

The Tang Hall Local History Group Presents

Snippets of Layerthorpe Life

Kelly's Directory

10 Earnshaw Jn	
12 Hearman Lawrence	
14 Paton Jas	
16 Douglas Ronald	
LAYERTHORPE.	
Layerthorpe bridge to Hawthorn grove.	
Left side	
Walker J. H. & Co. (York)	
Ltd. builders' mers. & coal merchants. Telephone. York 22051	
9 Mereer C. G. newsagt	
11 John Bull Inn	
15 Silcock S. shopkpr	
21/27 Turnbull R. & P. motor car agts. & dlrs	
..... here is Chieory yard	
MASON R.	
cycle agent & dealer	
Taylor C. J. & Son Ltd. genl. engns	
39 Frost Peter	
39 Bearman Mrs. S	
43 Parco Ltd. motor car accessories	
53/57 Clarkson H & Son, genl. engns	
59 Pencock J. T. turf commission agt	
..... here is Downhill at	
61 Clark Mrs. E. E. shopkpr	
63 Costello Thos	
65 Savory A. café	
67 Prossers Fisheries, fried fish dlrs	
69 Hutcheson John, woodworkers' supplies, timber merchant & do it yourself supplies. Telephone. York 53517	
71 Cryle J. turf commasn. agt	
73 Holmes Harry	
75 Morrison Mrs. M	
YORK AUTO SPARES (OSSIE'S), motor car breakers & accessories. Telephone, York 59131	
..... here is Wilson's yard	
83 Nicholson Fredk	
85 J.N.T. Model Products, who. distributors	
87 Frog Hall Inn	
89/317	
119 Parker Geo. J	
121 Foster Jsph. W	
123	
135 Hodgkin Arth	
137 Wrigglesworth Tom	
139 Dickinson Alfd	
	Right side.
	Taylor C. J. & Son Ltd. genl. engns
	59 York Autotelectrics Ltd. automobile electrl. engns
	69 Avery W. & T. Ltd. weighing machine mks
 here are Redeness st. & St. Cuthberts & Hallfields roads
	99/103 GLADSTONE GARAGE (YORK) LTD. motor car agents & engineers. Telephone. York 56671/2/3
	112
	116 Thompson Kenneth
	118 Thompson Miss Emily
	120/122
	121
	126 Pletcher Miss Violet
	128 Laverick J
	130 Wedin Raymond
	132 Waddington Colin
	134 Dixon Mrs. Annie
	LEADMILL LANE.
	34 George st. to Piccadilly. here is Aneroft st
	6
	Wallis O. & Co. (Produce Merchants) Ltd. who fruit mers
	LEAKE STREET.
	25 Lawrence st. to 1 Dundee st.
	Left side.
	1 Wintechams, hairdressrs
	3/7 Edmunds Walker & Co. Ltd. motor fetrs
	9 Quanton Wm
	11
	13 Stinger Jilly
	15 Tuppen Rt
	17 Botterill Emily
	19 Littlewood Harry
	21 Smith Cecil
	Right side.
	2 Meek Arth. W
	4 Edmondson Regald
	6 Botterill Jsph
	8
	LEEMAN ROAD.
	Station road to Garfield ter.
	Right side.
	FOXTON'S GARAGE LTD. (Station Garage). motor car agents & dealers. Tel York 54217 & 28202



Walkers Yard used to be on the corner of Layerthorpe & Foss Bank, the picture here is taken from Foss Bank

Matilda Moss



Matilda Moss, from Haxby, who celebrated her 100th birthday with family and friends looks at her telegram from the Queen

Picture: Nigel Holland

Matilda waltzes to 100

TRUSS
JAN 8

A WOMAN who brought up five children singled-handed after the death of her husband celebrated her 100th birthday this week. Matilda Moss, known to her friends as Tilly, was born in Rymer Street, York, on January 6, 1899, and has lived in the city her entire life. She moved to Duke of York Street on her marriage to husband Bert in 1922, and when he died prematurely at the age of 41 she dedicated her life to caring for her five children, Alma, Pauline, John, David and Tom, on her own. Tom said: "Her great passion has always been the family and bringing the five of us up. She has had a really tough life, there is no doubt about that, when we were young, she didn't have time for anything else except the family." Tom said the family had celebrated her birthday at the Birchlands nursing home in Moor Lane, Haxby, where she has lived for two years.

Nellie Nacey



PROUD DAY: Nellie Nacey who celebrated her 100th birthday at Woolnough House York

Picture: Nigel Holland

Nellie joins the 100 club

YORK resident Nellie Nacey has celebrated her 100th birthday.

The great-grandmother received a card from the Queen at home in Woolnough House yesterday where she was visited by family and friends to mark her landmark birthday.

Kathleen, her daughter, said: "She has enjoyed the day very much and has had lots of visitors."

Mrs Nacey was born in Richmond Street in Layerthorpe in 1914 and was the youngest of five. Her eldest brother Arnold was killed in the First World War and buried in France. When her mother became ill when she was 14, she took on the role of caring for the family.

She married labourer Jim Nacey and they lived in Rawdon Avenue, where Mrs Nacey stayed for 70 years, and had two children Kathleen and Mary, and adopted a son, Tony.

Mrs Nacey has five grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren with another due.

Deaths

NACEY Nellie (nee Doherty)

Passed away peacefully in York Hospital on September 7th 2014 aged 100 years. Loving wife of the late James, beloved mother of Mary, Kathleen and the late Anthony, mother-in-law of Bill, a dearly loved gran and great-gran. The funeral service will take place at St Aelred's R.C Church, Fifth Avenue, York on Wednesday September 17th at 1.30pm followed by interment at Fulford Cemetery. Flowers can be sent to J G Fielder & Son, Funeral Directors, 48/50 Clarence Street, York. Donations in lieu can be made to St Vincent de Paul Society, a plate will be provided at the service.



Mr Raymond Mason, who is shutting up his cycle repair shop in York after 56 years.

Mr Mason, aged 64, shuts up shop at Chloory Yard, off Layerthorpe, at the end of the week.

"The place has got to come down for redevelopment, but in any case I would have had to pack up through ill-health," explained Mr Mason.

Mr Mason was born near Hull Road and after education at St George's School and St Willfrid's in the city, he joined his father, Thomas, in repairing bikes.

"When I was still at school my father had a shop in Lord Mayor's Walk, which is going back more than 50 years. Bikes were hired out at six pence an hour and if bikes were not returned I had to go looking for them."

The prices have changed

Ray shuts shop after 56 years

considerably, but the tools of Mr Mason's trade have remained the same and his personal touch has attracted customers from throughout the county.

Mr Mason, of Barfield Road, Muncastergate, said one advantage of his small premises was the minimal overheads which meant he had been able to keep his prices low.

But even his extensive knowledge of cycling has not enabled Mr Mason to overcome one hurdle — he has never cycled and does not want to.

THE WAY WE WERE

JULY

11

100 years ago

At the Juvenile Court, Henry Alwyn Scales, aged 15, of 2, Morley Street, was charged with stealing a quantity of growing apples from a garden, the property of Mrs E Starkey. PC W Ward said that at 7pm on June 20th he had watched the defendant with another boy named Mills enter Mrs Starkey's fowl yard. They went to the kitchen garden, and there commenced to fill their pockets with apples and berries. Upon approaching them they made off, but he caught the defendant Mills who had been dealt with the previous Monday week and from inquiries found the current defendant at 2, Morley Street. The Chief Constable said this was a most serious matter for the lady who owned the garden. She had complained continually about robberies from her garden, and he asked magistrates to take the matter into serious consideration, so as to draw attention to it all over the city. This was a silly theft for them to commit, because the apples were not fit to eat. Scales was fined 2s 6d and costs.

73, WINS YORK ROAD WALK

SEVENTY-THREE-YEAR-OLD Tommy Cole, the oldest walker in the race, won the first prize in the Layerthorpe W.M.C. road race last night. His time for the six miles was 71 minutes.

He was first off and had a start of 20 minutes over the two scratch men, W. Rawson and A. Frankish.

The first man home was Cpl. D. Robinson, a P.T. instructor at Rufforth R.A.F. camp, but because he entered as a guest walker he received no prize. He started six minutes before scratch and returned a time of 55 minutes.

FOURTH SUCCESS

After the race Mr. Cole said that he had had an easy race. He has won the race four times and although most of the race was in heavy rain he looked very fresh at the finish.

Robinson has played for the club in the Rugby League Inter-Works competition and is also a good boxer. He recently beat D. Walls, of York Boys' Club, one of the club's most promising young boxers.

Third man home was H. Ezzard with a time of 62 minutes. One of the scratch men, A. Frankish, returned the fastest time of the race with 53½ minutes.

T. Richardson withdrew from the race in Stockton Lane because of cramp.

Results: 1, Cpl. D. Robinson (55min.); 2, T. Cole (71min.); 3, H. Ezzard (62min.); 4, A. Frankish (53min. 30sec.); 5, T. Addison (67min.); 6, W. Rawson (56min. 30sec.); 7, R. Richardson (61min. 30sec.); 8, J. Simpson (62min.); 9, T. Harrison (61min.); 10, G. Calpin (63min.) and J. O'Brien (64min.).

2ND JUNE 1953

Press Cuttings

Ex-Sheriff of York dies

MR JOHN LAVERACK, the former Sheriff of York, has lost his courageous battle for life. He died in hospital yesterday.

Mr Laverack, who was 65, suffered a setback earlier this week after a transplant operation at the St James's Hospital, Leeds.

The stitches burst causing haemorrhaging and he was put back on to a dialysis machine which had kept him alive for two years. He had suffered from weak kidneys for 40 years.

Today, a friend and colleague, Coun Keith Wood, said: "There are a great many people in York who are in a better position today because of John Laverack due to his council work and the personal help he gave. He was always warm, friendly and enjoyed life to the full. He will be sadly missed."

Mr Laverack, of Gladstone House, Layerthorpe, was chairman of the former Gladstone Garage in Layerthorpe which he founded in 1950.

During the war he served with the Tank Corps.

He was a Conservative city councillor for nine years and served as Sheriff in 1978-79.

Earlier this year, and despite his illness, he bravely stood for election to the county council.

He was a well-known amateur



Mr John Laverack: Always warm and friendly.

golfer in York and played in international tournaments in South Africa, Tobago and Paris. He was a member of Fulford Golf Club.

Mr Laverack leaves a widow, Wyn, a son, John, and two grandchildren.

A funeral service will take place at Heworth Church on Tuesday.

FREE! GIFT TOKENS



Houses come down in the Groves, York.

Life and views on living in Layerthorpe area

TO many York citizens Layerthorpe is an uneasy 10 seconds as the bus rushes through on its way to Stockton Lane and Elmfield Avenue.

"And do people actually live there?" one might ask after glancing at bleak, drab Downhill Street.

They do indeed, and a highly individualistic crowd they are, the common denominator being in the words of Mr. M. Thompson, of 12 Downhill Street, that they are very decent people who would be a credit in any district.

So perhaps, with slum clearance in the air, and a fistful of objections all ready to be heard before the public inquiries which will be held in York later this year, it is time to look at some of the working people to whom Layerthorpe means "home."

CHICORY YARD

Such a man is 73-year-old Mr. C. E. Cook who lives just through the dark passage into Chicory Yard.

Mr. Cook now pays a rent of 8s. 2d. a week for his house, with electric light and gas cooking. When he first went to Chicory Yard, it was only 3s. 11d. and he can remember

By W. Lang

the day, when, instead of a corrugated iron fencing opposite the houses, there were pieces of garden for the tenants.

The man who gave his name to the yard was "Chicory" Smith, who owned a chicory mill in the area, and washed his product there.

To-day, there is still a small business in Chicory Yard—a thriving cycle repair shop run by 54-year-old Thomas Mason, and his son.

"What will happen?" echoed the elder Mason, "your guess is as good as mine. One family has just gone out of Bilton Street, and they had eight cycles. But once people get up Kingsway or any other part of the new estates, they aren't going to come to Layerthorpe to have their cycles repaired."

WOMEN'S VIEWS

Incidentally, his son Thomas, who lives at No. 6 in Chicory Yard, believes in the modern conveniences for his wife. He has re-decorated the house, and they have an electric washing machine.

So much for the men. But when you talk to the women, they are quick to see the advantages a move to a new house or flat might bring—always providing the rent is within their income if they have a large family.

Although Mrs. E. Dobson, of 4 Chicory Yard, has lived in the district all her life, she would not object to a move.

"I wouldn't mind at all," she said.

SOOT AND CURTAINS

"Let me get out as soon as possible," said Mrs. V. Remison, of 2 Downhill Street, who



Chicory Yard (above) and Downhill Street, in Layerthorpe, York, are some of the properties to be included in the York Corporation slum clearance programme.



Life in Layerthorpe



Work on Layerthorpe Bridge, York, has progressed enough to show a new concrete span, which will add to the width of the present road.

More Press Reports

MAY 10TH 1945

UNAUTHORISED COAL DELIVERIES "Blow Struck At Root Of The Scheme"

FINES and costs totalling £40 8s. were made against John S. G. Peacock, of Downhill-street, York, at York Magistrates' Court to-day, for offences under the coal regulations dating back to 1942.

Peacock pleaded guilty to eight offences, two of the prosecutions being brought by Flaxton Rural District Council, the others by York Corporation. Prosecuting for York Corporation, Mr. G. H. Heningham said

the offences struck at the root of the scheme for the allocation of coal.

He said that Peacock had delivered coal to houses in Main-avenue and Tuke-avenue, which he was not authorised to do. He also delivered the coal without furnishing a delivery note, and failed to keep a record of the deliveries.

When seen by the enforcement officer in connection with the offences, Peacock said: "I have got it over before and I hope to do so this time."

WOMAN COMPLAINED

Mr. J. C. Peters, who prosecuted for Flaxton Rural Council, said that it was only through a complaint on the part of Mrs. Dale one of the customers, that the matter came to light.

Mrs. Dale was charged a flat rate of 4s. 3d. a bag from July of last year, no matter what the quality of coal. Mr. Peters said that Mrs. Dale had kept a record of her purchases and when she was seen by Inspector Dodds, Enforcement Officer for the North Riding, the overcharging was apparent.

Coal delivered in December last should have been retailed at 3s. 11d. a bag, and not 4s. 3d., the price charged.

Old cars getting younger each year

OLD age — if you can call 12 years old age — is catching up on more York cars these days.

The evidence is at the Layerthorpe scrapyard of York Autospare, where the piles of wrecks are growing day by day.

Director Mr. Mark Grant, seen here with part of the collection, said that many of the cars coming in were still in good running order, with reasonable bodywork.

Dated

"The main problem is corrosion underneath. People have been hanging on to them, but they can't afford to repair the sub-frames.

"We have been getting far more cars in the last few months than we did last year at this time. There have been 30 already this week and one week we got 50."

The majority of cars being scrapped are dated around 1970, but more recent models — made in 1972-4 — are also reaching the end of the road.



Sell your furniture or your wife

Wayward wife

A York coal dealer called William Beaumont, of Richmond Street, Layerthorpe, took the drastic step of condemning his wife Ellen in print.

Mr Beaumont placed an advertisement on the front page of the Evening Press which stated that he would no longer be responsible for any of his wife's debts.

**SELL US YOUR SPARE
FURNISHINGS.**



**We Want CARPETS and
all kinds of good HOUSE-
HOLD FURNITURE.**

Best Prices Paid.

STIRK'S

Furnishing Stores,

LAYERTHORPE, YORK.

Tel. 2405.

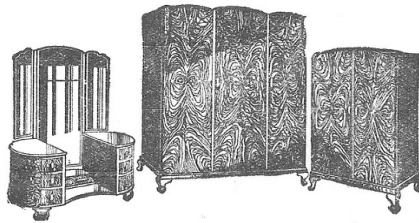
Stirk's Furnishing Store

IN ACCOUNT WITH
STIRK'S FURNISHING STORES

(Sole Proprietor—A. STIRK.)

3696

Bedroom and
 Settee Suites
 a Speciality.



Cash or
 Deferred
 Payments.

LAYERTHORPE - YORK.

M. *W. Freeman* *Sept 13* 19*20*

<i>2 Dining Chairs</i>	<i>15/6</i>	<i>1-11-0</i>
<i>Paid Deposit 13/9/20</i>		<i>10-0</i>
<i>Paid account</i>		<i>1-1-0</i>
<i>Settled with</i>		
<i>Stirk</i>		
<i>23/9/20</i>		

YOUR OLD FURNITURE TAKEN IN PART EXCHANGE. Liberal allowance made on your old suite. Don't leave it until it's too late—**DO IT NOW.**—Make an early call at **STIRK'S FURNISHING STORES, Layerthorpe, York.**

STIRK'S FURNISHING STORES have still ample stocks of **SETTEE, DINING and BEDROOM SUITES,** which will be sold without Purchase Tax until exhausted. Have a walk round and buy your Suite now, at **Layerthorpe, York.**

Land for sale at Layerthorpe Grove

PARTICULARS

OF THE

Valuable Block of Freehold Property

CONSISTING OF

THE DETACHED RESIDENCE called

LAYERTHORPE GROVE,

WITH THE


Extensive Grounds, 3 Cottages, Stable and Outbuildings,

all lying together at the Corner of Layerthorpe and Mill Lane at HEWORTH,

in the CITY OF YORK.

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION

(By order of the Executors of Miss Joanna Ellen Millington),



MESSRS. THOMAS WALKER & SONS

ESTATE SALE ROOMS, NEW STREET, YORK,

On **THURSDAY** the 3rd day of **JUNE**, 1920.

June 1920

GENERAL REMARKS.

The whole of the property is Freehold.

vacant possession of Lots 2 and 3 can be given on completion.

The whole of the growing timber will be included in the purchase.

It is intended (subject to the right of the Vendors to alter this arrangement) to offer the property in the following manner—

First, the 3 lots together; Secondly, Lot 1 separately and Lots 2 and 3 together; and Thirdly the 3 lots separately.

The property may be viewed by permit from the Auctioneers any week-day between 9 and 4 p.m., or at other hours by special appointment.

The property has a frontage to Layerthorpe of about 459 feet, a frontage to Mill Lane of about 157 feet and an area in all of about 8,510 square yards, and forms a most eligible building estate.

The property is on the route of the Trackless Electric Omnibuses which will shortly be running.

The longest side of the property adjoins the Foss Islands Branch of the North Eastern Railway, and the possibility of obtaining a Siding materially enhances the prospective value of the property as a site for a factory.

PARTICULARS.

Lot 1.

(COLOURED PINK ON THE PLAN).

Lot 1 is a detached residence with a frontage to Mill Lane of about 157 feet, and a total area of about 2,631 square yards. It includes the OLD MUSTARD MILL and COTTAGE occupied by Mr. J. H. Wright as a laundry with the paddock fronting to Mill Lane; the COTTAGE occupied by Mr. John Joy with the Garden on the South side of it, and a large open yard and other Buildings.

Lot 2.

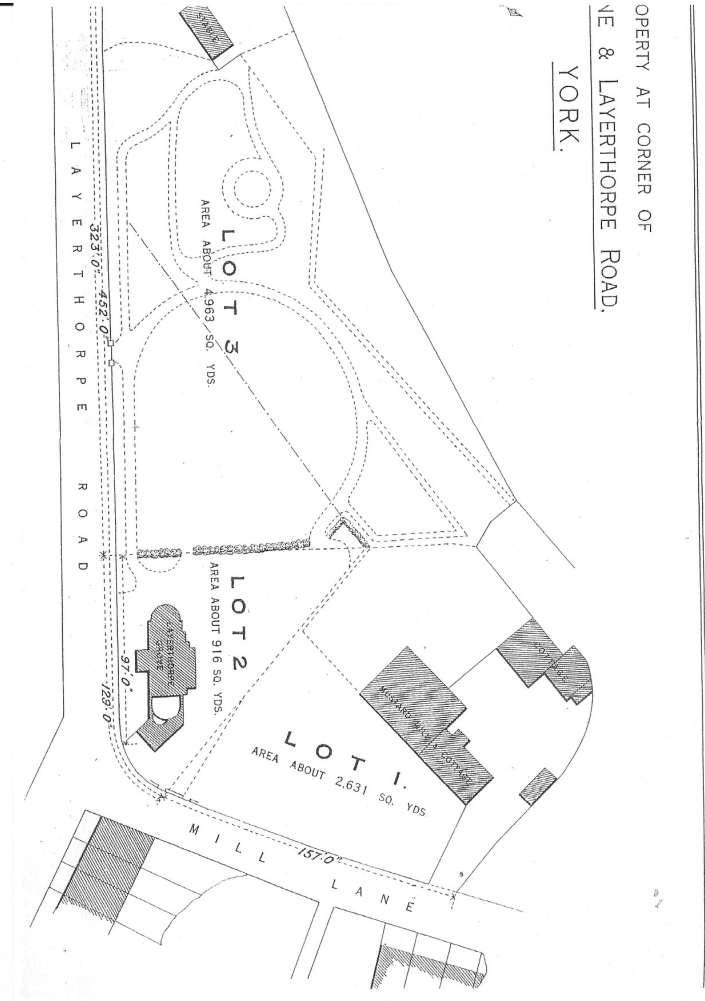
(COLOURED YELLOW ON THE PLAN).

Lot 2 is a detached residence with a frontage to Layerthorpe of about 129 feet, and a total area of about 2,631 square yards. It includes the HOUSE occupied by Mr. J. H. Wright as a laundry with the paddock fronting to Layerthorpe; the COTTAGE occupied by Mr. John Joy with the Garden on the South side of it, and a large open yard and other Buildings.

Lot 3.

(COLOURED GREEN ON THE PLAN).

Lot 3 is a detached residence with a frontage to Layerthorpe of about 323 feet, and a total area of about 2,631 square yards. It includes the HOUSE occupied by Mr. J. H. Wright as a laundry with the paddock fronting to Layerthorpe; the COTTAGE occupied by Mr. John Joy with the Garden on the South side of it, and a large open yard and other Buildings.



Herbert Clarkson

Family mourns skilled engineer

BY ALEX ROSS

alexander.ross@thepress.co.uk
Twitter: @AlexThePress

AN engineer responsible for a host of popular and renowned miniature railway displays died from a heart attack on Christmas Eve aged 85.

Skilled Herbert Clarkson spent decades producing an array of locomotive models alongside his father at their workshop in Monkgate for shows across the country, including those at the city's National Railway Museum.

Mr Clarkson was born in York and joined his father's company, H Clarkson and Son, in 1950 before opening a specialist arm of the company a decade later.

The Layerthorpe firm, which was based where Halfords is currently situated today, received fame in 1966 for building a six-tonne mini-loco — River

Mite — which was transported 200 miles to the Lake District to form part of a display.

The brown and gold locomotive was about the third of a size of a full-scale steam engine and was purchased by the Ravenglass and Eskdale 15-inch gauge railway.

H Clarkson and Son closed in the mid-1980s, but Mr Clarkson continued working as a sole trader and was commissioned by Rolls Royce and British Rail to build prototypes and display models.

The great-grandfather, of Barmby-on-the-Marsh, also built model steam locomotives for collectors worldwide and transport museums, including the National Railway Museum.

In 2000 some of the models were on display in the Millennium Dome in London.

His wife Avril, 83, to whom Mr Clarkson celebrated 60 years of marriage in

September 2014, said: "Herbert loved his work.

"Over the years, he had worked with people from all over the UK and the world.

"It's a testament to his generosity with his time and knowledge that many remained good friends.

"When times were hard, he worked harder, yet still devoted time to his beloved family."

His granddaughter, Stacey McVeighty, 34, added: "My grandad was wonderful to be around.

"He was so intelligent, but didn't take himself too seriously, especially around his grandchildren.

"We all doted on him and loved to listen to his stories about his work and travels.

"I am so grateful that we got to spend so much time with him and that my daughter got to know her great-granddad, too."

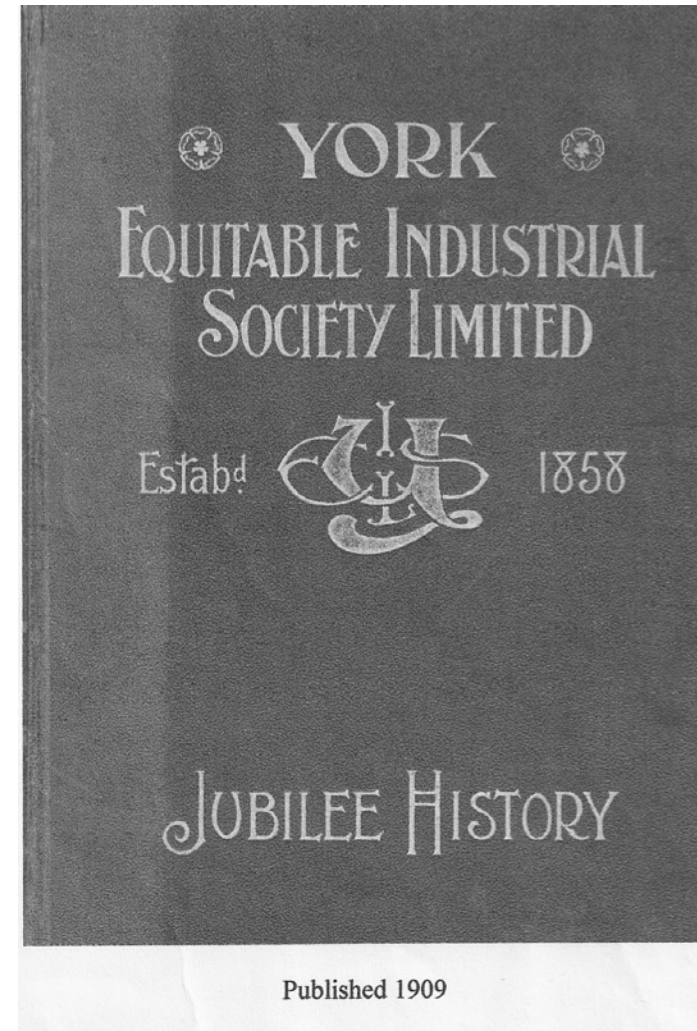


York Equitable Society Ltd

Layerthorpe Branch opened 25th June 1896



NO. 8 BRANCH, ST. CUTHBERT'S ROAD, LAYERTHORPE (Grocery). Society's Motor Wagon at side.



Published 1909

Holmes Fruit Shop



The John Bull Inn



Those were the days _____

Life and times of the John Bull

Incidents from a time when community life revolved around the pub

MY GRANDMOTHER, Mrs K Waite, had a small shop selling papers and groceries next door to the John Bull, in Layerthorpe.

Before I was three years old she had gone to a new shop in Dodsworth Avenue, and my father Fred Waite, took over her shop.

Mr Batters was the landlord of the John Bull then, and when he died some time later my father and mother ran both the businesses for a short time until Cec Mercer took over the shop and we just had the pub.

My father loved being a landlord. He had a very good trade even though it was quite a poor area and at the time many houses were being demolished.

Layerthorpe at that time was a warren of houses with many passages which opened out to yards which were filled with even more small houses. There were hundreds of people living closely together. It was more of a village and a very closely knit community.

The John Bull was a focal point where people went for a drink, a chat and for a good time. Sons could hardly wait to come in and have a pint with their fathers as they were then deemed to be 'of age'.

When the new John Bull opened it was very popular. The shop was moved next door and this house given a large shop window and naturally Cec Mercer moved with it. The new pub interior had a large bar, large lounge, a wide passage with tables and chairs and a small outsales, with the living quarters upstairs.

The new John Bull was as successful as the old, we were nearly always full and had trips to the seaside. We had good darts teams and won trophies, a lot of customers looked forward to their domino school, and there was

always plenty of interesting conversation. At the weekend we had Jack Mercer on the piano and Joe Langan as Master of Ceremonies as customers got up to do their turn and there was always a good sing song with everyone joining in.

The Lounge was always busy and two waiters were needed to keep the customers served. One of the waiters, Joe Kynman, had a very good voice and he usually gave a song or two. On Sunday night when we opened at 7pm a queue was usually waiting outside and my mother used to shout "now", and both the front and back door had to be opened simultaneously so that customers could pour into the lounge at the same time, as every seat was taken in that first

My mother used to shout "now", and both the front and back door had to be opened simultaneously so that customers could pour into the lounge at the same time, as every seat was taken in that first minute

minute. Once it was said that the Reverend Bainton had said he wished people would queue for his church, St Cuthbert's, as readily as they queued to get into public houses!

At closing time one night someone suggested having a diving competition off Layerthorpe Bridge with Sep Aspinall as judge. Despite objections from wives and girlfriends five or six men in their underpants were stood inside the railings on top of the bridge and at the count of three had to dive. On three only Bull Kirby (the local strong man) dived and the others all got dressed. Poor Bull came out dripping wet and cursing. He did

other and he complained that if he only had a man on the other end it would be a lot easier. Poor dad and George were too exhausted to even be insulted.

One Sunday after we closed a group of customers went down the skinyard, which was next door but one to the pub but led to our rear entrance, to play pitch and toss (very illegal in those days). A few minutes later police came running down to try and catch them. It was bedlam. Ronnie Long climbed over two walls and helped a very surprised Mr Holmes by taking a handle from him and innocently continued sharpening tools on a very large stone wheel. Four or five men ran down to the river and tried to climb along the back of the skinyard over the river Foss to escape, but one of the most ingenious, Arnie Clark, came in our kitchen and pretended he was having his dinner with us.

As the pub was near the river we were sometimes flooded; when it was really bad it used to flood Layerthorpe and up to a couple of feet through the pub.

Later came the war and the pub was busier than ever. Most of the newcomers were airmen and one crew would come in regularly until we heard they had either been shot down or crashed. There were about five of them and the pilot was called Grandad because he was the oldest - he was only 21. I can remember talking to Dessie Byers, a local boy who had just recently been called up. He was so proud of his uniform and the fact that he was now old enough to go to war. He was killed not long after in the Normandy landing.

When my father was called up my mother had to work a lot harder as he was only able to come home on leave occasionally.

When the air raid siren went we used to go down to the cellar but in the end usually ignored it and stayed in bed. When the big raid came I was at my other grandmother's in Tang Hall where we were woken when a cluster of incendiaries fell outside. We could hear the bombs and I could hardly

take it in good part later and made quite a few pints on the strength of it. The same Bull was once helping my father and George Warriner to move a piano up the iron staircase at the back of the house. They were on one end and Bull on the other and he complained bitterly that if he only had a man on the other end it would be a lot easier. Poor dad and George were too exhausted to even be insulted.

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Later came the war and the pub was busier than ever. Most of the newcomers were airmen and one crew would come in regularly until we heard they had either been shot down or crashed. There were about five of them and the pilot was called Grandad because he was the oldest - he was only 21. I can remember talking to Dessie Byers, a local boy who had just recently been called up. He was so proud of his uniform and the fact that he was now old enough to go to war. He was killed not long after in the Normandy landing.

When my father was called up my mother had to work a lot harder as he was only able to come home on leave occasionally.

When the air raid siren went we used to go down to the cellar but in the end usually ignored it and stayed in bed. When the big raid came I was at my other grandmother's in Tang Hall where we were woken when a cluster of incendiaries fell outside. We could hear the bombs and I could hardly

my mother and family were OK. I walked from Tang Hall and when I turned into Layerthorpe just couldn't believe the mess.

The John Bull entrance ceiling had come away at the back, the front windows upstairs and down were completely curved in but very few of the small glass diamonds were broken. The force of the blast had blown some of the doors in but it had also moved the complete bar back an inch or so and made a crack on the bar floor.

After the war more houses were being demolished and fewer people lived in the area, trade slowed down, my father became ill through his war service and died. My mother, who now had three young children, took over the licence. A lot of the old regulars who had moved away still came to see us but the advent of television was quite a blow to the trade. As more people got them they stayed in and were entertained in their own homes. My two young sisters and brother went away to the Licensed Victuallers School, in Slough, and my mother decided to leave, taking a small off-licence in Mount Ephraim, off Holgate Road.

I think the John Bull is nearer to the old type of pub, with the music nights and get-togethers, and also it is one of the few of the 'thirties' pubs to survive. It should not be demolished, it should stand, it is unique. Car parks can be built anywhere, but original 'thirties' pubs cannot.

Support from across the Atlantic

A SISTER of Sheila Davies, who now lives in America, has said what could be her last farewell to the John Bull, and added her support to saving it.

Judith York was born in the pub in 1946 when parents Molly and Fred Waite were landlords. She emigrated to the USA in 1966 and heard about the possible fate of the John Bull when she visited York this summer.

Judith went to the pub for a final drink. "It was a special - and sad - occasion for me," she said. "There are few 1930s buildings around, especially ones that have remained essentially unchanged. I was hoping that somehow the pub could be saved."

The visit sparked off memories for Judith. She said: "When I was a child I'd sometimes lie awake at night and listen to the piano and memorise songs."

"I realise Layerthorpe is an industrial area now but its a shame to get rid of so much history."

■ ABOVE: the



A lost friend called John Bull

PINTS OF VIEW

Regulars of one of York's best-loved pubs tell **Gavin Aitchison** why it was one of a kind – on the 20th anniversary of its closure



EVEN today, some people talk of it in the way they would talk about a lost friend. They say it was, for a good decade or so, the best pub York had. A wonderful place full of wonderful people. The city at its very best – until it was taken from them.

Former regulars and nostalgic landlords smile when they remember it and shake their heads dolefully when they recall its destruction.

Walk along Layerthorpe today and you would find no evidence it existed. But in the memories of thousands, and in a heartfelt video online, it lives on.

The John Bull closed 20 years ago this coming Wednesday, a move still seen by many as wholly needless and cruelly barbaric. This was no struggling backstreet boozery that became unviable. This was a popular, vibrant pub, closed because a businessman next door wanted to extend his car park.

The pub was built by John Smith's in 1837, in a similar style to the Masons Arms in Fishergate. It closed for a spell in the 1970s but was reopened in the early 1980s by Neville Hobson, a former baker with a love of beer and music. He turned it into a real ale freehouse at a time when such venues were rare and it

was doing well when the wrecking ball came calling. Loyal customers fought tooth and nail to save the pub, but their efforts came to naught. The final pints were pulled on May 28, 1994, and the pub was reduced to rubble soon afterwards, its fittings and contents auctioned off to regulars hungry for souvenirs.

I didn't arrive in York until 2000 so rely entirely here on others' memories and that fantastic video. It was produced by Old Dairy Studios in the pub's final days and is a tremendous piece of York social history, showing regulars gathering around the curving bar, a group singing, musicians playing, pints being pulled, groups chatting and lone drinkers enjoying their world. There are bursts of laughter but also moments of visible sadness between a handful of interviews.

The beer list is tantalisingly out of shot, but the sandwich board offers cheese, hummus, ham, beef or turkey. Were it not for the lost fashions and the cigarette smoke drifting across some shots, and if you didn't know the truth, then you could think the film had been shot yesterday.

The video ends with manager John Schofield proposing a toast: "To the John Bull: long may it remain in people's memories."

For those who were there that

night, and as one who laments what I missed, here's a renewal of that toast.

Memories of the John Bull:

Maggie Thorburn, who helped lead the campaign against closure: "The beer was lovely and the surroundings unpretentious. Neville furnished the 1937 interior with old enamel signs, it had a real fire, the sandwiches were amazing and it wasn't like anywhere else."

I'm not sure what created the particular chemistry that made the Bull such a special place. It certainly had an eclectic mix of people as regulars: artisans, students, pensioners, doctors, people out of work (beer was cheaper then), bikers, bookbinders, auctioneers; anyone and everyone just mixed in together. That was certainly part of it. It was a friendly place where people talked to each other. There was no jukebox, only live music and the occasional theatre performance. There was a genuine sense of community and if you went down there on your own you knew you'd end up chatting to someone interesting.

Some of the music nights were legendary: Acme Blues Band on Mondays were so packed that people would go up to the Frog Hall to get a pint as they couldn't get to the bar in

the Bull. People danced, sometimes on the tables. There was a lot of music. The Butter-Mountain Boys, Brendan Croker & Steve Phillips (who later went on to form the Notting Hillbillies with Mark Knopfler), Rory Motion, Ray Stubbs."

Pauline McAdam, a former regular, now living in France:

"The Bull became recognised as a great place to meet and socialise, where you could get an excellent range of beer and stonking sandwiches. Rowan [one of the bar staff] used to get supplies for the sarnies from Sainsbury's just round the corner and across the River Foss. Half a loaf, a slice of cheese an inch thick, ditto of pickles and about two inches of green salad were combined into a sandwich you had to dislocate your jaw to eat, anaconda style. There was no juke box, no piped music and no TV. Particularly nice was that as a female I could go into the John Bull on my own."

Dave Gamston, author of York's Real Heritage Pubs:

"It has never been replaced. It was a very special place and there is just nothing like it. It was pushing the boundaries of its time, being a real ale freehouse with live music. At the time, it was very different and quite exciting and there was a community around it as well, including a cricket team. Those people dispersed afterwards."

Chris Tiley, editor of YorkMix and former pub columnist for The Evening Press:

"The John Bull was a place apart. Unremarkable from the outside, idiosyncratic on the inside, going through its front door was like climbing through the wardrobe and finding a licensed Narnia, with fewer fauns and a lot more laughs."

It certainly felt like an alternative universe. At its worst, York can feel a little narrow minded, but the best thing about the Bull was how accepting it was of all comers. Men, women, old, young, black, white, it was a place where you were always welcomed, never judged."

Mat Lazenby:

"It was a fair walk out of town but totally worth the welcome you received. It had a really infectious no-frills atmosphere. It was home to an amazing blues band called the Homewreckers whose many members seemed to half fill the back bar. As a young lad embarking on a lifelong love affair with real ale it was the John Bull that first cemented in my mind what a good pub was."

Nick Fallon:

"The things that stick out in my mind are:

- Great ale. That was the era when Taylor's Landlord wasn't mass produced. Tasted totally different then. There was always a small but reasonable selection of other ales.

- No jukebox and an informal atmosphere. People just turned up and started to talk.

- Jamming in the back room - this was superb. People would turn up with their instruments and start playing. There was a lot of Irish folk that used to get played in those days.

- A stressed Neville – a balding chap with a beard who used to be landlord. Always looked hassled but being as the place used to get packed out a lot, understandable.

- New Year's Eve - always special. Each table had a candle in a bottle on it and sometimes a flower. That was it! No decorations."

Twitter: @PintsOfView

Saturday, May 31, 2014

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Soap Box



"NOTHING LASTS FOREVER": Drinkers in the old John Bull which stood in Layerthorpe, York

Real story behind the end of city pub

IF Gavin Aitchison must recall the demise of the John Bull pub in Layerthorpe (Pints of View, May 24), the whole story should be told out of respect for Peter Turnbull, who is no longer with us.

Mr Turnbull did not take anything away from anyone.

Following slum clearance in the 1960s, the pub lost its customer base. It was virtually deserted except for staff from Laverack Builders. The brewery shut it down.

The empty building was on the market a long time, but no one was interested in reopening it as a pub. Peter bought the freehold to extend his garage business. He agreed to temporarily lease the building for use as a pub again; but it was recognised that one day it would become part of an expanding motor dealership. The leases were for agreed periods only.

The leases expired and Mr Turnbull moved forward with his redevelopment plans. He acted properly at all times, but

was subjected to a campaign and continues to be wrongly vilified.

Far from being the villain of the piece, Peter Turnbull allowed the John Bull to run those extra years and he should be thanked for it by those who enjoyed those times.

Remember - nothing lasts forever!

Matthew Laverack,
Architect of this parish,
Lord Mayor's Walk,
York.



GRAND DAY OUT: Regulars ready to board the bus for a day's outing from the John Bull in 1935



FAMILY BUSINESS: The Waites' family shop

IN our weekly pub column recently (A lost friend called John Bull, Saturday May 24) we looked back at the John Bull pub, which closed 20 years ago.

Today, we are grateful to one man who knew the pub better than most - having been born in the upstairs room.

Mick Waite, who still lives in York, was born in 1948, the youngest of Fred and Molly Waite's six children. Fred died suddenly only six months later, meaning Mick never knew his father, but family stories and photographs have been passed down the line.

"My dad ran the shop next door then took over the pub and for a while they had both businesses," says Mick.

The businesses had been run by Fred's parents, but after his father was killed in the First World War, his mother (Mick's grandmother) Kate Francis Waite took over the shop.

Fred and Molly then took over and moved into the pub shortly before it was rebuilt by John Smith's in 1937.

"The pub was very popular with bomber pilots during the war. There were a lot of Poles, and my dad would always say "see you tomorrow" when they left.

When they said "not tomorrow Fred," he knew they were flying the next night."

He would give beer and packets of Player's cigs to the Polish Airmen and often used to say a few days later when they came back to the John Bull, 'Where's Jan?' or 'Where's Miloslav?' They'd say 'You won't be seeing them again Fred' - a telling moment."

Fred also ran a penny lending library from the pub, while the running joke among regulars was you could get served quickly or slowly - depending on whether you were served by landlady Molly Waite or barmaid Edith Rush (later Edith Warriner).

After Fred died, Molly moved on to run an off-licence in Mt Ephraim Street but the family remained in touch with friends from the pub, and when York City played Newcastle United in the 1955 FA Cup semi-final at Hillsborough in Sheffield, Mick recalls an open-backed lorry with 15 men on board set off from outside the pub.

"Mum pestered me to go back one night before it closed and I wish I had not," Mick says. "Glasses were still out from the lunchtime and she looked at the terrazzo floor she used to scrub every day on their knees, and said it wasn't the same."

Gavin Aitchison



AWASH: Flooding in Layerthorpe



OPENING TIME: Mick Waite's father, Fred, and barmaid Edith Warriner at The John Bull pub in Layerthorpe, York