

RIPLEY & DISTRICT
HERITAGE TRUST
DERBYSHIRE

Newsletter



Number **Twenty-One**

June 2021

www.rdht.org.uk

Lockdown Notes #2

It is looking increasingly like it will be September at the earliest before we can return to anything like normal. The committee have met via Zoom, and it is possible for a lone individual to visit the “shed” by prior arrangement. Otherwise, everything remains on hold.

Butterley Ironworks Trust Update

The crowdfunding appeal, with Gift Aid and associated individual donations has resulted in a wonderful total of over £11,000. Thank you to everyone who contributed to it.

The appeal was to raise money to pay for professional help to create a business plan. Initial talks have been held with two prospective companies, both having excellent references and ideas as to how they could help us progress with our ideas. It has been decided to go with a Nottingham based company, Focus Consultants run by a Mr Stephen Fletcher (Director and Partner) since 1996. The Company also has offices in Leicester and London. Mr Fletcher is a local man, living in Mansfield, but was born in Pinxton with his father working in Bentinck Colliery. He has a good knowledge of local industrial history and in addition to his professional help has agreed to help BIT in unpaid other ways.

The other company interviewed was Urban Vision Enterprise CIC, (UVE) based in Leek, Staffs. Again, a company with a vast amount of experience and so BIT's decision was difficult. However they have been informed that we are very interested in them and are likely to bring them onboard further down the line (as funds permit) to help plan a 'community engagement project' as some very good ideas were suggested during the interview.

Regarding progress on the Works Site, BIT has had a fruitful meeting with Godkin Holdings' Tim Godkin who explained his plans for developing the buildings in the near future. He is definitely fully supportive of BIT's aims. It is understood that issues have yet to be resolved with respect to S106 agreement involving repairs and future maintenance of the Blast Furnace Wall. This has to be resolved before further planning approval can be given for house building to begin.

Finally, BIT feels that some progress is slowly being made with respect to establishing a definite 'heritage roadmap', although everyone appreciates that the

road ahead will be full of major potholes. However – ‘we don’t have problems, only solutions’ !!

“Voices” magazine

You may remember that we used to have a regular page in the “All Things Local” magazine. The Ripley edition, however, has recently been discontinued.

We have now been approached by another, similar, advertising-funded free magazine, “Voices”, which is starting a Ripley edition. We have agreed to contribute a monthly article for as long as we can, and the first edition should by now have been published containing an article on Robert Argile. In case you missed it, I’ve reprinted the article below.

If you have an idea for an article on Ripley local history, please get in touch: articles should be around 400 words and include two or three pictures.

What’s in a Name?

Ripley is not known for its architects. Engineers, yes: the Butterley Company’s list of achievements is well known, but architects?

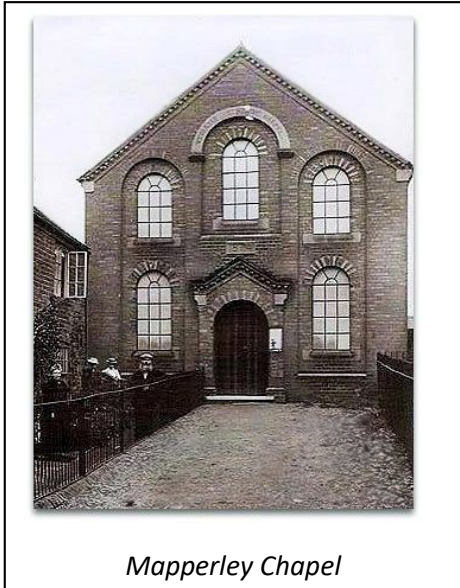
Well, there is one at least whose work merits attention, and the more so since designing buildings seemed to be a sideline for him, his main activity being civil engineering works: he supervised the laying of most of early Ripley’s drainage system, for example.

Robert Argile was not formally trained as an architect: he learned on the job, both at Butterley and from his father, another Robert, who had progressed from being a foreman at the “steam engine manufactory” (Butterley) in his mid-thirties to becoming a self-employed consulting engineer, even designing the new hall and shops for the Ripley Co-operative Society in 1880. Like his



Robert Junior

son, he also played an important role in both in the Baptist church and the town's local government.



Mapperley Chapel

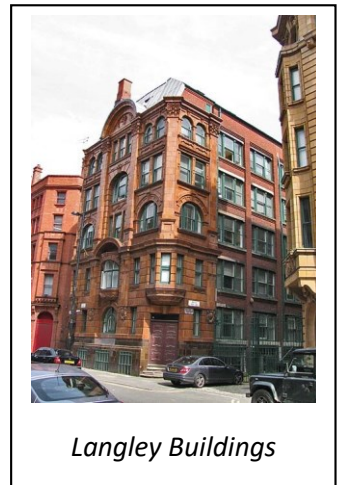
Robert Junior spent most of his time as a surveyor and consulting engineer but from time to time he designed buildings, mainly non-conformist chapels like those in Mapperley (1875), Kilburn (1891) and Marehay (1903). Later, in 1911, he designed Ripley Hospital, a project he had long campaigned for.

His greatest achievement, however, was not in Ripley but in Dale Street, Manchester: Langley Buildings. This was a 5 storey long narrow construction, in the baroque style, elaborately faced in terracotta tiles, built in 1908 as the printing office of the "Daily News" and

the warehouse for the burgeoning mail order firm of J.D. Williams. Now a listed building, it is totally unlike anything else he built.

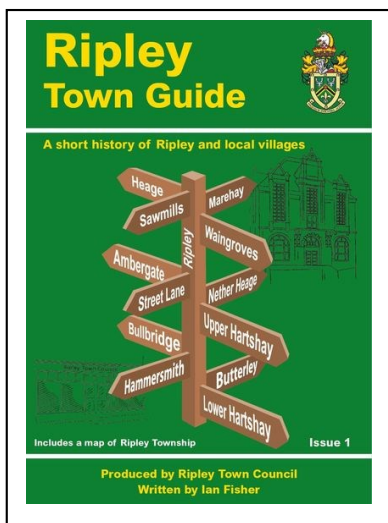
How did he come to build It? The answer seems to lie in his commitment to his church. In 1878, James David Williams, a draper from London, had married Amy Ann Coupe at Ripley's Baptist chapel. The Coupe family, who lived at Porter House in Ripley, were also devout Baptists and would have known Robert Argile, one of the church's elders, well. What more trustworthy man, then, to help found a retail empire?

In 1897 in Ripley he had laid out a new road called Argyll Road, modestly changing the spelling to make it refer to the Duke of Argyll. Yet what better tribute to his role in building the town and its infrastructure, than to name a street after him? Perhaps it should be changed back!



Langley Buildings

Ripley Town Guide



A new edition of Ripley Town Guide has recently been published by Ripley Town Council.

The Guide gives an attractively presented informative account of the history of the different parts of the Ripley township and will be accompanied by information boards set up around the area. RDHT has worked with its author, Councillor Ian Fisher to produce the guide. It is available free from Ripley Library.

An example of one of the information boards is shown below.

Welcome to Hammersmith



We invite you to read on and find out more about the history of this area.

Until the Butterley Company purchased the land early in the 19th Century and built a number of semi-detached and terraced houses, Hammersmith was a small hamlet.

The terraced houses were known as "Poker Row"; it was said that the tenants knocked on the walls with a poker to warn neighbours that the rent man was around!



Hammersmith - early 20th Century, with the cinder breaker on Cinder Bank in the background

A geological survey of a large area around Ripley during the years 1817-27 shows pits near Padley Hall at Hammersmith.

A house on the site of Padley Hall was probably the home of the le Luys family in the 14th Century. The family name evolved into Lowes, and the road from Ripley to Pentrich that passes through Hammersmith was known as Lowes Hill Lane. This was the main road, but was probably only a poorly maintained path. Everyone from Ripley who went to the Parish Church at Pentrich must have used this path every Sunday.

Padley Hall has Elizabethan origins, but was substantially improved in the 17th Century.

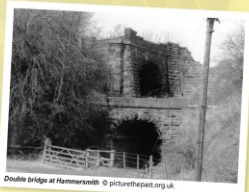
In 1679 Robert Feame of Padley Hall, a quaker, was sent to prison for not paying a tithe of 1 shilling and sixpence. Quakers did not recognise the role of priests, which the tithe supported, and so in conscience refused to pay the tithe. On his release he left for Pennsylvania in 1682, becoming one of the first settlers, seeking freedom of worship.

As early as the 13th Century coal and ironstone were mined in this area. Pentrich Colliery was near to what is now Asher Lane, and the site that is now a business park was a wire works into the 20th Century. The chimney was demolished brick by brick in 1978.



Padley Hall © picturequest.org.uk

The development of railways at Hammersmith led to an unusual "triple" bridge being needed. A railway line passed over an accommodation track for the Cromford Canal - originally used by towing horses whilst their barges negotiated Butterley Tunnel - and the Butterley Company's branch from Buckland Hollow Junction on the Ambergate-Pye Bridge line. This served the collieries at Lower and Upper Hartshay before continuing to Butterley Ironworks, Britain Pit and Swanwick Junction.



Double bridge at Hammersmith © picturequest.org.uk

The arrangement here was quite unusual as the Butterley Company's line crossed the Cromford Canal whilst another bridge took the Heanor branch over both the canal track and the mineral railway.

In 1976 the top part was demolished and the bottom part filled in to make way for the A38 Ripley by-pass.

Installed by Ripley Town Council. Written by Ian Fisher. Thanks to Peter Smith, Linda McCormick and Ripley Heritage Trust for their assistance and information and to all those who have given permission for illustrations to be used. For more information please scan the QR code or visit www.ripleytowncouncil.gov.uk



RDHT Website Changes

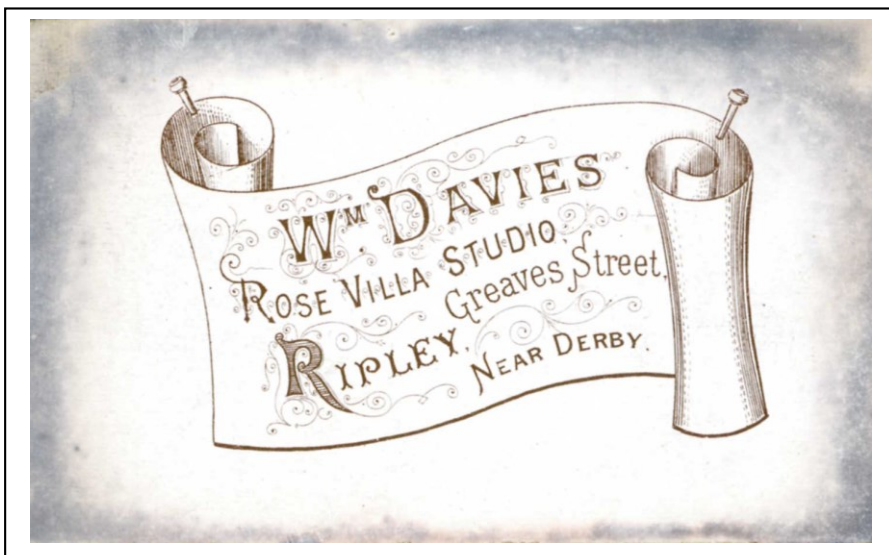
Our website may change very slowly, but it is gradually developing.

I have recently reorganised it to include a “History by Person” category, which at the moment contains a dozen brief biographies of people important in the history of Ripley. We have already had one suggestion for another: the Horne family of Butterley Hall – and would welcome more ideas.

Other articles have been grouped under headings like “environment”, which includes topics like refuse collection and the introduction of a gas supply.



William Davies 1831- 1900



William Davies was born around 1831 in either Glastonbury or Carmarthen: two different census entries give different places. He was a veteran of the Crimean War: in an obituary in 1900, the Derby Mercury reported that he: “was a colour-sergeant in the 41st Regiment, was present at the battles of Alma and Balaclava and served before Sebastopol during the greater part of the siege. He was mentioned in despatches as having charged gallantly inside the Redan on 8th September 1855, and for remarkably cool conduct on the occasion. He came to Ripley in 1860 as sergeant-instructor to the newly-formed Volunteer Corps, of which the late Mr William Jessop, of Butterley Hall, was captain.”

He had married in Derby in 1859 and worked for nearly 40 years as “house agent” for the Butterley Company: in effect managing their considerable housing stock : this might explain why he seemed to move around so much.

However, sometime around 1880, he had also begun to work as a photographer, presumably in addition to his “day job”. He worked with his younger daughter, Bertha, who is shown in the 1891 census as a “photographist”, his elder daughter Margaret having married the chemist John Wain in 1880 when she was 16.

Nearly all the photographs we have of Davies’ studio (which, like his family moved around a lot in the town) are Cartes de Visite, popular studio portraits of people in their best clothes, often with Davies’ name on the bottom. Unfortunately, very few of them are identified, like this attractive portrait of a young woman on a swing.

It is likely that mouldering in the attic of some people in Ripley are some of Davies’ Cartes de Visite of their ancestors: if we knew more about them, we might be able to say more about Davies’ clientele.



The October Fair 165 Years Ago

Ripley Fair was once three fairs in one: a cattle fair, with horses, cows, sheep and other animals for sale, the Statutes, or hiring fair, where farm servants signed up with a master for the following year, and a pleasure fair, which, according to the Derby Mercury of 1856, was: “never before known to be so full, the market-place being literally packed with shows, bazaars, and stalls, every available niche being taken up; some of the stalls extended their line down the adjoining streets.”

That year, however, there was one other great attraction, for on Tuesday 28th October, the day before the start of the fair, the town was visited by Edmond’s Travelling Menagerie. Edmond’s was the renamed Wombwell’s

Menagerie, whose poster is shown here and which featured, among other

attractions, the lion “Wallace”. Marriott Edgar later used the name for the lion in his monologue “The Lion and Albert”.

Maybe the lion in Ripley also “lay in a som-no-lent posture / with the side of his face on the bars.”

