



FRODSHAM AND DISTRICT HISTORY SOCIETY

JOURNAL



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Journal of
FRODSHAM AND DISTRICT HISTORY SOCIETY
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We are very grateful to Heather, a member of our society, who is employed by Cheshire Archives and Local Studies (CALS). Heather has very speedily met our requests for electronic copies of FD and FDN images now displayed on the Cheshire Image Bank and needed to illustrate and enhance articles in this year's journal.

Front cover picture

Frodsham Parish Church, St Laurence, as seen from Churchfields.

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

Officers: Sue Lorimer, Chairman; Kath Gee, Hon. Secretary; Peter Connor, Hon. Treasurer.

Committee: Gill Baxter, Archivist; Fiona Barry, Archive Project Manager; Fran Miller & John Davies, Programme Secretaries; Margaret Dodd, Membership Secretary; Kate Birkenhead; David Fletcher; Peter Rolfe; Frank Whitfield.

The D-Day commemorations and researching for the Memorial Project at St. Laurence Church this year has made me reflect and appreciate the contributions made by those who have gone before.

This year we lost three of our longstanding members, Philip Ashworth, Pat Holder, and Val Salisbury. All had been members for many years and until recently had regularly attended the monthly meetings. Philip was one of the few who braved the rain to attend last year's Lost Pub Walk. Val's expertise was 19th century history and she gave a presentation of her research on Elizabeth Gaskell in February 2017.

In July, we learnt of the death of the Society's former Hon. Secretary and prolific author, Arthur Smith, whose books were an invaluable source of reference for the Memorial Project. Kath has compiled a tribute to him using memories sent in by our present members.

Enough retrospection; as a society we must look to the future, to protect our local heritage and to attract new members. The theme for this year's CLHA History Day was 'The Future of Cheshire's Past' and the focus of our society's display was 'Education, Education, Education.' This year we have been out in our community, spreading the word, more than usual. See 'Out and About.'

Continuing the education theme, we have submitted our initial selection of 'Gems' from our archives for Cheshire Archive's, 'a story shared project' which is on schedule to be launched in Spring 2025. For more information about this exciting project visit www.cheshirestoryshared.org

The 'Open House' event at St. Laurence Church, in June, was a great success and attracted a few new members. However, people felt that there was a little too much information to absorb on the day. Thanks to a grant from EET Fuels, '100 Grants for a 100 years', to celebrate Stanlow's 100th Anniversary, we have been able to produce a booklet showcasing the Memorials.

The grant will be sufficient to update and reprint 'Frodsham in the War Years' in 2025. This will be next year's big project, so be prepared.

This year we have had contributions to the Journal from one remote member, who lives in East Sussex and another from a supporter in Australia. It is amazing how far the 'district' in Frodsham and District History Society, stretches!

Sue Lorimer

IN MEMORY OF ARTHUR R. SMITH, A FOUNDER MEMBER OF F&DHS

Kath Gee

Image: Arthur celebrating the 30th Anniversary of F&DHS, 3rd October 2011.

Arthur was the first Honorary Secretary of the Frodsham & District Local History Group when it was established in 1981. I first got to know Arthur when I joined the society in 2007. Sheila Holroyd and I became assistant Journal editors to Arthur in 2009. The 3 of us produced the next 4 journals (2010 -2013), then Arthur and Kay moved to Dorset to be near their daughter and family.



When Arthur retired from school-teaching in 1990, he devoted much of his time to Frodsham local history research and publications. In pursuing these wide-ranging activities, he was honest, thorough and compassionate in his portrayal of events and people. He was liked and well-respected by those that knew him, as shown by the tributes I have received since announcing his death to the current members of History Society.

One of the first & oldest memory came from 'Ruth', now Mrs Wales, who said:

"Mr Smith was my History teacher when I was a pupil at Wade Deacon High School in Widnes. We were midway through studying for our O levels when we'd suddenly been thrust into our new comprehensive, and taught by many unfamiliar teachers. Poor Mr Smith had the daunting task of taking on a bunch of grammar school girls who thought all the best teachers had gone to the 6th form college in Cronton. I don't think it was an easy task for him!

Mr Smith was taking us for Social and Economic History. He took us on several trips to local mills and industries connected with this subject, and brought to life this fascinating period of history. He showed us how the progress made in our little northern towns of England reached the corners of the world, and still influences our lives today.

Thank you, Mr Smith, your portrayal and enthusiasm for this subject to a bunch of 15-year-old girls has stayed with me and ignited a lifelong interest in history."

I received a second tribute from Fiona Barry, our current Archive Project Manager:

"On moving up to Frodsham at Christmas 1985, I found a leaflet inviting people to join a group to research the history of Frodsham. A group of twelve of us worked on that project through 1986 and 1987 to when the book was published. This is where I met Arthur. We worked on allocated chapters separately, but had meetings where we would be informed about progress and deadlines from our editor, Mr Frank Latham, who eventually published more than a dozen books on the histories of Cheshire villages using the same format, and working with local people.

Arthur was a major contributor to the Journal, continuing even after he and his wife Kay left Frodsham to live closer to their family. During this time, I also saw Arthur at History Group meetings, but the demands of my work and then eventually a family too, meant that my membership lapsed. Nevertheless, I was on Arthur's mailing list, meaning that every time he published a book, he would call round with a copy for me ready to purchase, over a cup of tea!

I remember Arthur for his kindness, his energy and enthusiasm, and also the fact that he always gave very considered responses to my many questions. Thanks to Arthur and other founder members, a lot of valuable material was recorded at a time when local history wasn't such a popular subject. His natural curiosity drove him to find out more about the history of the town, and then write it up for others to enjoy. Recently, while researching Vicar Cotton for an enquiry, I went to Chester Record Office and spent a morning reading through his notes for his book. His writing was very distinctive, and it was lovely to see it again, taking me back more than 35 years to our research together."

A further tribute came in from Judith Shore whose first memory of meeting Arthur dates back to 1992:

"I asked if he would sign his newly published book on '*The 'Schools' at Overton*'. This copy is now in New South Wales, Australia, with Rob Savage, grandson of Herbert Savage and his brothers who attended this school".

At the time that Judith's mother, Beb Savage, died in 1991, Beb and Arthur were staunch supporters of Castle Park Arts Centre. Beb had just completed a long-planned Arts Centre exhibition, '*My Work and my Pleasure*' (in china painting).

"I was there at the time it was being dismantled, Arthur very kindly discussed his memories of my mum, Beb, with me".

Kath Hewitt, History Society's first Archivist wrote:

"I knew Arthur for almost 30 years from when I joined the History Society and then as a committee member, meeting him when a few of us had to move all the documents and artefacts stored in the dark and damp cellars of Castle Park House. Eventually everything was moved into a space in Castle Park House attic where Arthur made good use of the growing archives, as well as contributing so much.

I soon found that he was someone I could discuss things with and exchange information.

When he decided to move to Dorset, he asked if I would take the few things he had left at home. He really meant everything he had collected and worked on for 30 or 40 years. I said of course I would.

He had a way of researching local unknown facts - although to see the mass of paper on his dining room table each time I went there, I did wonder how he managed to find anything. Kay was so patient with him, quietly getting on with everything.

Then the boxes began to arrive - 'Just one more, Kath' - I heard for weeks. My back kitchen was full so I drove down to CPH many times with a car full of boxes - then more and more...

It took me a year to read and catalogue everything he brought. Kay was very pleased to see her dining room once more.

One very thick file about W.C. Cotton, M.A. vicar of St Laurence (1857-79), and his introduction of bees to New Zealand, was very interesting to read and was the reason why the bee became Frodsham's symbol. Arthur's research was so detailed that I felt it was too important to keep in our archives. I contacted Chester Record Office and they were happy to have Arthur's whole file, which would become a very useful resource for future articles & books.

Many friends will be contributing to Arthur's memory, so much more to tell, but enough is enough".

A fifth and very different memory arrived on my desk from my friends, Diane and Eric Hodgson. They wrote:

"We got to know Arthur back in 2006. He had just published a book: *William Charles Cotton 1813-1879 Priest, Missionary and Bee Master - a turbulent life*.

Arthur somehow discovered we had a holiday planned to New Zealand early in 2007. So, he invited us to his Frodsham home with his lovely wife, Kay, to request we hand-deliver a signed copy of this book to the Bishop of Auckland! I seem to recall they had corresponded and shared some of their research. It meant we actually had a very interesting personal tour, accompanied by the Bishop of Auckland, to some of the places referenced in Arthur's book.

Arthur was a great local history enthusiast and he shared numerous interesting stories when he realised I had family roots in Frodsham. Sadly, we lost touch but still have fond memories. Please pass our sympathy on to Kay and his family".

And finally, a brief thought from our book-selling member, Ken Stanley:

"I have read many articles by Arthur, it is such a sad loss to his family and to Frodsham with his inexhaustible knowledge. I hope the History Society will do a special supplement on him in the next journal, and all he did for the town".

Ken, I hope this short article shows how much respect members still have for Arthur. Rest in peace.

Key publications by Arthur Smith

A R Smith ed (1985) *Discovering Old Frodsham*

A R Smith (1991) *Discovering Mersey View, Frodsham*

A R Smith (1992) *The 'Schools' at Overton*

A R Smith (1994) *Discovering Frodsham's Old Schools*

A R Smith (1998) *Happy Days? The Story of Frodsham Girls' School, 1835-1941*

A R Smith (2001) *From Battlefield to Blighty; Frodsham Auxiliary Military Hospital 1915-1919*

A R Smith (2006) *William Charles Cotton MA 1813-1879 Priest, Missionary and Bee Master A turbulent life*

A R Smith (2012) *Brief Lives Notable People of Frodsham in the Past*

A R Smith (2015 edition) *From Battlefield to Blighty*

NEWLANDS AND THE GREENING FAMILY IN FRODSHAM

Sue Lorimer with additional information from Elsie Greening's goddaughter

Newlands Close, off Manley Road, was built on the site of a magnificent house, in beautiful grounds of over 3 acres. 'Newlands', built in the 1890s, was the home of Nathaniel and Elizabeth Greening.

The name, Greening, is synonymous with wire working in the Warrington area N. Greening and Sons was the oldest wire drawing firm in Warrington, having been established in 1799 by Nathaniel Greening. He had been poached from Tintern Abbey Wire Works, by Captain Ainsworth, a copper smelter, who had wanted to start his own wire works in Warrington. Ainsworth ran out of money and Nathaniel teamed up with John Rylands, whose father was a local sailmaker. That partnership lasted until 1843 when Nathaniel Greening set up on his own.



Nathaniel was born in 1780, in Gloucestershire. His father, Benjamin, was a long case clockmaker and an itinerant non-conformist preacher.

Nathaniel did not follow his father and brothers into the clockmaking trade, but went to work at the local Fromebridge Company Wire Mill, later moving to Tintern Abbey Wire Works, and from

there to Warrington.

Nathaniel married twice and had 8 sons and 5 daughters, some baptised in the Wesleyan Methodist Church. George, his firstborn, became a printer, bookseller, and auctioneer in Frodsham. George auctioned many properties in the Frodsham area in the 1840s, notably the Salt Works in 1846

The Tithe Map of 1846 shows George Greening renting a house on The Rock, from Richard Warburton, a baker, living in Liverpool. Richard had inherited property on The Rock from his father, William Warburton, of Frodsham. This property was later rented by Samuel Walker, a printer and stationer, who ran his business there from the mid-1850s to his retirement in 1892. In 1883, Samuel bought the property following the death of Richard Warburton, and he sold it and 6 cottages to Charles Linaker in 1892. The property for sale was described as a 'commodious dwelling house, shop, printing office and large garden'. The house, now known as 'Press Cottage' 38 The Rock, was probably the shop and office. The dwelling house would have been next door, 40 The Rock. The printing business was taken over by Osmond Kemp who ran it until his death in 1940.



Press Cottage on the right

George Greening also married twice and had a large family of eleven. Two of his sons became printers, one in Liverpool and one in Bradford. Nathaniel, his son who remained in Frodsham, did not continue the business on his father's death in 1851, but joined the family business in Warrington, becoming a wire worker.

Nathaniel Greening, founder of the Warrington company, retired in 1851, when N. Greening & Sons was the largest and best-known maker of wire-screening in the world.

Nathaniel left the company to his sons, Timothy, Noah, and John. Timothy soon left to start his own business, and in 1857 emigrated to Ontario, Canada, with his family, his sister Hannah and his half-brother Benjamin. Their sister Susannah, was already established in Canada with her family and had sold them the dream of a new life. After surviving a shipwreck en route, the brothers had hoped to retire in Canada. Instead, they formed a new wire working company, initially as partners, until a falling out led to separate companies being established. Other siblings, Nathaniel and Sarah, and their widowed mother, Mary, followed them to Canada. There are now Greenings all over Canada, USA, and Australia.

Timothy's departure left N Greening and Sons in the control of Noah and John. They both retired in 1878 and the management passed to their respective sons, Linnaeus and Nathaniel. Although, when N. Greening & Sons became a limited company in 1883, John returned to become the Chairman until his death in 1890.



This is where Frodsham comes back into the picture. Nathaniel born 1852, married Elizabeth Grime, in June 1881. Elizabeth was the daughter of Thomas Grime, a master draper, whose business premises were on Bridge Street, Warrington, (later the original site of Hancock and Wood, established in 1914). About 1894, Thomas Grime built the house 'Clifton' on Vicarage Lane, Helsby, (left), where he lived until his death in 1914, at the age of 85.

Nathaniel and Elizabeth Greening lived in Thelwall for several years, where their three children were born. About 1890, the family moved to Museum Street, Warrington before moving to 'Newlands' in 1894. 'Newlands' was a modern house, which even had electricity installed in 1900. It is sad that we cannot find any photographs of the house to date.

Nathaniel was Company Chairman 1890-1895. He was heavily involved in the production side, overseeing the building of new premises in Bewsey, Warrington, and steering the company through the problems caused by shortages during the Boar War. His cousin, Linnaeus, concentrated on the business side and had wide interests that will be mentioned later. In his free time, Nathaniel's only passion was for cycling. He even undertook a cycling holiday on the continent, but it does not appear that Elizabeth shared his hobby. She was a supporter of St Laurence Church and contributed to a recipe book published to raise funds for the church, a copy of which is held in the archives.

The family thrived until 1904 when Lucy, their middle child, died. Her elder sister, Elizabeth, went on to marry Warrington Yorke, Professor of Tropical Medicine at Liverpool University in 1916. They were married by the groom's father Rev Henry Lefroy Yorke a Wesleyan Methodist minister. Warrington was to become chairman of Greenings from 1930-1943.

Nathaniel and Elizabeth's son, Nathaniel, known as Jack, born in 1889, married Elsie Brotherton in August 1917 at St Paul's Church, Helsby. Elsie was the daughter of John Brotherton J P, manager of British Insulated and Helsby Cables (BICC), who lived at 'Elm Cottage,' Alvanley Road, Helsby.

Image (right) from a postcard c.1909 from Jane Arnold.



Jack and Elsie lived at 'Beechfield', Chester Road, Helsby, until they moved to 'Newlands' following the deaths of Nathaniel and Elizabeth Greening in 1930.

Nathaniel (Jack) was elected to the Board of Directors in 1928 and was Assistant Managing Director when he died on the 31st December 1949. He obviously was on good terms with his staff as he left money to a number of his employees and former employees.

Elsie continued to live at 'Newlands' until 1962 when the house, at that time, converted into 3 flats, was sold. It remained as flats until the late 1970s, when the house was sadly demolished to make way for a small housing development. Elsie moved first to 'Hill Rise', Carriage Drive, and later to Springbourne, off Bradley Lane, Frodsham, where she died on the 3rd January 1974.

Jack and Elsie did not have children. Jack enjoyed cricket and, in his youth, played for Frodsham Cricket Club. Elsie had always involved herself in the community. During WW1 she worked as a nurse at the Auxiliary Military Hospital in Helsby. She later became a State Enrolled Nurse, working at Crossley Hospital and Widnes Hospital. She became the local Commandant for the British Red Cross and was an ambulance driver with the ARP during WW2. In fact, Elsie was a member of the Advanced School of Motoring. She had a passion for E-type Jaguars and had owned several. Jack had specifically left all his cars to her in his will. In her later years, Tom Savage acted as her gardener cum chauffeur.

Elsie was a member of Frodsham Parish Church, and a generous benefactor. She was a leader of the Women's Fellowship and a member of the Parochial Church Council. In 1960, she produced a guide to St Laurence Church in the form of a small booklet to help visitors understand a little about the church.

At the Dissolution of the Monasteries, the rectory and tithes of Frodsham were conferred upon the Dean and Chapter of Christ Church, Oxford. From that time therefore, Frodsham became a Vicarage. In Ormerod's History of Cheshire, Vol. 11, first mention of the change in Patron occurs in 1547, as: 'Ric Cox, Dean and Chap. xt Ch. Oxon'.¹² A Record of the Rectors and Vicars of Frodsham since 1209 may be seen on the North wall, near to the Porch.

(E. Greening, 28th February, 1960).

¹² Ormerod.



Elsie had a lifelong interest in Guiding, starting a Ranger Company in Helsby in the 1920's and becoming both District Commissioner and President of the Girl Guide Association in the Frodsham area. In March 1944, following a meeting at the Bourne Methodist school room in Main Street, and under the chairmanship of Mrs. Greening, Frodsham Townswomen's Guild was formed. Elsie also held the position of President and was a Federation delegate.



Mrs. Greening as Mrs. Twine, with black shawl.

Chester Chronicle 6th December 1936

Elsie was a keen member of Frodsham and District Music and Arts Society and had been a member of Helsby Players. She appeared in their adaptation of Ben Traver's farce, Rookery Nook, at the British Insulated and Helsby Cables Recreation Hall in 1936.

Helsby Players started life in the 1920s as Helsby Dramatic Society, a section of the BICC Sports and Social Club, with productions staged in the Recreation Hall. When the hall was sold for redevelopment in 1987, they changed their name to New Venture Theatre and moved to the new HQ of 1st Helsby Scout Group on Lower Robin Hood Lane. The Players folded soon after that, only to be revived in 2022 by Michael Mills, former vicar of St Laurence.

Another of Elsie's passions was ice skating. She was frequently seen ice dancing with Rev. Green on Crommere Lake, accompanied by music from a wind-up gramophone. Her ice skates are now held in FDHS artifacts collection.

Mrs. Elsie Greening was indeed a remarkable woman. Sadly, despite being such a prominent figure in the community, we were unable to find any good photos of her. The one reproduced right, is from the Runcorn Guardian, August 1967, when Mrs. Greening was featured as 'Woman of the Week'



Mrs E. Greening.

Elsie Greening was well known in Frodsham, but other members of the Greening family gained national / international fame. Edward Owen Greening, born 1836 in Warrington, was the son of Benjamin, who emigrated to Canada. Edward did not go with his father and became a leading light in the Cooperative Movement. He was a radical activist, supporting such causes as temperance, trade unionism, education, and anti-slavery.

His cousin, Linnaeus, previously mentioned, born 1855 in Warrington, was the son of Noah. Both Noah and his father, Nathaniel, were keen naturalists and Linnaeus was named after the 18th century Swedish biologist, Carl Linnaeus, who developed the modern system of naming organisms. In the 1880s, Linnaeus Greening visited Charles Darwin to discuss evolution and natural selection. Linnaeus served for 47 years on the Warrington Museum Committee and was Honorary Curator of Ornithology. He was internationally famous for his work on reptiles and frogs and had a venomous Brazilian frog named after him: *Corythomantis greening*, Greening's Frog, thankfully not native to Frodsham.

The Image below by Carlos Jared, Butantan Institute.



The Greening family's interest in Natural History started, with Nathaniel way back in the early 19th century. He was interested in taxidermy and examples of his work on birds sent by his father from The Forest of Dean, were displayed in Nathaniel's own 'Museum of Curiosities', in an upper room in Buttermarket Street, Warrington. Nathaniel's brothers, Benjamin and Timothy, formed Warrington Natural History Society, in 1838.

George Greening of Frodsham and his brother, Benjamin, donated specimens to the Warrington Natural History Society in 1840. The Society opened its own museum in 1842 and soon acquired the contents of the 'Museum of Curiosities'. Warrington Council, with its powers under the Museums Act of 1845 opened Warrington Museum and Library in 1848, followed by a new building opened c 1860.

The art of taxidermy, somewhat frowned upon today, appears to have been a Greening family obsession. In 1925, Mary Greening, born 1855, daughter of John, donated to Warrington Museum a stuffed sparrow, 'preserved' by her father in 1854.

Following a disastrous strike in 1983, Greenings, the longest established wire company in Warrington, was split and sold off in 1986. The factory chimney on Bewsey Road was demolished by Fred Dibnah in the late 1990s.

Wire drawing companies like Greenings, Rylands, Lockers, and Whitecross were major industries in Warrington, leading to the rugby league team, Warrington Wolves, being nicknamed 'The Wires'.

Many of Warrington's leading industrialists made their homes in Frodsham. As well as Greenings, there were the Stubs, tool makers, Crosfields, soap makers, Reynolds, and Mortimer, tanners. Most contributed to Frodsham society, but none could have influenced everyday life in Frodsham more than Mrs. Elsie Greening.

THE MYSTERY OF THE SILVERWARE FROM SIERRA LEONE

Fiona Barry

In November 2023, Bishop Babatunde C. Akinpelu Johnson ('Tunde' for short), Bishop of the Diocese of Lagos Mainland in the Church of Nigeria, visited Frodsham, bringing with him a silver chalice and paten which had been presented to his great-great uncle, Revd. Henry Johnson 150 years earlier. He asked, when was this given, and why?



Image kindly provided by Bishop Tunde

The inscription at the base of the chalice reads '*The Revd. Henry Johnson on his return to Africa from the Vicar and other friends at Frodsham*'.

Who was **Henry Johnson**? He was a tutor in the Grammar School at Freetown from about 1857, and after the death of his parents was brought from Sierra Leone to London in 1865 by the Church Missionary Society (CMS), to train for the ministry. He was ordained by Bishop Anderson as a deacon on 23 December 1866, and ordained as a priest by the Bishop of London a year later. In 1869 he returned to West Africa to translate native languages, and later would be awarded an honorary M.A. by the University of Cambridge for his work. In March 1873 he returned to England, and in December he travelled to Egypt and then Palestine where he learned Arabic. He visited Ibadan (Yoruba Country - now part of modern day Nigeria) before returning to England from Jaffa in April 1876, and in January 1877 went to Lagos, Nigeria, to become Pastor of St Paul's Church, Breadfruit. In 1881 he was transferred to the Niger Mission and was made Archdeacon of the Upper Niger, until 1890 when the mission was disrupted and he returned to Sierra Leone to serve in some parishes until his death in 1901.

What brought Reverend Johnson north to Frodsham? A search of national newspapers online shows that he was a travelling preacher, and that the money given at the services he attended was mostly donated to the CMS. In July 1867, he spoke at Langport, and in November he preached to Faversham in East Kent. In June 1868 he preached about the customs of Sierra Leone to the Church Missionary Association at Penge, and in August he preached in Halstead Church near Maidstone. In May 1869 he spoke at Cambridge, and in October 1876 he spoke about the success of the missionary work in Sierra Leone to the Southampton branch of the CMS. Not suprisingly, the majority of his preaching was in the south, however the Chester Chronicle reported on 20 June 1868 that he had preached both morning and afternoon sermons at St Laurence Church, saying

"Both sermons were eloquently delivered...the collections were greater than usual, the amount for both services being £14 2 shillings". He stayed in Frodsham overnight, attending the missionary society meeting where the feature stated that

"The meeting was numerously attended".

A visit to Cheshire Record Office threw more light on his work, as a volume of the sermons preached at St Laurence (ref P8/2619/7/1) shows not only the dates that he preached but also the title of the sermon. As well as his visit on June 14th 1868, he returned on 14 November 1869 to preach in the morning on 'The fruits of righteousness' and later that day on 'The presence of God with his people'.

THE WHEELWRIGHT AND THE WHEELWRIGHT ARMS, ELTON

Stuart Jepson

This article looks at the role of the village wheelwright from the middle of the 18th century to the middle of the 19th century, and the history of the Wheelwright Arms, Elton, with additional material contributed by Sean Crosswaite, whose family became the owners of the Wheelwright Arms in the mid-1990s.

The wheelwrights' trade

The method of making wheels for drawn vehicles has essentially changed little in 4,000 years, and the "art and mystery" of this craft is amongst the oldest known to man.

However, with the development of bicycles and later the motor car, the requirement for individually made wheels gradually reduced, and not only did the craft itself rapidly diminish, but also its language fell out of use.

To make a wheel it is essential first to construct the hub (known as 'the nave'), the spokes and the rim or 'felloe' segments (pronounced 'fellies') follow. These are assembled into a unit by working from the centre of the wheel outwards. Originally all wheels were made from wood, but over many centuries they evolved to be 'straked' with iron plates, to protect the 'felloes' against wear and to help bind the wheel together.

Over time the overall appearance of the wheel had barely changed, but subtle changes to the design such as "dishing" and "staggering" made a massive improvement to the strength of the wheel whilst reducing its weight; hence carts and wagons then became far more efficient to both build and use.



In 1630, the leading wheelwrights and coachmakers petitioned to become a company, finally being incorporated as the "Worshipful Company of Wheelwrights" in 1670, one of the Livery Companies of the City of London.

Up until the arrival of mechanisation in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, many villages provided sufficient work justifying the employment of a locally based wheelwright.

Locally, demand amongst the farming community and activity along the southern side of the Rivers Mersey and Weaver was buoyant with the need for materials and labour

supporting the local boat and ship building industries. In 19th century trade directories, such as Bagshaw's and Pigot's, wheelwrights are listed for local villages.

Wheelwrights and the Wheelwright Arms, Elton

During the reign of King Charles 1st (1625-49), Elton village boasted two alehouses, both long disappeared. However, one establishment today honours the craft of the wheelwright, the Wheelwright Arms, which as far as can be determined is the only public house of that name in Cheshire.

Adjacent to the Wheelwright Arms stands Laurel Farm, dating from 1705, bearing the initials J and M Wright and a later date of 1724 and the name, John Wright. It is not exactly certain when the Wheelwright Arms was built, however it is likely that it would have first been a

wheelwright's shop dating from a similar period. The Wrights were a long-established family in the area, owning land in Elton, Hapsford and Ince.

According to Sean, there may be a connection between the two properties. What is certain is that another John Wright became licensee of the pub in 1888 and worked there with his wife Elizabeth until 1898. This John was likely to have been a descendant of the other.

The earlier John Wright purchased the lease to the Grange of Whalley Abbey (previously known as Stanlaw Abbey) from its then owner Sir Francis Poole, who had been advised that the river had encroached on the land impacting the viability of its corn and cheese production. Unperturbed by this, it was here around 1745 that John Wright built a farm, Stanlaw House, and various dwellings for his two sons, Thomas and John and his daughter, Mary.



Stanlaw House, *courtesy of EPF&LHS*

Descendants of the family would continue to live at Stanlaw. The name means “stone hill” in Old English, and was inadvertently changed to ‘Stanlow’ in Victorian times. From 1903 John Wright, the former landlord of the Wheelwright Arms, lived at the farm until his death in 1939. In 1924, a compulsory purchase order was placed on land to enable Shell to build a small bitumen plant.

In the early 1840s William Littler, wheelwright in the village of Tarvin, lived with his wife Margaret, and their two sons Samuel, born in 1742, and Richard born in 1749. Samuel, who had been an apprentice to his father, moved to the village of Elton. In January 1766 he married Mary, the youngest daughter of local tenant farmer Edward Clough and his wife Elizabeth Bennett. The marriage took place at St. Mary's Church in Thornton-le-Moors. Samuel and Mary assumed occupancy of the wheelwright's shop and land at its rear for tenant farming, where they raised their seven children.

Despite demand for their work many craftsmen would have had a second string to their bow, working sometimes as innkeepers. At some point, Samuel and Mary had taken up the brewing of ale and beer. Since the days of King Richard II in 1393 it had been a legal requirement to advertise that alcohol was sold at the premises by means of a hanging sign outside. Originally the innkeeper would hang a branch of hops cut at the same time as the ale was brewed, so that locals could assess its freshness. A sign outside the wheelwright's shop advertised the nature of Samuel's business, and that ale was sold.



Wheelwright Arms sign by *Lauren Smith*



Wheelwright Arms by Lauren Smith

A licensing system for public drinking places in both England and Wales had existed since as early as the 16th century. By a statute of 1552, keepers of 'ale houses' and 'tippling houses' had to obtain a licence from the local magistrate who had wide-ranging powers to grant and, more importantly, revoke licences, so by 1797 Samuel Littler became the first licensed seller of ale and beer at the Wheelwright Arms.

When Samuel Littler died in 1808, none of his sons wanted to take over as wheelwright. Edward and Samuel had become butchers, Richard was a tailor and Joseph, the youngest, trained as a shoemaker. It is thought that local man James Fletcher took on the business in different premises. James Fletcher and his wife Ann Bradshaw had two sons Richard and John, who both served apprenticeships as wheelwrights with their father. Richard became the wheelwright in Overton, Frodsham, and John started a business as wheelwright, joiners and undertakers in Helsby which operated into the mid-20th century.

Isaac Dalton, having married Sarah Ellams, succeeded James Fletcher as the wheelwright of Elton. In 1840 Sarah's sister Anne Fletcher, wife of Richard, died in childbirth, and her baby Sarah was taken to live in Elton with Isaac and Sarah. The 1841 census for Elton shows Isaac as a wheelwright, living with his wife, Sarah, their one-year-old niece Sarah Fletcher, and also Isaac's assistant William Roberts, a wheelwright joiner. In the 1851 census Isaac's business was doing well, and he employed an apprentice and two additional wheelwrights but within the following decade he had moved on and taken over a farm at Great Sutton. The village of Elton was without a wheelwright until the early 1860s when George Lloyd moved his business from Thornton to Elton. The business started off small but by 1881 his son Joseph had joined him as a wheelwright. By 1901 Joseph was living at Thornton-le-Moors as a farmer, but at some point, the wheelwright's business returned to the Fletcher family, descendants of the original James Fletcher, who had died in 1855. In the Chester Chronicle of 7th December 1957, the will of John Fletcher was published, former wheelwright and smith of Elton, who lived at the Smithy, Elton Green.

Returning to the Wheelwright Arms, Samuel Littler's widow Mary continued to run the pub under her husband's licence until it was issued in her own name in 1815. After Mary's death in 1822 their youngest son Joseph, having completed his apprenticeship as a shoemaker, became the licensee in the following year. Joseph would run the Wheelwright Arms for another thirty-seven years until his retirement in 1860. The 1851 census shows that Joseph's daughters Mary and Elizabeth were working as waiters, serving food. The pub may have provided accommodation as it was en route to Ince, where there was a ferry service across to Liverpool.

In 1860 Joseph Littler retired with no son to take over at the Wheelwright Arms and so Thomas Littler, a cousin, took over as licensee. Thomas served as licensee at least until 1865 but there is some uncertainty as to exactly what happened next. In 1871 Thomas Ellams, nephew of Sarah Dalton, took on the license for the Wheelwright Arms, and he and his wife Jane were living in the pub on the 1871 census. He remained licensee until the late 1870s when he was succeeded by Thomas Lloyd, who became licensee in 1881.

As previously mentioned, John Wright, who was born in Kingsley in 1847, became licensee in 1885, which he continued as until 1898. He was also a farmer and in 1893 one of his cows gave birth to a calf with two tails, which sensation was reported in the Cheshire Observer!



The Wheelwright Arms during much of the 20th century was under the ownership of the Birkenhead Brewery Co., before it was taken over by Sean Crosswaite's family in 1996. Sean explained that the Inn had been extended at various times over the years and that in 2013, when Build Force were working on an extension at the rear, an unmarked well had been discovered.

The well was just under seventeen metres in depth, hand cut into sandstone. It was originally outside the building but within its perimeter wall. In earlier times it would have been used to brew ale and to serve the community. It now provides a feature inside. Sean said that after excavating the well it filled naturally in a couple of days.

Modern photograph of well by Lauren Smith



Descendants of families such as the Ellams and Littlers, the earlier innkeepers, are still living around the village of Elton and its environs today.

With grateful thanks to Ellesmere Port Family & Local History Society for their help.

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www.heritagegateway.org.uk

www.historic-uk.com/CultureUK/Pub-Signs-of-Britain

REV. WILLIAM CHARLES COTTON'S BOOKPLATES

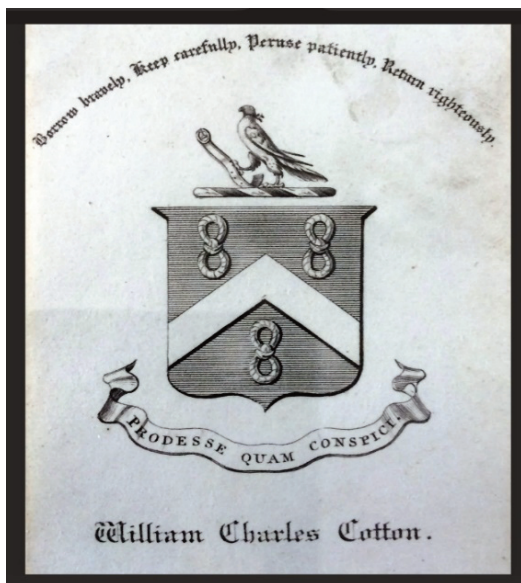
Peter Barratt, Caloundra, Queensland

I've maintained an interest in all matters relating to William Charles Cotton since 1995 when I first came across his efforts to introduce honey bees into New Zealand in December 1841. As a result, I self-published *William Charles Cotton, Grand Bee Master of New Zealand, 1842-1847* in 1997; and in 2023 *Cotton's Tomatin Bees, 1841-1842*.

For the last few years my interest has focused on Rev. William C. Cotton's bookplates.

A bookplate, or **ex libris**, is an author's or owner's identification label usually pasted on the inside front cover of a book. The bookplates of notable historical figures are known to adopt specialist designs often based on heraldic imagery or armorials. These have a value to collectors and are sold at auctions. I've had a standing search on *Ebay* using 'W. C. Cotton' as the 'find argument'.

A Rev. William Charles Cotton bookplate



His design constitutes a maxim curved across the top, below which is a bird of prey on top of a shield. The shield bears a deep inverted 'V', also three identical shapes in the form of figures of eight. Below the shield on a scroll are the words **prodesse quam conspici**. This literally translates as 'to accomplish rather than to be conspicuous' which suggests the message: achieve good things but don't sing your own praises.

From *Notes on book-plates (ex-libris) ... and a proposed nomenclature for the shapes of shields* by J. Paul Rylands, published in Liverpool in 1889, page 18, says:

The late Rev. William Charles Cotton, Vicar of Frodsham, who wrote an eccentric but learned

book on bees, was the owner of an armorial ex-libris with a French eared shield, but no helm (helmet) or mantlet (drapery), and above the crest, in old English characters, the advice 'Borrow bravely, Keep carefully, Peruse patiently, Return righteously'.

The maxim is good practice for a book lover: in Walter Hamilton's *Dated Book-Plates (Ex Libris) with a Treatise on their Origin and Development*, London, 1895, page 123 says:

For brevity and conciseness, the instructions given on his armorial book-plate can scarcely be surpassed.

My *Ebay* bid was placed on an earlier version of a W. C. Cotton bookplate which doesn't present the above advice. This bookplate was most likely extracted from one of Cotton's other books which was not about bees.

Gill Baxter, Frodsham & District History Society Archivist, advised me that eight of his books, with bookplates, survived in the current Frodsham Vicarage roof space until they were recently donated to the F&DHS Archive collection.

The bookplate offered for sale may even have come from a bee book that someone, in the past, did not 'Return righteously'. Quoted alongside Cotton's book borrowing advice in *Long Ago, a monthly journal of popular antiquities*, London, December 1873 p.374, is a similar rhyme which reads:

**Read slowly, pause frequently, think seriously,
Keep cleanly, return duly,
With the corners of the leaves
Not turned down.**

A variation in the shape of the 'bookplate shield' is portrayed compared to that depicted on the armorial of his brother, Henry Cotton (1821-1892). This may be seen in *Debrett's Illustrated Heraldic and Biographical, House of Commons and the Judicial Bench*, 1884, p.262, compiled and edited by Robert Henry Mair.

Henry Cotton's Armorial (right)

I initially thought the three coils of rope could relate to their father William Cotton's eleven-year involvement in the manufacture of cordage.

In 1807, William Cotton senior (1786-1866) became a partner in the cordage manufacturers Huddart & Co., in Limehouse. He was later general manager, until 1838. My research indicates Huddart and Cotton met while serving with the East India Company. I found in *The Athenaeum and Literary Chronicle* 1838, p.154, that W. Cotton Esq, read a paper titled: *On Captain [Joseph] Huddart's Improvements in Rope Machinery*.

William Cotton senior was elected a Director of the Bank of England, and served as Governor from 1842 to 1845.

His second son, Henry Cotton, was a British judge who rose to Lord Justice of Appeal and a Privy Councillor. Henry was knighted and adopted a more ornate armorial in 1877.



Sir Henry Cotton's armorial from 1877



After gaining his knighthood, Sir Henry Cotton's armorial (left), is completed with helm and mantlet. However, the three symbols surrounding the inverted 'V', or chevron, are similar in design to those seen below on the joined coat of arms of Sir Hugh Cotton (Hugh of Hodnet) born c.1255, and his wife Elizabeth Tittenleigh that is displayed on the restored coving in the Library at Combermere Abbey, so it couldn't relate to cordage manufacturing...



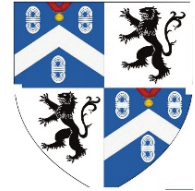
Left: The restored thirteenth century joined arms of Cotton and Tittenleigh at Combermere Abbey

Following the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII in the 1530s, Combermere Abbey, near Whitchurch, North Shropshire, was acquired by Sir George Cotton and the Abbey's Hall became the secular heart of Sir George Cotton's new Tudor house at Combermere.

The Cottons remained at Combermere for almost 400 years, gaining stature locally, nationally and internationally. The former Abbey was remodelled on 3 major occasions, lastly under Sir Stapleton Cotton, 1st Viscount Combermere, who was a respected military hero. Sir Stapleton Cotton (1773-1865) gained many awards and titles, became second in command under Wellington and was made Field Marshall in 1855. The escutcheon (or shield) of the Viscounts of Combermere is described as follows:

Escutcheon of Stapleton-Cotton, Viscounts of Combermere

Shield – Quarterly: The 1st and 4th, Azure (blue), a chevron between 3 hanks of cotton Argent (silver), in chief, pendant from a ribbon Gu, a representation of the medal presented to the 1st Viscount after the battle of Salamanca (Cotton); 2nd and 3rd, Argent, a lion rampant Sable (black) (Stapleton).



An equestrian statue of the 1st Viscount, in bronze, was raised in his honour at Chester Castle by the inhabitants of Cheshire in the year of his death, October 1865. An obelisk was also erected in his memory on the edge of Combermere Park in 1890.



Above, FDN0679 Stapleton House

The similarity of the Cotton armorials suggests a familial link with the Frodsham vicar William Charles Cotton appointed in 1857. Early in his tenure Rev. William Charles Cotton appointed the Cheshire architect, John Douglas, to build him a house at the nearby junction of Red Lane and Fluin Lane, whilst the vicarage was restored and extended in the 1870s. He called his 'temporary' home Stapleton House. Sadly, the significance of the house name and the architect were not appreciated, and the house was demolished in the 1950's.

From *A guide to the study of book-plates (ex-libris)* by the Hon. J. Leicester Warren, published in London in 1880, we read:

...heraldry and book-plates are so intimately blended ... The main reasons for which a book-plate becomes interesting may be thus succinctly stated – it bears an early date, or infers an early date from its workmanship; it records as owner some well-known person in the past; it is beautiful as a work of art. These may be respectively called the antiquarian, the historical, and the artistic aspects of ex-libris.

The mere eccentricities, the plagiarised designs, quaint mottoes, and other points of book-plate curiosity, will only be noticed incidentally, or as illustrating some of the more important aspects of our subject.

Warren added: ***Upon their heraldry was soon engrafted a mass of extraneous ornamentation, usually, however, supposed in some degree to be connected with the central escutcheon.***

Hon. J. Leicester Warren clearly recognised a link between heraldry, a science that dates back to at least the Norman Conquest, and bookplates that came much later. The Cotton coat of arms with its escutcheon (shield) can be traced from Sir Hugh Cotton's armorial that was displayed and restored following the dissolution of Combermere Abbey, and used by the 1st Viscount Combermere and his successors from the 19th century.

What particular ornamentation recurs or is added to the Cotton armorials over the centuries?

Two features in particular require explanation. The bird of prey was added in the early seventeenth century. What I thought to be coils of rope, which are consistently present, are more likely to be hanks of cotton. Fine woven cotton has been a valued product since the 12th century in Europe, so it's not surprising that a titled person with the surname 'Cotton' employed reference to this expensive traded commodity in their armorial.



I also found two other bookplates from the same seller, up for auction. They incorporated the same features as seen on Henry Cotton's armorial; one bookplate bears the name Thomas Barnett Cotton within a scroll below the shield (left). He was born in 1748, the son of Thomas Cotton and his wife Mary nee Barnett. A record of the death of 'Mr Thomas Barnett Cotton of Fenchurch-street' appeared in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, August 1806 p.777. A notice by one of the Executors of his Estate appeared in *The London Gazette*, 12 Sept. 1807 p.119, which identified him as a **Carver and Gilder**. Although there is no proven link between Thomas Barnett Cotton and the Rev. William Charles Cotton, the similarity in the bookplates suggest otherwise.

The Cotton memorial tablet in Frodsham Parish Church

As part of my research I exchanged a lengthy series of *Facebook* messages with Fiona Barry at Frodsham & District History Society. I requested a photo of Cotton's memorial tablet, shown right, which is cut into a pillar near the pulpit in the ancient Parish Church at Frodsham, Cheshire. This photograph was taken by Kath Gee.

The memorial shows a crest at its top in blue, white and black. It carries the chevron and three hanks of cotton on a shield. Above, sits the bird of prey and beneath that is the Cotton family motto **prodesse quam conspici** finished in silver. The wording below reads: **In memory of William Charles Cotton, M.A., sometime worker in New Zealand with Bishop Selwyn. Born 1814. Vicar of this Parish from 1857 until his death in 1879.**



The stonemason must have been misinformed as we know that Rev. William Charles Cotton was born 30th January 1813.

The earliest Cotton Armorial



15th century St Margaret's Church, Wrenbury

Wrenbury church, south Cheshire, was formerly owned by Combermere Abbey in north Shropshire. Wrenbury is one of 9 Cheshire churches that still has pews. In the late 17th century new pew doors were added and decorated with the crests of the local gentry who owned them. 19 of the pews were owned by the Cotton family, who also commissioned a stained-glass window above the altar in 1866, several memorials in the church and 2 pubs in the village!



St Margaret's Church Pews



A Cotton Pew door



Window commissioned 1866

Finally, I present here an unexpected find. In *The County Families of the United Kingdom, or Royal Manual of the titled and untitled aristocracy of Great Britain and Ireland ...by Edward Walford, London, 1869, p240*, I found the following listing for Rev. William Charles Cotton, of Leytonstone, Essex:

COTTON, the Rev. WILLIAM CHARLES, of Leytonstone, Essex.

Eldest son of the late William Cotton, Esq., of Leytonstone (who was formerly Governor of the Bank of England), by Sarah, elder dau. of the late John Lane, Esq., of the Grange, Leyton, Essex; *b.* 1813; *s.* 1866. Educated at Eton and Ch. Ch., Oxford (B.A. 1835, M.A. 1837); is Lord of the Manor of Gobions and St. Clears, and Vicar of Frodsham, co. Chester. This family is descended from the Head Falconer of Henry VII. — *Walwood House, Leytonstone; Vicarage, Frodsham.*

His Pres., his brother Henry, M.A., educated at Eton and Ch. Ch., Oxford, Barrister-at-Law, Q.C.; *b.* 1815.

In [Geni.com](https://www.geni.com) I found Lord of Gobions Manor, Thomas Harrison (1568-1625), of St. Giles. Our beekeeping cleric's grandfather, Joseph Cotton (1745-1825), had married Sarah Harrison in 1779. So, I surmise the title had descended through the Harrison lineage to William Cotton, and on his father's death to Rev. William Charles Cotton, the eldest son. Reference to the Head Falconer explains the addition of the falcon to the armorials of the Cotton progeny and the bookplates of Rev. William Charles Cotton after 1779.

Acknowledgements

I researched and produced the original story on Cotton's bookplate. Kath and her team members have skilfully crafted it to emphasise the armorial history of the Cotton family. With their keen eyes they spotted the intriguing 15th century link to the falconry of Henry VII.

Contextual Information and References

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_cotton

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_heraldry

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coat_of_arms_of_England

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Escutcheon_of_Stapleton-Cotton,_Viscounts_Combermere.svg

<https://combermereabbey.co.uk> This is a 5-minute video about Combermere's history and restoration

Smith, A. R. 'William Charles Cotton, MA, 1813-1879: Priest, Missionary and Bee Master' Countrywise, 2006.

St Margaret's Parochial Church Council, A guide to St Margaret's Church, 2019

AN ENGRAVED STONE IN DELAMERE

George H Nash, David Joyce and Peter Winn

In 2021 a stone engraved with a spiral design was discovered along a track on the north-western side of Delamere Forest whilst I (DJ) was walking my dog. I had walked past the stone on several occasions and it had piqued my interest. To cut the story short, I contacted



a friend (PW) who has archaeological expertise, who then got in touch with George Nash, an acknowledged expert in early rock art, who visited the site. Initial inspection revealed that the motif appeared to have been engraved using a metal tool, throwing some doubt on its authenticity. However, closer inspection revealed that the tooling marks were sufficiently weathered to suggest that the stone and its engraving are of great antiquity. When found, the stone was probably not in situ and was in danger of being damaged if left within the surface of the trackway. The decision was made to carefully remove it, and the stone is currently securely stored.

The stone consists of an elongated block of laminated sandstone, with a maximum length of 30cm, width of 18cm and thickness of 8–12cm. The motif comprises a clockwise spiral with 5–6 rounds, 10cm in diameter and is uniformly circular.

In broad terms, the decoration on the Delamere stone is similar to other spirals in the Atlantic rock art tradition found in western Britain, in particular on sites on the north Wales mainland and Ynys Môn (sometimes referred to as the Irish Sea Province). However, it is only the third engraved stone to be found in the Dee, Mersey and Severn catchments exhibiting spirals, the others being the Calderstones monument in Liverpool and possibly the Willaston stones. Even in Wales, as a whole, later prehistoric rock art is considered rare. Across north Wales, Cheshire and Merseyside there are only eight sites (excluding Willaston) that collectively display twenty-six spirals, many associated with other motifs that include single and multiple cup-marks, and zigzag lines.



Whilst the exact date of the carving is unclear, George concluded that it could date to the late Bronze Age or early Iron Age (1250-600 BC). George has produced a paper which discusses the discovery and context of one of the first significant discoveries of later prehistoric rock art to be found in Cheshire.

Article originally from: ***Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society 2023 Vol 93 pp7-16***

OUT AND ABOUT IN THE COMMUNITY

Editors & Archivist

1 In 2024 our History Society community activities began with a challenging project.



Left, members of the Open House team with posters

We were invited to share an Open House weekend with St Laurence Church Frodsham on an appropriate project of our choice. We elected to research some of the visible

memorials within the church and to piece together individual family relationships over a few generations. The memorials included some attractive story-telling stained-glass windows and carved stone memorials, some of them quite difficult to see and read. This was helped by photographing them, then copying the script alongside in a plain English font and making a pen portrait of their families from the sources now available to us.

The Open Days on 8th-9th June, were manned by a team from F&DHS and church members. We exceeded our expectations in terms of visitor numbers, some people doubtless attracted by the promise of a trip up the tower and refreshments in the nave. So successful was the weekend that we are now compiling a booklet of the posters to be ready by Christmas.

2 Even before the Open House weekend took place, two members of History Society had agreed to accompany Su Pollard, the actress and singer, for 'A Frodsham Pilgrimage'. Su was one of two celebrity walkers in this years' 20th Anniversary Frodsham Festival of Walks.

Almost 2 years ago Su Pollard had made a television pilgrimage, 'The Road through Portugal' with 6 other personalities. The Festival of Walks Team thought it would be good to replicate that experience in Frodsham by calling at former and present Places of Worship, some with their ministers, Su's company was enjoyed in an interview about her pilgrimage before the start, and in her discussions with participants during the walk. It was a good opportunity to showcase the religious heritage of Frodsham. The informality of the walk facilitated a meeting with the owners of Austerson Old Hall, which led to a visit to their home for History Society members later in the summer (item 3).



Above, walkers setting off on Church Street with celebrity, Su Pollard, for the Frodsham Pilgrimage

3 The main summer event for members was a visit to Austerson Old Hall, a relocated property, moved from near Nantwich to Albanley. We had been keen to visit the site ever since Tim had given the society a talk about the Hall on Zoom during 'lockdown'. At the serendipitous Frodsham Pilgrimage meeting Tim readily agreed to show us round his historic home.



Tim and his wife, Anne, were generous hosts, showing small groups of us around the house to highlight the intricacies of the hall from the inside. The interior of the solar, to the right of the steps, looked especially cosy. Austerson Old Hall retains its Grade II listed status as it was relocated using old building techniques, but not necessarily old building materials.

Following the house-tours we were served tea with homemade scones and jam, on the lawn. It was an idyllic setting on a perfect summer's day.



Above, relaxing on the lawn at Austerson Old Hall

4 For History Society's short summer walk we tried a different approach to the 'past and present churches walk'.

One History Society member who lives next to Trinity Methodist Church 'controlled ruin' was able to explain the sequence of events leading to the survival of its spire.



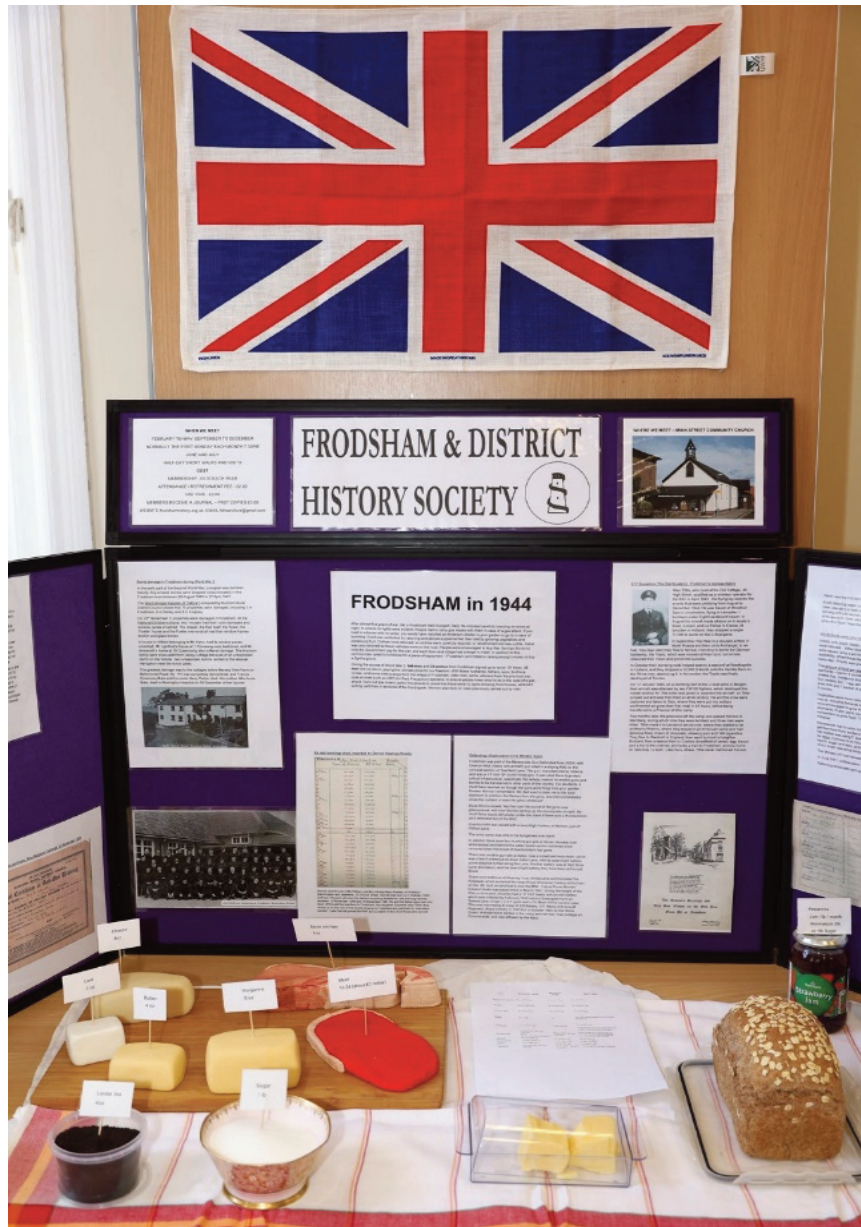
Left, Trinity Methodist Church's spire, a landmark seen from many parts of Frodsham. Right, walkers in The Garth of Trinity Church listening to the story of the church's partial demolition.

Another History Society member kindly gave us an informative guided tour of the interior of St Luke's Church and the history of Catholicism in this area of the town.



The Ship Street Chapel, opened in 1949, was in use until St Luke's Roman Catholic Church, in High Street, was built in 1981, right. The Ship Street Chapel is now the PO Sorting Office.

5 Frodsham Town Council celebrated the 80th anniversary of D-day on 6th June by funding local group, Bee Friends, to organise an afternoon tea in the Parish Hall. Our society was asked to provide a small display about Frodsham during the war. Fiona researched what impact World War 2 had made on the town by 1944, and created the display. Gill checked what rations people would have been allocated in 1944, and then created models from fondant icing, which were very eye catching. She also baked a National Loaf, which was devised by the Federation of Bakers in 1942. This was made from wholemeal flour with added minerals and vitamins to supplement the diet. The loaf was not at all popular, however white bread became unavailable. To the modern palate, it was rather dense but otherwise tasty!



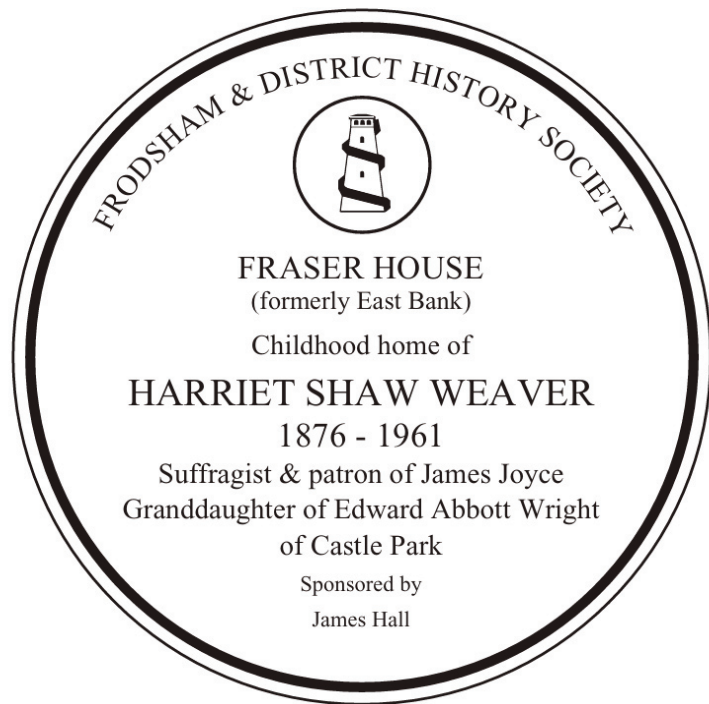
6 Frodsham & Helsby Rotary Club hosted the ever-popular Frodsham Festival in the Park on Sunday afternoon, 7th July, to show-case local organisations. F&DHS attended the event, our displays included information on Frodsham in 1944, the replica post-war rations and Gill's version of the National Loaf, that was cut up for people to sample.



7 Six of us attended the Cheshire Local History Association's History Day 2024 at The Grange Theatre, Hartford on Saturday 19th October. The theme this year was 'The Future of Cheshire's Past'. F&DHS had placed the emphasis of our contribution on Education, which allowed the display of wartime food to be reused with a newly baked National Loaf and the addition of a delicious malt loaf made from a 1940s recipe, displayed on a new tablecloth, and all handmade by our archivist, Gill.

8 At the end of the article entitled 'East Bank and its occupants' in last year's Journal, it was mentioned that the house, now known as Fraser House, was subject to a planning application to convert it to 7 dwellings. Comments on behalf of F&DHS included the recommendation that a Blue Plaque be placed on the building to indicate that the house was the home of Harriet Shaw Weaver, one of Frodsham's most famous personages.

You will be delighted to hear that the owner of the development at Fraser House has agreed to sponsor the Blue Plaque. A draft of the plaque, shown on the right, will hopefully be in place soon.



9 Gill is a former member of the local Townswomen's Guild Choir, which is now called 'Melody Makers'. This year she was invited to give an illustrated talk to the Guild about our Archives and the fascinating story of Philip Webb which she had researched as an article for the History Society Journal 2023,

Gill presenting her talk to Frodsham Townswomen's Guild.

And finally, from the archives:

10 Gill has received a number of donations this year including two pairs of photographs. One pair is of two girls at Netherton House School in the 1950s, and the other pair is of nurses at the Frodsham Auxiliary Military Hospital between 1915 and 1919, showing their indoor and outdoor uniforms, and with a helpful list of names.

This year she also received generous donations of books, including a full set of books (6 volumes) of J McN Dodgson, *The Placenames of Cheshire; Domesday Book, 26 Cheshire*, Ed John Morris, published by Phillimore 1978; *Domesday Geography of Northern England*, Ed Darby and Maxwell. There has also been a large donation by Rev. Atack of old books found in the Vicarage roof, part of Rev. Cotton's extensive library. These books are the ones referred to in Peter Barrett's article on page 17.

11 Last year Mrs Nunney decided to return a collection of deeds found in her late husband's study to their home town of Frodsham, as there was no family connection to either the places or the people mentioned in them.

Not to show favouritism, she divided the deeds between the four charity shops in Eddisbury Square. Once we became aware of the situation it was a mad dash to acquire these deeds for the archives, which we succeeded in doing, except for one set that had already been taken by a collector. Despite our best efforts we have been unable to trace these, so this year we set about interpreting the story hidden in the remaining documents.

The first set of documents refer to a parcel of land, called 'The Dowles', on Frodsham Marsh. It appears to have been a former strip, subdivided into 5 plots (dole = share or charity), plot number 474 on the Tithe Map for Frodsham. The ownership can be traced from Joseph Burrows, wheelwright, in 1806, to John Birkhill, blacksmith, in the 1840s, to William Burgess, former grocer of High Street, in the 1850s. On his death in 1889, it was owned by William

Beamont of Orford Hall. In 1881, William Beamont, solicitor, and former mayor of Warrington, wrote the book 'A History of the Ancient Town of Frodsham', but otherwise he does not appear to have any connection with the town.



Left, William Burgess's shop on High Street. At the time of this photograph, in the early 1900s, it was a cycle shop.

Image courtesy of Jane Arnold.

The second set of deeds relate to land round Iron Dish House, Woodhouses, at the top of Chestnut Lane, opposite Godscroft Lane, which at that time was called Danbo Lane. These deeds trace the ownership, from Thomas Tasker, of Sandiway, in the 18th century, who was the owner of The Blue Cap Inn, through to the owner registered on the Tithe Map 1846, Ralph Greenway, landlord of the Horse and Jockey, Helsby. The above mentioned, William Burgess, is also mentioned in these deeds in 1837.

Right, Horse and Jockey circa 1900 Thomas Ellams, landlord

Image courtesy of D. Jackson



How (if at all) these properties, The Dowles and Iron Dish, are related remains a mystery, as does to which properties the missing deeds refer and their part in the stories. However, we remain grateful to Mrs Nunney for her thoughtfulness in returning the deeds to Frodsham. It just shows the importance of old deeds. They should always be cherished and preserved.

FRODSHAM & DISTRICT HISTORY SOCIETY

Programme of meetings 2025

3rd February	Bridges / crossings of the River Mersey at Runcorn Bob Roach
3rd March	AGM 7.15pm The Slave Ships of Neston and Parkgate Anthony Annakin-Smith
7th April	Stories around 'Flower Cottage' and the Wheelwrights of Frodsham Stuart Jepson
12th May	Travellers' Rests – Tina Lawton
June visit	Historic St Michael's Church and Village, Shotwick Date to be decided
July walk	Short Local Walk – Details to be decided
1st September	Dad's Army Cast's Real Wartime Experiences Chris Green, the History Chap
6th October	Grandfather's journeys in Tall Ships Ian Bellard
3rd November	Cheshire's Roll of Honour – Stephen Benson
8th December	Speaker to be arranged

Programme Secretaries, Fran and John, have organised the speaker programme