of courage and his loyalty to the Crown that brought him to the attention of church ministers, but above all his uncompromising sermons warning of the dangers of 'popery'.

In July 1717 Peploe was promoted to the vacant wardenship of the Collegiate Church



of Manchester. This was an influential post but Francis Gastrell, Bishop of Chester, refused his induction. He claimed that Peploe's bachelor of divinity, conferred at Lambeth, was deemed invalid by his diocese. The dispute continued for seven years but was finally resolved in Peploe's favour in 1725.

Higher orders

In the same year, 1725, the post of Bishop of Chester became vacant and Samuel Peploe was appointed to this position. His success was noted as mostly due to his 'zeal and affection to the true interest of our king and country'.¹ Historians believe that he was almost certainly supported by Edmund Gibson, the Bishop of London. Peploe was ordained on 12 April 1726.

Samuel Peploe had a reputation as a pugnacious character and, over the coming years, he proved a determined, combative individual who fiercely defended what he believed. He eventually established a Whig majority at Chester Cathedral, working to set up charity schools, founding the town's Blue Coat School, and never allowing the rich to forget their Christian duties towards the poor. This was somewhat ironic as he himself had a reputation for meanness.

A man of unwavering principles

During his ministry, Samuel Peploe consecrated 39 churches and chapels throughout his diocese, two of the most outstanding being Grimsargh and Goosnargh churches, both in the Preston area. He was also responsible for the building of two new galleries in the choir of Chester

Cathedral. Peploe was a staunch Anglican, but not a zealot, except perhaps in his opposition to Roman Catholicism. When, in 1745, Prince Charles Edward Stuart (Bonnie Prince Charlie) and his Jacobite supporters marched as far as Derby in an attempt to overthrow the king, Peploe once again denounced 'popish idolatry' and donated £200 towards local defences. He was respected as a great defender of the Church against its detractors, and for his diligent approach to his duties.

From father to son

Samuel Peploe married twice. His first wife, Ann Browne, bore him a son and four daughters but died in 1705. He married again in 1712 to Ann Birch, daughter of the previous Bishop of Chester. Ann outlived her husband but with no surviving children. Peploe's son, also called Samuel, became Archdeacon of Richmond and, in 1738 when Peploe resigned his wardenship at Manchester Collegiate Church, he ensured that his son succeeded him in this post. Samuel Peploe Junior went on to become Chancellor of the Diocese of Chester. A portrait of him, painted by Thomas Gainsborough, hangs in the National Portrait Gallery in London.

In later life, Peploe suffered increasingly poor health. He died on 21 February 1752 and was buried in Chester Cathedral. A memorial to him was placed on the North Wall of the building.



The Peploe memorial at Chester Cathedral (courtesy of Chester Cathedral)

Notes

- 1 Statement in a congratulatory letter from the Duke of Newcastle to Samuel Peploe on his appointment to the post of Bishop of Chester.



Photograph of John Poole Sandlands 1838– 1915 (© courtesy of Ida White)

The Rev John Poole Sandlands BA, MA: Vicar of Brigstock and prolific author

By Gill Egan

As well as having a successful career in the Church, John Poole Sandlands was the author of many books on subjects ranging from nutrition and healthy living to oration. His expertise and reputation as a teacher earned him respect around the globe. His most famous work, *The Voice and Public Speaking*, is still in print today.

John Poole Sandlands was born in Dawley in the spring of 1838. His parents John and Mary Ann lived in Finger Lane (now called Finger Road). They had nine children in all but only five lived to an old age.

An educated family

John Sandlands senior was a saddler by trade. It appears that Mary Ann dedicated herself to educating her brood. On the 1851 census, Isabella, John, Harriet, Eleanor, Sarah and Mary are all described as being 'Scholars at Home'. Mary Ann's teaching skills were rewarded. The census of 1861 shows that John Poole Sandlands, now aged 22, was employed as a schoolmaster. His sister Harriet was a schoolmistress and Eleanor and Sarah were both pupil-teachers.

John Poole Sandlands went to Lichfield College to further his education. From there he went to

Trinity College, Dublin, where he gained a BA in 1860 and his MA in 1863. Soon afterwards, he began a career in the Church.

Sad losses and new beginnings

In 1866 John Poole Sandlands became the curate of St Luke's, Hanley. Sadly, his sister Sarah died that year, aged just 20 years. On 27 February 1866 Sarah Sandlands was buried in the graveyard of the Holy Trinity Church in Dawley. A year later she was joined in the same grave by her father John, and just four years after that, by her older sister Eleanor.

During the spring of 1869 John Poole Sandlands married Janet Pitcairn Simpson and in 1870 John and Janet had their first child, Sarah. It was a further eight years before their second child, Paul Ernest, was born and by then John Poole Sandlands had become the Reverend J.P. Sandlands, Vicar of Brigstock,



Northamptonshire. The family lived in the vicarage of St Andrew's Church.

A healthy career

Over the following years, as well as being the Vicar of Brigstock, J.P. Sandlands wrote books on nutrition and healthy eating. He was also an authority on public speaking, writing books on this subject too. His maternal grandfather, Thomas Poole, was the Town Crier in Ironbridge and it may be from him that John inherited his powerful voice and confident ability for public speaking.

Through his many books on the subject of health, J.P. Sandlands became known far-and-wide. His vicarage gradually developed into a sanatorium, to which patients travelled from all over the world. He had made a special study of the throat, in relation to voice production, and many eminent men visited him for treatment, including cabinet ministers, church dignitaries and stage celebrities.

One of J.P. Sandlands' books entitled *How to Develop General Vocal Power and Cure Stammering and Defective Speech* was reviewed by George Bernard Shaw in 1886.

Strong family bonds

Despite living away from Dawley, John Poole Sandlands' family links remained strong. The 1871 census shows that on the night of 2 April 1871 when the census was taken, John's daughter Sarah was staying with her grandmother and aunts in their home at Finger Lane.

Sarah grew up in Brigstock, and around 1891 she married Doctor Charles Herbert Brown. Their son Paul Ernest Sandlands QC was appointed an OBE in the 1920 Civilian War Honours for his service in the Police.

An interesting ancestor

Not long before this article was written, two of John Poole Sandlands' great-great nieces visited the vicarage at Brigstock, curious for an insight into the personality of their interesting ancestor. They learned that the village of Brigstock has two roads named after Rev J.P. Sandlands: 'Sandlands Close' and 'Sandlands Avenue' and that he is still well remembered and much loved. He was a most remarkable man, a vegetarian, total abstainer and non-smoker. He was interested in travel and education and gave private lessons as well as lessons at the local church school in reading, spelling, geography and scripture.

John Poole Sandlands died when he fell down stairs at the vicarage in 1915. He was 77 years old.

Further reading

J.P. Sandlands' obituary in *The Kettering Leader* (Northamptonshire edition), 5 February 1915

McFall, J. 'Education in the Madeley Union of Shropshire', dissertation for University of Keel (1952 Record of teachers at Pool Hill School, Dawley 1863–1867)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Sandlands

Best known books by John Poole Sandlands

The Voice and Public Speaking (1880)

How to be Well; or, the Principles of Health (1896)

Natural Food (1902)

Walking and the Principles of Training (1903)

Science in the Daily Meal (1903)

Corpulence. A case and cure; or, Why grow fat? (1903)

Quacks and what they do (1904)

Health: a Royal road to it (1909)

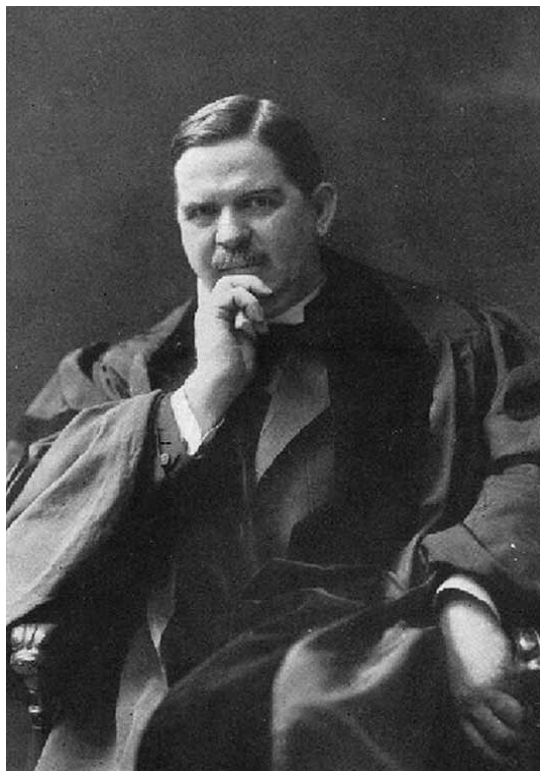
Consumption. An appeal to the common sense (1910)

The Rev Samuel Parkes Cadman DD, LLD pioneer of broadcast preaching

By John Churm

Samuel Parkes Cadman rose to fame during the early years of wireless radio, as one of the first radio preachers. His tremendous gift for oratory and his unwavering Methodist beliefs regularly drew in huge audiences. Born in Dawley, he moved to the United States in 1890 but he never forgot his Shropshire roots. John Churm pays tribute to his great achievements.

Samuel Parkes Cadman
1864–1936



Growing up in a Methodist family, I had always heard the name of Samuel Parkes Cadman. My great grandfather, Poyner Bray, was a Sunday school teacher at Lawley Bank Wesleyan Methodist Chapel. He and Cadman were of the same generation and, as young men, they attended the chapel together.

Samuel Parkes Cadman was born on 18 December 1864 in the Parish of Wellington, to Samuel Cadman, a miner, and Betsey Cadman (née Parkes). He was baptised at Ketley Brook Primitive Methodist Chapel. After living for some time with an aunt and uncle on Ketley Bank, the Cadmans moved to Coppice Cottages, Old Park when Samuel was still a child. Attending Sunday school there had a profound effect on Samuel. He was particularly influenced by William Owen, known locally as the 'Bishop of Old Park', whose biography he would go on to write in 1922.

Hellfire Methodists

The Cadman family were ardent Methodists. Samuel's father and grandfather were reputedly 'hellfire Methodist preachers'. Both regularly walked to chapels such as Prees Heath to preach, a distance of 50 miles there and back.



In later years Parkes Cadman gave Prees Green Chapel an oak pulpit and communion table as gifts, in memory of his grandfather and father. All his father's brothers were active Methodists and so was his younger brother William.

Hard work and dedication

At the age of 11, Samuel started work as a pony boy at Little Hays and Woodhouse pits (between Ketley Bank and Priorslee). Even at this young age he demonstrated huge devotion to his faith. While waiting for his tub to be unloaded, he would read his Bible. During lunch breaks he would hold sermons at the pit.

Samuel's skills in communication developed during his time at Wrekin College. Aged 16 he attended a Mutual Improvers class there, under the direction of the College founder John Bayley. Like his pupil, Bayley was from a poor background and had achieved success through sheer hard work. The headmaster's logbook contains frequent commendations for Parkes Cadman's outstanding attainment.

It was a service given by the Reverend J.M. Pascoes at Dawley Wesleyan Methodist Chapel that inspired the 16-year-old Samuel to become a Methodist minister. At that time, however, his goal was some way off. His first step was to join Lawley Bank Methodist Chapel and become a Sunday school teacher there.

Over the next ten years Samuel worked as a miner, while at the same time honing his public speaking skills as a lay preacher at

the local Methodist chapels. At the age of 21, Lawley Bank Church and the Wellington Circuit recommended him as a candidate for the Wesleyan Ministry.

The next stage of Samuel's life took him to the Wesleyan Theological College at Richmond, Surrey. His sponsor was Sir John Bayley who had noted his early potential. While there, his talent shone. His tutor is quoted as saying that Samuel 'was the man who showed the greatest promise'.

The US calls

Samuel completed his studies at Wesley College in Bristol and fulfilled his ambition of becoming a Methodist minister. For many years he had been interested in US history and affairs, particularly as his uncle Isaac, along with other young men from the Ketley and Dawley area, had emigrated to the States to become Methodist ministers there.

Parkes Cadman's time in training had left him with debts and he was keen to begin his career. An offer of preaching in the US presented a solution, to not only his debt, but also his personal life. He desperately wanted to marry his childhood sweetheart, Lillian Esther Wooding, who had attended

Selected works by S. Parkes Cadman

Charles Darwin and Other English Thinkers (1911)
The Three Religious Leaders of Oxford: John Wycliffe, John Wesley and John Henry Newman (1916)
Ambassadors of God (1920)
Imagination and Religion (1926)



Samuel Parkes Cadman with a Lawley Bank Sunday school group in 1932 (courtesy of Jean Bryce)

Lawley Bank Chapel with him. However, it was usual in Britain for Methodist ministers to do three years' probation before being allowed to marry. No such restrictions existed in the US.

So, in 1888 Samuel married Esther. They were to have three children during their married life: Frederick, Marie and Lillian. In 1890 Samuel emigrated to America, planning for his family to join him as soon as his earnings would allow this. His passage was paid for by miners from Old Park & Lawley.

The beginning of a new era

Dr Richard H. Travis, the presiding elder for the Poughkeepsie District of upstate New York, offered Parkes Cadman a small Methodist church in Millbrook, New York, as well as Verbank Methodist Church three miles away. His congregation at Millbank was about 150. Although the church authorities had difficulty raising the annual sum for his salary, it was supplemented with presents of pork, potatoes and turkeys from his parishioners. One farmer made him a gift of a load of hay!



Over the following year, Samuel Parkes Cadman's skills as an orator drew in a growing congregation. Offering to do much of the work himself, he persuaded the church members to support the building of a new parsonage, and he returned to England to collect his wife and children so that they could begin their new life in the States. Also sailing with them was William L. Cadman, Samuel's younger brother.

It was in this same year, 1891, that Parkes Cadman began to make a name for himself, writing for the *New York Ledger*.

Growing popularity

S. Parkes Cadman, as he now preferred to be called, grew his congregation year on year. Consequently, in 1892 he was offered a salary of \$994. Then, in spring 1893 his salary was increased to \$1,905. In the summer of 1893 he took up a position at the Central Methodist Church in Yonkers, New York and his rising fame led to a dramatic expansion in his congregation.

In 1895 he became pastor at the Metropolitan Methodist Church on Seventh Avenue between 13th and 14th Streets in New York City. There, his oratory skills attracted large crowds from the city's cosmopolitan population. The church prospered and so did he.

He was made a Doctor of Divinity by Syracuse University in 1898 and Doctor of Laws (LLD) there in 1922, as well as receiving other honorary university appointments such as Doctor of Divinity (DD) from the prestigious Yale University in 1925. Parkes Cadman also

became the youngest member to be elected to the General Methodist Conference.

In 1901, while maintaining his position as a Methodist minister, Parkes Cadman was also elected minister of the Central Congregational Church in Brooklyn, New York, with a roll of 3,000 members. He held this post for the rest of his life. Between 1924 and 1928 he became president of the American Council of the Churches of Christ.

Media man

However, S. Parkes Cadman's most significant career did not begin until 1923. It was in this year that he became a pioneer of the, then new, medium of radio broadcasting. His powerful voice and complete confidence in his message soon attracted a wireless audience of over 30 million listeners.

In 1926 Parkes Cadman also began to write a daily newspaper column for the *New York Herald Tribune*. This was syndicated nationwide as 'Dr Cadman's Daily Column'. Here he answered readers' questions and gave advice. His articles were reproduced in more than a thousand newspapers. His reputation as a writer grew and he penned many books on life from a Christian perspective as well as writing his autobiography in 1910.

A true man of Dawley

Despite his fame and wealth, Samuel never forgot his roots. He made a yearly visit to England to see as many family members and friends as he could. He would be much

in demand each summer at local chapels throughout his home region. Huge crowds would gather wherever he preached but he expected no payment. On one visit in 1899 he gave a lecture at the Primitive Methodist Chapel in Dark Lane. Although the chapel received four pounds and 17 shillings for the tickets they sold, he insisted on taking only 15 shillings for his expenses.¹ On another visit he laid a commemorative foundation stone for the new Methodist Sunday School at Lawley Bank, which can still be seen today.² It was also through his generosity that the new Lawley Bank Sunday School was erected in March 1908 at the cost of £1,600.

It is said that when Samuel Parkes Cadman was invited to give a sermon at the Bethesda Primitive Methodist Chapel in Old Park, there were so many people there that he chose to give his sermon from a cart in the field



Parkes Cadman memorial stone at St Mary's Church in Red Lake (Shirley Bruneau)

opposite the chapel. His last visit to Shropshire was in 1935 when he was guest of honour to dedicate the Ketley Playing Field gates.

Preaching to the end

Parkes Cadman was suddenly taken ill with acute appendicitis on 5 July 1936 in Westport, upstate New York. It was just a week before his proposed trip to England on the *Queen Mary*. Despite feeling ill, he carried out both a morning engagement and an evening service, but was taken into hospital directly afterwards. He died a few days later on 12 July.

His body was taken to Brooklyn, New York by train for his funeral service in the Central Congregational Church where he had been pastor. He was temporarily buried in a crypt at Kensico Cemetery mausoleum, Valhalla, Westchester, New York before being permanently buried at this cemetery in a family plot in 1938. There is a memorial plaque to him and his family at the cemetery in Red Lake.

Notes

- 1 Rogers, D.J. (2002) *Dark Lane: The Forgotten Village of Telford*, p.25.
- 2 On the building opposite the Bulls Head public house in Dawley Bank.

Further reading

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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/S._Parkes_Cadman



Dawley Demonstration Day: an annual celebration of Christian faith

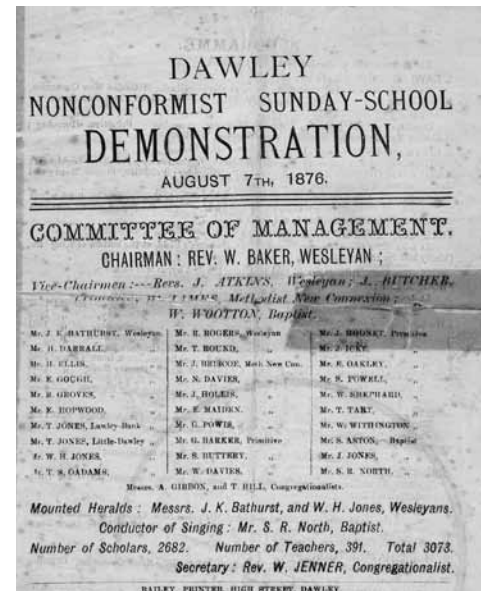
By Shirley Bruneau

For nearly a hundred years, Dawley Demonstration Day was a day of great celebration and a show of religious faith in the town. From 1876 to 1971 the 'Demmon' as it was often called, was held each August Bank Holiday Monday.¹ It was a colourful event in the town's calendar and many residents have fond memories of marching its well-worn route.

The original Dawley demonstrations were a show of Nonconformist strength in the area. Sunday schools of all denominations took part – Wesleyan Methodists, Primitive Methodists, Methodist New Connexion, Congregationalists and Baptists. According to a report in the *Wellington Journal*, a total of 16 Sunday schools and 3,073 children and their teachers were involved in the first demonstration in 1876.

The Sunday schools divided into three sections for marching to Dawley: Lawley Bank, Horsehay and Little Dawley. Participants would meet at their chapels and then march under their chapel banners to agreed points where they would form their sections. The three groups would then proceed to Dawley, meeting up at Meadowell field in King Street. Here, ministers

led the children and their teachers in singing hymns. The entire parade then continued through Dawley, accompanied by brass bands² and led by men mounted on horseback. It was quite a spectacle.



Dawley Nonconformist
Sunday School
Demonstration leaflet,
1876 (courtesy of
Shropshire Archives)

Dawley Demonstration
Day Parade in the early
20th century (courtesy
of Dawley History Group)



A grand parade

The Demmon was always a time for children to look their best. Girls would wear their prettiest dresses, often white, and they would carry baskets of flowers – taken from their gardens or picked wild. Boys would wear their ‘Sunday best’ clothes.

Thousands gathered along the way to watch and cheer them on. It took over an hour for the parade to walk the three-quarters of a mile route up King Street, along High Street, around the Elephant & Castle, past Dawley Park, down Chapel Street, through the lower part of High Street, then down King Street and Back to Meadowell field. Here they would sing more hymns, and finally the National Anthem. The schools then returned to their respective chapels for tea and sports.

The end of an era

In later years the Demonstration was enlarged to include all local Anglican churches. When the Meadowell was built on, the parade used the council playing fields instead to meet up. However, support for the Demmon gradually dwindled, along with Sunday school numbers, and the parade was finally abandoned altogether in 1971.

Notes

- 1 The only exceptions were 1959 and 1960 when the parade was held on a Saturday (Finch, I. 1999. *Dawley's Special Day*).
- 2 Many brass bands took part in the Demonstration, sometimes coming from other towns in Shropshire and the Black Country, and even Birmingham.

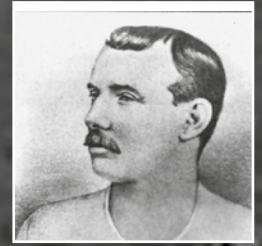


TOP LEFT: Flower girls at the Dawley Demonstration, late 1940s (courtesy of Suzette Collier)

TOP RIGHT: Dawley Demonstration, June 1960 (courtesy of Graham Williams)

BOTTOM: Dawley Demonstration through the High Street, 1967 (© courtesy of Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust)

OPPOSITE: William Foulke and the England football team in 1897
INSET: Captain Matthew Webb (© courtesy of Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust)



Dawley's Hall of Fame

sportsmen, writers and
entertainers who won national
and international acclaim



William Ball: The Shropshire Giant who achieved national fame

By Shirley Bruneau

With his incredible girth and larger-than-life character, William Ball was aptly named and a true Victorian wonder. His national fame as ‘John Bull – the largest man in England’ earns him a special place in the history of Dawley and recognition as one of the town’s literal giants.

William Ball 1795–1852
(© courtesy of
Ironbridge Gorge
Museum Trust)

William Ball was an interesting character. Born in Horsehay, Great Dawley in 1795 and baptised on 8 July of that year, he was the first of five children born to Thomas and Elizabeth Ball. He gained notoriety in the 19th century because of his size. Although a modest five feet nine-and-a-half inches (176cm) tall, at his heaviest he was said to weigh over 40 stone (254kg). Hence the title given to him of ‘The Shropshire Giant’. People said that ‘his waistcoat was so big that three men could be buttoned into it.’¹

Ball had a jocular and pleasant disposition and a notably retentive memory.² Despite his size, he was also a very active man.

A man of iron

From the age of eight, William Ball was employed as a puddler³ at the Horsehay ironworks, which was owned by the Coalbrookdale Company (*see pages 14–17*).

He later progressed to being a shingler⁴ at the works. In the 1841 census he had given his occupation as a forgerman. Ball worked at Horsehay Works for 40 years and was known to be immensely strong. ‘Billy’, as he was known, was able to lift a piece of iron from the ball furnace weighing almost nine hundredweight (about 64st or 400kg)⁵ to place under the forge hammer.⁶ He left the ironworks after being blinded in one eye by a piece of molten metal. From that time onward he wore thick-lens spectacles.

Big John Bull

After leaving employment, Ball’s career took an unusual turn. Recognising that his spectacular size had crowd-pulling potential, he began earning money as an exhibit. He toured the county fairs as the largest man in Britain, going under the pseudonym of ‘John Bull’.



In 1850 he was chosen as one of two men to lead a procession through Horsehay to celebrate the birth of Alfred Darby II. Because of his massive bulk, 'Big Billy Ball' had to be hoisted onto his horse by a specially constructed pulley and blocks, while his co-leader 'Little Bennie Poole', as the smallest man employed by Coalbrookdale Company, was mounted on a pony for contrast. Billy was said to exclaim as he mounted 'Dunno yo drop me!' Regrettably, his sturdy horse had to be destroyed after the procession because Billy's weight had broken its back.⁷

The great exhibit

In the census for 30 April 1851 William Ball is listed, aged 55, with no occupation. Yet this was the year that he came to national prominence when he attended the Great Exhibition as a celebrity guest and exhibit. He went by train to London, travelling in the guard's carriage as there was no passenger seat big enough to take his size. At Birmingham, it is said that some businessmen came on board and began teasing him. They asked him how much material would be needed and what the cost would be to make him a suit. After he quipped that if they would take him to a tailor, have him measured and pay for a suit, he would give them the information they wanted, they troubled him no more!

Although William Ball had the honour of being a celebrity at the Crystal Palace, his experience of the capital was tainted by falling prey to thieves and he left never wishing to return. This was to be his greatest and last major public appearance as he died in June 1852 at the age of 56.

Love and loss

William Ball married twice in his life. His first marriage was to Mary Bailey in September 1819 and she bore him two children: Eliza, born in August 1823 and Thomas, born in August 1824. Sadly, Eliza died in infancy and Thomas in 1839. His wife Mary also died in October 1824. In 1825 Ball married Margaret Wood. They had no children and she is believed to have died in 1850, two years before her husband.

A heavy farewell

Fittingly, a larger-than-life character had an unusual burial. He was taken from his residence in Sandy Bank Row. His coffin was so large that '10 lads were able to lie in it at the same time and it took 10 of the strongest men in the district to carry his coffin, and even then they had the assistance of poles and straps to assist them.'⁸ He was buried in the graveyard at St Luke's Church, Doseley.

Notes

- 1 Taken from the plate on the chair belonging to William Ball, on display at the Ironbridge Gorge Museum
- 2 *Shropshire Life*, March 1952, p.19
- 3 A puddler stirred the molten pig iron in the furnace
- 4 A shingler forged the ball of puddled iron after it was removed from the furnace
- 5 http://www.ironbridge.org.uk/collections/sweat_and_toil
- 6 *Shropshire Life*, January 1971, p.21
- 7 *Shropshire Life*, March 1952, p.19
- 8 *Shropshire Life*, January 1971, p.21

William Ball's chair and stick at Ironbridge Gorge Museum (© courtesy of Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust)





Captain Matthew Webb
1848–1883 (© courtesy
of Shropshire Archives)

Captain Matthew Webb: the swimming hero who conquered the Channel

By Malcolm Peel

Matthew Webb, the first person to swim the English Channel from England to France without the help of any artificial aids, is perhaps Dawley's most famous son. His astounding swimming achievements and courage won him national and international acclaim. His face appeared on items from matchboxes to mugs and for several generations Captain Webb was a household name.

Matthew Webb, born on 19 January 1848, was the second son of Dr Matthew Webb, a local surgeon, and his wife, Sarah, who lived at that time on Dawley High Street (see page 48). They had 14 children in all but two died in infancy. When Matthew was 14 months old, the Webb family moved to neighbouring Madeley.

From the Severn to the seas

By 1856 the family had moved again, to Coalbrookdale. Their home, Eastfield House, was close to the River Severn so it seemed natural for Matthew to learn to swim in the river. He quickly became a strong swimmer and, in 1863, he proved his proficiency by saving his younger brother, Henry, from drowning.

The young Matthew Webb was determined to go to sea and in 1860, at the age of 12, he joined the merchant navy as an apprentice for Rathbone Brothers Shipping in Liverpool. After five years' training – initially aboard HMS *Conway*, then on Eastern cargo ships – he passed his examinations to become Second Mate. By 1875, Matthew had served on seven ships, the last being the *Emerald*. It was on this ship that he was appointed Captain.

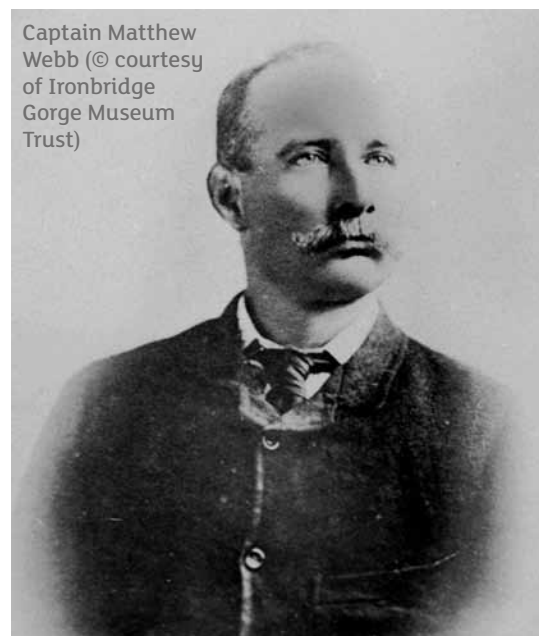
In April 1873, during his service aboard the liner *SS Russia*, Webb made a heroic attempt to rescue a sailor who had fallen overboard. For this, the Royal Humane Society awarded him the Stanhope Gold Medal for bravery, along with a reward of £100. Matthew Webb was the first person ever to receive this prestigious award and he received national recognition.



Sights set on swimming

In 1873 Webb read an account that was to change his life. It told of a failed attempt to swim the English Channel, by J.B. Johnson, a racing swimmer. Webb studied a chart of the Channel and felt confident that he could succeed where Johnson had failed. From then on, Webb dedicated himself to swimming. He left his position on the *Emerald*, moved to London and began to train.

Initially Webb trained at Lambeth Baths, but soon he began braving the cold waters of the River Thames and the English Channel. On one occasion in July 1875 he swam 20 miles in five hours, from Blackwall to Gravesend. He made an attempt on the Channel on 12 August 1875, but due to adverse weather conditions, he abandoned this after seven hours.

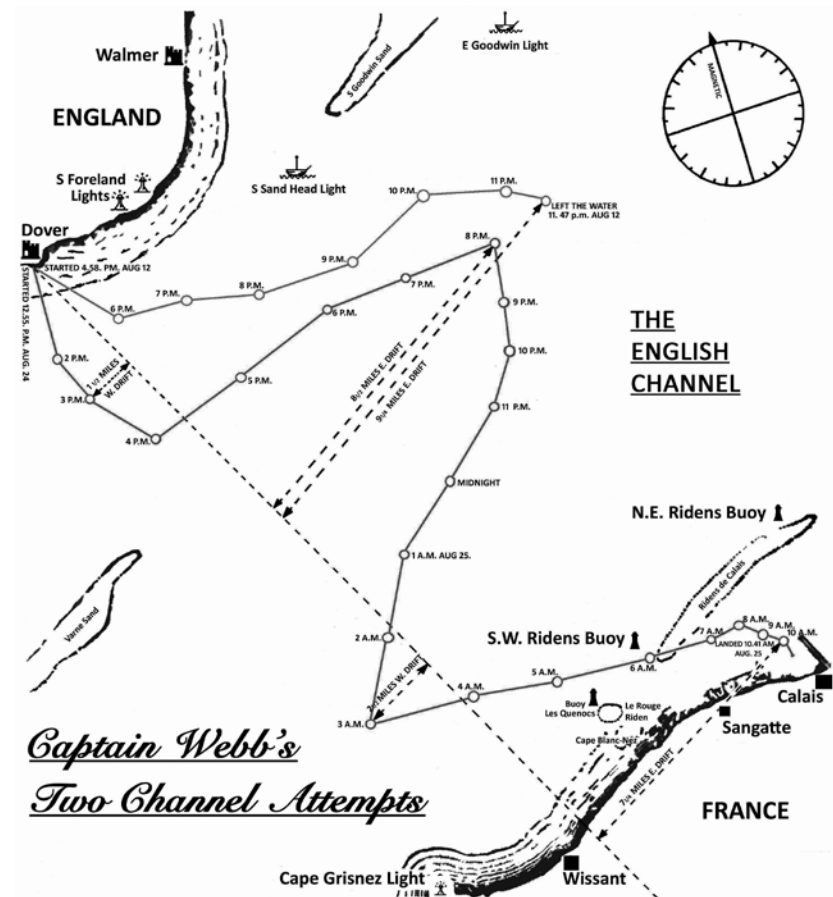


The Channel challenge

At 12.56pm on 24 August 1875, Captain Matthew Webb dived into the English Channel from Admiralty Pier in Dover. Accompanied by a lugger and two small rowing boats with journalists on board, he began to swim breaststroke towards Calais.

At 10.41am on 25 August, Webb finally reached his destination and became the first man to swim the English Channel unaided. He had been in the

Map reproduced by
Malcolm Peel





The pig on the wall

The procession through Dawley to welcome Webb after his Channel swim formed the basis of a well-known postcard of 'the pig on the wall'. Myth has it that the landlord of the Unicorn public house in Little Dawley hoisted a pig on to his wall to watch the band go by. In 1909 Baldwin Bros, a photographic firm from Dawley, reproduced the concocted scene as a postcard to coincide with the unveiling of the Matthew Webb memorial in Dawley.

Postcard: who put the pig on the wall at the Unicorn pub to watch the band go by for the Captain Webb Celebrations on his return to Dawley after swimming the Channel? (© courtesy of Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust)

water for a total of 21 hours and 45 minutes, and due to changing tides, he had covered a distance of 39 miles. Webb's final strokes were watched by the crew of the mailship *The Maid of Kent*, who roared out *Rule Britannia* as he reached the shore.

The hero returns to Dawley

Matthew Webb returned to Shropshire, and to Dawley, to a hero's welcome. He had arrived at Wellington by train and was met by a large crowd and the band of the 7th Shropshire Rifles. So emotional was the crowd that they removed the horses from the carriage that was to transport Webb to Ironbridge, and pulled it themselves, all the way. There, he was met by another band from the 6th Shropshire Rifle Corps, and received an official welcome from the Mayor of Wenlock.

Webb spent the night in Ironbridge, and the following morning a deputation from Dawley invited him to 'receive the homage of the town of his birth'. They then proudly conveyed Captain Webb to Dawley to receive another rapturous welcome, and paraded him through the High Street.

Fame and fortune

Captain Webb was now a hero. The nation felt such pride and respect for his achievements that money was collected throughout the country. The London Stock Exchange set up a Testimonial Fund for Webb, guaranteeing him an income of £87 a year for the rest of his life.

In May 1879 Webb won the Swimming Championship of England at Lambeth Baths in London, competing against champions from other cities in the country. Over a period of six days, he covered a distance of 74 miles in the pool. He was now in demand for lectures and swimming exhibitions and his achievements soon drew the attention of marketeers, who saw his money-making potential.

Promoters in America created opportunities for Webb to make money from his swimming prowess. Events such as his swim from Sandy Hook to Manhattan earned him \$1,000, which was a fortune in those days.

In September 1879 Webb competed for the Swimming Championship of the World



against an American named Paul Boyton but had to retire because of cramp. Another event was soon organised for the two to race one another. Webb won the race but was accused of cheating. It was a ten-mile race and the American was well ahead, but Webb somehow completed the last mile in an astounding 45 minutes. Some suspected that, under cover of darkness, Webb had come out of the water, run along the beach and returned to the water in time to reach the finish before Boyton. Although there was no evidence for this, the prize money was withheld.

Webb continued with swimming races and lectures in England, and promoters both sides of the Atlantic had him performing in exhibitions and circus-style stunts, such as high dives. He also demonstrated feats of floating in tanks of water for long periods, watched by thousands of spectators. One such event at Boston Horticultural Show had him floating in a tank for 128 hours and earned him another \$1,000.

Niagara calls

On 27 April 1880, Matthew Webb married Madeleine Kate Chaddock at St Andrew's Church in West Kensington and soon they had a son and a daughter. By now he was a very wealthy man, and his life brimmed with success. Then, in the winter of 1882, Webb announced his intention to swim across the rapids at the base of the Niagara Falls.

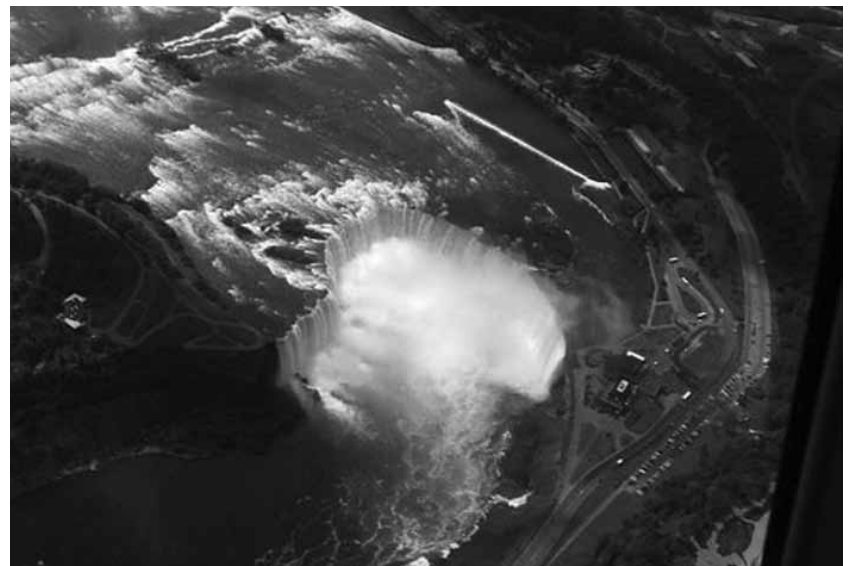
Matthew and his family arrived in America in June 1883. He had planned to make what some people called his 'suicidal' attempt on the rapids on 21 July but lack of sponsorship

forced him to postpone the attempt. Webb was determined to prove his ability, however, so at 4.25pm on 24 July a small ferryboat rowed him out to mid-stream, near to the Niagara Falls Suspension Bridge.

Webb stripped down to his red trunks – the same pair he had worn for the Channel swim seven years before. The ferryman made one last attempt to dissuade him, but Webb only smiled and, with a wave of his hand and a 'Goodbye boy!', he jumped over the side of the ferryboat.

At first all went well, but soon Webb was caught by a large wave that lifted him up and caused him to cry out and to throw up his arm. He disappeared underwater for about 40 metres, and then reappeared briefly before he was sucked down by the whirlpool. It was 4.35pm and this was the last time Matthew Webb was seen alive.

Aerial view of
Niagara Falls (courtesy
of Sue Poulson)



Finding Webb's House

Until recently, no one was certain of the exact location of Matthew Webb's birthplace, but local historians have now identified the likely spot. They discovered that the Chairman of the Matthew Webb memorial committee, Dr Frederick Howard Davis, claimed to have been born in the same house as Webb, which he said had since been demolished to make way for four shops. By tracing Davis' family in various local records, the researchers have been able to determine the approximate position of the Webb house. They are convinced that it was behind what is now numbers 57 to 63, High Street, Dawley.

Right: Matthew Webb memorial in Dawley High Street 2009, with inscription-detail (courtesy of Dawley History Group)

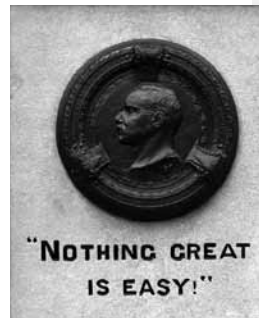
Webb's grave at Oakwood Cemetery, near Niagara Falls (courtesy of Sue Poulson)



Death in the water

Matthew Webb's body was recovered four days later. He had a large gash on his head, which led people to believe that he had struck it on a submerged rock, lost consciousness and drowned. However, the autopsy found that, although he had a fractured skull, drowning was not the cause of death. He had died due to the huge pressure of water beneath the Falls, which had pressed in on his body, paralysing his nerve centres and prevented him from breathing or using his limbs.

His body was temporarily buried in Oakwood Cemetery near Niagara, and later reburied in the same cemetery on 10 January 1884. The grave is surmounted with a Gothic monument made from dark granite, and bears the inscription: 'Captain Matthew Webb. Born Jan 19, 1848. Died July 24, 1883'.



The Dawley memorial

In 1909, due to local public demand for a memorial to Matthew Webb in Dawley, a committee was formed to establish this. With the help of public subscriptions, a drinking fountain was erected at the bottom of Dawley High Street. It was unveiled by Matthew's older brother, Thomas, on 23 October 1909. Only 17 weeks had elapsed between the first memorial committee meeting in Dawley Town Hall in June, to the unveiling ceremony.

A national memorial to Matthew Webb was unveiled on 8 June 1910 in Dover.

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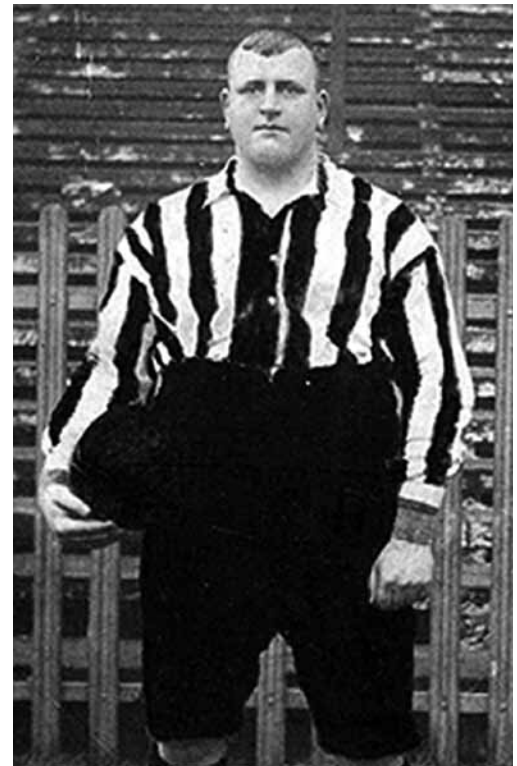
www.shropshiremining.org.uk/captwebb.shtml



William Foulke: perhaps the most talked of player in the world¹

By Paul Sherry

William Foulke, or 'Foulkes' as he was often called, stood literally head and shoulders above his peers with his height given variously as being between 6ft 2in and 6ft 4in. At his heaviest, he weighed in at over 24 stone. His dimensions, large by any standards at that time, led him to become one of the earliest and most recognised sporting superstars of the nation – as both a footballer and a cricketer.



Today, success in professional sport requires almost superhuman fitness. Sports coaches scrutinise everything from the diet to the family welfare of their players, striving to gain an edge in the extreme mental and physical environment of modern sport. In this arena, there is no place for an individual who has not achieved the peak of physical fitness and optimum weight, body mass and muscular development.

Consider now the story of William Henry Foulke, born in Dawley on 12 April 1874.

Fatty Foulke the footballer

William Foulke was 19 years old, employed as a miner, and already 6ft 2in and 15 stone when talent scouts discovered him, playing in goal for Blackwell Colliery, Derbyshire. Sheffield United immediately signed him up and, on 1 September 1894, at the age of 20, he made his debut against West Bromwich Albion.

Over the next decade 'Fatty' Foulke, as he was affectionately known, helped Sheffield United to reach three FA Cup finals (two of which they won) and a League championship. The losing final against Tottenham Hotspur Football Club, a non-league team in those days, drew

William Foulke
1874–1916.

It is hard to believe that someone carrying almost the equivalent weight of two modern footballers could even participate in the sport, let alone make rapid upward progress to appear eventually as an England international player.

a crowd of over 114,000, which was huge by today's standards. Spectators were no doubt attracted, in part, by Foulke's growing fame.

Foulke's weight appears to have increased in proportion with his fame as he made impressive progress in the sporting world. From Sheffield, he moved to Chelsea for a fee of £20. There, he was quickly made Captain and soon drew the attention of the crowd, developing an adoring fan base.



Foulke (back row, centre) with the England football team 1897

A huge impression at Chelsea

Despite his ever-expanding girth, Foulke was regarded as an outstanding goalkeeper with excellent agility for his size. In 1897 he won his first and only England cap, with a 4–0 victory against Wales.

Foulke's rapid progress was undoubtedly a result of his unique combination of weight and athleticism in an era when football favoured muscular forwards who could score by shoulder charging goalkeepers into the back of the net.

Despite making a huge impression, after only one season with Chelsea, Foulke moved to his final club Bradford City in 1905, where he remained for the rest of his football career. During his 13 years in professional football, Foulke made over four hundred appearances, 44 of them being in the FA Cup.

Foulke's foray into cricket

Even in the early days of professionalism, the ability to play two sports at senior level was very rare. However, in 1900 William Foulke did just this. While playing football for Sheffield United in the winter season, he also managed to make four first-class appearances as a cricketer for Derbyshire. His first, and biggest, innings for the club was 53, against Essex at Leyton. His average score was 10.83. Despite his talent for cricket, he gave up the sport because he did not want to put his football career in jeopardy.

Although Foulke's cricketing career was brief, he holds the world record for being the heaviest first class cricketer ever.

Right: Foulke in the sporting line-up with the Sheffield United team



The darling of the crowd

Foulke's talent as a crowd-pleaser brought an extra dimension to conventional football entertainment. His immense size gave him a range of unusual goalkeeping skills. At clearances, he was able to punch the ball over the half way line – a huge advantage, which could rapidly turn defence into attack. Unsurprisingly, he was also an expert at saving penalties. During a match with Burton Albion FC, Foulke stopped two penalties and the forward who missed them apparently complained, 'Where else could I have placed the kicks – there was nowhere else to aim!'

To draw even more attention to Foulke's frame and further distract the opposition, his team would position two small boys behind his goal. The boys would sometimes run and return the ball when it went out of play, and quite by accident, ball boys came into being.²

Colourful antics

Foulke was a colourful character and there are many tales of his amusing behaviour on the field.³ One tells of how he picked up a forward who had offended him and held him upside-down by his feet over the muddy pitch. He is also said to have sat on people who teased him, until they apologised.

According to football legend, at a game against Accrington Stanley in February 1907, Foulke's jersey clashed with the red of the Stanley team. As no one could find an

alternative shirt large enough to fit him, he played the game wrapped in a sheet, borrowed from a house nearby. Foulke made no dives during the match, so that he kept a 'clean sheet'. Bradford won 1–0. (It was also during this game that Foulke snapped a crossbar in two causing the match to be halted.)

At the end of the first match in the 1902 Cup Final, Foulke protested to the officials that Southampton's equalising goal should not have been allowed. Foulke left his dressing room unclothed and pursued the referee, who took refuge in a broom cupboard. A group of FA officials had to stop Foulke from wrenching the cupboard door from its hinges to reach the hapless referee.⁴

A giant appetite

Foulke's love of eating was legendary. Apparently, he would often arrive at the football club early for breakfast, set out food for the whole team, and scoff the lot! The football chant 'Who ate all the pies' is said to have originally been about Foulke, although this is generally accepted as an urban myth.⁵ The one-liner 'Call me anything you want, but don't call me late for dinner,' has also been attributed to him, but sources are unclear.

However, the following quote does appear in the Chelsea match programme for 2 December 1905: 'Foulke says he doesn't care how much they charge him, so long as they don't charge him too much for his dinner.'⁶



Sheffield shopkeeper

William Foulke married in 1896. He and his wife Beatrice lived in Sheffield and, after Foulke's sporting career ended, they bought a general stores there. In 1908 they took over a larger shop and then later ran a pub in the city, called 'The Duke'. However, in 1910 the pub was raided, Foulke was fined £25 for illegal gambling, and he lost his job.

An untimely end

William Foulke died in 1916 and was buried in Burngreave Cemetery, Sheffield. His death certificate gives 'cirhossis' as the major cause of death. Rumours of him having caught pneumonia while earning pin money at a 'beat the goalie' booth on Blackpool Sands seem to be without foundation.⁷ He was aged 42.

Man about town

Foulke's biography, *Colossus* by Graham Phythian, states:

'Foulke's passion for football remained undiminished and he was a regular on match days, sitting in a specially constructed chair on the front row. His affluence ran to employing domestic servants, and he was ever the dapper man about town, sporting his gold watch chain, silk scarf and gold pin.'

Notes and references

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- 2 www.wikipedia.org
- 3 www.bbc.co.uk
- 4 Ibid
- 5 'Football legend inspired Pie Chant', *Daily Mirror* www.guy-sports.com/world_cup_football/football_chants.htm (The chant 'who ate all the pies?' sung to tune of 'Knees Up Mother Brown' directed at Foulke by his own fans.)
- 6 www.wikipedia.org
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Edith Pargeter OBE: the well-loved author 'Ellis Peters'

By Paul Wolfe

During her 60-year career as a writer, Edith Pargeter had over 70 novels published, although many under different names. Some of her best-loved works, written as 'Ellis Peters', were adapted by the BBC in the 1990s and starred Derek Jacobi as the central character, Brother Cadfael. Edith won many awards both in the UK and abroad and she has fans in many countries.



Edith Pargeter
1913–1995
(© courtesy of BBC
Radio Shropshire)

Edith Pargeter was born on 28 September 1913, just before the start of the First World War. She was the youngest of three children. Her sister Margaret was two years older and her brother Ellis, whose name she was to adopt much later as a pen name, was six years her senior.

The family lived in a two-bedroom terraced cottage in Horsehay. The community was dominated by the Horsehay Works (*see pages 14–17*) where her father Edmund Valentine Pargeter worked as a clerk and timekeeper. Her brother was to join the workforce there later, as an engineer.

Memories of home and school

Edith's mother, also named Edith, was an important influence on her life and that of her brother and sister. This was a working class home with a vibrant, sympathetic and encouraging atmosphere. They were a musical family and

the children were encouraged to read from an early age. Edith's mother was quoted as saying proudly, 'She (Edith) was always writing, right from a child'. According to Edith, 'We had also the inestimable advantage that my mother was artistic, musical, interested in everything. She played the violin and sang, only in a family context, but her musical repertoire ranged from folksong through music hall and Edwardian ballads, to grand opera.'

Edith was baptised as Edith Mary Pargeter on 31 October at St Luke's Church in Dawley Parva. This is now a private home but during Edith's early years it was the church that her family attended and where she and her siblings went to Sunday school.

Edith went to the Dawley Church of England School, about a mile from her home. School meals were not provided at that time and in her book entitled *Shropshire* Edith wrote about her walk every lunchtime, 'Twenty minutes

roughly to get home, twenty minutes to eat, twenty minutes to get back to school, it just fitted. There was no time to linger on the road, except on the way home in the afternoon.'

Edith wrote about her experiences at school:

'The building was Victorian, with windows too high for the pupils to be distracted by peering out, and a block of lavatories across the yard. It had no central heating, but it did have fireplaces, and in winter fine hot fires, but shielded by iron fireguards. Outside the actual schoolyard but part of the permitted playground was another spoil heap, known as the Clay Mound.'



Working at Bemrose Chemists Edith learned about medicines, a knowledge she later used in her crime novels (© courtesy of the *Shropshire News*)

Edith Pargeter as a young woman (© courtesy of Shropshire Archives)



During her school years Edith was awarded several certificates and won first prize in a writing competition for the Wellington area NSPCA, with an essay entitled 'Kindness to Animals'. In 1924 success in her written examinations earned her a free place at Coalbrookdale High School for Girls. It was here that teachers encouraged Edith's interest in composition, art and Latin, which became her lifetime passions.

Edith's early career

When she left Coalbrookdale High School Edith had passed both the Oxford Local and the Oxford Higher examinations. She aimed to join the executive

division of the Civil Service and remained at home studying for the exams. However, competition for places was fierce and although she did very well in the written English test, her mathematics let her down. In her own words she 'detested figures at school'.

Edith found temporary work at the women's labour exchange in the Potteries, but as a reporter in the *Shrewsbury Chronicle* reported, 'The dust laden atmosphere so noxious to breathe after the clear air of Shropshire affected her health, and now she was not sorry to return to Dawley where she found a post with Mr Bemrose as a chemist assistant and dispenser.' She worked in Dawley High Street (later Lloyds chemist) for seven years, living in a small terraced cottage in King Street close to the Library. Edith enjoyed this period of her life because it brought her into contact with a variety of people from the area.



Pan-Atlantic success

Between 1950 and 1994 Edith wrote two successful series of detective novels: the George Felse mysteries and the chronicles and mysteries of Brother Cadfael. These were some of her most popular works and had a particularly strong American following. As well as her novels, she also wrote non-fiction books about various topics, including the factual history of Shropshire. Her best-loved works include:

Fallen into the Pit (1951) – the first Inspector George Felse mystery

The Heaven Tree (1960)

The Grass-Widow's Tale (1968)

A Bloody Field by Shrewsbury (1972) US title: *The Bloody Field*

A Morbid Taste for Bones (1977) – the first Brother Cadfael chronicle, set in 1137



This was also the time when Edith's writing career began to take off. She had written her first book at the age of 15 and sent it to Heinemann Publishers. Although this was rejected she was not deterred. She continued to develop her style and her first published novel *Hortensius, Friend of Nero* was written before she was 20 (although it was not accepted by a publisher until 1936).

The Second World War and after

In 1940 Edith joined the Wrens, based first at Devonport and later at Liverpool. Her work involved supporting the ships in the Battle of the Atlantic, in which over two thousand allied ships were lost. Edith achieved the rank of Petty Officer and was awarded the British Empire Medal in 1944. When the war was over she left the Wrens and returned to her beloved Shropshire.

During the 11-year period between her first publication in 1936, and 1947, Edith wrote 14 books, including a wartime trilogy, which

raised her profile to a national level. Though she had used several different pen names (including John Redfern, Jolyon Carr and Peter Benedict) it was not until 1959 that she first used the pseudonym by which she was to become best known: Ellis Peters.

Following her experience in the war, Edith and her brother Ellis became involved and active in the Dawley branch of the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) and helped to establish the Shropshire Adult Education College at Attingham Park. They supported the work of Sir George Trevelyan in establishing the college and helping to organise courses and events such as concerts, plays and poetry readings.

A love for Czechoslovakia

Edith and Ellis visited Czechoslovakia first in 1947 during the brief period between the end of the war and political changes following the nation's incorporation within the Warsaw Pact. Edith felt, as so many did, that the

country's politicians before the war had let the Czechoslovakian people down. What began as sympathy for the people was to become a lifetime interest in the culture, language and stories of this Central European country.

Over the next two decades Edith visited Czechoslovakia many times. Having first taught herself the language, she translated into English, and published, a number of books from the country. Czech writers held her in great respect and in 1968 she was awarded the Czechoslovak Society for International Relations' gold medal and ribbon. Soon afterwards, political change following the Soviet Invasion made it impossible for Edith and her brother to visit their beloved country.

Awards and acclaim

In her later years, Edith gained numerous awards for her writing. In 1962 she was presented with an Edgar (named after Edgar Allan Poe) by the Mystery Writers of America. In 1980 the English Crime Writers awarded her the Silver Dagger and this was followed in 1993 by the Diamond Dagger which was presented to her in the House of Lords. In 1989 the Ellis Peters Appreciation Society was founded in America. A year later she was invited to join the Welsh Academy in recognition of her writing about Welsh history. This was followed by a Masters Degree from Birmingham University.

In the New Year Honours List of 1994, a year before her death, Edith was awarded an OBE for her contribution to literature, a remarkable achievement for a woman born into a working class family from Horsehay.

Edith's final chapter

Edith Pargeter died on 14 October 1995 following a fall and a short illness. She was 82 years old. A memorial service was held at Shrewsbury Abbey, where a commemorative stained-glass window to St Benedict was set above the entrance in her honour. Part of the window depicts an open book with a quill pen and the character Brother Cadfael whom Edith created. Her ashes were scattered at the crematorium in Shrewsbury alongside those of her brother Ellis. *The Times* published an obituary with the following comment: 'A deeply sensitive and perceptive woman, an intensely private and modest person.'

From relatively modest beginnings this prolific writer left a legacy of books which have been translated into many languages.

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The Edith Pargeter memorial stained glass window in Shrewsbury Abbey (courtesy of Paul Wolfe)



OPPOSITE: Finger Road with Elsie Day's family home centre
 (© courtesy of Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust)
 INSET: Sir Joseph Simpson (© Metropolitan Police Authority 2010)



Great Servants of Society

dedication to education,
community and public life



Albert Stanley
1862–1915

Albert Stanley MP: miners' champion and MP for NW Staffordshire from 1907 to 1915

By Shirley Bruneau

At the tender age of 11, Albert Stanley, like his father and brothers before him, started work as a miner in the East Shropshire Coalfields. By the time he died, he had become MP for North West Staffordshire. He never forgot his early years in the mines and he spent his lifetime serving colliers and fighting for his Liberal principles.

Albert Stanley was born 7 June 1862 and baptised at St Leonard's Church, Malinslee on 6 July 1862. He was the seventh of ten children born to Richard and Martha Stanley, who lived in the hamlet of Dark Lane in Dawley.

From a young age, Albert Stanley was keen to progress. Although his education had been brief – first at Dame School, then at the local National School – he developed a great love of books. He borrowed them or bought them second-hand and he would study at night, after his work at the mine.

The boy preacher with a thirst for politics

The Stanleys were Primitive Methodists, attending the chapel in Dark Lane. As Albert's learning grew, so did his faith and confidence.

By the age of 14, he was well known in the Dawley area as 'The Boy Preacher' and he would address large congregations. Too poor to train as a Methodist minister, he became a local preacher at the Primitive Methodist Church, where he delivered his sermons standing on a stool in the pulpit. Albert's great oratory skills drew in large crowds. He was to continue preaching in chapels throughout Shropshire and Staffordshire for the next 25 years. Albert developed an early interest in politics and at the age of 15 he became secretary to the Young Liberals Association. While working at the mine he also became involved in trade union affairs.

The move to Cannock

Albert first worked at Stirchley Coal and Iron Company Colliery alongside his father.



However, by 1881 his family had moved to West Hill, Hednesford in Staffordshire, probably to find work as the economic slump hit the East Shropshire Coalfield. He and his father became miners at No.1 Pit, which was part of the West Cannock Colliery Company.

At the age of 19, an accident at the pit left Albert seriously injured and unable to continue his mining work. However, a year later, in 1884, he was elected as an agent for Cannock miners. This was a responsible position, which involved looking after miners' welfare, working hours and working conditions.

Tragically, soon afterwards, Albert's father was killed in another mining accident at No. 1 Pit, and it was Albert that represented him and the other victims at the inquiry that followed.

Rising status

Albert's social standing grew steadily as he became more involved in trade union politics. In 1890 he represented the Cannock Chase Miners' Enginemen and Surfacedmen's Union, which had a membership of around 4,000. He also became secretary to the Midlands Miners' Federation, a position he held until his death. In 1889 Albert attended the founding conference of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain and served on its executive committee until 1912.

Soon after moving to West Hill, Albert Stanley had married. His wife, Ellen had grown up in Malinslee, Greater Dawley and they had been childhood sweethearts. The 1891 census shows they had two sons and a daughter but by 1901 they had a brood of five. Now, Albert, who

was still listed as a miners' agent and living in West Hill, also employed a young housemaid, indicating a significant rise in status.

Parliament beckons

Alongside his work, Albert continued to be involved with the Liberal Party and with the politics of the day. He believed passionately in Home Rule for Ireland and was an ardent follower of Gladstone. He was one of the founder members of the Midland Liberal Federation when it formed in 1894.

In 1896 Albert was asked if he would stand for Parliament but he declined. He declined again four years later. However, in 1907, Albert Stanley finally decided to represent his party at parliamentary elections. He stood as a Liberal/Labour candidate and was elected MP for North West Staffordshire. Over the following years Albert was re-elected twice, with an increasing majority on each occasion. He was clearly a very popular MP.

The loss of a great champion

In 1912 Albert Stanley celebrated 25 years of his official connection with Cannock Chase miners. He died in 1915 aged 52. Accounts say 'There were drawn blinds in every mining village of Cannock Chase; veterans of the pits and their sons too felt that they had lost a great champion.'¹

Notes

- ¹ Pitman (1935) *The Friendship of Cannock Chase*.
Midland News Association Ltd, p.42



Elsie Day in her youth
(courtesy of John
Merrington)

Mrs Elsie Day: a remarkable headteacher who lived to 110

By Ros Collins

Elsie Day was born Elsie Kate Merrington in 1885. When she died in 1996, aged 110 and three-quarters, she was the oldest woman at that time in Shropshire. As a gifted and dedicated teacher, Elsie left a positive mark on the lives of many local people. Her immense age, amazing memory, remarkable character and contribution to education, earn her a place as one of Dawley's 'giants'. Here, Ros Collins sketches some of the episodes of Elsie's life.

My name is Ros Collins and I am the present owner of Hazeldene House in Southall Road, Dawley (now a guesthouse). The warmth that this house emitted was enough to make me buy it in 2004 and start a new life here. After moving in, I heard snippets of information from various neighbours about the history of this Georgian house and I gradually became interested in the history of Mrs Elsie Day (née Merrington) who lived here for 87 years.

Pictures of the past

I can look out of my lounge window at the front of the house and through the broken green gate opposite, and I imagine Elsie Day in her tweeds and twin-set (minus the pearls as they would have been too flamboyant) and

her wellington boots, tending the vegetable garden. This would have been a regular sight back in the 1950s. At that time Southall was the main A442 road to the south and not as now a very busy fast B road.

My imagination can go back further and see the road as a dirt track with the occasional horse and cart passing by, and the Merrington family in their Victorian regalia. The Merringtons were quite a well-to-do family and very highly thought of in the area. They even employed a housemaid. People have told me of the family's generosity, especially during the closure of Stirchley forge and furnaces around 1904. Elsie's mother would cook a bucket of stew for the poor once a week and the other days she would feed them bread and jam.



A fair schoolmarm

Elsie sounds a remarkable character – tenacious and a very strict disciplinarian, but a fair, dominant schoolmarm with a philanthropic side. Even after she retired from teaching, boys with reading difficulties were sent over from the school to help with the vegetable garden behind her house. But apparently they did not do any gardening, maybe because Elsie liked to be in charge and do everything herself! With their insistence on teaching phonetics and giving individual attention, Elsie and her sister Belle taught these boys to read and write where school had failed. One of Elsie's pupils became a jockey and every year on Mothers' Day, he returned to see the Day family. He knew if he had not learnt to read and write he would not have been successful in his chosen career.

Elsie's education

Elsie Merrington began her own education at the age of four at Langley School, Dawley, and she never really left. At 15 she became a pupil-teacher, then a trainee teacher. Many of her contemporaries would have left school long before her to begin work. Pupils from poorer families could obtain a Labour Certificate if they had good attendance, which allowed them to leave at the age of 11. Their families would be glad of their earnings. The girls went to work at the pit bank or into domestic service. Wages were very poor in Dawley and the girls discovered they could earn better wages in Lancashire in the cotton factories. They often met their husbands there and



never returned. Many of the families plus the children went hop and fruit picking in Hereford, and treated the work as a holiday.

Elsie (front left) with her family outside Hazeldene House Hereford, and treated the work as a holiday (courtesy of John Merrington)

In 1913 Elsie was appointed headmistress of Stirchley School, remaining in this position until 1927. It must have been a very proud day for her when on 25 June 1992, in her 106th year, she attended the opening ceremony for the re-erected school at Blists Hill Victorian Town.

Stirchley was a council school, not a church school, with between 80 and 90 pupils. It had a great number of farmers' children from the rural community of Stirchley and the urban district of Dawley. The pupils usually found employment on the land and did not have to move away from the district to find work.



Elsie and her husband
Walter Day (courtesy of
John Merrington)

A brief marriage

The marriage register for Holy Trinity Church, Dawley, shows that Elsie married Walter Edward Day on 19 April 1927. Walter had served in the First World War as a soldier and became a milkman, living in Finger Road. When she married, Elsie was 41 years old; Walter was 33. Sadly, Walter Day

died after only three years of marriage.

After the wedding, Elsie had moved to a property owned by the Day family, next door to Hazeldene. However, when Walter died she returned to her family home to live with her mother, brother and sister. In those days the education system did not allow female teachers to be married, so, after becoming a widow, she resumed her teaching career at Stirchley School.

Vivid memories of a very long life

I find it fascinating listening to a tape that was recorded by Shropshire Radio on Mrs Day's 100th birthday. Her voice is unfaltering and crystal clear, reminiscing about the great event in Dawley, the celebration of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. She also remembered the ending of the Boer War in 1901 and that, on Monday 25 May 1900, a holiday was given to everyone to celebrate the relief of Mafeking.

Elsie lived through two World Wars and remembered vividly the depression in the Dawley area caused by the closure of Stirchley Furnaces. She could recall with clarity the days when children had to take their pennies to school each week to enable them to enjoy the privilege of an education. In 1880 education was compulsory between the ages of five and ten (poor families were exempt from paying).

Sister Belle

Elsie's sister, Belle Merrington, was headmistress of Mr Parry's Malinslee Institute School for 36 years and was the more outgoing of the sisters. Reports suggest she was ahead of her time as she had a liking for riding motorbikes, driving cars and smoking! Belle was very sporty and played golf regularly at the Wrekin Golf Club, Wellington.

Elsie with her sister Belle
(courtesy of John Merrington)





Elsie Day in later life at home in Hazeldene House (courtesy of John Merrington)

Merry tales

There are many stories and anecdotes about the formidable Mrs Day and her family. The Merringtons were the first locals to taste tomatoes as they were sent by Walter Day's parents as a present from their home on the Isle of Wight. Apparently, they really did not know whether to put salt or sugar on them! The Merringtons were also the first family in the area to have electricity, despite their frugality.

Another story related to me about the Merringtons was that when they needed to consult their solicitor from Wellington he was invited to the house and told, 'Come at 12 o'clock because my brother likes his sherry then.' After Charles died the story became, 'Come at 12 o'clock as my sister likes her sherry then.' Then, when Belle died, it was, 'Come at 12 o'clock as I know you like your sherry then.' I think Elsie liked a drop of sherry!

The Merringtons at Hazeldene

Four generations of Merringtons lived at Hazeldene House. Back in the 1820s Elsie's great grandfather, Charles Thomas Merrington, had founded a chain-making business and blacksmiths there, making pit chains for the collieries belonging to Fosters of Apley. The family ran the business for over a hundred years and, during Elsie's life, the six workshops in the grounds of the house were run by Elsie's father and her brother John. Both men were first class craftsmen, and part of their work was the forging of the link chains used for the surrounding pits (*see page 27*).



Merrington's blacksmiths at Finger Road (courtesy of John Merrington)

All horses in the area were shod at the Merringtons' workshop. As many as 40 horses would be left at the blacksmiths before breakfast to have frost nails put in their shoes in the winter (much bleaker and severe winters were experienced than current times). Opposite the smithy were two pit mounds between which was the wheelwright's shops, which made wheels for all types of vehicles.

When Elsie Day left Hazeldene House to go into a care home, it had been occupied by the Merrington family for over 150 years.

A remarkable character

Even in her 90s this diminutive lady was still bustling around, looking after her younger sister. She broke her hip when she was 102, recovered well, and spent the rest of her life in Lincoln Grange Residential Home, Madeley. According to her nephew, John Merrington, she treated it as a luxury hotel, and the staff as servants.

Staff at Lincoln Grange remember with amusement the healthy rivalry between Mrs Day and a fellow resident when they were introduced to Prince Charles. Elsie overheard the other lady telling the prince that she was

the eldest in the home but Elsie interrupted the conversation saying, 'She is telling you an untruth your Highness. There are two of us over one hundred years old, and I am the elder!' Precise to the end.

My favourite story is of Elsie's greeting to the Prince of Wales on his visit to Lincoln Grange, which went;

'I am very pleased to meet you Sir. I do hope you are keeping well and, oh by the way, how's your mother?'

What a remarkable lady!

'Oh, by the way, how's your mother?' Elsie (second from left) meets the Prince of Wales (courtesy of John Merrington)





George Chetwood: Father of the New Town

By Mark Chetwood

Known locally as ‘Mr Dawley’, George Chetwood was a powerful driving force behind the development of the New Town. A staunch trade union man with strong religious beliefs and unflinching morals, George dedicated his life to improving the Dawley area and creating better social welfare for his fellow citizens of Shropshire.



George Chetwood
1903–1974
(© courtesy of
Mark Chetwood)

George Chetwood was the second child of George and Emma Chetwood. He was born at Ladies Row in Hinkshay Village on 22 February 1903 and baptised at Holy Trinity Church, Dawley on 26 March. At home, he was seldom called George, but went by ‘John’ or ‘Johnny’. In later life, his grandchildren never called him anything other than ‘Granddad Jack’.

A shining talent

Even at infant school, George’s potential shone. His headteacher there, Mrs Elsie Day (*see pages 60–64*) described him as a member of her ‘talented family’. He progressed to Langley School and in September 1915, he gained one of the few scholarships to Newport Grammar School offered that year.

In later life, George recalled that he had to cycle from Hinkshay to Newport and back every day

in every kind of weather. He mostly enjoyed his time there, except for French lessons, which he disliked intensely. The teacher had the nasty knack of twisting the boys’ ears if they mixed up their verb endings! George must have been on the receiving end of such treatment quite often and admitted that he would play truant, cycling to his Aunt Polly’s house which was quite near to the school.

Shattered dreams of flying

A short time after the First World War, George qualified to join the Royal Flying Corps. However, his mother had other plans for him and refused to give the parental permission needed for underage applicants. Instead, she used her influence to gain him a position as a clerk in a local factory, which she believed offered far safer career prospects than flying machines stitched together from canvas and string!

Marriage and shared ideals

In 1928 George married Margaret Stewart Roberts. As well as being a great advocate of women's rights and equal opportunities, she shared George's interests in socialism and the newly forming unions. Together they set up home at Hinkshay but later moved to Portley Road, Dawley, where they brought up their family and remained for the rest of their long married life.

George and Margaret's wedding day
(© courtesy of Mark Chetwood)



With his own plans in ruins, George in characteristically headstrong fashion tore up his newly acquired qualifications saying if he could not fly, he certainly would not work in an office. With that, he found himself a job as an apprentice moulder at the Horsehay Works (*see pages 14–17*), remaining there until 1921 and drawing a wage of 18s 2d (about 90 pence) a week. His mother saw this as a huge waste of a grammar school education, which the family had struggled to fund. By 1921, George had moved to Clays Foundry at Ketley.

Enduring images of hardship

During his formative years, George witnessed great hardship within his largely industrial community. Throughout the war years, food was in short supply and after the fighting ended, there was little work for men returning home from the horror of the trenches. Injuries prevented many ex-servicemen from working at all and those who found jobs had poor pay. The General Strike of 1926 left a great many families desperately struggling to feed themselves or cover the rent.

These early experiences of social hardship gave George the resolve in later life to do all he could to improve the living conditions for local residents. George was a confirmed member of the Church of England, regularly attending the Hinkshay Mission Church. His sincere religious beliefs gave him an inner strength and developed his social conscience. He had a genuine desire to do what he believed to be right and to serve those who might need his help.

'Mad Johnny'

Like most young men, George liked some fun. Unlike his brothers, he was not one for dancing, but he was a strong and very accomplished swimmer and he loved playing football. He also had a passion for motorbikes and racing them at considerable speed. This earned him the nickname 'Mad Johnny'. However, he paid a high price for his recklessness when he came off his bike and smashed his ankle. He had to undergo painful pioneering surgery in order to save his badly injured foot and, after a long stint in leg irons, the accident left him with a shortened leg and a permanent limp.



However, none of this stopped George from continuing his work at Clays Foundry, where he became foundry foreman. Neither did it prevent him being the driving force behind the foundry's fledgling union and one of its founder members.

In the early 1960s, Clays offered George a paid directorship of the company, which he refused. The ideals of his youth had remained with him: he was a union man and a working man. These were principles he was not prepared to give up or compromise. He remained foundry foreman at Clays until his retirement in 1968.

The launch into local politics

George first became interested in local politics through Alderman Sinclair, a former Mayor of Warrington and the national organiser of the Foundry Workers' Union. George had huge respect for Sinclair and they became good friends.

In 1945 the trade unions came together and decided to fight for representation on local councils. George later remembered their first meeting in the Queen's Head in King Street, Dawley. Following this and inspired by Sinclair, George made contact with the Workers' Educational Association, and as a consequence, training on local government in Dawley was organised.

From then on there was no stopping George Chetwood! He stood for the local government elections with eight other union-sponsored candidates and all of them were elected.



The following year George became a councillor on the old Dawley Urban District Council (UDC) and the Chetwood home at Portley Road rapidly turned into his office. He took over the reins from another good friend and mentor, Alderman R. Alma Rhodes, a towering personality in local politics who had been on the council since its very beginnings way back in the 1890s. Alderman Rhodes had a motto, which George may well have taken to heart: 'Press on! Never despair; never be discouraged. However stormy the Heavens, or dark the way, or great the difficulty, or repeated the failures, press on!'

In April 1952, George stood as the Labour Party candidate for Malinslee electoral division in the Shropshire County Council elections. It was an easy win.

George Chetwood
(seated) at his Dawley
UDC office
(© courtesy of the
Shropshire News)

By this time, he had built up an impressive curriculum vitae and his election flyer listed a string of achievements:

- A lifelong and prominent trade unionist
- Chairman of the Dawley branch of the AUFW with over a thousand members
- President of the Wrekin Trades Council (over two years)
- Labour member of Dawley UDC (six years)
- Chairman of Dawley Road Safety Committee (three years)
- Founder member of the Old Folks Restroom Committee
- Chairman of the Group Committee of the 2nd Boy Scouts
- Chairman of Dawley Ex-Service Mens Club
- School manager of Malinslee, Langley and Pool Hill Schools

Cllr George Chetwood, chairman of Dawley UDC, being interviewed by the BBC (courtesy of Mark Chetwood)



Raising the Phoenix

After his successful election to the County Council, George was able to use his new status to push for a new secondary school in Dawley. At that time, secondary education was very limited, at Pool Hill School. By 1956, the newly built Dawley Secondary Modern School opened its doors to pupils with Mr Rennie as headteacher and George as the chair of governors. George still held this position in 1967 when the school became a comprehensive with a new name, the Phoenix Comprehensive School, under the inspirational and progressive headship of Richard Neal. The school expanded during the 1970s, with new laboratories, art and drama areas.

George was at the forefront of many shared development projects between the school and the council, resulting in new community sports and leisure services. Part of the new build at the Phoenix that is open to the wider public (and sometimes used as a polling station) was named the Chetwood Hall and Coffee Bar in recognition of George's services to the educational community.

Talk of a New Town

During the 1950s, George was asked several times to stand as an MP at a less than secure seat near Birmingham. In typical style, George refused the offers, making it clear that he had more important work to do, closer to home. George and many of his council colleagues were only too aware that the Dawley area was in terminal decline.



The vast majority of the housing stock was in private hands and in shockingly poor condition, and the landscape was heavily scarred from industrial activity, now long since finished.

As early as August 1946, Mr R. Lewis Price the council surveyor had produced a short report for the UDC outlining the work required to redevelop the Dawley area.¹ However, the debate about a new town at Dawley really began about ten years later, in George Chetwood's living room at 55 Portley Road. An informal chat between George and Mr A.W. Bowdler, the Dawley correspondent for the *Wellington Journal & Shrewsbury News*, led Bowdler to suggest in an article for the *Birmingham Gazette* that semi-derelict areas of East Shropshire might be used for development (see page 87).

The article appeared in print in 1955 and members of the council, particularly George Chetwood and Mr Charles Savage, the surveyor for Dawley, were keen to approach Birmingham City Council with their ideas.² George sent a letter to the Mayor of Birmingham, dated 16 February 1955, offering to receive a delegation from the Birmingham Corporation to conduct an inspection of his council's area.³

The decision to establish a new town at Dawley, announced in the *Express & Star* on Wednesday 30 May 1962, appears to have met with all round approval. In the same press release, George, Chairman of Dawley Urban District Council, gave this statement directly from his place of work:

'Our council welcomes the news – for years we have been urging that the waste land here could be put to good use, for housing. But we could not develop it ourselves; it was too costly. From what we have already seen of Birmingham people who have come here under the 'pilot' overspill scheme, I'm sure the thousands more who are coming will settle in well. As a council we shall be proud to play our part in helping people to live in better homes.'⁴

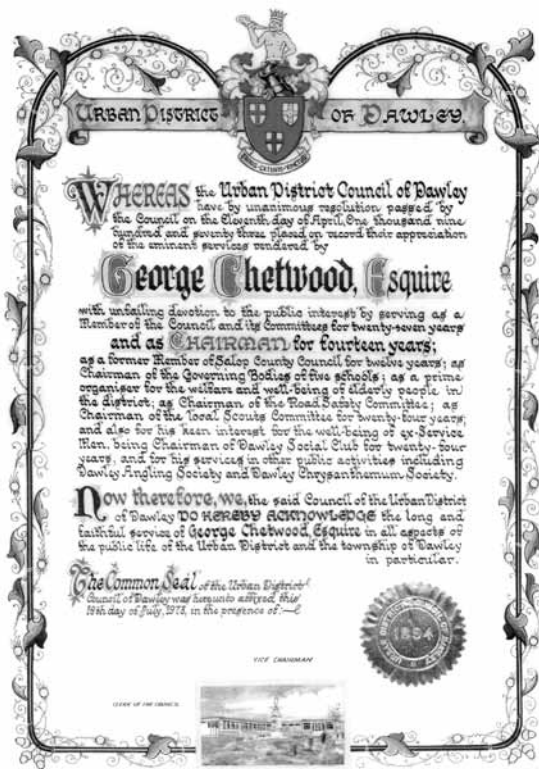
A vision for the future

George Chetwood lived a full life, devoting most of his spare time to public service. He always felt it was an honour and his privilege to serve the electorate and, from the beginning, George never actively sought acclaim; indeed, he shunned it. In a 1966 newspaper interview, he set out an agenda for regional government in his typically logical and far-sighted way and suggested for the first time the idea of having paid full-time councillors. But from where he sat, this was decades away.⁵

In his final years, George was often called 'Mr Dawley' and those people new to the area believed that was his real name. This nickname gave him no end of amusement and demonstrated just how much the man had become synonymous with the town.

George Chetwood
Court, Malinslee
(courtesy of
Shirley Bruneau)





Wrekin Council recognised his immense contribution to public life by naming part of an estate at Malinslee, his electoral ward, George Chetwood Court. During the formal address at the opening ceremony, the closing paragraph simply stated,

‘Father of the New Town, George Chetwood died on 8 May 1974, at the age of 71 years. He was instrumental in the opening discussions with Birmingham City Council on the provision of overspill housing in Dawley, a scheme which prompted the conception of Dawley New Town, and ultimately, Telford.’⁶

The decorated testimonial presented to George Chetwood by Dawley UDC in recognition of his services to the urban district and to the town of Dawley (© courtesy of Mark Chetwood)

A worthy memorial

Maybe because of his early memories, George was particularly keen to support ex-servicemen in the area. He was involved with Dawley War Memorial Hall at King Street from its beginning in 1928. He continued to give freely of his time and energy when this became Dawley Social Club. In September 1974, some months after George died, the *Shropshire Star* announced the official opening of the George Chetwood Lounge at the club in recognition of his work over the years in connection with ex-servicemen and women.

Notes

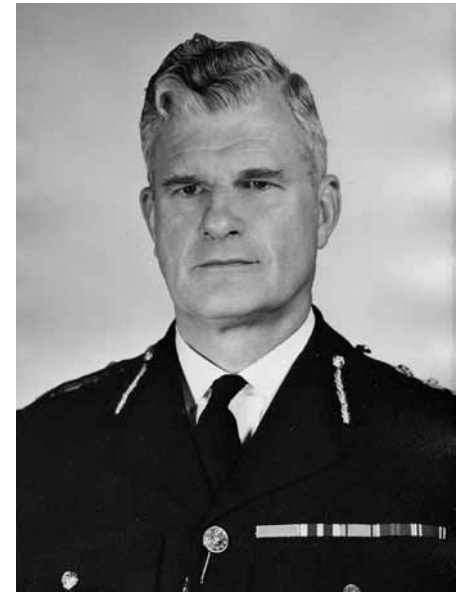
- 1 *To The Chairman of The Dawley UDC*. Dated 27 August 1946 and signed R. Lewis Price. Document in Chetwood family archive.
- 2 *Wellington Journal & Shrewsbury News*. Saturday 2 June 1962. Front page story, ‘New Town at Dawley’. This article mentions the Bowdler report appearing in the *Birmingham Gazette* and also has statements from George Chetwood and Charles Savage.
- 3 Original copy of letter in Chetwood family archive. Authorship: J.G. Chetwood.
- 4 *Express & Star* 30 May 1962, Salop edition. Front page story. The new town decision is welcomed: ‘DAWLEY: EVERYBODY IS HAPPY!’ by Harry Godwin.
- 5 Partially dated newspaper clipping, *Shropshire Star* 1966, ‘Call Him Mr Dawley!’ A Peter Kirk profile.
- 6 District of the Wrekin Council Estates Department. An Introduction to George Chetwood Court Grouped Dwelling Scheme.



Sir Joseph Simpson KBE, KPM: Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police 1958–1968

By Pam Bradburn DL

Born in Dawley, Joseph Simpson was the first police officer ever to move up through the ranks and become the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Britain's most senior police officer. During his ten years in this position he hugely transformed the Met, greatly improving welfare and equality, and he established many nationwide Police initiatives that are still in operation today.



Sir Joseph Simpson
1909–1968
in his Police uniform
(© Metropolitan Police
Authority 2010)

On 3 July 1909 the following announcement appeared in the *Wellington Journal*: 'Simpson, 26th June to Mr & Mrs Joseph Simpson, Greenhurst, Doseley, Dawley, a son.'

Joseph Simpson senior was the chairman of the Horsehay Company and his wife, Dora, was a member of the Maw family, the famous Jackfield tile makers. The arrival of their first son, named Joseph after his father, probably aroused considerable local interest as the Simpsons were well-known industrialists and major employers in the Dawley area. No doubt there was local speculation as to whether this newest member of the Simpson dynasty would, in time, follow in his father's footsteps and join the family company.

In fact, young Joseph's life was to take a completely different course and one that would result in his achieving national recognition.

Sporting excellence

Joseph spent his early years in the Dawley area, where the family home was at Moreton Coppice, Horsehay, but then left to be educated at boarding schools at Ashdown House and later, Oundle, a well-known public school in Rutland. As a youth, he developed into a notable sportsman and excelled in rugby and athletics. At Oundle School he became captain of the rugby and athletics teams and, in 1927, he won the Public

Joseph Simpson
as a young man
(© courtesy of
John Simpson)



Schools Long Jump Championships. In the same sports event the following year, he set a public schools' record in the long jump of 22ft 3½in and ran the 440yds flat race in 52.35 seconds.

From school Joseph went on to study at Manchester University College of Technology. He represented the university at rugby and athletics, excelled in hurdling and running and played cricket. In 1930 he competed in the World's University Championships in Germany and set the record time of 54.15 seconds in the 400-metre hurdles.

First steps into policing

Following university, Joseph Simpson worked for a short time in the Lancashire cotton industry but in 1931 he decided to join the Metropolitan Police. This choice was to change his life.

He was posted first to Wembley (X Division), and then transferred to Bow Street (E Division). At 6ft 3in and with an athletic physique he had little difficulty in chasing and apprehending criminals.

Simpson became captain of the Metropolitan Athletic Association and, in 1932, competed in the Midland Counties Championship Meeting where he defeated Lord Burghley, the British Olympic Games captain, in the 440yds hurdles. Lord Burghley was a member of the famous team of athletes that included Harold Abrahams and Eric Liddell, whose story was the subject of the film *Chariots of Fire*.

At various times in his sporting career, Simpson was associated with Birchfield Harriers, the London Athletic Club and Keswick Athletic Club. Simpson also played rugby for the Metropolitan Police, the Police Rugby Union and Middlesex. He was a keen rifle shot and cricketer too.

Although a shoulder injury eventually forced him to give up both rugby and hurdling, he remained keenly interested in sport and particularly supported it in the Police forces in which he served.



Rapid progression and early honours

In 1934 Joseph Simpson was selected to be one of the 30 police officers to attend the first course at Hendon Police College. He graduated as top student and won the prize for Criminal Law and Procedure in 1935. On completing the course, he was promoted to Acting Station Inspector but returned to Hendon College in 1936 as a member of the teaching staff. In the same year he married Elizabeth May (known as Betty) Bowler. At this time, he had also obtained a Law degree and in 1937 he was called to the Bar by Gray's Inn.

Over the following years, Simpson's Police career progressed rapidly. In 1937 he was appointed Acting Chief Constable of Lincolnshire. Alongside his Police studies, he found time to pursue a new sporting interest, becoming an active and successful member of Lincoln County Rifle Club. In 1939, with the storm clouds of the Second World War gathering, he was seconded to the Regional Police Commissioner offices. Between 1939 and 1943 he served first as Regional Police Staff Officer and then as Acting Inspector of Constabulary in both the Nottingham and Cambridge Civil Defence regions. In 1946 his contribution to the war effort was recognised with the award of an OBE for his services to civil defence. Later that year he was appointed Chief Constable of Surrey, a post he was to hold for the next decade.

Joseph Simpson, his wife, and their two sons, Mark and Benjamin, settled in Surrey, near Goldalming. Joseph resumed his interest in

rifle shooting and became chair of the Surrey County Small Bore Rifle Club and, the now defunct, National Short Range Rifle League.

Services to the Police

Simpson's wife bred Labrador dogs and Joseph developed an interest in training working dogs. He became increasingly aware of the potential for using dogs in Police work and, consequently, Surrey was one of the first Police forces to incorporate this aspect of policing into the service.

Joseph Simpson's services to the Police were subsequently recognised in the 1952 New Year Honours, when he was awarded the King's Police and Fire Service Medal.

On 1 March 1956, 27 years after he joined as a young police constable, Joseph Simpson returned to the Metropolitan Police as Assistant Commissioner B, in charge of traffic policing. In his new role he accompanied the then Transport Minister, Ernest Marples, to Canada and the USA to study methods of traffic management.

Rapid rise to the top

Then, in June 1956, the Deputy Commissioner, Sir Ronald Howe CVO MC, announced that he would retire from his post the following January. The Home Office simultaneously announced that Assistant Commissioner Joseph Simpson would succeed him. Recalling much later how Joseph Simpson quietly gave him the news of his appointment, his colleague, Sir Ranulf Bacon, referred to him as



Sir Joseph Simpson in ceremonial dress
(© Metropolitan Police Authority 2010)

Joseph Simpson's appointment received considerable national publicity. At 49, he was the youngest Commissioner in living memory. But, importantly, he was also the first to rise through the ranks of the Police and become Britain's most senior police officer.

a humble man with acute understanding of the responsibility placed upon him. Simpson had said, 'Don't write me a congratulatory letter. Come and tell me in a few years' time whether I am doing any good in the job.'

Just 16 months later the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir John Nott-Bower, announced his retirement, to be effective from August 1958. On 6 June 1958 the *Police Review* announced that his Deputy, Mr Joseph Simpson, had been appointed to succeed him. Joseph Simpson's appointment received considerable national publicity. At 49, he was the youngest Commissioner in living memory. But, importantly, he was also the first to rise through the ranks of the Police and become Britain's most senior police officer. In the 1959 New Year Honours, Joseph Simpson was knighted as a Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire (KBE).

Sir Ranulph Bacon, who was to serve as his Deputy, wrote, 'Well though our force has been served by soldiers and civil servants at its head, the dream of every London policeman was to see one day a man who had risen through his own ranks to Commissioner.' With the appointment of Joseph Simpson that dream was realised.

Leading by example

Simpson took up his post with one ambition – to make the Metropolitan Police Force the finest in the world. In the ten years he served as Commissioner, he achieved his goal. He took office at a time when there was a steep rise in crime, particularly gangland crime, and a distance had developed between senior officers and lower ranks. Police recruitment was at a low ebb and the relationship between the Police and the public was deteriorating.

Sir Joseph Simpson had a reputation for fairness and tolerance. He was a great believer in discipline, set himself high standards and expected the same from his officers. He also believed that senior officers and lower ranks should work towards a closer relationship. As Commissioner he led by example and quickly established a more personal style within the Police Service. He gave members of the Force the opportunity of meeting him both on and off duty, and he regularly attended the many



social and sporting events held within the Metropolitan Police. Indeed, Joseph Simpson liked nothing better than to be in the company of his colleagues on these occasions and his men commonly knew him as Joe Simpson. As a sportsman himself, he also recognised the importance of encouraging athletics and other sports and games within the Met.

Welfare and equality

Having risen through the ranks to become Commissioner, Joseph Simpson was deeply concerned about the welfare of those under his command. He attached no personal importance to rank, salary and public acclaim, and firmly believed that a good constable walking 'on the beat' was doing just as important a job as he was himself. He never forgot those who had joined the 'Met' with him as police constables, and always remembered and addressed them by their first names. He hated unfairness in all its forms and often dealt with problems personally in order to ensure that justice prevailed but, equally, he was meticulous in his attention to detail in dealing with internal disciplinary matters.

A programme of reform

In his role as Commissioner, Sir Joseph Simpson embarked on an almost continuous programme of reform with the aim of modernising and improving the Metropolitan Police. Under his leadership the Metropolitan Police Cadet Corps was expanded. New methods of training ensured that both general education and activities to develop a sense of discipline and responsibility were an integral

part of the programme. The training of new police recruits was also radically overhauled and modernised.

With the increase in crime levels, particularly violent gangland crime, one of his first priorities was to strengthen the Criminal Intelligence Branch (CID). He also set up the Stolen Motor Car Branch. Another of Simpson's initiatives, the Crime Intelligence Branch, developed into the nationwide network of regional crime squads that still play a vital role in fighting crime throughout Britain today. He went on to establish further specialist developments: the Special Patrol Group (1961), Obscene Publications and Drugs Squads (1963), Art Squad, and Antiques and Philately Squad (both 1967). In addition, he expanded the Metropolitan Police Flying Squad.

Simpson had a keen interest in using the newly developing forensic skills to fight crime, which encouraged him to lay the foundations for a Scenes of Crime Branch. This initiative did not come into being until shortly after his death but in the 21st century, Scenes of Crime Departments are now an integral part of the British Police Service.

Overhaul of the 'Met'

In modernising the Met, nothing escaped Sir Joseph's attention. Acutely aware of the shortage of manpower, he devised and implemented new systems of working police 'beats' and encouraged the use of any new technology available to support his officers. He introduced personal radios and expanded the use of Panda cars for patrol purposes.

It is not surprising that Sir Joseph, a former Assistant Commissioner for Traffic, was the commander who introduced traffic wardens and fixed-penalty policing fines, which were subsequently adopted by most of Britain's major towns and cities.

Crime prevention measures were used in attempts to improve police and public relationships, and the public was urged to 'have a go' in the fight against crime. Sir Joseph Simpson also reorganised and integrated the Metropolitan Special Constabulary more closely with police divisions. The city of London itself was in the throes of change during this time and when the Greater London area came into being, Sir Joseph moved quickly to align police divisional and sub divisional areas with those of the new authority to enable the two to work more closely together.

A decade of dedication

The ten years during which Sir Joseph Simpson commanded the Metropolitan Police were considered the most progressive years in the history of the Police Service. In him, the Met had found a dedicated and dynamic commander, a man of whom his Deputy Sir John Waldron said: 'He was a tremendous inspiration to work with, invariably a perfectionist, but in the most pleasant of ways. Knowledgeable and wise, he always provided great depth of thought and logic to any discussion.'

By 1964, some considered it likely that the Commissioner would be contemplating retirement, but he remained in office. There was still much to do. He wanted to plan further

major reorganisation of the Met and contribute to changes proposed within the Police Service nationally. He was also keen to continue his official and semi-official appointments in connection with his professional work. These included: vice patron of the Amateur Athletic Association, vice president of Middlesex RFU and chair of the Working Trials and Obedience Committee – the Kennel Club. In 1963 he was elected president of the Medico-Legal Society for a two-year period. He became vice president of the Association of Chief Police Officers in England and Wales (ACPO) in 1966 and he was elected president in 1967.

A decade of total dedication to the Metropolitan Police and indeed to the Police Service, eventually took its toll on Sir Joseph's health. On 19 March 1968 he died suddenly at his home at Roehampton, Surrey at the age of 58. Sir Joseph Simpson's death came at a time when many of his initiatives and reforms were just coming to fruition. In July 1967 in his annual report, he had stated that there were signs that the rise in crime had been checked and that relationships between police and public were improving. He had achieved his goal.

Tributes and farewells

Sir Joseph Simpson's funeral took place with full honours, at Westminster Abbey on 29 March 1968. The Lord Bishop of London read the memorial address, and the Metropolitan Police Band participated in the service. At 11am, all Metropolitan Police Officers who were able to do so, observed a one-minute silence as the funeral service began.



Among the many formal and informal tributes to this remarkable man, held in so much respect and affection, were two of particular note. James Callaghan, the Home Secretary, wrote to Sir John Waldron, the Acting Commissioner:

‘He was an outstanding leader of men and his death is a tragic loss both to the Force, which he served so well as Commissioner for one decade, and to the Police Service as a whole which he served in so many ways all his working life.’

Sir Charles Cunningham, who was formerly at the Home Office, wrote in *The Times* of Sir Joseph Simpson’s leadership, fearlessness, his intellect, patience, tolerance, integrity and his capacity to understand others and see the other man’s point of view:

‘These were qualities which everyone who worked with him – Ministers, Civil Servants, members of his own service – recognised, respected and admired. They won him the loyalty and affection of all his officers – who would have done anything for him. He has left the Metropolitan Police a better force – in efficiency, in morale and in the standards to which all its members work – than it has ever been. Both it and the Police Service as a whole will miss him very much. And so will his friends.’

However, the personal tributes from his closest colleagues and fellow officers were the most moving. Sir John Waldron, who was to succeed him as Commissioner, said:

‘He was a great man in every sense of the word. He was a dedicated leader and the most impressive Commissioner in the history of the Force. He was also an extremely modest man who shunned the limelight. He liked people. It is for these qualities that he will always be remembered – that and the fact that there’ll never be a better “guvnor”.’

On 4 June 1970 a memorial service was held in the crypt of St Paul’s Cathedral where a memorial plaque was unveiled by the Home Secretary, James Callaghan. It bears the following simple inscription:

JOSEPH SIMPSON
K.B.E K.P.M.
1909 – 1968
POLICEMAN
1931 Constable Metropolitan
Chief Constable Northumberland & Surrey
Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis
1958–1968

It would be almost impossible to pay any finer tributes to this great man than those quoted already. This factual account of his life is partly a tribute in itself and it is hoped an inspiration to future generations of young people in the Dawley area. It is perhaps more fitting that the tribute from local people who remember Sir Joseph Simpson and his family, with affection and respect, should be simple but sincere:

‘We are privileged and proud to be able to say that Joe Simpson was ‘A Dawley Mon’.



Michael Lowe (courtesy of Telford College of Arts & Technology)

Michael Lowe CBE, DL: Dawley businessman, community leader, and ambassador

By Shirley Bruneau

It is impossible to describe in a few pages all that Michael Lowe has done for the people of Greater Dawley, and indeed Shropshire. His unswerving commitment to voluntary work and his vision for the area have improved sport, education, business and, most importantly, opportunities for young people. His accomplishments and his drive to improve the region make him a true giant of Dawley. Here, Shirley Bruneau outlines some of his many achievements.

The first time I met Michael Lowe was in 2007. Before me stood a well-groomed, dapper man with a full head of silver-grey hair and a beaming smile. He had an obvious zest for life, a sharp mind and great warmth. It was hard to believe that he was 71 years old.

It soon became apparent that Michael Lowe had led a very rich and fruitful life.

Challenges and changes in early life

Michael was born in Wolverhampton on 6 January 1936. His parents came from St George's and Ketley Bank but moved to Wolverhampton

when they married. In the late 1940s his father started his own foundry business. It was a real family enterprise and every member had a role within it. For a while, the company thrived but problems soon began to occur, causing family stresses. Life became very difficult. Then, in 1953, when Michael was 17, his mother left, taking him with her, and they returned to live with his maternal grandmother in Ketley. Michael's biggest regret is that he lost contact with his father.

Michael did well at school. After achieving his O levels, he expected to take his A levels and eventually attend university. However, these plans had to change with the break-up of his



family. His careers master suggested that he became an accountant so, when he returned to Shropshire, this is what he did. His first job was as an articled clerk with Howard (Bob) Tranter at his firm of chartered accountants in Oakengates.

Although unaware of it at the time, Bob Tranter was to be a huge influence on Michael's life.

On track for a successful career

Michael was thirsty for challenge and got off to a flying start. After qualifying as a chartered accountant in 1960, he worked with the DuPort Group as assistant financial controller, continuing to work for Bob Tranter at weekends. It says much about Michael's character that he left his new job after only six months because he felt that there was not enough pressure and returned to work for Bob Tranter full time. In 1962, Bob offered him a partnership in the company in recognition of his ability. Dawley had just been designated a New Town, and Michael was given his own office there. He became the senior partner in the company in 1982. The firm, now called Tranter Lowe, became one of the largest in Shropshire and had contracts with many companies nationally and internationally. Michael is still involved in the business today.

A lifetime of hockey

Michael had a huge talent for sports and, throughout his life, combined participation with voluntary roles in many sporting organisations.

Bob Tranter introduced Michael to the sport he most excelled at – hockey. Bob played as goalkeeper for Shifnal Hockey Club first team and in 1953 he invited Michael to join. Michael, naturally left-handed, found it difficult to hold the hockey stick at first, so they suggested he play in goal. His left-hand bias gave him a huge advantage and very few balls could get past him!

Michael's long and successful career in the sport had begun. When Bob Tranter retired as the Shropshire goalkeeper, Michael took over the mantle. Between them, he and Bob Tranter had notched up 50 years in service as goalkeepers for the county. In 1972 he was the first player to represent his county on 100 occasions.

Alongside his county commitments, Michael captained the Shifnal Hockey Club for 12 years. Under his captaincy they became Midland Champions three years running. He was also chairman of Telford and Wrekin Hockey Club for 20 years, before becoming its president.

In 1967 the Midland Counties Hockey Association (MCHA) elected Michael as its representative for Shropshire. At that time, its members complained that the media gave the sport too little coverage. Michael believed that introducing more competitions would gain more media attention and, as a result, in 1969 he set up the Midlands

Michael Lowe as a young man (courtesy of Michael Lowe)



A sporting coup for Telford Town Park

As vice president for Shifnal Hockey Club (now called Telford & Wrekin Hockey Club), Michael Lowe was responsible for the development of the Hockey and Rugby Club in Telford Town Park. The club was built in 1978 and opened by Emyr Thomas CBE, general manager of Telford Development Corporation. This facility was an important sporting coup for the Dawley area as it meant that county hockey could be played there.

Hockey League, the first official league for the sport in the UK. This proved so successful that eventually a National League was formed. Michael became the MCHA's first secretary and its first treasurer, a position he held for 32 years from 1969 to 2001. The MCHA made him life vice president in 1977 and in 1982 he was the first Shropshire person to become its president.

At the age of 46, Michael retired from county hockey after making a record 203 appearances and serving as captain of the county side for ten years. He went on to be chairman of Shropshire County Hockey Association for ten years, and president for a further ten. In 1998 the Association made him a life patron.

Michael Lowe's hockey achievements

- 1969** – responsible for setting up the Midlands Hockey League
- 1969** – selected for the Midlands team
- 1969, 1970, 1971** – Shifnal Hockey Club are Midland Champions under Michael Lowe's captaincy
- 1969** – trialed for England
- 1972** – the first player to represent his county on 100 occasions
- 1977** – made life vice president of the Midlands County Hockey Association
- 1998** – made life patron for services to Shropshire County Hockey

Michael also served for 11 years on the English Hockey management committee. This was a very successful period for British hockey. The team won an Olympic Bronze medal in 1984, they were finalists in the 1986 World Cup, European Silver medalists in 1987 and won the Olympic Gold in 1988. In 1993, when Michael retired from the committee, they made him life vice president in recognition of his services to English Hockey.

A man of many sporting talents

Michael had taken up tennis at secondary school and when he moved to Ketley he joined St George's Tennis Club. He played in the men's team, which made it to the second division of the Shropshire County Tennis League for a time. He represented St George's in the County Tennis League for many years. Michael became treasurer for the club in 1954 and later its chairman.

One of Michael's first achievements as treasurer of St George's Tennis Club was helping raise £300 to tarmac two of its courts. This was the first of many fundraising ventures. In 2002 he became chairman of the St George's ground development committee, which raised funds to create a new floodlit Astro Turf facility. This had a very positive effect on young people's interest in the sport. He continued his association as deputy chairman of the St George's Recreation Ground.

Alongside his hockey and tennis interests, Michael also played squash for a number of years. He represented both Shifnal and Ketley in the Midlands and Shropshire leagues and



was team secretary of Ketley Squash Club for five years.

In later life, Michael turned his hand to golf. He played at Shifnal and Chesterton Valley golf clubs, where he was on the management committees.

Charity, commerce and enterprise

When asked who had most influenced his life, Michael replied, 'Bob Tranter'. Bob offered him his first job and introduced him to hockey. It was also Bob that encouraged him to do charity work.

Michael's voluntary and charitable work has spanned more than half a century. He took up his first charitable position in 1962 as founding secretary for the newly established Dawley Chamber of Commerce. He continued in his role as secretary during the creation of Telford New Town, when the organisation changed its name to Telford Chamber of Commerce, and for many years beyond. In 1984, the Chamber invited Michael to become deputy president and 12 months later he began a three-year stint as president. He has continued to serve on the council of the Chamber ever since.

When in 1989 the Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) were established, Michael played an instrumental role in their success both locally and nationally. He became chairman of the Shropshire Training and Enterprise Council Board in 1992. This TEC was one of the leaders in the whole movement and always achieved its targets.

During the mid-1990s the Chamber of Commerce was struggling nationally due to the economic recession. The government agreed that where appropriate, TECs and Chambers of Commerce could combine. It was Michael Lowe's tact, diplomacy and steely determination that ensured the successful merging of the two Shropshire organisations in 1996 to form the Shropshire Chamber of Industry and Commerce, Training and Enterprise. With Michael as president, it was for a time one of the three fastest growing Chambers in the UK. Its members employed 65 per cent of the working population of Shropshire. Michael continued as president of this organisation until 2002.

Michael also found time to chair the West Midlands Group of TECs from 1994 to 1996 and serve on the Training and Enterprise National Council committee on education and training from 1996 until 1999. In addition, he was a member of the West Midlands Regional Further Education Funding Council from 1993 until 1999. Locally, he became chairman of the

© Wolverhampton Wanderers FC

A passion for Wolves

When Michael was a boy, his father had taken him to see his first football match at the Molineux Stadium and this was the start of a lifelong love of football and a passion for Wolverhampton Wanderers Football Club.

He shared this passion with a client and friend, Jack Harris, and, when Jack became a director of Wolves, he started to involve Michael in the Club. Michael became both its accountant and a director. Michael played a significant part in rescuing Wolves FC from receivership in 1986. For a period of eight weeks in 1988, he was acting chairman.





Michael Lowe in his full attire as High Sheriff of Shropshire (courtesy of Michael Lowe)

group that set up Shropshire Business Link, and first chairman of this new service from 1993 until 1996.

Commitment to education

In the 1990s Michael's charity work expanded into the area of education. He sat on the steering committee that established the University of Wolverhampton in Shropshire in 1994. He was also chairman of the Shropshire Careers Service around the time of the new millennium and oversaw its transformation into the Connexions service. He went on to become chairman of the local branch of Connexions4Youth in 2006.

In 2001, Michael Lowe appeared in the New Year Honours List. He was awarded a CBE for his outstanding 'service to education, training and business support'.

As a past governor of New College, Wellington, in 1976 Michael became a governor of Telford College of Arts and Technology (TCAT). In 1998 he became both chairman of the Board and chairman of the finance and general purposes committee, posts he still holds today. During this time, TCAT won more Beacon Awards for Excellence than any other college and became one of the best

colleges in the country, possibly the best. It grew fast, and soon became one of the largest FE colleges too. In its 2006 inspection, Ofsted declared that TCAT had achieved Grade One Outstanding in every single category. This was the first time any FE college had achieved such a report, and as a result, in November 2007 it won the prestigious Queen's Award for 'delivering economically important skills on employers' premises'. It came first in the UK for 'Train to Gain'. This was the only honour left for it to achieve.

High Sheriff Awards

Michael served as a Justice of the Peace for over 30 years. He also sat for six years on the advisory committee to the Lord Chancellor. He stepped down as a magistrate to become the High Sheriff of Shropshire for 2005/06. During the 12 months that he held this position, he attended over 300 functions and events across the county of Shropshire.

On becoming the High Sheriff, Michael decided to introduce High Sheriff Citizenship Awards throughout all Shropshire schools. The awards were for young people who had done outstanding work in their communities. The project had a tremendous response and at the end of his year, some 40 outstanding young people from schools across the county received awards. Afterwards, the Community Foundation for Shropshire & Telford, together with Telford College, took over the High Sheriff Awards scheme. Michael is currently the chairman of this local charity, which supports voluntary groups throughout Shropshire and Telford.



Unwavering service to the area

Back in 1963 Michael had become secretary to the Anstice Club in Madeley, one of the oldest working men's clubs in the UK. With over 45 years of service to the Club, he must also be one of the longest serving secretaries for working men's clubs! During this period, the Club generated several hundred thousand pounds and had extensive work carried out on their historic building.

Michael has also maintained a significant interest in the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust since its beginning in 1967. He first became involved as its honorary auditor, then, in 1979, as its treasurer. After a major reorganisation, he became chairman of the finance and general purposes committee, and held this position during a time when the Museum underwent a carefully controlled expansion. The Board invited him to become chairman in 1987 and during his time in this role, the Museum Trust had their World Heritage status confirmed and it became the largest independent museum in the UK. In 2002, the Trust appointed him president.

Michael also became a trustee to the Severn Hospice in 2001. He took up the role of chairman of the finance and general purposes committee and was chairman of the fundraising committee, which raised £5million for the construction of the new hospice, which was built in Telford in 2007.

Amazingly, Michael also found time to be president of the Rotary Club for Ironbridge, chairman of the Board for Telford FM Radio,

chairman of Maxell Educational Trust, president of the Shropshire Society in London and president of the Shropshire Male Voice Choir. In 2002, he was appointed a Deputy Lord Lieutenant for Shropshire. This role was to support the Lord Lieutenant for Shropshire, Algernon Heber-Percy, and to deputise for him when required.

Ambitions for Dawley

In 2006 Dawley Regeneration Partnership formed, and invited Michael to become its chairman. Having worked in the town for over 40 years, he had a real fondness for the place and the people and he immediately accepted. While in this role, Michael has been eager to take a lead in re-establishing a Traders

Michael as president of Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust in conversation with The Queen during a visit to the Iron Bridge (© courtesy of the *Shropshire Star*)





Michael Lowe with pupils Nicola Faulkner and Faye Percival after presenting them with their Good Citizens Awards (© courtesy of the *Shropshire Star*)

Association for Dawley. His ambition is to see the town re-establish itself as a thriving community once more, and for Dawley High Street to be a safe environment after dark where people can stop and look in a shop window without fear of crime or violence. He also strongly believes that, if an Olympic-size pool is to be built in the West Midlands, it should be in Dawley – the birthplace of Matthew Webb, the first man to swim the English Channel unaided (see pages 44–48).

Scaling down

Nowadays, Michael has scaled down his charitable and business activities and spends much of his time playing sport. He still keeps up some auditing and oversees his company. He says that it is good discipline for him to get up in the morning and go to the office.

When asked what he would most like people to remember him for, Michael said that it was when, as High Sheriff of Shropshire, he was able to introduce Citizenship Awards to recognise the good that is done by young people in Shropshire. He feels passionately that the county needs to focus positively on its young people and their achievements. This reveals much about Michael Lowe, a man who has devoted his life to voluntary service for Shropshire, Telford and Dawley.

OPPOSITE: Telford Plaza (© courtesy of Richard Bifield)
INSET: Thomas Telford the great engineer after whom the town was named (© courtesy of Richard Bifield)



A Gigantic Development

The making of one of Britain's
biggest new towns

The Making of the New Town: rising to the challenge of change

By Paul Sherry

Since its earliest origins, the New Town has always prompted robust debate, especially in the older settlements that surround the Wrekin. Various views are held as to whether it should be viewed as a massive land reclamation project and overspill town for Birmingham, a major social engineering project and a futuristic 21st century town, or whether Telford has already created its own history.



Spring in Telford new town (© courtesy of Richard Bifield)

The initial focal point, 'Dawley New Town' as it was first known, was at the centre of the discussions. Councillor George Chetwood (*see pages 65–70*) had lived in the area all his life and had seen for some time the effects of mine workings and the old factories. In 1946 he joined Dawley Urban District Council (UDC) and vowed to get something done about the 'derelict mess'¹ the district had become.

Foundations of the New Town

In the 19th century and with the coming of the Industrial Revolution, Britain had changed from being predominantly rural to mainly urban. Concentrated industrialisation led to overcrowded, insanitary working and living conditions surrounded by scarred and polluted landscapes. Eventually the government responded by producing new Acts for public health, town planning and housing, and The

New Towns Act of 1946. The arrival of these major pieces of legislation stimulated a wave of regeneration and reclamation in the areas that had felt the worst effects of the rapid shift to mechanised production.

The big news for Dawley Urban District came in June 1962 when the Minister of Housing, Dr Charles Hill, announced the government's plan to build a new town in the area, to relieve congestion in Birmingham. He believed that Dawley would be a satisfactory site for the new town, which would ultimately accommodate a population of up to 90,000, of whom he hoped 50,000 would come from Birmingham.

Salop County Council expressed support for the plan, saying it 'welcomed the New Town announcement and although the County would have a lot of expense it would be a good investment in the long run.'²



Why Dawley?

The choice of Dawley as the site for the new town came as no surprise to many locals. As early as 1952 Dawley UDC prepared a scheme to deal with reclamation of 30 acres of pit mounds for housing, but found that the town's financial resources could not stand a project of this scale. Then, in 1955, an article in the *Birmingham Gazette* by the *Wellington Journal* correspondent Mr A.W. Bowdler³ floated the idea that Dawley could help with Birmingham's growing congestion. The article, entitled 'Here's a place for overspill', stated:

'the once famous industrial areas of Shropshire could be brought back into prosperity again, giving great help to the overspill problem.'

Following on from the article, Cllr George Chetwood (by now chairman of Dawley UDC) sent a letter to the Lord Mayor of Birmingham, offering UDC help and support (see page 69). The letter said:

'It should be possible to incorporate a town of more than 100,000 people. The area is sufficiently far from Birmingham to prevent adding to the city's congestion but close enough not to destroy all links with the city.'⁴ Soon afterwards, both parties visited Dawley and Birmingham and a long period of negotiation and technical discussions began.

The Development Corporation

The local council quickly learned that the task of creating the new town was not to be given to locally elected democratic bodies. Instead, as with the first generation of new towns in the South East and elsewhere (Harlow, Stevenage and Crawley), central government appointed a variety of individuals with relevant skills and experience to form a Development Corporation. Some of its members were residents and representatives of the local area. The government commissioned a master plan and the Corporation appointed a team of professional officers, planners, engineers, architects, surveyors and so forth to undertake the works required, in consultation with the local elected authorities.

The government promised massive injections of funding, which would allow the new governing body, the Development Corporation, to change the face of the landscape and the lives of all who lived within it.

The master plan is revealed

On 22 January 1965 the *Dawley Observer* revealed the first master plan for Dawley New Town. The plan took in a huge area of land, stretching from the A5 in the north to the River Severn in the south. With one or two amendments, it is clearly recognisable as part of the



Scoop! Journalist A.W. Bowdler was the first to publish the Dawley new town idea in the *Birmingham Gazette* in 1955 (© courtesy of Dawley History Group)

Dawley New Town draft structure plan (© courtesy of the Homes & Communities Agency)





Thomas Telford's Mark Roundabout
(© courtesy of Richard Bifield)

Telford that we see today. It set out a 'zoned' approach to housing, industry, office and retail, linked by a network of roads. Even in the early years there was criticism of the separation of housing from industry, and therefore jobs, and the difficulties this would cause later on.

The task ahead was a daunting one, even for an organisation as well resourced as the Development Corporation. The challenge would be to overlay the complex infrastructure for a new settlement designed to serve for the next 200 years, onto old communities developed over centuries, which were in progressive decline. The slow, natural almost 'organic' growth of the Dawley area would be stimulated by rapid, centrally planned development.

The local authorities of Dawley, Oakengates, Madeley and Wellington, and subsequently Wrekin Council, were suddenly pitched into discussions at the highest level. Such debate required radical and robust thinking but also the utmost tact and diplomacy. However the town was planned, the impact on their communities – for good or bad – would be significant.

Tensions and fears of the unknown

Visions of the New Town generated ripples of excitement in Dawley. However, in this close-knit traditional mining town, people also had concerns. Locals were worried about seismic changes to living and working patterns that had developed over centuries, and which would now inevitably change forever.

George Chetwood was always an advocate for the community in the sometimes heated discussions with the Development Corporation. At an early stage, he took issue with its housing policy, claiming that it had stifled the council's own development in favour of its own plans. This, he said, had led to many people relocating to Oakengates and Wellington, where the local councils were still able to build new homes without restriction.

Profits and losses

Compulsory purchase of land and property in Dawley and elsewhere brought mixed fortunes. Tenants were paid normal compensation for tenants' rights and disturbance, and some businesses could be



offered discretionary payments of up to two years' profits. Owner-occupiers were paid the vacant possession value of their property and received only legal and removal expenses. Although some people were reasonably satisfied with the terms offered, others were not. They claimed that the compulsory purchase of sound properties as well as slums was forcing relocation, and consequently destroying old, established communities.

As part of the planning process, the Corporation also bought up vast acreages of virgin pasture, open fields, farms and smallholdings in preparation for development. The compulsory purchase arrangements caused lasting resentment. Affected families pointed to the huge profits generated as the Corporation sold land on to developers, and a number of them took their claims to the high court and beyond, to secure a better deal. Any profits helped finance the costs of roads, services and land reclamation.

Old settlements affected

The scale of the New Town's infrastructure – its roads, sewers and industrial and housing estates – left little room for the older settlements, although they were incorporated into the plan wherever possible. *A History of the County of Shropshire* records some of the property that fell within the town's remit. Hinkshay had a 'double row' of 48 back-to-back cottages and a 'single row' of 21 houses, Dark Lane had over 60 cottages in three long terraces and Horsehay's former potteries had been converted into 24 separate dwellings. These communities also contained extensive garden allotments and

The massive scale of change

Vast swathes of derelict land needed to be treated before anyone could even begin to envisage the new town of the future that was to be built in its place. The statistics at the time were quite staggering:

- 5,230 acres of derelict land, scarred by years of intensive mining and industrial activity
- 2,820 acres of land covered by spoil and waste deposits
- 2,957 recorded abandoned mineshafts and adits
- 830 acres of disused quarries and opencast mines
- 120 miles of abandoned canals and railways
- 3,730 acres of underground shallow mineral working
- 7,140 acres affected by past subsidence from abandoned deep mine workings

The scarred landscape had long been a 'playground' for local residents. The pit mounds provided a myriad of hiding places and, in later years, locals would play football and cricket there.





Thomas Telford statue in Telford Square (© courtesy of Richard Bifield)

many rented and unfenced plots. The majority had been cleared away by the mid-1970s.⁵

Inevitably, the impact on some of the established communities was drastic. Some good housing stock as well as substandard was knocked down, and some communities were destroyed completely and families were relocated to unfamiliar areas.

When the hamlet of Dark Lane had to be demolished, the Development Corporation promised its residents better housing nearby, and tried to accommodate them as a community. However, the first 12 families were moved to Oakengates, three miles away. This action worried the people of Old Park, whose land was to be used in a future phase of development. This old community could remember a time when it could support a village school, a chapel and a sprinkling of village shops. The impact of these actions on old established settlements upset many local people.

Right: Telford New Town announcement in the *Shropshire Star* (© courtesy of the *Shropshire Star*)

Inhabitants of the area had not foreseen the social upheaval of New Town planning, and the vision of a 21st century city did not compensate them for their loss. Many people still have vivid memories of the area in former days: the pastures around old Stirchley village, now turned over to housing, education and the Town Park; farmland at Dark Lane and Priorslee replaced with the courts, police station and town-centre shops and cinema; and prime agricultural land at Hortonwood transformed into industrial estates. However, these new features and developments are also revitalising the local economy and providing employment.

The name game

Even during the early planning stages, the name of the new town was already being questioned. As Dawley was the only local authority wholly within the designated New Town boundary, the working name 'Dawley New Town' made great sense. However, in 1968, and despite strong resistance from Dawley Council and local residents, the then Housing Minister, Richard Crossman, changed





the name to Telford when it was decided that the designated area of the new town would be enlarged to incorporate Wellington, Oakengates and open land to the north.

The name 'Wrekin' was also considered, but rejected in favour of the name of the famous engineer, who in 1786 became Shropshire Surveyor of Public Works and who built many local landmarks. Bill Yates, the sitting MP and an ardent supporter of the New Town, memorably declared it would be the 'setting for the second industrial revolution.'⁶

Throughout, the *Dawley Observer* continued to record the thoughts of the few individuals who were convinced that Dawley could be restored to its former industrial greatness.

The New Town grows

Phase One of Telford New Town Centre opened in 1973, followed eight years later by Phase Two, which introduced a wider range of shopping facilities. In 1983 the town's communications were transformed with the building of the M54, linking it to the M6.

The Development Corporation knew that, if it was to achieve its aim of creating a self-contained, balanced community, it would need to broaden its economic base. This would guard against major structural unemployment if one or two sectors of the economy were to go down. As a location for new investors, Telford could now offer financial incentives, development land, a skilled labour force, a good road system and a 'forest city' environment – all in a rural setting.

Telford timeline

1955	Bowdler article published in <i>Birmingham Gazette</i> suggesting a new town in the Dawley area
1962	Government announces plan to build a New Town in the area
1965	The master plan is revealed
1968	The name of Telford is chosen
1973	Phase One of Telford Town Centre opens
1981	Phase Two of Telford Town Centre opens
1983	M54 is linked to the M6
1986	Telford railway station opens
1987	Phase Three of Telford Town Centre opens, including a major Marks & Spencer store
1989	Telford's Princess Royal Hospital opens
1990	Telford campus of Wolverhampton Polytechnic opens

The big breakthrough for the town came with the attraction of its first Japanese company, Maxell, in 1983. A further 130 overseas companies quickly followed. Thereafter a number of key events really put Telford on the map. In 1986 the railway station opened, followed a year later by a large Marks & Spencer store as part of Phase Three of the Town Centre. The town centre is still growing. Telford Hospital opened in 1989 and in 1990 the Telford campus of Wolverhampton Polytechnic was established, now the University of Wolverhampton.

Loss or gain for Dawley?

So, has the reality matched the vision? Has the New Town delivered all that the government promised? It may be too early to answer these questions – after all, Telford has not yet reached its half-century. In a constantly evolving environment, perhaps people need a longer perspective, maybe a hundred years or more.

To an extent, the creation of the new town has affected the fortunes of all of its borough towns – Wellington, Ironbridge, Madeley, Oakengates and Dawley. However, as the closest to Telford's shopping centre, has Dawley suffered most?

To answer this, one has to look at the bigger, national picture. Throughout the country, a great many market towns have seen a steady demise over recent years, caused largely by changing lifestyles, the popularity of out-

of-town stores and, more recently, internet shopping. Traditional high street shopping may never return, to Dawley or the country as a whole.

In time, Dawley may indeed reap commercial benefits that come with proximity to this major regional shopping centre. It is already beginning to use the treasures of its past to position itself in a new market. Dawley has much to offer as an older community with a rich heritage of mining and traditional industry – all within walking distance of Telford Town Centre.

Dawley is entering a new era. Within the next 50 years its dynamic industrial legacy could become the foundation for a new vision for the area. Such a remarkable heritage has the potential to transform its fortunes.

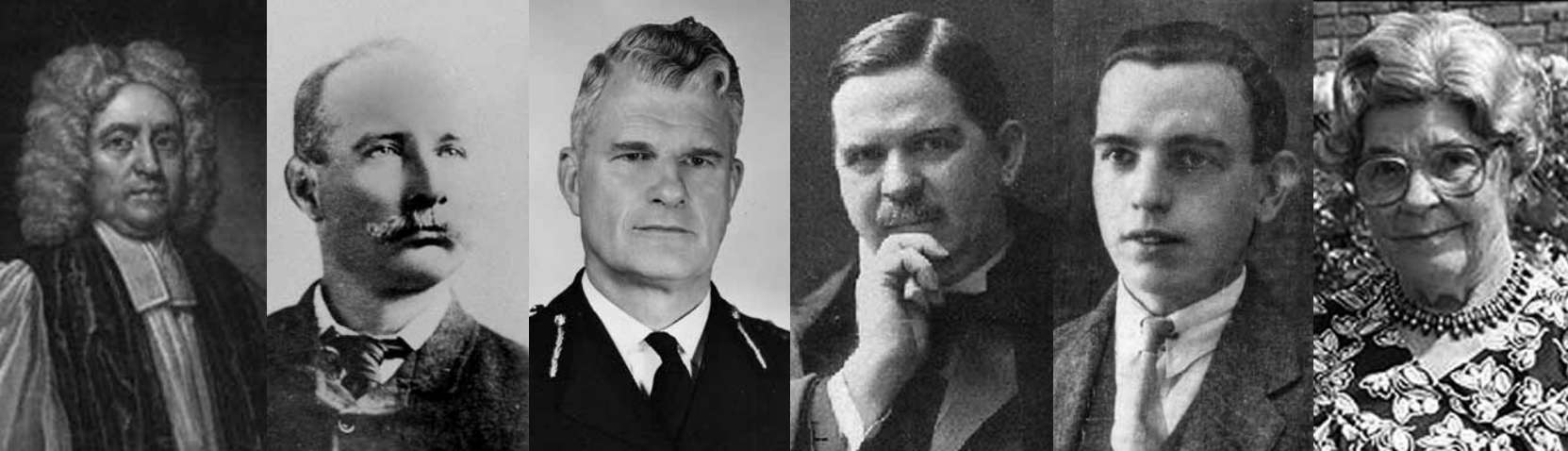
Looking ahead just a few decades, perhaps Dawley will have come full circle.

Notes

- 1 Cllr George Chetwood, 1946, quoted in the *Dawley Observer*, c.1973
- 2 Mr G.C. Godber, Clerk to Shropshire County Council. June 1962, *Wellington Journal & Shropshire News*
- 3 Mr A.W. Bowdler, originally printed in the *Birmingham Gazette*, Feb 1955, quoted in the *Wellington Journal & Shrewsbury News*, June 1962
- 4 Mr Charles Savage, Dawley Surveyor. Letter to the *Birmingham Gazette*, Dec 1955, printed in the *Wellington Journal & Shrewsbury News*, June 1962
- 5 'Dawley: Growth of settlement' in *A History of the County of Shropshire*, Vol 11 Telford (1985)
- 6 Mr Bill Yates MP. June 1962, *Wellington Journal & Shrewsbury News*

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- Baugh, G.C. (1985) *Victoria County History: Shropshire*, Vol. 11
- De Soissons, M. (1991) *Telford, The Making of Shropshire's New Town*. Shrewsbury: Swan Hill Press



“All communities have their local heroes, events and places of importance and in Dawley the roll call is an exceptional one. This excellent book is a celebration of all that makes Dawley such a distinctive town.”

Sir Neil Cossons

www.dawleyheritage.co.uk



Front cover photographs:

LEFT: Dawley Demonstration Day 1951; an annual event to celebrate religious faith (© courtesy of Graham Williams)

RIGHT: Bob Wallace and Edgar Rodgers either side of a hook pattern at Horsehay Works (© courtesy of Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust)

Photographs above, from left to right:

Bishop Samuel Peploe, Captain Matthew Webb, Sir Joseph Simpson, The Rev Samuel Parkes Cadman, Cllr George Chetwood, Edith Pargeter OBE