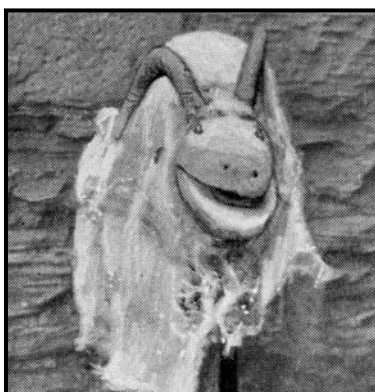


# Brimington *Miscellany* number 2

Brimington and Tapton Local History Group's Yearly History Review

## In This Edition...



Brimington's Derby  
Tup and Mummers'  
Plays, page 17



Brimington Cricket  
Club 1887 and 1888,  
Page 29



From Elementary to  
Further Education,  
Page 33

## Plus:

- Our year in view, page 3
- Three of Brimington's Second World War Heroes, page 37
- The Hedley House Treat, page 41
- Further Notes on the 'Skull and Cross Bones' Bridge at Tapton, page 44

### Introduction, from Doug Spencer, Chairman of the Brimington and Tapton Local History Group

Welcome to 'Brimington Miscellany'. In our second edition we again feature some of the research work of our members and others, along with some reminiscences of the past. Also returning is our review of the year, which proved popular in the first edition. We hope that this alone will prove of some benefit to future chroniclers of the past!

During 2009 we have, as a group, continued to prosper. Our talks programme has continued to be well supported and we have received some very welcome grants towards our activities. As last year, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our committee for their work during our second year, along with the contributors to this edition. My thanks to everyone who has supported us.

If you have any items for future editions of the Miscellany, particularly covering the Brimington and Tapton area, we would be pleased to hear from you.

In the meantime I hope you enjoy this edition. I am sure you will find something of interest within.

Doug Spencer

Addresses, other contact details, membership rates and activities may not be up-to-date.  
Please check the group's website [www.brimingtonandtptonhistory.org.uk](http://www.brimingtonandtptonhistory.org.uk)

## **Brimington and Tapton Local History Group**

### **Officers and Committee Serving for 2009**

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Membership Secretary: Marion Spencer, 2 Dale Close, Staveley, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S43 3TF. Telephone 01246 470533

Treasurers: Frank and Elsie Robinson

Other Committee members: Jean Arthington, Joan Graham, Alan Sharp, Brian Smith and Stan Wetton.

### **Our meetings**

All our meetings are open to non-members.

The group meets monthly during the year (except June, July and August) on the fourth Thursday of each month, at Brimington Church Hall, Church Street, Brimington, starting at 7.30pm. In December the group meets on the third Thursday at 7.30pm. These meetings usually comprise a talk by a guest speaker or a group member. One outdoor visit, usually a local guided walk, is held in June.

On the fourth Tuesday of every month (except June, July and August) a 'reminiscences' group meets at Brimington Church Hall, starting at 2pm.

### **Our other activities**

Our aim is to encourage people to bring along items that help record the history of Brimington and Tapton. If you have any old photographs, documents or a story to tell about the Group's area and would be willing to share these with us, we'd like to hear from you. Please contact Doug or Marion Spencer (address above) or come along to one of our reminiscences groups.

### **Membership**

Membership of the Group costs £5 per year (there are no reductions). Benefits include reduced admission to the group's fourth Thursday meetings and free admission to the reminiscences group. In addition the Group actively collects and copies old photographs and information from the Brimington and Tapton area. Members have free access to this growing resource. All members receive a free copy of the *Brimington Miscellany*. For further details contact the membership secretary.

The Group is affiliated to the British Association for Local History.

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Comments on articles should be addressed to the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Group.  
The comments expressed herein are those of the individual contributors. They are not necessarily those of the Brimington and Tapton Local History Group.

We welcome contributions to this publication, which should be with us before the end of October in each year. For details contact the Chairman or Vice-Chairman.

*Front cover illustrations; left: Derby Tup costume as performed at Handsworth in 1907; centre: part of a photograph of the Brimington cricket team who won the Derbyshire Cup in 1888 ; right: Brimington Junior School, Devonshire Street, 1995.*

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## OUR YEAR IN VIEW: NOTABLE EVENTS

Like *Miscellany One*, this section aims to take a selective review of the year in Brimington and Tapton. The period covered is roughly from the beginning of September 2008 to the end of December 2009.

### Buildings, Land and Businesses

We reported in *Miscellany One* our doubts over the future of the ambitious **Chesterfield Waterside** urban village project, due to the recession. This scheme involves the regeneration of land running from



the former Trebor site northwards along the Rother valley. In October 2008 it was announced that the East Midlands Development Agency had awarded two grants totalling £860,000 to the project's canal basin.<sup>1</sup> We reported that work had started in mid October 2008. This progressed on the basin; it being filled with water by March 2009. Our photograph (left) shows work in progress on 5 January 2009. The finished basin currently (January 2010) remains isolated from the canal, surrounded variously by a car park on the old Trebor site, the remaining road network at Holbeck Close or rubble from the Trebor site. Time will tell how fast this site will become developed and the basin linked into the canal. A viewing area, situated where Holbeck Close joins Brimington Road, was officially opened on Thursday 15 October 2009. The viewing area is equipped with a number of large display boards describing the project. The canal at this end is actually

the canalised river Rother; the plan being to link the basin with the river. A planning application for the development followed in November 2009.<sup>2</sup>

Bluebank Lock, on the **Chesterfield Canal** received a new set of bottom lock gates, which were installed during the summer of 2009, replacing a set dating from some 18 years previously.<sup>3</sup> Maintenance work had been in progress on this lock (number four on the canal) since December 2008 by volunteers from the Canal Trust.<sup>4</sup>

Meanwhile progress on the Hollingwood Lock House development, reported in *Miscellany One*, was setback by withdrawal of funding from the Community Assets Fund (CAF). By late summer 2009 the issue has been resolved. The jointly funded development, with some redesign is now to go-ahead following reinstatement of the CAF element.<sup>5</sup>

Brimington Parish Council, in partnership with the Three Valleys Project erected a new historical interpretation panel on the canal, at Newbridge Lane in the autumn of 2009.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Derbyshire Times (DT)*, 30 October 2008.

<sup>2</sup> *DT*, 15 and 22 October 2009 and 12 November, 2009. The application reference is CHE/09/00662/OUT.

<sup>3</sup> 'New Gates for Bluebank' in *Cuckoo, the Magazine of the Chesterfield Canal Trust*, Summer 2009, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> M. Hodgetts 'Along the Towpath – Chesterfield Canal Trust Restoration Volunteers', *Cuckoo*, Spring 2009, p. 11.

<sup>5</sup> D. Trickett, 'Hollingwood Lock House Update' *Cuckoo, the Magazine of the Chesterfield Canal Trust*, Summer 2009, p. 18. *DT*, 12 November, 2009.

<sup>6</sup> *DT*, 26 November 2009 and 3 December 2009.

*Cuckoo*, the magazine of the Canal Trust, is always a recommended read for those interested in the Canal's history. The spring 2009 edition reported on what it described as 'an important anniversary'.<sup>7</sup> On Sunday 16 November 1958, the Inland Waterways Preservation Society launched a number of canoes on the canal at Chesterfield. This effectively marked the 'first stirrings of a campaign to ensure its [the canal's] survival.' The canoeists left the water at 'Brimington Station'.

The autumn 2008 *Cuckoo* reported that during 17 to 21 November 2008 the canal towpath had been closed between Hollingwood Lock and Dixon's Lock to 'facilitate the removal of the water inlet which formally served Staveley Works'.<sup>8</sup> This inlet had been the reason for the canal remaining in water up to the works, so had effectively stopped the canal from being in-filled.



The demolition of the remainder of **Staveley Works** cannot go without mention, though, like the Hollingwood Lock House, it is just outside our area. The works had provided generations of local people with employment. Our photograph above, taken on 5 January 2008 before demolition had commenced, shows the former main entrance off Works Road. Notice the tops of the two cupola furnaces behind the right apex of the brick building—casting finished on 5 October 2006.<sup>9</sup> The final employees, by that time numbering only two to three people, finally left on Friday 25 April 2008.<sup>10</sup> The diversification of the Staveley Company into chemicals and its domination of the local coal and iron industry is of note. The political and social influence of its 'captains' and 'officers' over the years has been marked. Demolition of the remaining works, roughly to the west of Works Road, started in the autumn of 2008, with the job completed by the end of spring 2009. This work has removed some of the last large-scale remainders, in the Chesterfield area, of what can only be described as great corrugated steel-clad shed like buildings. Once a familiar site at such concerns as Donkin's, Markham's, the Tube Works and at Staveley, these vast buildings have now largely disappeared into history.<sup>11</sup> The demolition work went remarkably unnoticed by local newspapers, except when one of the contractors 'cherry-pickers' caught fire.<sup>12</sup> The only remains of this once thriving and vibrant site are the two office blocks on Works Road and the Covidien (formerly Tyco Healthcare) site off Hall Lane, Staveley.

<sup>7</sup> '50 Years of Campaigning', *Cuckoo*, Spring 2009, p. 16-17.

<sup>8</sup> *Cuckoo*, Autumn 2008, p. 9.

<sup>9</sup> Saint-Gobain Pipelines *The Staveley Story*, (2006). A DVD produced to mark the cessation of casting at Staveley Works.

<sup>10</sup> Information from Shelia Wetton, January 2010.

<sup>11</sup> There are some smaller scale buildings that remain—locally at New Whittington and some buildings at Sheepbridge—but the large scale complexes have gone.

<sup>12</sup> *DT*, 2 October 2008.

New homes at the site of the **former Prince of Wales public house**, on the corner of Cotterhill Lane and Manor Road, were completed during the year. Marketed as ‘Oakwell Gardens’, the show-homes were opened on Sunday 2 November, 2008.<sup>13</sup>

It was reported at the April 2009 parish council meeting, that **Dean’s Close**, the name formerly used for the site of the ‘Orchard’s’ development, off Chesterfield Road (see *Miscellany* One) is to be retained.<sup>14</sup> This name derives from the field name Dean’s Close, itself a reminder that this land was once possibly owned by the Dean of Lincoln, though by 1827 it was owned by the Duke of Devonshire.<sup>15</sup>



In October 2008 planning permission was sought and subsequently granted to change residential accommodation at 2c **‘Patrick Hinds House’, Chesterfield Road** to a sunbed/suntan shop<sup>16</sup>. Our photograph shows the property, during an initial refurbishment of the then two shop units, on the 25 February 2007. This retained the earlier converted living accommodation to the right-hand former shop unit. For many years this was the premises of J. Shentall, later Fine Fare. The whole now comprises a ‘S43 Barbers’ (next to the Ark Tavern public house); a beauticians

(specialising in false nails—for readers in the future, this is an the early 21st century fashion of applying acrylic false nails over finger nails to give a highly polished, longer, decorative nail) and finally the sunbed/suntan shop, run from the nail shop. Patrick Hinds House is a recent name. It is believed to be called after one of the owner’s relatives.

Work on three new wards at **Chesterfield Royal Hospital** started during the late summer of 2009.<sup>17</sup> At a cost of around £12m the architects are The Manser Practice, with GB Building Solutions the principle contractor. The wards face out onto Tapton and will be an added landmark in the area. In 2009 the hospital celebrated its 25th anniversary on the Calow site—opening on the 29 April, 1984. The present site was previously farmland.

Another noteworthy anniversary was the celebration of **Sainsbury’s** 20 years at its Rother Way, Tapton, premises in August 2009.<sup>18</sup> The original planning application, spearheaded at the time by Henry Boot Developments, effectively broke the Borough Council’s policy against out-of-town shopping. The site had been designated for industrial development on the Staveley/Brimington Local Plan. Sainsbury’s was quickly followed by Tesco’s store, itself followed by a raft of retail parks outside of the Chesterfield town centre.<sup>19</sup> As recounted in a brochure for the new store, Sainsbury’s opened on Thursday 24 August 1989.<sup>20</sup> There was, incidentally, no Sunday opening in those days!

<sup>13</sup> *Property Today*, 30 October 2008, p. 10.

<sup>14</sup> *DT*, 30 April 2009.

<sup>15</sup> DRO D636 A/PO1 Poor Rate Assessment Survey Book, 1827.

<sup>16</sup> *DT*, 30 October 2008. The application is CHE/08/000690/COU.

<sup>17</sup> *DT* 13 August 2009.

<sup>18</sup> *Chesterfield Advertiser (CA)*, 21 August 2009. ‘Fairplay to the twentieth anniversary of Sainsbury’s!’, *Reflections*, September 2009, p. 74.

<sup>19</sup> The proceeding is sourced from Henry Boot Developments *Proposed Retail Superstore, Lockoford Lane, Chesterfield, Application by Henry Boot Developments Ltd., Planning and Highways Appraisal Incorporating a Retail Impact Assessment*, (1987), [no pagination], Section 3.

<sup>20</sup> J. Sainsbury’s plc *New Store Opening Brochure*, (1989).

**Chesterfield and District Crematorium** opened its doors on the 1 November 2009 for visits to mark its 50 years of service. As commemorated on stones near the building's entrance, the facility had been opened on the 31 October 1959 by the Rt. Hon. The Earl of Verulam (a former President of the Federation of Crematorium Authorities), with dedication by the Bishop of Derby, the Rt. Rev. G.F. Allen. The original seven constituent local authorities of the joint committee operating the crematorium were Bolsover, Clay Cross, Dronfield and Staveley Urban District Councils, along with Chesterfield and Clowne Rural District Councils and Chesterfield Borough Council. The design was carried out by Chesterfield Borough Council's architects. The total cost was some £90,000. Principle contractors were Thomas Beighton Ltd., of Brimington. In a feature article of the opening, carried by the *Derbyshire Times*, we also find that F. Hallam of 34 Hall Road, Brimington, carried out the decorating. Before the construction cremations for local people generally had to be conducted at Sheffield. The site had previously been opencasted.<sup>21</sup>



Of lasting environmental significance was the start of consultation on **Chesterfield Borough Council's 'Local Development Framework'**, in June 2009.<sup>22</sup> The framework is designed to set-out development principles and priorities for the whole borough up to 2026. It replaces the Chesterfield Local Plan. An 11 page *Options* document<sup>23</sup> laid out a number of possible scenarios for development, but it was difficult to see how local communities would be specifically affected until the *Core*

*Strategy Options, Technical Background Paper*,<sup>24</sup> of some 135 pages, was consulted. One of the four options—'Expansion at Key Locations'—might see some 2,400 houses built in Brimington and Tapton, out of a total of around 7,000 homes for the whole borough. This scenario would see population in the area increase by something approaching 50%. Mentioned were such areas, described in the document,<sup>25</sup> as between Manor Road and Chesterfield Road (872 houses and illustrated above, looking from North Moor View in October 2009); Chesterfield Canal, Cow Lane, Gregory Close (978 houses); Wetlands Lane (119 houses); Ringwood Road (229 houses); Wheeldon Mill (349) houses; Ringwood Centre (153 houses), with others of smaller quantities. The reaction appears to have been surprisingly muted, though the options have been debated at both the Community Forum and Brimington Parish Council. In mid summer local Labour councillors described the consultation as 'Housing shock for Brimington',<sup>26</sup> with Liberal Democrats countering later in the year that it was all 'Labour Scaremongering'.<sup>27</sup> Readers are asked to draw their own conclusions.

Just out of our area, on 9 November 2009 **Tesco** opened a new store on part of what has come to be known as the Dema Glass site.<sup>28</sup> The new store is currently the fourth largest in the UK. Also under construction on the Dema site is **Chesterfield Football Club's new ground**; work starting at the end

<sup>21</sup> Information for this paragraph comes from the commemorative stones at each side of the crematorium entrance and DT, 30 October 1959 and 6 November 1959.

<sup>22</sup> DT, 26 June 2009.

<sup>23</sup> Chesterfield Borough Council, *Our Borough in 2026, How do you want it to look?* (2009).

<sup>24</sup> Chesterfield Borough Council, *Chesterfield Local Development Framework – Core Strategy Options Technical Background Paper – June 2009*, (2009), [Online], last visited 16 September 2009 at URL: <http://www.chesterfield.gov.uk/Site/1/Documents/Environment/Local%20Development%20Framework/Core%20Strategy/Core%20Strategy%20Options%20Paper.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*, p. 96 – 97.

<sup>26</sup> *Brimington and Tapton Labour Rose* newsletter, June 2009, p. 1.

<sup>27</sup> *Liberal Democrats Focus* newsletter, distributed October/November 2009, p. 1.

<sup>28</sup> DT, 12 November 2009.

of July 2009.<sup>29</sup> A month later the Club announced that the new ground was to be named the 'b2net Stadium', following a new sponsorship deal with a local information technology company of the same name.<sup>30</sup> In December it was revealed the main west stand will be known as the 'HTM Stand'—the result of an additional sponsorship deal.<sup>31</sup>

MacIntyre opened a charity shop at the **Ringwood Centre, Victoria Street**, on 18 March 2009.<sup>32</sup> The involvement of MacIntyre, a registered charity, who have taken over the County Council's direct involvement in running the centre, appears to have occurred in June 2006. The council's Cabinet approved the award of the contract to them; 'a national charity with 40 years experience of providing services for children and adults with learning difficulties'.<sup>33</sup> The ten year contract encompassed services in Chesterfield and north eastern Derbyshire.



We reported in *Miscellany* One that the future of **Brimington Common Post Office** was under review. In October 2008 the Post Office announced that Brimington Common would join with 14 others in definitely closing<sup>34</sup>. Our picture, left, shows the post office on 26 October 2008, just prior to closure. A photograph of the office's opening times is also reproduced. At the time there was some doubt about the future of the remaining newsagents and general shop. David Pearson, who had run the business for over 13 years, was reported as offering £1,000 in cash and £1,000 in stock to someone who would

take over.<sup>35</sup> The business was subsequently rebranded 'Brimington Common News', but closed completely at the end of October 2009. The newspaper business was then carried on via a small hut at the rear of the Methodist Church. There is now only one post office in Brimington and Tapton; on High Street, Brimington.

Thirty years of bowling on the revamped **Bowling Green**, off Broom Gardens, Manor Road, were celebrated on Sunday 5 April 2009.<sup>36</sup> The bowling green was originally part of the much larger Miners Welfare Recreation Ground, on which houses and bungalows were built after the Second World War, by the old Chesterfield Rural District Council. The bowling green survived though became derelict before

resurrection, officially reopening in April 1979.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>29</sup> DT, 30 July 2009.

<sup>30</sup> DT, 20 August 2009.

<sup>31</sup> DT, 10 December 2009.

<sup>32</sup> CA, 13 March 2009.

<sup>33</sup> Derbyshire County Council Report to Cabinet 16 October 2007 Report of the Strategic Director – Adult Social Services: Development of day services for adults with a learning disability in Chesterfield and north east Derbyshire, p. 2.

<sup>34</sup> DT, 16 October 2008.

<sup>35</sup> DT, 30 October 2008.

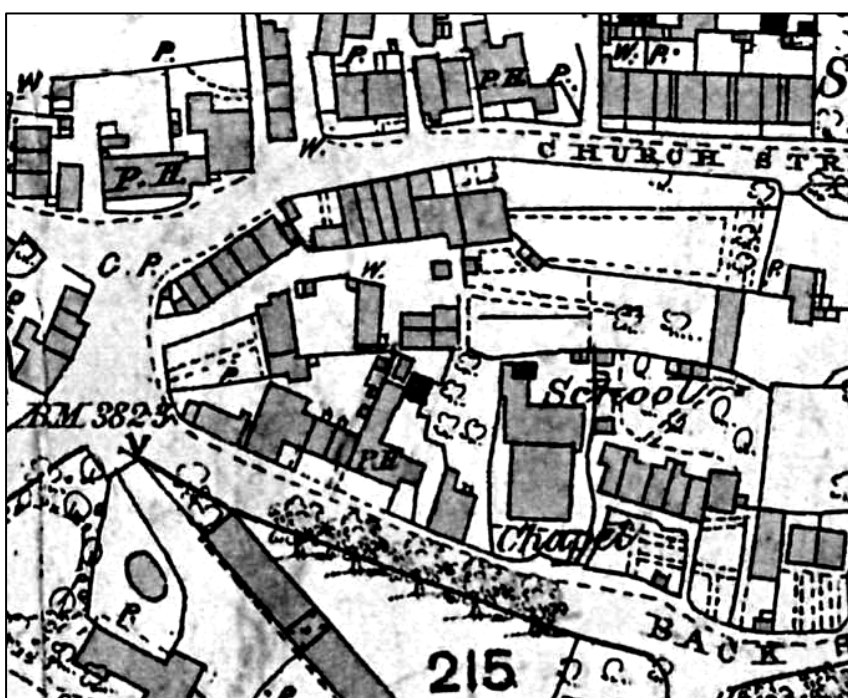
<sup>36</sup> DT, 26 March 2009.

<sup>37</sup> Star, 10 April 1979.

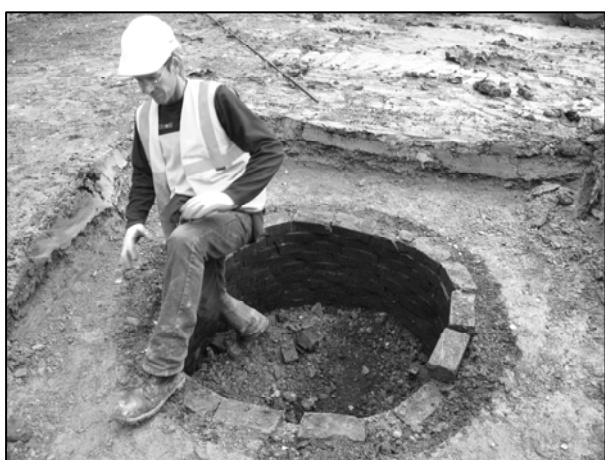
The *Derbyshire Times* of 27 August 2009, featured Brimington Common based **Roger Stuart Racing**, who had attended careers day events at Tupton Hall School. Based at 242 Manor Road, the company offers ‘a complete service to anyone wanting to start [motorcycle] road racing’.<sup>38</sup> There is a fully featured website at <http://www.rsr-racing.ltd.uk/welcome.html>.



In the area opposite the filling station, on the corner of **High Street and Hall Road**, a pair of semi detached houses were being built during late summer and autumn 2009. The construction is wooden framed, faced with composite stone blocks.



On Church Street work to extend the **Brimington Surgery** commenced in October 2009, pictured here (top left) from Hall Road, on the 11th of that month. The builders involved in both the High Street homes and surgery projects are Robert Woodhead Ltd., who are situated in Bilsthorpe, Nottinghamshire. The company’s site cabins for the surgery development are the two stacked units to the right of the photograph. In the week commencing 19 October 2009 a well was discovered during excavations to the rear of the surgery building (behind the mesh fencing) on our top photograph. The well, pictured bottom (courtesy Alan Sharp), was brick



lined, about one metre in diameter, with a depth over six metres. It is possibly one marked ‘W’ on the earliest available large-scale Ordnance Survey map of 1876<sup>39</sup> (above, centre) serving various properties in the vicinity. There are other wells and pumps—marked ‘P’—nearby. No attempt was made to excavate the well. A discovery of this nature gives us a glimpse of life in Brimington before piped water was supplied to the village.

At **Tapton Golf Course** a major planning application was submitted in July 2009 for ‘a new driving range, new building, earthworks and fencing/diversion of

<sup>38</sup> [On-line] last visited 20 September 2009 at URL <http://www.rsr-racing.ltd.uk/services.html>.

<sup>39</sup> Ordnance Survey, 25 inch Derbyshire sheet XVIII.15, edition of 1876.

footpaths' at Murray House, for Sheffield International Venues, the leasers of the facility (see *Miscellany One*, page 6).<sup>40</sup> A second application was submitted in November 2009.<sup>41</sup> On 9 May 2009<sup>42</sup> this company renamed the 18-hole course the 'Markham Course' in honour of Charles Paxton Markham, industrialist, politician and one-time owner of Tapton House and its estate. Part of this estate now forms the golf course. Travelling from Canada to be present at a ceremony and unveiling of a plaque to mark the event were John and Elizabeth Markham, the former being the grand nephew of C.P. Markham.<sup>43</sup> The event triggered a number of letters to the *Derbyshire Times* about Markham's legacy in the area (see 'Organisations and People', below).

**Tapton Grove**, in particular the plight of the Grade II listed Stables block, was mentioned in *Miscellany One*. The land around the derelict block was cleared around early spring 2009. Planning applications to extend and renovate this important Georgian building were submitted in December 2009.<sup>44</sup>

During the week commencing 6 September 2009 the former **JET petrol and diesel station on High Street** became a Murco fuel outlet. There has been a petrol filling station in this area for some years. The site was formerly occupied by Church Farm.

## Miscellaneous

Politics wise there was what might be described as a 'sea-change' result at the **Derbyshire County Council elections** on 4 June 2009. Labour party rule at County Hall came to an end after 28 years, as the Conservatives gained a majority. Brimington and Tapton people returned Labour's Walter Burrows as the division's representative. All major parties (Labour, Liberal Democrats and Conservatives) contested the seat.

Congratulations to **Brimington Manor Infants and Nursery School**, who received an award from Environmental Charity ENCAMS during spring 2009.<sup>45</sup> They received the 'Eco-school Green Flag' for work in reducing energy consumption, recycling and other activities.

Also in 2009 **Brimington Junior School** celebrated the achievement by staff and pupils of the Derbyshire Personalised Learning Award. The award is given by the county council's schools' inspection and advisory service. It 'gets children more involved with their own learning and in making key decisions which affect them.'<sup>46</sup> The school's pupils were featured in an April 2009 *Chesterfield Advertiser*<sup>47</sup> with a new weather-proof artwork they had created, situated in the school grounds, through their after school art-club.

On a more worrying note the major health concern of 2009 was the so-called '**Swine Flu**' which had World Health Organisation pandemic status. On 16 July the *Derbyshire Times* reported that 49 pupils at Brimington Junior School were off sick the previous day, an increase from 36 the previous week.<sup>48</sup> Nationally, after the virus declined over the summer, it was expected that once schools returned from

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<sup>40</sup> DT, 30 July 2009. The application reference is CHE/09/000439/FUL.

<sup>41</sup> CHE/09/00687/FUL.

<sup>42</sup> DT, 21 May 2009. The date is actually determined from a letter to the paper. Newspaper reports and news releases do not state the date that the ceremony took place.

<sup>43</sup> 'Golf Course Named After Famous Chesterfield Family' [On-line] last visited at URL

[http://www.taptonparkgolfcourse.co.uk/news/read/Golf\\_Course\\_Named\\_after\\_famous\\_Chesterfield\\_Family](http://www.taptonparkgolfcourse.co.uk/news/read/Golf_Course_Named_after_famous_Chesterfield_Family)

<sup>44</sup> Application references CHE/09/00712/FUL and CHE/09/00713/LBC.

<sup>45</sup> DT, 3 April 2009.

<sup>46</sup> *Derbyshire First*, November 2009.

<sup>47</sup> CA, 3 April 2009.

<sup>48</sup> DT, 16 July 2009.

their summer break cases would again increase. Fortunately, however, the outbreak appeared to have been contained nationally and locally, with the earlier predicted increase not taking place.

**Brimington Parish Council** now has a chain of office, thanks to the generosity of Brimington and Tapton Labour Party. News of the gift was announced at the September 2008 parish council meeting.<sup>49</sup> This is the first time in the history of the council that it has possessed a chain of office. The chain was presented to the council at a small ceremony before the December 2008 meeting.<sup>50</sup>

**Weather-wise** 2009 ended with a white Christmas, albeit in a thaw! January 2009 had seen a prolonged period of cold weather, with many roads and pavements icy from snow which had frozen following a thaw. Summer 2009 had been marked by rain.

## Transport

We will occasionally cover railways, as part of the Midland main line (MML) and the former North Midland Railway route enter our Brimington and Tapton area of interest.

On 14 December 2008 train operating company (TOC) Northern introduced a **new Leeds and Nottingham passenger service**. Operating hourly throughout the day, this has brought the TOC's services to our area for the first time, providing 'the first regular direct train service between Leeds and Nottingham for 25 years'.<sup>51</sup> There are also vastly increased services at Dronfield and at other stations as a result of this new service.

There was some anticipation that the MML from Bedford to Sheffield might be authorised for **railway electrification**. Network Rail published an electrification strategy on 15 May 2009, which clearly identified the MML as one of the prime candidates.<sup>52</sup> It was disappointing that when Transport Secretary Lord Adonis announced, on 23 July 2009, an immediate start on Great Western mainline electrification (plus a start on planning for electrification of the Liverpool-Manchester line via Newton-le-Willows), that the MML did not feature. Apparently though the Department for Transport has 'left open the door on MML' and that further electrification would be considered 'in the coming months'.<sup>53</sup> One commentator felt that the MML electrification authorisation might come in 2012 as the first of a proper rolling programme.<sup>54</sup> In early November 2009 Network Rail announced that it backed MML electrification,<sup>55</sup> but actually funding it is another matter!

## Organisations and People

During November 2008 the Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centre officially launched a **new drop-in centre at the parish council's community centre**.<sup>56</sup> This was thanks largely to the council and Brimington and Tapton's County Councillor, Walter Burrows', community fund.

In its August 2009 edition *Reflections* magazine published a profile of **Gerald Treweek** of Brimington, a prize vegetable grower, member and UK judge of the National Vegetable Society.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> *DT*, 30 October 2008.

<sup>50</sup> *DT*, 8 January 2009.

<sup>51</sup> Northern *Train Times* 33 – *Nottingham to Sheffield and Leeds, 14 December 2008 to 16 May 2009*, (2008), p. 4.

<sup>52</sup> *Rail*, issue 619, 3-16 June 2009, p. 5-9.

<sup>53</sup> R. Ford, 'Informed Sources: Electrification programme authorised', *Modern Railways*, September 2009, p. 19.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>55</sup> P. Haigh, 'Network Rail backs Midland Main Line electrification', *Rail*, issue 630, 4-17 November 2009, p. 8-9.

<sup>56</sup> *DT*, 6 November 2008.



The **Brimington Flower and Vegetable Show** continues to grow! The *Derbyshire Times* reported that the 2008 show featured 54 classes across vegetable, flower and home craft categories, with a record entry in the children's section.<sup>58</sup> The article claimed that the show, held at Brimington Community Centre, was now in its fifth year, though there have definitely been earlier versions. For the 2009 event organisers invited students at Eckington School to design a poster and schedule for the event.<sup>59</sup> Our photograph, courtesy of Alan Jacques, shows the Community Centre's main hall packed

with entries to the show on the 29 August 2009. There were over 260 exhibits.<sup>60</sup>

Brimington Parish Council's 'Community Service Award' for 2009 was presented to **Mandy Hickin** of Manor Road. She has been instrumental in organising the annual village market for more than 27 years.<sup>61</sup>

The **Brimington Village Circle** was formed in autumn 2008 as a group of local people interested in improving the village centre. Set-up costs were aided by the Community Forum. The group successfully organised a Christmas 'Market' on Thursday evenings of the 11 December 2008<sup>62</sup> and 10 December 2009.<sup>63</sup> During 2009 the group has also undertaken some flower planting in the village centre and on the village green.<sup>64</sup> The annual summer village market, held in 2009 on Saturday 27 June,<sup>65</sup> is now being organised by this group. The 'Village Circle' joins the 'Friends of Thistle Park' and the 'Friends of Manor Road Recreation Ground' as groups of local people who are interested in improving these local parks.

**Thistle park** (what is the origin of the nickname?), more properly known as Eastwood Park, was the venue for a 'fun-filled activity day' on 27 July 2009.<sup>66</sup> Organised by the **Brimington and Tapton Safer Neighbourhood Team** it was one of a number of events over the week.<sup>67</sup> Though the fun day was interrupted by what has proved to be a seasonal norm—heavy rain—the event seems to have been a success. The Neighbourhood Team is an initiative by Derbyshire Constabulary, across the county, giving a dedicated locally based policing team.

**Scouting in Brimington** continues something of a renaissance with the 34th (Chesterfield) Brimington Scouts reported as holding their first weekend camp 'for a number of years'.<sup>68</sup> They have also been

<sup>57</sup> J. Holloway, 'A man who knows his onions', *Reflections*, August 2009, p. 52 – 54.

<sup>58</sup> *DT*, 18 September 2008.

<sup>59</sup> *DT*, 23 July 2009.

<sup>60</sup> *DT*, 8 October, 2009.

<sup>61</sup> *DT*, 3 September 2009.

<sup>62</sup> *CA*, 5 December 2008.

<sup>63</sup> *DT*, 3 December 2009 and *CA* 4 December 2009.

<sup>64</sup> Forgoing information in this paragraph from 'Forum Focus: Brimington and Tapton Community Forum', *Our Town*, summer 2009.

<sup>65</sup> *CA*, 18 June 2009.

<sup>66</sup> *DT*, 6 August 2009.

<sup>67</sup> These were publicised in *CA*, 24 July 2009.

<sup>68</sup> *DT*, 6 August 2009.

carrying out some research into their history. For those with internet access visit [www.34thchesterfield.escouts.net/history.html](http://www.34thchesterfield.escouts.net/history.html) to find out more.<sup>69</sup>

In November 2009, members of **Brimington Methodist Church** were reported as receiving £2,000 from County Councillor Walter Burrow's community fund allocation. The grant was for community work carried out by the church, which includes provision of a venue enabling community care workers to run an elderly people's day centre three days a week.

During the early autumn of 2009 there were a number of letters in the *Derbyshire Times* regarding the possibility of naming a street, or perhaps the new M1 motorway Junction 29a, after **Fred Greaves, VC**.<sup>70</sup> Corporal Greaves was born in Killamarsh in 1890. He was awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions during the Battle of Poel Chappelle, near Ypres on the 4 October 1917. He worked at Markham Colliery both before and after his army service. He later moved to Brimington, where he died on 11 June 1973.<sup>71</sup> Just prior to Remembrance Sunday 2009, plaques to Fred Greaves and a second Chesterfield VC recipient, William Coffey, were officially unveiled on benches near to Chesterfield Town Hall. Hasland resident Raymond Griffiths paid for and had campaigned for the plaques to be erected.<sup>72</sup> Earlier that autumn Spire Brewery of Staveley had produced a 'Greaves VC' ale to support the poppy campaign.<sup>73</sup>

The letters column of the *Derbyshire Times* featured some correspondence following the decision to rename the 18-hole green at Tapton Golf Course after **C.P. Markham** (see above). The event also saw a new 'Markham' cup presented to the club. There was some debate as to Markham's philanthropic activities.<sup>74</sup> One contributor, Paul Wilson, appealed to us to 'take off our rose-tinted spectacles and see the Markham family for what they were.'<sup>75</sup> Good advice, perhaps, for anyone wanting an objective appraisal of the Markham family and their legacy in the area.

'Blue Peter', the BBC Television programme for young people, visited the **Tapton Golf Course** in February 2009 to record a 'Take me on' challenge segment for the programme.<sup>76</sup> The challenge was a game between Blue Peter presenter Helen Skelton and 12 year-old Welsh and European junior golf champion Emily Boyman. Some of the footage has made it on to 'YouTube'.<sup>77</sup> There had been less good news in early January 2009, when the public sector union Unison voiced fears that jobs were being cut at the course.<sup>78</sup> In March 2009 **Tapton Park Golf Club** was awarded Golf Mark Club of the Year for 2008 in recognition of the club's contribution to junior and beginner golf.<sup>79</sup>

Our best wishes to **Jo Morris**, from Brimington, who joins the ever growing numbers of Church of England deacons. She was ordained at Derby Cathedral on Sunday July 5 2009 by the Bishop of Derby,

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<sup>69</sup> Last visited at this URL on 20 September 2009.

<sup>70</sup> *DT*, 4, 18, 25 September 2008; 30 October 2008, 23 July 2009.

<sup>71</sup> The preceding is from N. McCrery, *For Conspicuous Gallantry*, (1990), pp. 62-63.

<sup>72</sup> *DT*, 5 November 2009.

<sup>73</sup> *DT*, 22 October 2009.

<sup>74</sup> For example *DT*, 21 May 2009, 4 June 2009, 18 June 2009, 9 July 2009.

<sup>75</sup> *DT*, 11 June 2009.

<sup>76</sup> 'Blue Peter Take me on Challenge' [On-line] last visited at URL: [http://www.taptonparkgolfcourse.co.uk/Blue\\_Peter/](http://www.taptonparkgolfcourse.co.uk/Blue_Peter/) and *Star*, 26 February 2009 [On-line], 'CBBC's Blue Peter TV golf challenge tees off at Tapton' [On-line] last visited 18 September 2009 at URL <http://www.thestar.co.uk/video/CBBC39s-Blue-Peter-TV-golf.5022342.jp>

<sup>77</sup> [On-line] Last visited 12 September 2009 at URL:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dYir2hteyqI&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dYir2hteyqI&feature=player_embedded)

<sup>78</sup> *DT*, 8 January 2009.

<sup>79</sup> 'Derbyshire Golf Club Named Golf Club of Year' [On-line] last visited 17 September 2009 at URL <http://www.englishgolfunion.org/newsdesk.asp?code=0001000100010029&id=3236>

the Rt. Rev. Dr. Alistair Redfern. Jo's husband, Philip, has for many years been a church warden at Brimington. Jo is now serving as a curate in the Alfreton, Ironville and Riddings areas.<sup>80</sup>

In autumn 2008 Brimington North Borough Councillor, **Terry Gilby** was confirmed as Chairman of the **Transpennine Trail**, which links Yorkshire to Lancashire.<sup>81</sup> 26 local authorities work in partnership supporting the trail, which includes links into the network from Chesterfield. Locally the trail initiative has brought much needed improvements to linked footpaths and bridleways over a number of years. Autumn 2009 improvements have seen the Blue Bank Loop (a former railway track paralleling part of the Chesterfield Canal) resurfaced along with another bridleway (number 19 in the parish) which runs from Grove Road down a steep hill at the side of the boundary wall to Tapton Grove.<sup>82</sup> The Blue Bank Loop work, which included some improvements to the canal towpath, was reported to have cost the county council some £30,000.<sup>83</sup>

Brimington Common based author **Scott Lomax's latest book** 'Unsolved Murders in and Around Derbyshire'<sup>84</sup> was published in the autumn of 2009.<sup>85</sup> Mr Lomax, who is also a Brimington parish councillor, describes himself as '...a true crime writer and campaigner for truth and justice...'<sup>86</sup> Mr Lomax has written other books and contributed articles on crime and justice. These are detailed on his website [www.sclomax.co.uk](http://www.sclomax.co.uk).

Centenarian **Elizabeth Kitchener**, who still lives in her own home in Brimington, celebrated her birthday in the autumn of 2009.<sup>87</sup> She has lived in Brimington since 1935.

**Brian Thompson**, a former chairman of and former councillor on Brimington Parish Council sadly died in the autumn of 2009, aged 73.<sup>88</sup> Mr Thompson had served on the council for 13 years, many as chair of the Community Centre Management Committee. He had particularly seen through modernisation of the premises in the 1990s. A Labour Party stalwart and trades unionist, Brian had taken a particular interest in disabled matters since being involved in a serious car accident outside his place of work (the former Avenue Plant at Wingerworth), which resulted in his early retirement.

We are, of course, very sad to record the death of one of our committee members, **Stan Wetton** on 18 September 2009. Stan was born at Hollingwood in 1920, working at Staveley Works until he was made redundant at 60. He had contributed for some time to the house magazine of that company. Not content to sit back on being made redundant from Staveley, Stan started work picture framing at Brayshaws in Chesterfield, until he finally 'retired', aged 72. Stan was also an accomplished artist. He had been a committee member from our inception and had spoken at our October 2007 meeting. He had been preparing a new talk, looking at byways in Brimington and Tapton, for inclusion in our future programme. Always interested in environmental, historical and community issues, Stan was intimately involved in the successful 1970s campaign against Derbyshire County Council's 'preferred' Brimington/Staveley bypass route. This would have cut through farmland, Manor Road and Ringwood Lake. He had been working on an article, detailing the campaign, for this edition of the *Miscellany*.

*Philip Cousins with contributions from Alan Sharp and Doug Spencer.*

*Sources are referenced, otherwise remarks are personal observation. Photographs are by Philip Cousins unless stated.*

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<sup>80</sup> CA, 12 June 2009.

<sup>81</sup> CA, 3 October 2008.

<sup>82</sup> CA, 25 September 2009.

<sup>83</sup> CA, 15 May 2009.

<sup>84</sup> S.C. Lomax, *Unsolved Murders in and Around Derbyshire*, (2009).

<sup>85</sup> DT, 19 November 2009.

<sup>86</sup> [On-line] Last visited 7 January 2010 at URL: <http://www.sclomax.co.uk/aboutme.htm>

<sup>87</sup> DT, 5 November 2009.

<sup>88</sup> DT, 5 November 2009.

## OUR YEAR IN VIEW: GROUP EVENTS



### Grants

During 2009 we have been particularly pleased to receive two grants towards our activities. In February, we received a £250 grant from the Brimington and Tapton Community Forum. This was followed in March 2009 by a £500 grant from County Councillor Walter Burrow's community fund allocation. Our photograph shows Walter (left) at the presentation of the cheque to our Chairman Doug Spencer. We have been able to purchase a scanner/printer, computer and sound

system with money from these two generous grants. Whilst we aim to be self-funding we could not have purchased these items without this external support.

### Talk Programme

We began our 2008/2009 programme in some style with an excellent talk by Mrs Beech of Sheffield entitled 'The Russian Coachman to the Duke of Devonshire'. Mrs Beech recalled how, when introduced to her future mother and father-in-law, Mr Beech junior was attacked by his mother who had rolled up a newspaper reigning blows on him, whilst repeatedly exclaiming words to the affect 'you can't marry her she isn't good enough for the family!' Despite this opposition the two were eventually married. Mrs Beech had been able to ascertain this detailed picture of her family's background from the research she had carried out, explained during her talk in September 2008.

A departure from our booked programme in October saw Philip Cousins deliver a talk on 'Two Tunnels and a Canal' which told some of the story of the Clay Cross railway tunnel, the Duckmanton Tunnel (particularly its infilling) and the Cromford Canal. The latter presentation comprised a colour film made in 1965 by Mr J. Newton. The film, despite being from the hand of an amateur, was complete with sound and edited to a very high standard.

Alan Sharp gave an illustrated talk on Brimington Schools to our November 2008 meeting. The talk traced the development of schooling in the area. Early attempts at elementary education, along with later developments were illustrated. Alan had made extensive use of school log-books in the Derbyshire Record Office. A paper, based on his talk, is within this edition of *Miscellany*.

Our December meeting comprised the Group's AGM followed by short presentations from members. The Secretary showed photographs of the various UK based international and national 'Garden Festivals' she had attended. Our Chairman presented some of the photographs copied by our Group during the year. Keith Noble showed a sequence of slides taken during construction of the Junior School on Springvale Road. The evening was rounded off by seasonal refreshments including mulled wine and mince pies.

Mervyn Allcock from the Barrow Hill Railway Roundhouse spoke to our January 2009 meeting. He gave an overview of the impressive saving of the roundhouse, literally hours from probable demolition.

A film originally made by Freda Stevenson entitled 'Venture into Faith' was shown at our February meeting. Made available courtesy of Ron Sharp, the film detailed the organisation, fund raising for and eventual building and opening of the Hall Road Methodist Church. The film showed many familiar Brimington faces and places.

Group member Peter Harrison gave a very entertaining talk 'A Kid from Cott. Lane' to our April meeting. This detailed his childhood in Cotterhill Lane, in the years immediately before and during the Second World War. With many of Peter's chums present you can guess how lively the evening was. Well done Peter; we are already looking forward to your next talk! The 'Derby Tup', which Peter mentioned in his talk, is the basis of a paper in this *Miscellany*.

Another of our members, Betty Bowler, spoke of her role in the Land Army during the Second World War, to our May 2009 meeting. Betty recalled that as a young hairdresser from Brimington she was suddenly sent to a farm in southern England, having to cope with such diverse tasks as milking cows (she became very fond of them) and harvesting. She came to enjoy the work and valued the friends she made during her stay. Again, another very interesting presentation by one of our members.

Our June meeting comprised the usual outdoor event. As a follow-up to the January talk we visited Barrow Hill Roundhouse. We hoped that the poor weather of previous outdoor meetings did not follow us—we were not disappointed, as the evening was fine and sunny. A tour of the complex, following a welcome cup of tea was a real winner with members. We enjoyed an introductory talk followed by a visit to the roundhouse itself. Of particular interest was a tour of the commercial side of Barrow Hill. This comprises workshop areas and space let out to commercial concerns. These companies undertake work for themselves or on behalf of other clients. As an example we saw work being undertaken, for Network Rail, on diesel locomotives involved in Welsh radio signalling tests. The commercial side not only creates local jobs, but is an important source of income to the preservation side.



Two 'residents' of the roundhouse were of particular interest to us. A Great Central Railway (GCR) 'Director' class steam locomotive named 'Butler Henderson' would have been a fairly frequent visitor through Brimington on the former GCR Chesterfield loop. This locomotive is pictured (left) behind part of our group. Midland Railway class 1F, number 41708, was one of a number of similar steam locomotives involved in shunting at Staveley Works. Unfortunately neither of these two locomotives can currently be

steamed. Our thanks again to Mervyn Allcock and the Barrow Hill team for their efforts.

A review of our 2009/10 talks programme, which started in October 2009, will appear in the next volume of *Miscellany*.

I would like to thank all our speakers for their time and effort—much appreciated by our committee, members and guests.

## Exhibitions and Reminiscences Group



For the second year running the Group staged an exhibition at the Brimington 'village market'. Based in the Church Hall on Saturday 27 June 2009, the exhibition was again popular. Our photograph shows a surprised Ken Bartholomew (far left) who had just spotted himself on part of a display covering Devonshire Street. Ken used to keep the radio and television business at the top of that street and had previously

talked to the Secretary about life at the shop. This is now one of the recordings in our archive.

The Group mounted an exhibition in Brimington Library during September 2009, particularly in connection with a local and family history day on Thursday 10 September. Members were present during the event to help explain what we do and to offer advice, along with library staff, on research. We also attended the Scarsdale Local History Fair at the Winding Wheel on the 1 November 2008, where our display proved a popular attraction. The Fair has been run for a number of years by the Derbyshire Victoria County History Trust, to which we joined in 2009. The Trust aims to publish and research a new history of every community in England. Several of our committee members are actively involved in the project.

Do not forget our fourth Tuesday afternoon monthly reminiscences group. This is proving popular with our members. Pop along if you have any reminiscences that you want to share with us. A warm welcome is assured.

Thank you to all who helped mount our various displays and to those who staffed the exhibitions.

*Janet Warmsey.*

*Photographs by Janet Warmsey, except Barrow Hill Roundhouse, by Philip Cousins.*

## SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE DERBY TUP AND THE BRIMINGTON MUMMERS' PLAYS

Philip Cousins, with material and information from Peter Harrison

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### Introduction

Peter Harrison's talk to the Group's April 2009 meeting on 'A Kid from Cott. Lane', covered memories of his childhood growing up in the Cotterhill Lane area of Brimington. In his talk mention was made of performing 'The Derby Tup (Ram)', in which Peter took part. Peter kindly had his own recollections annotated to music, by David Chin<sup>1</sup> making copies available to the audience.

So that Peter Harrison's recollections are made more widely available, this article reproduces the music handout and builds further on his reminiscences. In addition, there is a review and some analysis of the custom, though this article does not profess to be a complete history of the Derby Tup. The author has also widened the scope to include a brief account of the mummers' play performed in Brimington. For those curious in finding out more, some indication is given of sources for further information.

### The Derby Tup

The Derby Tup has perhaps been better documented and discussed than the casual reader might realise.

It is not intended to pursue a history of the Derby Tup song itself here, suffice to say that Llewellynn Jewitt in his 'The Ballads and Songs of Derbyshire'<sup>2</sup> of 1867 briefly reviews its history. Here we will look at the song in its context as being performed as part of the custom of the Derby Tup, sometimes also described as Old Tup.

In 1907, S.O. Addy reviewed the Derby Tup in the north Derbyshire area.<sup>3</sup> Though Addy did not refer to the custom in Brimington, he did observe that in some areas the custom was dying out.<sup>4</sup> There are some interesting illustrations in Addy's article, one of which— 'Old Tup at Handsworth'—is reproduced below. There is clearly some history to the Derby Tup, as Addy remembered it and the 'Old Horse' (of which more later) being performed at Norton in about 1855.<sup>5</sup>

In 1946 the *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society* published two versions of the Derby Tup from Staveley.<sup>6</sup> The author, Ivor Gatty, records that he visited the district in December 1945 where he interviewed a Mr. Gascoyne (aged 77) 'a retired schoolmaster, and Dr. Court, aged 78, a local resident'.<sup>7</sup> He noted Mr. Gascoyne's version of the Tup. Mr. Gascoyne had not taken part in any performance himself as a boy, but stated that his version was what 'he remembered having seen the boys of his school doing for very many years'. At this time (late 1945) Staveley children took the Tup round on New

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<sup>1</sup> David Chin is the organist of Brimington Parish Church.

<sup>2</sup> L. Jewitt, *The Ballads and Songs of Derbyshire: With Illustrative Notes and Examples of the Original Music*, (1867), pp.115-119.

<sup>3</sup> S.O. Addy 'Guising and Mumming in Derbyshire', *Journal of the Derbyshire Archaeological and Natural History Society*, Volume 29, 1907, pp. 31-37.

<sup>4</sup> Addy, *Guising*, p. 35.

<sup>5</sup> Addy, *Guising*, p. 35.

<sup>6</sup> I. Gatty, 'The Old Tup and its Ritual', *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*, 1946, Vol.5, No.1, pp.26-29. The consulted extract is available [on-line], last visited 18 September 2009 at URL: [www.folkplay.info/Texts/94sk47wm.htm](http://www.folkplay.info/Texts/94sk47wm.htm) and [www.folkplay.info/Texts/94sk47gm.htm](http://www.folkplay.info/Texts/94sk47gm.htm).

<sup>7</sup> See below for information about Dr. Court.

Year's day, but the ceremony was a 'travesty' of its former self 'which has degenerated into nothing more than a mere cadging expedition'.<sup>8</sup>

The second Staveley variation, to the same tune as the Gascoyne one, was noted by Gatty from a Mrs. Wragg, 'a young Staveley woman... She said she had known the performance all her life.'<sup>9</sup>

Ian Russell documented a survey he made during the 1970s of this traditional drama<sup>10</sup>. Russell describes it as being 'performed by a group of adolescents on particular evenings during the Christmas season at local public houses and working men's clubs'<sup>11</sup>. This was for money, collected from amongst the audience.

We will examine the players in the Derby Tup later, but typically costumed players would take the role of Man, Woman, Butcher and Tup. Russell believed that the importance of costumes had increased in years relatively recent to his 1970s survey.<sup>12</sup>

In the 1970s Ian Russell found that there would be a short spoken introduction on the lines of:

*Ere comes me an' our old lass.  
Short o' money an' short o' brass.  
Pay for a pint and let us sup.  
And then we'll show thee t' Derby Tup'*<sup>13</sup>

After this a combination of the short play and verses of the Derby Tup were preformed.

The two versions noted at Staveley in 1945<sup>14</sup> had different versions of the introduction. The one recounted by Mr Gascoyne has, perhaps, slightly darker overtones:

*Here comes me and my owd lass,  
Short of money, short of brass;  
It's money I want, it's money I crave,  
If you don't give me money I'll sweep you all to t' grave.*

Mrs. Wragg's version is more in line with that of the 1970s:

*Here comes me and our old lass,  
Short of money, short of brass.  
Give us a pint and let us sup,  
Then we will show you our old tup.*

## The Derby Tup at Brimington

At the time of his research (1970-1978) Russell was able to record forty-one groups from fourteen villages who were active in north eastern Derbyshire. These included one group from Brimington, with others nearby. There were variations of the Derby Tup chronicled by Russell, but he found 'no evidence to suggest that the tradition has ever abated during the past hundred years'.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Gatty, *The Old Tup...*, [On-line].

<sup>9</sup> Gatty, *The Old Tup...*, [On-line].

<sup>10</sup> I. Russell, 'Here comes me and our old lass, short of money and short of brass': a survey of traditional drama in north east Derbyshire 1970-8', *Folk Music Journal*, Volume 3, number 5, 1979, pp. 399-478. There are other earlier versions of the Derby Tup, some available on-line. See particularly a list of English Folk Play Scripts compiled by Peter Millington [on-line], last visited 18 September 2009 at URL <http://www.folkplay.info/Texts/CountyList.htm#Derbyshire>.

<sup>11</sup> Russell, *Here comes me and our old lass...*, p. 401.

<sup>12</sup> Russell, *Here comes me and our old lass...*, p. 472.

<sup>13</sup> Russell, *Here comes me and our old lass...*, p. 416.

<sup>14</sup> Gatty, *The Old Tup...*, [On-line].

<sup>15</sup> Russell, *Here comes me and our old lass...*, p. 401.

At Brimington there is a reference to the tradition being performed in 1966.<sup>16</sup> Peter Harrison and his friends performed the version reproduced herein for about two winter years during the Second World War, when he was about 13-14 years old. One of Peter's older brothers had taught him, which evidently points to the play being handed down. In turn one of Peter's cousins, who was in the Cotterhill Lane group, taught his brothers how to do the Tup. Peter remembers that the custom was still being performed in public houses in the period 1948-1950. In addition Rayleigh Avenue resident Jack Hazard, who was two years younger than Peter Harrison, taught his children the Derby Tup after he had moved to Killamarsh. Peter believes it was then performed there in 1966.

At the time of their performances Peter's group from Cotterhill Lane only went around the centre of Brimington; along Manor Avenue; Brimington Common as far as the Brickmakers' Arms public house; along Chesterfield Road and as far as Lockoford Lane, Tapton. Village centre public houses were obvious territory, but Peter's group never performed in the Brickmakers' Arms nor in the Prince of Wales. As the latter was at the top of Cotterhill Lane—being Peter's father's local—it was deemed too close for comfort!

Peter Harrison is not able to recollect how many other Derby Tup groups there were in Brimington, but is certain there must have been others, as his group did not cover the whole village.

The Cotterhill Lane group's method of picking performance venues was fairly simple in a war-time, blacked out Brimington. According to Peter;

*'We would walk along and listen if any house was having a party or if music was being played, knock on the door and ask if they wanted us to go in and perform. We did not go door to door as we did when carol singing. We would then finish the night by doing the pubs in Church Street.'*

The group also picked their area carefully; 'it was no good doing areas where there wasn't much money,' according to Peter, hence the group's territory included some of the more affluent areas of Brimington and Tapton. Rather like Staveley in 1945, Peter's group had no pretensions of upholding a tradition; they were interested primarily in the money that performing the Tup could bring.

On a lucky night the group might earn up to one old pound, split equally between them. A performance at a house could earn one shilling (5p); in a public house five shillings. At this time carol singers could be expected to earn one or two pennies (there were 12 old pennies per shilling). Peter Harrison well remembers a chance expedition out to Tapton Grove (then the home of John Charles Shentall, a leading Chesterfield businessman<sup>17</sup>), where his performance to the assembled party, who were 'in full evening dress', reaped the princely sum of six pennies!

In Peter Harrison's version of the Derby Tup boys (occasionally girls) played the characters, who he describes as Man, Old Lady or Old Lass, Butcher, Bystander and Tup (the latter the 'worst singer or youngest'). The players wore costume, though this was not elaborate. Peter describes their efforts thus;

*'The boy dressed as the Man would have a pair of his elder brother's trousers tied up with a piece of string (don't forget that we did not wear long trousers until we were old enough to leave school), a flat cap and a knotted scarf round his neck and smudged (dirty) face.*

*The boy dressed as the Old Lady would have one of his sister's frocks on, an old bonnet but no make-up.*

*The butcher would have an old apron he could acquire, or a piece of old sacking tied round his waist. It was essential he had some kind of knife.*

*The boy acting as the Tup would just have an old sack over him, with no attempt to simulate horns or other features of the ram.'*

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<sup>16</sup> A. Helm and E.C. Cawte, *Six Mummers' Acts*, (1967), p. 6.

<sup>17</sup> *Derbyshire Times*, 26 June 1942, p5.

Earlier in the history of the 'Tup a real sheep's head was used, which in the 19th century, in Brimington, was described by some as too 'malodorous'.<sup>18</sup> At Staveley it was recorded that at one time 'The Tup was fitted with a real sheep's head, with the skin on it. It was fixed to a pole and the boy crouched down behind it with a rug draped over him...that once on a time one set of actors had a fine pair of ram's horns'.<sup>19</sup>

Returning to the 'Cott. Lane' group's version, the introduction was slightly different to those chronicled above:

*Up comes me and our old lass,  
Short o' money and short o' brass,  
Pay for a pint and let us sup,  
Then we'll act our Derby Tup.*

Like the other recorded groups the said introduction would be followed by the first verse of the song, as reproduced below.

The group performed the Tup around the Christmas period. New Year the group went 'wassailing' and did not perform the Tup. Wassailing is another old tradition, performed countrywide, in this context involving the singing of a carol—'Here we Come A-Wassailing'— with lyrics particular to the New Year.<sup>20</sup>

Ian Russell found the Brimington 'Tup (which he recorded on 16 January 1977) 'alive', having been performed on New Year's Eve 1976 by Stephen Booth (Husband or 'farmer'), Caroline Squires (Wife), Stephen Squires (Butcher) and Martin Booth (Tup), all in age ranges 10 to 14.<sup>21</sup> The Butcher wore a flat cap and apron (carrying a knife and steel); the Husband wore a flat cap, muffler and dark overcoat; the Wife wore an apron and shawl and carried a large basket. The Tup was a sweeping brush poking from under a white sheet. The head of the brush was covered in white paper, with a face drawn on it. Horns were simulated by 'two pen cases', complete with a small beard.<sup>22</sup>

Brimington residents Stephen and Martin Booth's father had raised the idea of them performing the Derby 'Tup'. The latter had performed it when he was about his son's age. 'Stephen accepted the challenge, and together with a schoolfriend, Stephen Squires, obtained a version of the play from the Squires' uncle, Tony Hancock, who came from the neighbouring Hollingwood estate.' It was apparently Stephen's belief that 'they were the first group to act out the custom since their fathers' day'.<sup>23</sup>

Unfortunately, though the effort was 'polished and entertaining', the group experienced disappointment interesting public houses and clubs, as they perambulated Brimington and adjacent areas. Enthusiasm naturally waned and there was no repeat the following year.<sup>24</sup>

Since this date there have not been any further recorded performances of the Derby Tup in local public houses, though confirmation would be welcome. The New Year's Eve custom now appears to take the form of public house customers in fancy dress.<sup>25</sup>

Russell chronicles a number of differences between the various north eastern Derbyshire group's Derby Tups. There are also notable differences in the 1976 Brimington version and that supplied here by Peter

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<sup>18</sup> Helm and Cawte, *Six Mummers' Acts*, p. 6.

<sup>19</sup> Gatty, *The Old Tup...*, [On-line].

<sup>20</sup> This carol is still sung. For example, it appears in the *New Oxford Book of Carols*.

<sup>21</sup> Russell, *Here comes me and our old lass...*, p. 476.

<sup>22</sup> Russell, *Here comes me and our old lass...*, p. 414.

<sup>23</sup> Russell, *Here comes me and our old lass...*, p. 415.

<sup>24</sup> The proceeding information in this paragraph is from Russell, *Here comes me and our old lass...*, pp. 414-415.

<sup>25</sup> Personal observation. It is not known when this 'custom' started, but it was certainly being carried out in the late 1980s.

Harrison. Further variations are also present between both the two 1945 noted Staveley Tups and Peter Harrison's Cott. Lane version from the Second World War. This is only to be expected from a tradition handed down orally and performed in different areas. This, too, is reflected in the number of characters employed.

Notable are the five characters in Peter Harrison's performance; the 'Bystander' being additional to the four in Ian Russell's 1970s Brimington. Additional players are not, however, unique in the performances Russell recorded across north eastern Derbyshire in the 1970s. The cast in Mrs Wragg's earlier Staveley Tup is not mentioned but the one recounted by Mr Gascoyne appears to have included five or possibly more characters.<sup>26</sup>

Other variations in the two Brimington performances include Peter Harrison's version starting 'As we were going to Derby on a market day, we met the finest tup that ever fed on hay...' whereas the 1976 version has 'I was on me way to Derby upon a market day, An' there I saw the biggest tup that was ever fed on 'ay'<sup>27</sup>. Other examples include, in the remaining verses, the 1976 Brimington version having an Edale women come begging for the tup's ears with Ripley men 'come beggin' for 'is tail'.<sup>28</sup>

Peter Harrison's version also has two additional verses to the 1976 Brimington version; he was aware that there were more, but these were not performed by his group. The Staveley versions have eight verses. There are also musical differences, but it is not the purpose of this article to analyse these in great detail. Anyone wishing to compare the versions are referred to Ian Russell's article, which reproduces, in full, the Brimington New Year's Eve 1976 Derby Tup and additionally the on-line text of Gatty's 1945 noted Staveley performances. Gatty annotated the music for the latter, the online extracts have this and a MIDI music file.<sup>29</sup> In addition, anyone not having witnessed the Derby Tup being performed can now do so. A performance at Ridgeway in 1971 and 1972 was not only witnessed and recorded by Russell<sup>30</sup>, but also filmed. This is now available on DVD.<sup>31</sup>

Ian Russell concludes his detailed article by discussing why the Tup had survived in areas of north eastern Derbyshire, but had not in Sheffield, where it had been performed before the Second World War. He thought that Sheffield had been the subject of 'social upheavals, slum clearance and rehousing, that have led to the breakdown of their communities',<sup>32</sup> leading to an end of the Tup tradition. It is perhaps worth dwelling on why Russell thought the Tup tradition had survived in the north east of Derbyshire.

Writing in the different economic and social climate of the late 1970s Russell's conclusions were that;

*No such changes have taken place in the region where the Tup is performed. Industry is long established and council housing is in adequate supply. Nor has the area recommended itself in any major degree to the city commuter...a factor which has kept houses within the grasp of local buyers. It is therefore in the stability of North East Derbyshire communities that one can best explain the continuance of the Tup tradition.*<sup>33</sup>

Since the date of Russell's article and his comments, there has been a massive change in social continuity. Large industrial employers have vanished, coal mining has ceased, schools have amalgamated with ever increasing size, there is a decline in social housing stock, increasing out-of-town shopping, the

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<sup>26</sup> Gatty, *The Old Tup...*, [On-line].

<sup>27</sup> Russell, *Here comes me and our old lass...*, p. 415.

<sup>28</sup> Russell, *Here comes me and our old lass...*, p. 416.

<sup>29</sup> [On-line] last visited at URL <http://www.folkplay.info/Texts/94sk47wm.htm>

<sup>30</sup> Russell, *Here comes me and our old lass...*, p. 445-450. Russell describes the Ridgeway version as 'in many ways the most spectacular that I have witnessed'.

<sup>31</sup> *Derby Tup*, Garland Films, 81 Kenton Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 4NL.

<sup>32</sup> Russell, *Here comes me and our old lass...*, p. 474.

<sup>33</sup> Russell, *Here comes me and our old lass...*, p. 474.

dominance of information technology, increased mobility and the like. Perhaps the social upheavals since Russell's article can only have been expected to lead to the demise of the Brimington Tup.

## Mummers' Plays

Ian Russell highlights debate about the status of whether the Derby Tup, was a 'fragmentary survival of a mid-winter fertility rite, or alternatively a degenerate form of a dramatised myth'.<sup>34</sup> Russell also mentions that some writers have described the Derby Tup as not a play but 'merely a dramatisation of the song'.<sup>35</sup>

Interestingly, Peter Harrison's own remembrance of the Derby Tup is that this was regarded as a mummers' play at the time in Brimington. This accounts for his comment in the reproduction below; 'A version of the Derby Tup mummer's play...during Christmas and the new year in the years before the second World War'.<sup>36</sup>

For many years there have been hero-combat plays. Russell found evidence (in Killamarsh) that both the Derby Tup and a hero-combat play were performed, one the alternative to the other, by the same group,<sup>37</sup> but this did not happen at Brimington at the date of his survey.

There has been and continues to be some interest in these hero-combat plays, more usually termed mummers' or guisers' plays. A typical internet search for 'Brimington Mummers' Plays' will produce something like 43 entries,<sup>38</sup> not all, of course, directly relevant to the village.

Perhaps the most relevant to anyone wanting to find out more is that of the 'Traditional Drama Research Group (T.D.R.G.), which states that 'the Guisers' and Mummers' Plays are short traditional verse sketches performed at Christmas and other festivals, and taken round pubs and private houses in return for cash and refreshments'.<sup>39</sup> Unlike the Derby Tup, these plays were not restricted to Derbyshire.

The T.D.R.G. 'is essentially an informal group of researchers in the British Isles, Europe and North America who have an academic interest in the history and performance of all forms of traditional drama'.<sup>40</sup> Its webpage<sup>41</sup> reproduces text from an article in A. Helm's and E.C. Cawte's 1967 *Six Mummers Acts*,<sup>42</sup> of a 'Brimington Mummers' Play'. Helm and Cawte claim that there were 38 examples of the play in Derbyshire.

That the interest in such tradition goes back further is evidenced by an internet search link to John Ashton's 1894 book *A Righte Merrie Christmase*, which contains some references to Mummers' plays, including two he cites directly, both featuring St. George. By this date Ashton says;

*'We still have our mummers in very many a country village; but the sport is now confined to the village boys, who, either masked or with painted faces, ribbons, and other finery (I have known them tricked out with paper*

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<sup>34</sup> Russell, *Here comes me and our old lass...*, p. 400.

<sup>35</sup> Russell, *Here comes me and our old lass...*, p. 400 quoting E.C. Cawte, A. Helm and N. Peacock, *English Ritual Drama: a geographical index*, (1967), pp. 14-15.

<sup>36</sup> Peter Harrison has since identified the date that his group performed the Derby Tup as the early years of the Second World War. He is also now clear that his group did not perform the Tup at the New Year—see paragraphs above.

<sup>37</sup> Russell, *Here comes me and our old lass...*, p. 400.

<sup>38</sup> At Google, as at 16 May 2009.

<sup>39</sup> [On-line] Last visited 16 May 2009 at URL: <http://www.folkplay.info/index.htm>.

<sup>40</sup> [On-line] Last visited 16 May 2009 at URL: <http://www.folkplay.info/TDRG.htm>.

<sup>41</sup> [On-line] Last visited 16 May 2009 at URL: <http://www.folkplay.info/Texts/86sk47rs.htm>.

<sup>42</sup> Helm and Cawte, *Six Mummers' Acts*, pp. 6-11.

*streamers, obtained from a neighbouring paper mill), act a play(!), and, of course, ask for money at its conclusion.*<sup>43</sup>

John Blair in his *Bampton Folklore* (Bampton is in west Oxfordshire) describes at some length mumming recorded in the 1840s, evidencing the practice back into the late eighteenth century.<sup>44</sup> The Bampton play is almost certainly of a hero-combat type.

More locally we have S.O. Addy's *Guising and Mumming in Derbyshire* published in the 1907 Journal of the Derbyshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, available online.<sup>45</sup>

Returning to Helm's and Cawte's Brimington mummers' play; this had actually been collected when Sir E.K. Chambers was studying material for his *The English Folk Play*, published by the Clarendon Press, Oxford in 1933. The play had been collected by Mr R.W. Shipley in 1933<sup>46</sup> 'from two old men'<sup>47</sup> who had taken part in it. One of them had 'first heard it in 1862 and took part in it during the next five or six years, after which the players were separated and the play discontinued.'<sup>48</sup> The play does not resemble the Derby Tup.

There appears to have been some competition between the groups performing the mummers' play, the morris dancers and the Derby Tup teams. The morris dancers were described by the mummers' groups that Shipley came into contact with as 'wild zulus', with the Derby Tup teams as 'too rough and the sheep's head they carried with them too "malodorous"'.<sup>49</sup>

Readers interested in learning more about the Brimington Mummers' play are referred to Helm's and Cawte's publication, or the T.D.R.G. website. The latter has a MIDI music sound file of the song performed at the conclusion of the play. Briefly, however, we learn that the play was known locally as 'St. George', with the players as 'mummies'. It was usually performed in crowded rooms, with a circle being formed by the players, in the middle of the room. The players would step forward into the circle and backwards as required. At the close of the play they all linked arms together, singing a few lines. There were eight players, but this was sometimes cut short to six players for the eight parts—this made more for each in the share out of money given by the audience after the play had finished. It also made for some flexibility as a 'Morris team was a serious competitor for rewards...'<sup>50</sup>

The costumed players were Slasher, St George, Black Prince, Doctor, King of Egypt, Hector, Beelzebub and Devil Doubt. All carried wooden swords described as being three feet long. King of Egypt (who had a copper coloured face) was also equipped with a dagger; Black Prince, Beelzebub and Devil-Doubt all had black faces.

Brian Woodall states in his 1976 book *Peak District Calendar of Events* that these St. George and the Dragon plays 'used to be published in small chap-books under the title of "The Piece Egg"'.<sup>51</sup> Fortunately a copy of one of these publications survives at Chesterfield Library in the Handford Collection<sup>52</sup>. There are others listed in the British Library catalogue.

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<sup>43</sup> J. Ashton, *A Righte Merrie Christmase*, (1894), p. 125. [On-line] Last visited 17 May 2009 at URL: [http://www.gutenberg.org/files/19979/19979-h/19979-h.htm#Page\\_125](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/19979/19979-h/19979-h.htm#Page_125).

<sup>44</sup> J. Blair, *Bampton Folklore*, (2001) pp.10-22.

<sup>45</sup> S.O. Addy *Guising*, (1907). [Online] Last visited 17 May 2009 at URL: <http://www.archive.org/stream/journalofderbysh28derb>.

<sup>46</sup> There is material regarding this play in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library.

<sup>47</sup> Helm and Cawte, *Six Mummers' Acts*, p. 6.

<sup>48</sup> Helm and Cawte, *Six Mummers' Acts*, p. 6.

<sup>49</sup> Helm and Cawte, *Six Mummers' Acts*, p. 6.

<sup>50</sup> Helm and Cawte, *Six Mummers' Acts*, p. 7.

<sup>51</sup> B. Woodall, *A Peak District Calendar of Events: Annual Events, Customs and Folklore*, (1976), p. 67.

<sup>52</sup> Chesterfield Local Studies Library (CLS), Handford Collection, HAN 289(d).

Charles Handford was a local historian, from Whittington, whose collection of documents resides in Chesterfield Local Studies Library. Handford's copy is actually called *The Pace Egg*, subtitled 'a Christmas Joust for boys'. This small booklet, whose cover measures just over 90mm by 165mm, was published in London and Ottley by William Walker and Sons. The front is illustrated at the end of this article. Handford's copy appears to have belonged to Sir Josiah Court of Staveley<sup>53</sup>, indeed the front has 'Dr A. Court, Staveley' written on it. Unfortunately the booklet is not dated.

Dr Arthur Court will be remembered by older readers for his long tenure as Staveley's principal doctor. This was in succession to his father, Josiah Court, who had been knighted for his work on Nystagmus, an eye disease once common amongst miners. It was Josiah Court who was interviewed by Ivor Gatty in 1945 towards his article on the Derby 'Tup' in the Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society.<sup>54</sup> Arthur Court's book *Staveley my Native Town; Some Historical Notes of the Parish*<sup>55</sup> includes some reminiscences of the Christmases of his youth. This was presumably the early 1870s as he died in 1960 aged 94.<sup>56</sup>

Dr Court recounts how 'during the day the Volunteers' band, the handbell ringers, the Derbyshire Tup, and the Mummers would join in the fun.'<sup>57</sup> Court states that:

*'The mummers' play or joust has certainly come down to us from medieval times, and some authorities think it may have had its origin as far back as the days of the Romans.*

*A similar play was performed by London citizens in 1377 to entertain the son of Black Prince, then living in Kensington, and it is worthy of note that in the Mummers or "Pace Egg" play, as it is sometimes called today, a Black Prince is introduced. Shortly the Mummers' Play is centred round the victory of St George over his three opponents. First Slasher, a soldier, next the Black Prince of Paladine, and finally Hector. The play begins with the entry of the actors, announced by the Fool...'*<sup>58</sup>

This is a different amount of players to that at Brimington in the 1860s. Court's recollection bares some similarities with the Brimington version, but has more in common with that in the *Pace Egg*... booklet. For example the opening dialogue in the *The Pace Egg*... is taken by 'Fool' whereas in the Brimington play 'Slasher' takes this role. As might be expected there are variations in the actual dialogue.

Just when the custom of regular mummers' plays in Brimington died out is not known. But writing in his 1937 *History of Brimington*... Vernon Brelsford describes how 'at Christmas the mummers were to be seen performing "St. George and the Dragon," "The Hobby Horse," and singing or reciting the "Derby Ram"...These customs appear to be dying out.'<sup>59</sup>

Note that Brelsford seems to describe the three customs all being performed by the mummers, unlike Shipley's 1860s account of the Tup and the mummer's play being performed by separate groups.

The 'Derby Ram' undoubtedly refers to the Derby 'Tup' described earlier in this article. The 'Hobby Horse' may refer to 'The Old Horse', which was chronicled by S.O. Addy in 1907.<sup>60</sup> A body of men would accompany one man dressed in cloth or tarpaulin to represent the body of a horse, complete with a head fashioned from wood, which had an opening mouth operated by strings inside. A song would be sung when the men reached the door of a house, followed by some prose conversation amongst the

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<sup>53</sup> The envelope containing the publication is inscribed 'Yorkshire Pace Egg Valuable Copy. Formerly the copy of Sir Josiah Court of Staveley', presumably in Handford's hand.

<sup>54</sup> Gatty, *The Old Tup*., [On-line].

<sup>55</sup> A. Court, *Staveley my Native Town; Some Historical Notes of the Parish*, (1948). There was an earlier edition of 1946.

<sup>56</sup> 'Obituary – Dr Arthur Court', *Sorby Record*, Number 3, Winter 1960, p. 30.

<sup>57</sup> Court, p. 84.

<sup>58</sup> Court, p. 84.

<sup>59</sup> V. Brelsford, *History of Brimington*..., (1937), p. 32.

<sup>60</sup> Addy, *Guisling*, pp. 37-41.

munners. According to Addy this ritual was a Christmas Eve event in north Derbyshire, but there were other variations in other counties, some performed at different times of the year.

Peter Harrison, whose memory stretches back to the period of Brelsford's book, cannot remember performances of the munners' 'St. George and the Dragon' (presumably this still resembled the St. George Brimington munners' play of 1862 described above), or the 'Old Horse'. Brelsford's assertion that the Derby Ram custom was dying out is, as Peter Harrison has described above, not proven, though whether it was being performed less than previously is not known.

The author remembers performing St. George and the Dragon as part of class activities at Brimington Junior School in the late 1960s. The 1862 Brimington version of the play, was last performed publically by pupils from the same school on 22 November 1997 in Brimington Parish Church. This was part of a programme of events celebrating 150 years of the building—a copy of the publicity leaflet is included in this article.

## Conclusion

Evidence points to Brimington as being no different to other communities English wide in the performance of munners' or guisers' plays, along with the Derby Tup, in north eastern Derbyshire. It appears that, certainly in the 19th century, there was some competition between groups who separately performed each element of these customs—morris dancers, the munners and those performing the Derby Tup. Perhaps by the time recounted by Vernon Brelsford there were no longer separate groups performing each element.

Possibly, performing the munners' 'St. George' play became too elaborate and time consuming for a growing Brimington. Increasingly in the 19th century the population and so the cliental and social mix of Brimington's inns and ale houses—the traditional performance ground for St. George—would change from being agricultural based to a more robust industrial worker. Perhaps the change was later—there is some evidence that the custom became much less popular throughout Derbyshire after the First World War.<sup>61</sup>

It may be that as performance of the St. George munners' play declined, that of the Derby Tup increased in the village, with its shorter, simpler production and catchier tune for audience participation. That boys and girls in the village could readily gang together to perform the Derby Tup, without too much preparation, would add to the Tup's attractiveness.

With today's propensity of discos, piped music and television in public houses, plus different values in youth culture, it is not surprising that the Derby Tup has declined. It may face the same relative oblivion as the munners' plays—destined to be played out in occasional revivals by local schools, with a much more polished, but perhaps less robust approach. We do, however, at least have the written music and prose to enable these revivals, thanks to Ian Russell's and now Peter Harrison's work.

## Acknowledgements

The author is particularly grateful to Peter Harrison's co-operation with research and information. Both are grateful to David Chin for his musical annotation of the Derby Tup reproduced below. Thanks are due to Derbyshire County Council for their permission to reproduce the front of the *Pace Egg*. Mention

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<sup>61</sup> C. Porteous, *Ancient Customs of Derbyshire*, (1976), p. 16.

must be made of the Traditional Drama Research Group, whose efforts have made various versions of the mummers' plays and Derby Tup widely available on-line.



'Old Tup at Handsworth' from S.O. Addy's 1907 'Guising and Mumming in Derbyshire'. In Peter Harrison's day the Tup consisted simply of a sack placed over the boy's head. Unlike this example, there was no attempt to replicate horns or facial features.



The last recorded time the Brimington Mummers' Play was performed in the village was in November 1997, as part of the 150th anniversary of the present Parish Church building. This handbill (originally A5) promoted the event.



Front cover (reduced) of 'The Pace Egg...' formerly the property of Dr Arthur Court, Staveley. This pamphlet found its way into the Handford Collection (HAN 289(d)) at Chesterfield Local Studies Library. There are other published versions of the 'Pace' or 'Piece Egg'. (Reproduced by courtesy of Derbyshire County Council).

**'The Derby Tup' as remembered by Peter Harrison, transcribed by David Chinn**

**The Derby Tup ( Ram )**

A version of The Derby Tup mummer's play performed by boys ( occasionally girls ) of Brimington during Christmas and the new year, in the years before the second World War.

Usually five performers :- Two dressed as a man and old lady,;- One as a Butcher;  
One bystander, and the worst singer or youngest with a sack over his head as the Tup.



As we were going to Der-by up- on a mar - ket day we met the fin- est



tup that e- ver fed on hay. Fey lay fey lay nan - a - ga lay

( MAN ) "Is there a butcher in this district ?"

( BYSTANDER ) " Aar Bob's a blacksmith "

( MAN ) " You silly blockhead I asked for a butcher not a blacksmith "

( BYSTANDER ) " Well ther's Bill he's a butcher "

( MAN ) " Well fetch him ere then "

( BUTCHER ) " Here I come where shall I stick this beast head or tail "

( ALL ) " Head to be sure"

Butcher pretends to stab the tup

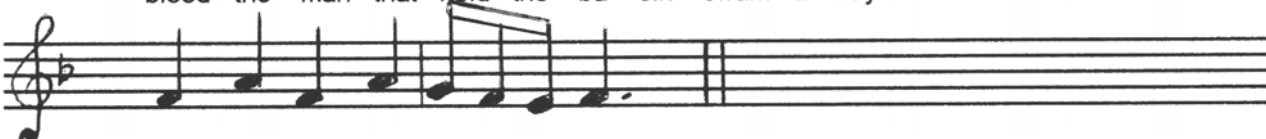
( TUP ) " Largest squeal he can "



The man that stabbed the tup's back was up to the knees in



blood- the man that held the ba - sin swam a - way in the flood.



Fey - lay fey - lay nan - a - ga lay

The hairs that grew on the tup's back grew so mighty high  
that eagles came and built their nests and made the young ones cry

Fey - lay Fey - ley nan-aga lay

The horns that grew on the tups head grew up to the moon  
a lad went up in January didn't get down till June

Fey - lay Fey - ley nan-aga lay

and all the kids in Derby came begging for it's eyes  
to make a pair of footballs they were just the size

Fey - lay Fey - ley nan-aga lay

and all the women in Derby came asking for it's ears to make  
a leather apron to last them forty years

Fey - lay Fey - ley nan-aga lay

and all the men in Derby came begging for it's tail  
to ring St George's passing bell in the middle of Derby gaol

Fey - lay Fey - ley nan-aga lay

and now our song is ended we canna longa stay so  
please give us a copper or two and let us go away

Fey - lay Fey - ley nan-aga lay

## BRIMINGTON CRICKET CLUB – DERBYSHIRE CUP WINNERS 1887 AND 1888

Janet Murphy

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The Derbyshire County Cricket Club *Year Book* of 1972 included a photograph of the Brimington team which won the Derbyshire Cup in 1888 (illustrated at the end of this article). The caption indicated that the club also won the cup in 1887 and were semi-finalists in 1889, but this is only part of the story of cricket in Brimington at the time.

At the time of the 1881 census Brimington had a population of 1768 males of all ages. So it is rather remarkable that on three occasions, in 1883, 1885 and 1886, Derbyshire County Cricket Club fielded a side which included three players born in Brimington. Five different players were involved, all of whom appeared in the 1881 census for Brimington: William Mycroft and his half-brother Thomas, William Cropper, George Davidson and John Brelsford (or Brailsford). Despite being the home of such talented cricketers there was no organised cricket club in Brimington until 1884.

Hugh Franklin Hole was the husband of Geraldine Markham, and a frequent visitor to Tapton House.<sup>1</sup> He was instrumental in establishing the club. When visiting Brimington he had been surprised to find that although there were plenty of cricketers in the village, some of whom were playing as professionals for other sides, there was no team. The cricket ground was on the Common but there was no pavilion, the players changed in the local pub.

Hole entered Brimington in the Derbyshire Challenge Cup in 1887. Brimington swept aside their semi-final opponents, West End, with ease at the County Ground, Derby. None of the West End players reached double figures in their reply to Brimington's 231. Martin Cropper was not included in the side 'owing to some difference between him and the committee'. Fortunately the matter was resolved and he was included in the side for the final three weeks later which was an altogether closer affair. Their opponents were Derby Midland (Railway), the premier club in Derby. Most of the county eleven were on one side or the other.

The match was played over two days with two innings a side. The bowlers were on top throughout with Martin Cropper taking four wickets for ten runs in Derby Midland's second innings. On the Monday morning a train-load of Brimington supporters made their way to Derby in anticipation of seeing Brimington score the 100 runs they required to win. However six wickets fell cheaply before Joe Marshall scored 20 and, when Fred Eyre, the last man, went to the wicket to join Hugh Hole, 27 runs were still required. Fred Eyre was a typical number eleven batsman and it was up to Hole to score the runs. With two runs to win Eyre got the bowling.

In his biography Hugh Hole described the end of the match as Eyre pushed the ball into the hands of silly point who juggled with the ball—and dropped it! He skied the next ball which fortunately fell between the bowler and the outfield: the batsmen ran two and Brimington had won. The immense cup was filled with champagne and handed to Hole. After it had been emptied they visited two hotels who had promised to fill it free, if they won, with neat whisky first and neat brandy second! Perhaps Hole viewed the ensuing proceedings through an alcoholic haze. He described the scene as several hundred Brimington men took possession of Derby Station and 'sat on the metals, community singing'. This must have been something of a provocation to the railway staff as their side had lost. Nevertheless they managed to clear the track for the train back to Chesterfield, where a vast crowd awaited the players. The wagonette sent to fetch them had two long ropes attached and they were pulled two miles back up the long hill, headed by a brass band playing *'The Conquering Hero'*.

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<sup>1</sup> H. Hole, *Looking life over*, (1934), p. 68-71.

The *Derbyshire Courier* saw things slightly differently: 'The utmost excitement prevailed, and when the wagonette conveying the players home reached the top of Cemetery Hill, the horses were unyoked and the cricketers pulled through the streets by enthusiastic supporters, amidst the cheering of hundreds of lookers-on. The flag on the church was flying, and flags and pieces of bunting were displayed from several of the principal houses in the village.'<sup>2</sup>

The *Derbyshire & Chesterfield Reporter* took an entirely different view: 'Midland played well throughout and ought to have won easily and would have done so but for the unfortunate mistake of Wren in letting Eyre off so easily.'

Brimington repeated the feat in 1888 and if they had won a third time, in 1889, the cup would have become the property of the club. The club received a devastating blow before the season started when one of their star players, William Cropper, was injured when playing in a football match for Staveley against Grimsby. He was accidentally kicked in the stomach and the injury was so severe that he could not be moved to hospital and he died shortly afterwards. Reputedly a team called the Littleover Free Lancers was got together to frustrate the Brimington Club. The Littleover team included the Australian 'Demon Bowler' Frank Spofforth who was playing for Derbyshire at the time and W. Chatterton, Derbyshire's leading batsman. Brimington complained that the Lancers were not a bone fide club, but their objections were overruled and, when the two sides met in the semi-final, Brimington were heavily defeated. Perhaps there was some justification for their complaints as the following season there was no mention of a Derbyshire Cup in the local press and Chatterton and Spofforth were playing for Derby Midland, the leading club of the season. By contrast at least five of the side which won the cup in 1888 were born in Brimington; W., F. and M. Cropper, G. Davidson, J.R. Maddison and T. Purdy.

Why were there so many talented cricketers in Brimington at that time? At this late stage it can only be a matter of conjecture. Until the Brimington club was formed William Cropper played for Chesterfield Cricket Club alongside Joe Davidson, father of George, and William Mycroft had also played for them. Mycroft and Joe Davidson were contemporaries; they would have been well aware of the exploits of Thomas Hunt and might well have seen him play when, in June 1858, at Chesterfield, 22 men of Derbyshire and District (including Hunt) defeated England by 12 wickets. The match was played over three days and attracted vast crowds.

Now almost completely forgotten in his home town Thomas Hunt was born in Chesterfield in 1819. He was apprenticed to a coach builder, but spent all his spare time playing cricket. When his apprenticeship was finished, he became a professional cricketer with the Sheffield Club before moving to the Manchester Club. These were the forerunners of the Yorkshire and Lancashire sides. He also played for Yorkshire, Lancashire, the North of England and once for the Players. When he was 39 he died from his injuries after being hit by a train at Rochdale. Thomas Hunt was a complete all-round cricketer; as well as batting and bowling he also kept wicket on several occasions. He augmented his income by playing single and double-wicket matches. In 1845 he played a Knaresborough XI. Hunt scored 23 and ten but Knaresborough only managed 16 and nine and 14 of those were wides! He was known as the Star of the North.

Mycroft, aged 17 in 1858, would therefore be aware that it was possible to earn money as a professional cricketer during the summer months. Details of his early career are sparse but according to his obituary he was playing important matches in 1867, was a professional for Birkenhead in 1871, and South Derbyshire in 1872. He came to prominence in September of that year when George Parr's All England XI played Chesterfield. Mycroft took eight wickets for 50 runs in 75 overs of which 52 were maidens. He played his first match for Derbyshire in 1873 at the age of 33. Although the wickets at the time definitely favoured the bowlers the opportunities to play first-class cricket were less and his figures of

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<sup>2</sup> *Derbyshire Courier*, 17 September 1887 p.3 and p.7.

534 wickets in just 81 matches show how important his bowling was for the county. In 1878 he took 101 wickets for Derbyshire in just 11 matches. By comparison Derbyshire's leading bowler in 2008 took 59 wickets in 16 matches. Mycroft's 17 for 103 v Hampshire is still the best bowling analysis in a match by any Derbyshire bowler (only 19 Hampshire wickets fell in the match and he caught one of the other two). His 12 for 42 v Kent and 13 for 65 v Yorkshire are still the best bowling figures against those counties. His feat against Yorkshire was followed by 12 for 84 in the following match also against Yorkshire! Derbyshire won both matches and it is the only time Derbyshire have beaten Yorkshire twice in one season. When not playing for Derbyshire he played for the All England XI, the MCC, the North and the Players. His most successful season came in 1877 when in all first-class matches he took 174 wickets in 1525 overs, of which 753 were maidens, for 2140 runs at an average of 12.32.<sup>3</sup> This was an incredible number of overs. Most of the matches he played were between 1873 and 1882; his appearances were few after that as he suffered badly from rheumatism. His playing career was over before Brimington's historic cup run.

So also was that of Joe Davidson, who had played for Derbyshire in their first ever match in 1871: his last match for them was three years later. He lived at the side of Brimington Common and would have spent many hours coaching his sons George and Frank, who also played for Derbyshire and no doubt inspiring other boys like the Croppers and the Purdys. Of his two sons George was the more talented. He was the third cricketer after W. G. Grace and W. Flowers to achieve the double and his innings of 274 against Lancashire in 1896 is still the highest innings for Derbyshire. He even toured South Africa. Sadly he died of pneumonia in 1899 at the early age of 32 leaving a widow, five young children and not much money.

Where did the other players of the 1888 team come from? During the 1870s and early 1880s Chesterfield Cricket Club had a strong side. At least ten members of the club also represented Derbyshire. However with too few members and a diminishing number of spectators at the matches there was insufficient income to meet the club's outgoings. There were several contributory factors to the declining interest in the club including the poor playing surface (Saltergate Recreation Ground, which they shared with Chesterfield Football Club); the growth of professional sport and the proliferation of works and village teams. In March 1887 *The Derbyshire Courier* reported that the club had given up the ground at Saltergate and that the old pavilion and grandstand were being demolished. As Chesterfield Cricket Club declined the leading players, E.A.J. Maynard, F. Keeton, A.B. Gregory and G.G. Walker, turned out instead for Brimington Cricket Club. E. A. J. Maynard captained Derbyshire from 1885-7 and G.G. Walker was an all rounder with the county side for many years.

Brimington ran two teams until 1892 and the last time the averages appeared in *T.P. Wood's Almanac* was 1894. Chesterfield Cricket Club was re-formed in 1887 and by 1894 had a new home in Queen's Park. As the fortunes of the Chesterfield club improved, those of Brimington declined and, although Henry Fox Purdy (between 1906 and 1919) and John Henry Purdy (1896-1906) both played for Derbyshire, the glory days of Brimington Cricket Club were over.

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<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately different sources give different figures. However he bowled an incredible number of overs.



*The famous Brimington team of 1888 (winners of the Derbyshire Challenge Cup in 1887 and 1888, semi-finalists 1889) Seated—F. Hopkinson, J. Gregory, E. A. J. Maynard (capt.), W. Cropper, F. Cropper. Standing—T. Purdy, —., M. Cropper, G. Davidson, —., G. G. Walker, —., F. Eyre, F. W. Keeton (reserve), J. R. Maddison. All played for the County except Hopkinson, Gregory, F. Cropper and Maddison, and these four were chosen for the Derbyshire Colts matches. Can you identify the three unknown gentlemen?*

## FROM ELEMENTARY EDUCATION TO FURTHER EDUCATION

Alan Sharp

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### Introduction

Today politicians debate about extended educational opportunities for young people up to the age of 18—further education. In the second half of the 19th century the concern of Parliament was the education of children at the other end of the age range (five)—elementary education. Despite opposition from the higher classes of society, religious factions and even the working class to a national system of education, Parliament was increasingly concerned that the commercial and manufacturing supremacy of Britain was in decline. This was mostly due to the fact that other European countries had a developed educational system. Education for all now seemed to be the way forward.

The year 1870 marked a turning point for the British working classes. The passing of Forster's Education Act established the principle of national responsibility for the provision of 'elementary education for all'. Since 1833 Parliament had been increasing its annual financial grants to the voluntary organisations to aid the provision of schools. Now it required the voluntary bodies to provide additional accommodation to accept ALL children, or failing this, school boards were created, with the task of building schools financed by local rates. The school boards consisted of respected gentlemen elected by the ratepayers (including women, long before universal suffrage).

It was by this Act that the Brimington United District School Board came into existence and the village schools on Devonshire Street and Brimington Common were built. The 'United' part of the title no-doubt refers to the amalgamation of Brimington with Tapton for school board purposes. The *London Gazette* of 26 February 1876 reported that on the 23rd of that month the school board had been compulsorily formed. Charles Markham later claimed, in a letter to *The Times* published on the 19 May 1880, that the amalgamation of the two parishes into a school board was not favoured by him or Tapton people.

Before the board built schools the only recognised educational establishment in the village was the National School on Church Street, opposite the parish church. This had been built in 1840 on land donated by Mr. G.H. Barrow of Ringwood Hall and Staveley Works. The standard of educational provision at the National School must have been questionable as it failed to gain a government grant in 1860-61.

The school boards had a relatively short existence. They were abolished by the 1902 Education Act, when local authorities (in Brimington the county council) set up education committees. But as we know the schools continued to provide education for the children of our village for most of the 20th century. Indeed Brimington Common (United District Board) School is still providing first class education for children up to the age of seven to the present day.

### The Schools

Brimington Common was only an infant school. Unlike its sister school on the Common, Devonshire Street Central School was an all-age school with infant (five to seven), girls and boys departments (seven to thirteen). It is not clear where the infant department was housed but I suspect it was the building nearest to Parkin Yard. The girls and boys departments shared the main building; and never the twain should meet! For most of the period 1878 to 1940, the girls and boys departments were from the age of seven to thirteen initially, then gradually the upper age limit was raised. From 1889 until 1920 however, a mixed junior department was opened with children from seven to eleven. It was not until

1941 that the mixed junior school was reopened when the girls department transferred to Hollingwood. In 1957 boys of eleven plus from the Devonshire Street buildings moved to new premises on Springvale Road.

A couple of facts that are of interest—in the early days of the board schools many of the teachers were the product of the pupil teacher system. This was devised by Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth in 1846. Schools regarded as efficient could train young people between the ages 13 to 18, during which time they continued with their schooling as well as practising teaching. The young people involved were paid nominal amounts. They then entered for the Queen's Scholarship Examination which would allow them to enter training college if they passed the examination successfully.

The other fact I find interesting is that the teachers often came from considerable distances to teach in our schools—this is especially true of the schoolmistresses. Home towns included Torquay, Taunton, Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Darlington.

It should also be noted that whilst the school board were actively pursuing erecting the Princess Street (later Henry Bradley) school, it was not built during their reign; opening in 1904 under the local education authority.

### **Brimington Common United District Board School of 1877**

Although the building bears the headstone 1877, it was officially opened in January 1878. In the next 60-plus years it was to have just eight headmistresses.

The first Log Book entry reads:

*January 14<sup>th</sup> 1878. Brimington Common U.D. Board School was opened for the first time today. The Rev.J.J. Singleton visited the school this morning. There has been ninety six children admitted during the day. I find the children very rough and ignorant, a great many of these have never been to school before. (As a former pupil of this school I find this observation very hurtful!)*

This entry was written by the first headmistress, Miss Mary Louise Walker. She served this new board school for 17 years and in that time firmly established it with a growing reputation. No other head was to serve longer until the formidable Miss F.B. Babbs was appointed in 1921.

In 1898 Miss Mabel Doughty was appointed head mistress. 24 years old on her appointment, she had been a pupil teacher at Brimington Central School before training at Whitelands 1894-5. Miss Doughty was to serve the village for 40 years, finally retiring in 1935 as head of Princess Street School, a position she had been appointed to on its opening in 1904.

### **Brimington United District Board School – Central Boys' School**

As a boys' school, at Devonshire Street, there were to be just six Headmasters in 79 years.

The school opened on the 3rd June 1878. The first Headmaster was Mr. Benjamin Groom who came originally from Norwich but who had taught previously at Staveley Coal and Iron Company school.

We often think of the early days of education as the 3Rs – reading, writing and arithmetic. An early entry in the Log Book showed that this was far from the truth.

*June 24<sup>th</sup> 1878. Monday. School very thin. Sunday School Union Festival held today. Holiday in pm.*

*Work – Reading, Arithmetic (x2 of money by 2 figures), Dictation, Spelling, Map Drawing, Grammar, Geography, Poetry, Drawing, Singing, Drill.*

Mr. Groom was Head for 17 years. He was followed by Mr. Orville Samuel Raistrick (four years), Mr. George Ingham Bell (14 years), Mr. Charles A. Harvey (27 years), Mr. Maurice Unwin (13 years), Mr. Desmond Kelly (24 years) and Mr. David Vinson (14 years).

## **Brimington United District Board School – Girls' Department**

Between 1878 and 1941 this department was served by 10 Headmistresses.

*7th June 1878. Brimington Central Girls School opened on Monday. Thirty girls were admitted chiefly from private schools in the village. Their attainments are very low not more than four of them being able to pass the first standard. Very few of them have any knowledge of Arithmetic. Needlework throughout the school – very fair. Considerable progress has been made this week, especially in Arithmetic.*

*E. Wharton – Headmistress.*

This headmistress was a very strict disciplinarian. Less than a year into her appointment she was administering corporal punishment to girls and persuading the school management to amend previous regulations forbidding the same.

Miss Mary Randell was headmistress for only four years. Interestingly she left to become a missionary in China. She later wrote a book entitled 'In the Taking of a Vow'. Sadly this appears to be unobtainable.

A Miss Helena Adams was head for 10 years between 1920 and 1930 and she was succeeded by Miss Nora Jabet in November. Miss Jabet was to see the senior girls transferred to Hollingwood Senior Girls School on the 8th January 1941, along with five other members of staff from Brimington.

## **Brimington United District Board School – Infant Department**

Unfortunately log books for this department were not found at the Derbyshire Record Office. Some of the names of staff have been found in other sources.

Esther E. Woolfinden, first headmistress

Effie Stormont, from Sunderland.

Miss E. Poultney, from Broseley.

Kate Ellen Sarahs, from Taunton.

Emily Jane Jenkinson, who later became Mrs. Yeomans, wife of Robert Yeomans, a butcher living on Staveley (later Ringwood) Road, Brimington.

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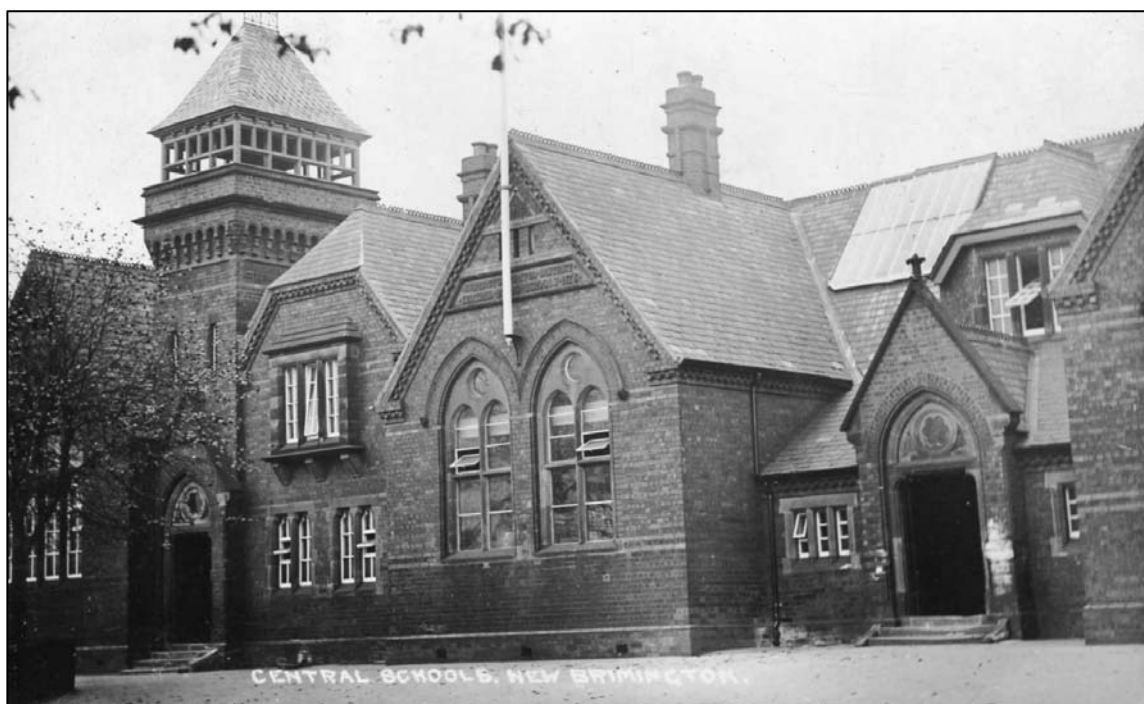
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Brimington U.D. Board School (Girls): DRO, D1969C/EA/1/2 & D3627.



*The first of the new school board's buildings to be opened was Brimington Manor Infants, pictured here in 2005. Although the date on the building is 1877, it actually opened in January 1878. The single storey extension to the left of what was originally the head teacher's house, enabled nursery accommodation to be provided from 1991. (P. Cousins)*



*The Devonshire Street Central Schools were opened in June 1878. According to the 'Derbyshire Times' of 8 June 1878, the architect was Mr. Rollinson, of Chesterfield. The building is a particularly fine example of his prolific work. The buildings, erected at a cost of £4,000, were originally designed to accommodate 160 boys, 130 girls and 120 infants. The school board had a room placed over the front entrance, in which they met. According to contemporary trade directories the schools were enlarged in 1888. This postcard probably dates from around 1905. In its final guise, as solely a junior school, the building closed in December 1998. (Author's collection)*



*Postally used in October 1904, the year of its opening, this postcard of 'Princess Street School' must represent an as-built view. This school was constructed by the local education authority, not the school board, though it appears the latter had bought the land in 1902. (Author's collection)*

## THREE OF BRIMINGTON'S SECOND WORLD WAR HEROES

Peter Harrison

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### Introduction

In the Second World War, 35 Brimington young men paid the ultimate sacrifice and their names are commemorated on the war memorial at Broom Gardens. Others were wounded; at least six seriously. They are all Brimington Heroes

This is the story of just three of those who selfishly gave their lives so that others could live in freedom.

### Albert Edward Edwards

Albert Edward Edwards was born in 1901 and joined the army as a boy soldier during the First World War. At the end of the war he was serving in the Royal Garrison Artillery. He left the army and started work at the Staveley Coal and Iron Company as a labourer in what was known as 'O'Shay's heavy gang'. It was during this period of work that Albert developed his very muscular body, becoming a very strong and fit young man. In 1930 he married Nora Keeling, the girl next door, settling down with her and her widowed mother, at 39 Cotterhill Lane, for the next few years.

When the Second World war started in 1939 the Army territorials and reservists were the first to be called up to the colours; then volunteers were asked for. Albert was one of the first from Brimington, even though he was a married man with children. The army accepted Albert, but because of his age he was not eligible to join his old regiment. Instead he was posted into the Army Pioneer Corps, the jack of all trades of the British army. Because of his previous army training Albert, now 130006792, Private A.E. Edwards, soon found himself in France as a member of the British Expeditionary Force (B.E.F). He was there all through the so-called 'phony war'—when after the defeat of Poland nothing was happening on the Western front.

This came to an end when the German forces invaded Belgium on the 10th May; culminating in the majority of the B.E.F. being evacuated at Dunkirk by the 3rd June 1940. Albert and thousands of others of the British forces were still in France, still fighting and retreating to the channel ports. France agreed to an armistice with Germany on the 21st May which came into effect on the 25th of that month.

Albert and his company had been making their way to the port of Le Havre, destroying stores of war material, at the same time being strafed by the Luftwaffe. During one of these attacks Albert's Regimental Sergeant Major was hit in both legs and was unable to walk. If he was left behind it meant certain capture. Albert picked him up and carried him the 10 miles that they had to cover in order to reach the French port. Once at Le Harve they boarded a ship and made it back to England. For this act Albert was given a field promotion and made a King's corporal, a rank which could not be taken from him except by a court martial.

During and after the Battle of Britain Albert was on duty guarding German prisoner of war captives (P.O.Ws). At that time the majority of German prisoners were either ardent members of the Nazi party or regular soldiers. The time came when Corporal Albert was in charge of a party of prisoners. When he gave an order, one large P.O.W spat straight into Albert's face. This, to one of Albert's upbringing, was far worse than a blow. Without thinking of the consequences, Albert handed his rifle to one of his men and proceeded to give the German a good hiding. A fight ensued and the P.O.W ended up in the camp hospital. Albert also needed treatment and said afterwards; 'That bl--dy German was a tough b----r. I think he's cracked one of my ribs'.

Corporal A.E. Edwards, service No. 13006792, was demoted to Private. Eventually he became Sapper Edwards and transferred to the 970 Floating Equipment Company of the Royal Engineers. Albert was employed in the transfer and assembling of the artificial Mulberry harbour at Arromanches. Just after D-Day he was on a tug towing a section of the harbour when the tug was torpedoed by a German E-boat. Albert with the rest of the tug's crew finished up in the waters of the English Channel. He was a very good swimmer and he had on a life-belt, but it was eight hours before they were all picked up. Albert was then given four days leave to help him recover, as the lower part of his body was black and blue from the explosion and exposure. He was then sent back to France. On the 9th December 1944, Albert's wife, Nora, received a letter from Albert's Commanding Officer stating that it was with great regret that he had to inform her that Sapper A.E. Edwards' body had been washed up on the coast of France. Even to this day it is still a mystery as to how Albert, such a strong swimmer, came to be in the sea and what caused his death. Albert's death meant that his widow Nora had to bring up their eight children alone.

Sapper A.E. Edwards body now rests in Grave 111. H. 1. in the Bayeux War Cemetery.

## **John K. Harrison**

John K. Harrison was born in 1918, left school at the age of fourteen and started work in the office of Beighton's Builders on Station Road Brimington. He was there when the Second World War began. After the Reserves and Territorials had been called up, Jack was in the first group of thousands of young men who were conscripted to follow them into the forces. He was called up with another one of his old school class, Gordon Ashmore. They both went for their medical and joined the Army on 7th January 1940. After very little training they were posted to the Royal Army Medical Corps and came home on leave in March. Jack did not know it but it would be another three years before he saw Brimington again.

German forces attacked and invaded Denmark and Norway on the 9th April 1940. The British and French Governments decided to send what forces they could spare to help in the defence of Norway. Jack and Gordon, even though they had only three months training, were part of that force. The combined force landed at the port of Narvik in the north of Norway, but they had no supporting artillery or air cover. The German army and Luftwaffe attacked the small combined force all through April and May. At this time both Brimington boys were members of the 137 Field Ambulance, attached to the French forces. During an attack by the German forces on the 15 May and under an intense barrage of shell fire and bombs, many of the French soldiers were killed and wounded. Jack, Gordon and other medical orderlies went out under continuing fire to attend the wounded. One bomb dropped nearby, taking off the tip of Gordon's right thumb. The same bomb shattered Jack's right leg. Jack's commanding officer was Captain acting Major J.L. Warner, a member of a well known Chesterfield family. Capt. Warner signalled a British naval Destroyer to help with the seriously injured and these, including Jack, were taken aboard. A Royal Navy surgeon operated on Jack and removed his badly damaged leg. Jack was then transferred to a hospital ship, landing in Liverpool a few days later, where he was put into The Royal Hospital.

Jack spent some time at the Royal undergoing operations until the hospital was hit by bombs during the air raids on the city. He was transferred to Chester, Warrington, then back to Liverpool. Each of these places came under air attack while Jack was there, but eventually he got back to his home in 1943. The French government awarded nine Croix-de-Guerres to the British forces under their command in the Norway campaign. Major Warner and Private 7369766 J.K. Harrison being two of them. Their citations were signed by General Bethouar, Commanding Officer of all French and Polish troops in the Scandinavian States.

Jack settled down in Brimington, started work again and married a Swindon girl, Bernice Herbert, who he had met when she was visiting the wounded at Chester in 1940. In the late 1960s Jack developed throat cancer and after treatment seemed to be over the worst, but then the cancer came back and he was admitted to the Chesterfield Royal Hospital. It was during this period that Bernice persuaded Jack to write to the French Embassy and ask if the medal could be sent to him. Although he had received the £100 per annum as a pension from the French, he had never been sent the medal. The Croix-de-Guerre came by post in a marvellous presentation case on the 9th December 1976. On the same day Bernice arrived at the Royal where she was met by a doctor who informed her that Jack had suddenly passed away one hour before. This was the same time that his medal had arrived at their house. So, Jack never saw the medal he had been awarded nearly 37 years before.

## **Roy Dixon**

Roy Dixon, the son of John and Elsie Dixon of Raleigh Avenue, was born in 1924. Mrs Dixon was a well known figure in Brimington, as she was the district nurse and mid-wife. Roy was a pupil at both Brimington Boys and Chesterfield Grammar schools. When he was eighteen years of age he volunteered for air crew duties with the R.A.F. After his initial training in England, Roy was sent to Canada for advance training. In February 1943 he graduated as a pilot. Returning to England Roy carried out the normal training of a prospective bomber pilot. At Operational Training Unit he crewed up and flew Wellington bombers for the first time with other aircrew, who would remain with him on air operations. Roy was posted to a Heavy Conversion Unit. At the end of 1943 he, together with his crew, joined 101 Squadron of No. 1 Bomber Group, which operated Lancaster aircraft from the R.A.F base at Ludford Magna (situated on the A631 road between Market Rasen and Louth). 101 Squadron was a special squadron in Bomber Command; it was the only Lancaster squadron to carry a regular crew of eight, instead of the normal seven. The eighth member was a German speaking radio operator—it was his duty to search the different radio waves for the German night fighter communications, interfering with these by jamming them with the Lancaster's engine noise. The aircraft also carried a normal bomb load. Because of this roll 101 Squadron flew when their own Group was not operating and they took part in more bombing raids than any other squadron in No. 1 Group.

On Roy's first operation with his squadron, his aircraft was damaged as they flew over the Dutch coast and they lost the power of one engine. A Lancaster was quite capable of flying on just three engines, but not at the height of the bomber stream. No pilot, especially one on his first operation, would be expected to fly over enemy territory to a target and return in an aircraft with only three engines running. Roy, however, knew that any aircraft from 101 Squadron which aborted an operation would leave a gap in the bomber stream's defences. He therefore decided to carry on and successfully carried out the operation, returning the aircraft and crew back safely.

Roy was awarded an immediate Distinguished Flying Medal, a decoration which very few aircrew were awarded on their first operation. He had joined the squadron when Bomber Command was going through what has become known as the Battle of Berlin and the Command were suffering heavy losses. Roy carried on with his operational career. On the night of the 26th February 1944, he was on an operation to attack Augsburg, a target which had not been attacked before. Consequently the bomber crews expected very little opposition. Roy, flying in Lancaster ME 590 (SR- C for Charlie), was hit by flack over the target area, fracturing the aircraft's hydraulic lines. The aircraft was then attacked by a night fighter, whose fire damaged the elevator control surfaces. Roy and his crew managed to get back to Ludford, but Roy had to get the aircraft down without lowering the undercarriage. The crew sat in their crash positions, with Roy making a safe belly landing at the side of the runway, with all his crew safe. Roy was then commissioned and promoted to Pilot Officer. Three weeks later, on the night of the 18th March, Roy was flying in Lancaster LM464 (SR- E for Easy) on an operation against Frankfurt.

Taking off at 1920 hours, the crew successfully bombed the target. When returning, however, the aircraft gradually began losing height. On approaching its base at Ludford, the aircraft lost the power on all four engines. The aircraft crashed seven miles east, north-east of Diss, near the Suffolk and Norfolk border. There were no survivors. Roy is buried in Grave 14758 of the Cambridge City Cemetery.

## Acknowledgements

The author is most grateful to the family of Roy Dixon and Albert Edwards for their co-operation and help during research for this article.

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## **OUR CONTRIBUTOR ASKS A QUESTION. DOES ANYONE REMEMBER ‘THE TREAT’ AT HEDLEY HOUSE? Jean Crossley, with an answer from Philip Cousins**

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Has anyone heard of ‘The Treat’? This was an event that took place maybe only a few times, possibly only once?

The Treat comprised afternoon tea with games afterwards for children who lived on Station Road, Brimington from the ‘Tap Yard’ (a group of houses roughly on the site of the entrance to Rother Avenue) to the bottom of Wheeldon Mill, Newbridge Lane and Bank Street. Only children who lived in these areas were invited.

One of the organisers of this event was my uncle Mr Jack Reynolds, who lived on Station Road. He was a regular customer at ‘The Mill’ public house (then the ‘Great Central Hotel’), so I suppose he got some friends together and the result was ‘The Treat’. It would be interesting to learn where the money came from for this event—perhaps raffles at ‘The Mill’?

The tea was set-out in the garage of Mr Pass (he had lorries at that time) at Hedley House. Here long trestle tables would be laid out full of sandwiches, jellies, cakes and a drink of either lemonade or tea. My aunt Mrs Mabel Reynolds and a number of ladies must have prepared the food, because I remember vividly ladies being there and making sure everyone ate everything up!

After tea we were allowed to play in the field at the rear of the garage and later there were organised games such as a sack race, egg and spoon, three legged, etc., with a penny if you won. What fun we had. I remember winning one of the races, but my uncle, who was giving out the pennies, would not give me my penny for winning. I shouldn’t really have been there, as I lived on John Street at the time!

My uncle died in October 1938, so ‘The Treat’ that I can remember (was it the only one?) possibly took place in the summer of that year. I would have been only five years old at the time, but ‘The Treat’ stands out very much in my memory.

### **We provide an answer**

There is some information, first courtesy Mr Ray Surr of John Street, who explains that the ‘The Treat’ was held in August of each year. He can remember it in the immediate years before the Second World War. Illustrated at the end of this article is a rather creased, but never-the-less interesting photograph from the 1930 event, courtesy of Mr Surr. Apparently a Mrs Twelves is top left. Can any of our readers fill in further details about the people in the photograph?

With some more research, it is possible to piece the story together a little better. In those days the *Derbyshire Times* had a quite a comprehensive local column. For example, readily available to your editor are references to the annual treat for children at Hedley House in August 1927.<sup>1</sup> In August 1931 what is described as the 9th annual treat of Station Road and Wheeldon Mill children (ages 4 – 14), was held at Hedley House, by permission of Mrs Knighton.<sup>2</sup> 149 children attended, with a mug inscribed ‘Children’s Treat 1931, Wheeldon Mill’ presented. Do any of these survive?<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Derbyshire Times* (DT), 20 August 1927.

<sup>2</sup> DT, 22 August 1931.

<sup>3</sup> Our photograph on page 43 also shows a number of children holding a mug.

In 1933<sup>4</sup> we read of a meeting held at the Great Central Hotel to make arrangements for the annual treat. Mr G. Barber was the Chairman, other committee members were Mrs Fox, Mrs J. Allen, Mrs G. Evans, Messrs B. Pratt, J. Reynolds, B. Botham, C. Middleton, C. Lawson (treasurer) and J. Mann (secretary).<sup>5</sup> That year the treat was being held again at Hedley House, Mrs Pass offering the grounds.

What follows is a transcription from the 'Derbyshire Times' of Friday 2 September 1938, describing that year's event—the one remembered by Jean Crossley.

*The Brimington Station Road and Wheeldon Mill Children's Day held their annual treat at Hedley House on Saturday, by kind permission of Mr and Mrs J. Pass. There were sports, a Punch and Judy show, and each child was presented with sweets and prizes. The New Whittington Band gave selections. Refreshments were served by the committee and helpers. The following committee were responsible for the arrangements: Mr Mann (secretary), Mr. Beighton (president), Mr J. Reynolds (treasurer), Mr Pass, Mr and Mrs J. Russell, Mr and Mrs B. Botham, Mr and Mrs J. Stones, Mr and Mrs G. Barber, Mrs Fox, Mrs Allen, Mr Cox, Mr Parker, Mr and Mrs Lawson, Mr Moss, Mrs Evans. At a meeting of the committee, held on Wednesday, Mr Botham presiding, it was announced that there was a balance of £2. 10s. from the treat. Afterwards there was a presentation of a pipe and money to Mr J. Mann (secretary), which was subscribed for by members of the committee.'*

Hedley House is now demolished with the site marked by Hedley Road. It certainly seems to have been the centre of some social activities in the interwar period. In May 1931<sup>6</sup> we have, for example, the opening day season of the Hedley House Bowling and Tennis Club at the Hedley House grounds. In the evening Alderman Phipps apparently entertained the members to tea, with a whist drive held in the pavilion, presumably in the grounds (which were extensive). Mrs Knighton (the family lived at Hedley House at the time)<sup>7</sup> was thanked for the use of the bowling green and tennis courts. Chris Goodlad says that he can remember the remains of both the tennis courts and bowling green at Hedley House, which were taken up during the 1970s to accommodate additional lorry parking by Pass's.

There have been other treats in the area. Your editor has seen a postcard with a large group of children outside the Great Central Hotel. It is captioned 'These are a few of the children supplied with a free tea by Mr and Mrs G.B. Graham of the GC Hotel, Brimington. March 22nd'. Kelly's directories show the following:

- 1904 - Graham, George, New Inn (the original name for 'The Mill'), Station Road
- 1908 - Graham, John, Great Central Hotel, Station Road (note name change)
- 1912 - Graham, George Baines, Great Central hotel, Station Road
- 1922 - Britt, Robert, Great Central hotel, Station Road.

The postcard had therefore been produced during the above period, certainly pre 1922.

Returning to the interwar years, treats were not uncommon, as a glance through the *Derbyshire Times* will reveal. In August of 1938 alone there had already been an annual picnic in connection with the Brimington Common Methodist Church at Furnace Farm.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps more ambitious was the 'Brimington Common Children's Day Committee' whose annual outing of that year involved a motorbus trip to New Brighton.<sup>9</sup> We learn that 125 children and 186 adults had made the journey, with all those aged over 70 taken free. Treats in connection with the various churches were a long established feature of village life. Perhaps there was some competition as to who could organise the most ambitious treat! It seems likely that the Station Road treat was abandoned, like many others, with the on-set of the Second World War, unless our readers have other information.

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<sup>4</sup> DT, 27 May 1933.

<sup>5</sup> Mr Mann lived in Bank Street. Information from Mr Ray Surr, January 2010.

<sup>6</sup> DT, 23 May 1931.

<sup>7</sup> Kelly *Dir. Derb.*, 1928, p. 76; 'Knighton George B. Hedley house' is listed under 'Private Residents' as is a Geo Knighton at The Gables, Station Road. The 1932 edition (p. 77) lists Joseph Pass at Hedley House with no Knightons.

<sup>8</sup> DT, 12 August 1938.

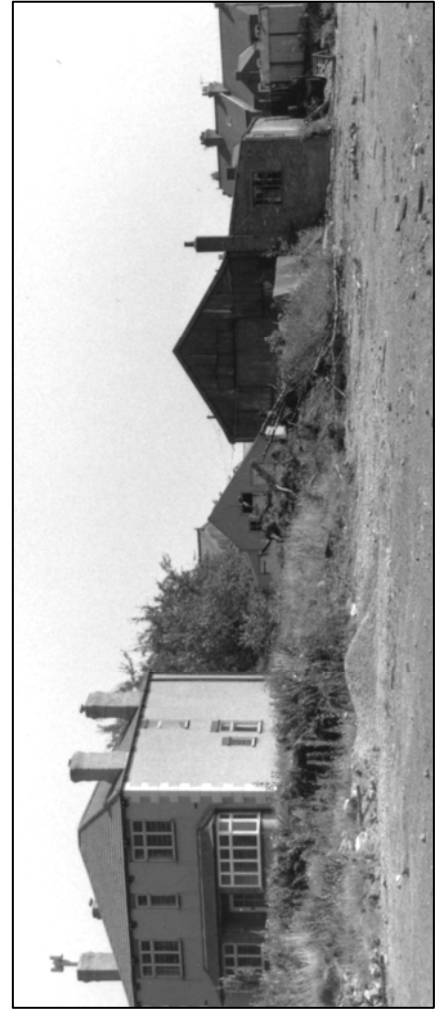
<sup>9</sup> DT, 26 August 1938



*The 1930 Station Road and Wheeldon Mill Children's Treat. Can our readers identify anyone on the photograph? (Courtesy Ray Surr)*



*Jack Reynolds who was one of the treasurers of the Hedley House Treat. (Courtesy Jean Crossley)*



*Hedley House, pictured shortly before demolition in November 1989. (Philip Cousins)*

## FURTHER NOTES ON THE 'SKULL AND CROSS BONES' BRIDGE AT TAPTON

### Philip Cousins

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#### Introduction

The Skull and Cross Bones Bridge at Tapton was the subject of an article in number one of the *Miscellany*.<sup>1</sup> The article referred to the signs erected by Charles Paxton Markham that subsequently gave the name to the bridge over the former Midland Railway's line on Brimington Road, Tapton. The subsequent history of the road, in particular its role in the aborted 'Cross Valley Link' road scheme of the 1960s, was traced.

The article stated that no definite date for removal of the signs had been ascertained, but that there was some evidence that they should have been removed before the Second World War. This assertion promoted some debate, as some residents believed that the signs were still insitu, guarding the approach to the bridges, until the early 1950s.

The article also reproduced a photograph from the January 1954 edition of the *Staveley News*, showing one of the signs awaiting its fate, after removal, in the yard at Staveley Works. The *Miscellany* article further speculated that had the signs been removed either during or just before the war, that it was unlikely that they would have survived the war-time drive for scrap metal.

Since writing this article the author has found additional evidence that the signs were certainly supposed to have been removed just before the on-set of the Second World War. It is also clear that both were re-erected at Staveley Works, following removal from Tapton.

#### Creation of the Skull and Cross-Bones Bridge Signs

Firstly, it is worth recounting a perhaps typical Charlie (C.P.) Markham story about how the signs came to be created in the first place. Tony Hallam, in his book *The Family Markham*<sup>2</sup> recounts on how Markham, frustrated with the Chesterfield Town Council's inaction on dealing with the hazardous road bend at the railway bridge, took things into his own hands. According to Hallam, Markham;

*'...one day asked his shop floor superintendant [at Staveley Works] if he had ever constructed a road; knowing the 'chief' from bitter experience, the man's safe reply was always... "No, but I could try". CPM responded, "Good you will succeed tonight, I have ordered the tackle and materials."*

*That night the road widening was completed, new boundary fences were erected on his own land and the junction adorned with skull and crossbones danger signs. On receiving from the Town Clerk the usual 'still receiving attention' reply, he arrived at Chesterfield Town Hall and presented the Clerk with the title deeds for the Markham marginal land used and suggested there was no need to bother any further!'*

Unfortunately the basis of this story is not referenced, with Tony Hallam unable to remember the exact source.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> P. Cousins, *The Skull and Cross Bones Bridge at Tapton* in 'Brimington and Tapton Miscellany', number one, 2008, p. 35 – 37.

<sup>2</sup> A.J. Hallam, *The Family Markham*, (2006), p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> Information from Mr A.J. Hallam, October 2009.

Tony Hallam adds an endnote<sup>4</sup> to the effect that ‘the original drawing for the skull & crossbones sign was done by C.C. Hollis a member of the LMS staff at Chesterfield Station. The iron signs made at Staveley Works were positioned in the early 1920’s.’ The author’s original *Miscellany* article states, correctly, that the sign was sketched by C.C. Hollis—he was not the originator of the design.<sup>5</sup>

## Removal from Tapton

The *Derbyshire Times* of 7 October 1938 carries a report of that week’s Chesterfield Town Council meeting. Under the subheading ‘Skull and Cross Bones to go’, Councillor T.J. Mitchell is reported as moving ‘the reference back to a minute authorising the Borough Surveyor to remove the “Skull and Cross Bones” signs erected near the railway bridge in Brimington Road.’

According to Cllr Mitchell the signs were ‘not in the way and until a new bridge was put up there was still a possibly of people going over the “precipice” at the corner. The signs were a sort of memorial of the late Mr Charles Markham, and he thought they should be preserved.’ The reference back, i.e. reconsideration, was supported by Cllr L. Wilkinson.

It is clear from remarks made by Cllr Kirk (who was Chairman of the Improvement and Highways Committee) that the intention was to remove the signs, as the Ministry of Transport had decreed this action. The *Derbyshire Times* reports Cllr Kirk’s sentiments as; ‘no one objected to the signs being removed more than he did, but they had no alternative. He had suggested that if the signs were moved back from the road they might be retained, but the instructions of the Ministry of Transport were definite that all unauthorised signs on or near main roads must be removed.’ Councillor Mitchell then raised some laughter in the chamber, and comment in the *Derbyshire Times*’ long running ‘Mainly About People’ column,<sup>6</sup> when he asked ‘how far is near?’ But the motion was lost, only three voting for it.

Councillor Mitchell was the retiring member for St. Helen’s ward, which at that time included Tapton. In the council elections later in 1938 he was returned unopposed, after representing the ward without a break since 1926.<sup>7</sup>

As might be expected, the Chesterfield Corporation minutes paint a more dispassionate version of events. At the Improvement and Highways Committee meeting on 19 September 1938 the Borough Surveyor had reported, under a minute headed ‘Skull and Cross Bones Signs’, that a circular had been issued by the Ministry of Transport requesting local authorities to remove ‘unauthorised road signs’.<sup>8</sup> Members resolved to authorise the Borough Surveyor to remove them. As the *Derbyshire Times* detailed, a motion was proposed at October’s full council meeting referring the matter back for further consideration, but this was lost.<sup>9</sup>

## Use at Staveley Works

The next stage in our story is again from the *Staveley News*, this time the Spring 1959 edition.<sup>10</sup> It is worth quoting the brief article, headed ‘Resurrected’ in full.

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<sup>4</sup> Hallam, *Markham*, p. 94.

<sup>5</sup> The original sketch is still extant. It is currently in the collection of Mr Hollis’s son.

<sup>6</sup> *Derbyshire Times (DT)*, 7 October 1938, p. 14.

<sup>7</sup> *DT*, 21 October, 1938, p. 17.

<sup>8</sup> Minute 2823.

<sup>9</sup> Chesterfield Corporation, Full Council minutes, 4 October, 1938, minute 3151.

<sup>10</sup> *Staveley News*, Spring 1959, p.105.



*Do you remember this picture ? [top] It appeared in one of the first magazines of this series, recalling the old "skull and crossbones" which gave the name to the bridge at Tipton, and which were erected at the works after the Chesterfield Town Council had decided to remove them.*

*The picture below shows them doing their job of warning road users on works property. The photographs were sent to the news by Mr R.W. Barlow, from No. 1 area training centre of the N.C.B. at Grassmoor.*

*"I recollect a fatality near the one with the wooden fencing background" [centre] he writes "when a petrol-driven roller crashed into the river, pinning Arthur Swift (42), 8 Devonshire Street, Brimington.*

*"Geoffrey Dronfield (ambulance) donned a diving suit to locate him, but Swift was dead when extricated."*

The actual locations of the photographs are;

**Top:** as featured in the *Staveley News* of January 1954 and *Miscellany* number one, one of the signs languishing 'by the narrow bridge to Devonshire Works'.

**Bottom:** on Works Road heading to Barrow Hill. Behind the photographer is the surviving 'Clock Tower' office block, the land immediately behind the sign was for some years used as the bus stands for the works, but is now abandoned. To the left distance is an internal works railway bridge, removed a few years ago, immediately before the river Rother. To the left of the photographer, but not on this photograph, is what became the main entrance to the works, up until demolition in 2009.

**Centre:** This sign is pictured guarding a bridge which crossed the river Rother a little way up a road running from the right of the bottom picture. This road is still in use, with the river crossing still in place, but now closed off. The road formerly led from the side of the 'Clock Tower' offices to the Devonshire iron and chemical works.



## The Bridge

The Corporation minutes from the late 1930s do reveal that the railway bridge guarded by the skull and cross bones signs was destined for replacement.

In September 1938 the Borough Surveyor reported that negotiations with the London Midland and Scottish Railway (LMS), whose line the bridge crossed, were at the stage where 'draft heads of agreement' for the necessary work to go-ahead had been received.<sup>11</sup> At this date work was also progressing on a scheme to widen and reconstruct the Lockoford Lane railway bridge, as part of a

<sup>11</sup> Chesterfield Corporation, Improvement and Highways Committee minutes, 19 September 1938, minute 2822.

scheme to widen Lockoford Lane itself.<sup>12</sup> The Borough Surveyor was authorised to prepare plans, specifications and estimates for the necessary road works and to co-operate with the LMS regarding final plans for this bridge. Around this time other improvements by the LMS to railway facilities were also envisaged, with plans for improvements to the town's station.<sup>13</sup>

By May 1939 it was reported that land required to widen the Brimington Road bridge was to be purchased from the LMS for £375, plus surveyor's and legal expenses.<sup>14</sup> In addition it was agreed that the Corporation should pay the LMS for increased liability for their future maintenance of the new bridge. In turn the Corporation were to receive payment from the LMS as the former were to take over maintenance of the bridge's road surface.

The Brimington Road bridge scheme seems to have suffered the effects of the Second World War. As recounted in *Miscellany* number one, it was not replaced until the late 1960s. The date that the Lockoford Lane bridge (now a cul-de-sac) was replaced requires further research.

## Conclusions

It is now clear that the signs were removed from the Brimington Road bridge approaches and had some useful life afterwards; being re-erected at Staveley Works. Their removal from Tapton was the result of Ministry of Transport insistence in 1938, not widening of the Brimington Road around 1934.

Just when the signs were removed from the 'Skull and Cross Bones' bridge is perhaps still a little unclear. It seems improbable, however, that the Borough Engineer would not have removed the signs in 1938, particularly having had a specific resolution approved to do so confirmed after being referred to a full council meeting.

The Spring 1959 *Staveley News* article quoted above and titled 'Resurrected' perhaps adds to the confusion. The photographs it carries appear to predate the January 1954 *Staveley News* article in which one of the signs is pictured 'ripe for resurrection'.

Probably our readers who reported seeing the signs at Tapton in the 1950s are mistakenly confusing them resurrected at Staveley Works.

Have our readers any further ideas?

*Lockoford Lane, looking east, March 1956. Notice the narrow railway bridge, presumably the reason why plans were advanced in the 1930s to reconstruct it. The car is standing near the entrance to the former scrap-yard. (Author's collection).*



<sup>12</sup> Chesterfield Corporation, Improvement and Highways Committee minutes, 19 September 1938, minute 2803.

<sup>13</sup> DT, 23 September 1938.

<sup>14</sup> Chesterfield Corporation, Improvement and Highways Committee minutes, 15 May 1939, minute 2039.

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*Some Brimington business of the day advertising in the August 1939 edition of 'St Michael's Brimington Parish Magazine'.*