

North East Derbyshire Industrial Archaeology Society



NEDIAS Supplementary Newsletter – December 2020

Price: £2.00 (Free to Members)



Whilst the Committee have taken the difficult decision to cancel all remaining meetings for the foreseeable future we thought that our membership may appreciate an occasional supplementary Newsletter based on previously published articles that you may have missed.

Company Housing in the Derbyshire Coalfield

by Philip Riden

September 2003's talk to the society was by Philip Riden, the County Editor for Derbyshire for the Victoria County History project, which is based at Nottingham University, where Philip is a principal research fellow. His subject was company housing in the Derbyshire coalfield—mainly the northern half of the coalfield around Chesterfield, Clay Cross and Alfreton. Philip has kindly scripted the following resume of his presentation.

Philip began by explaining that although company housing was a familiar feature of north Derbyshire mining villages, this was not the case throughout the British coalfield: in South Wales, for example, most housing was privately built and much of it owner-occupied, although conversely much of the housing in the Great Northern coalfield was employer-provided. Thus it was interesting to look at how the tradition of company housing had developed in Derbyshire.

The earliest company housing on the coalfield was built by some of the larger ironworks in the early nineteenth century and what appears to be the very first such housing, built by Benjamin Outram & Co. (later the Butterley Company) in 1796 at Golden Valley near Swanwick has survived. Interestingly, Butterley was among the last companies to continue building housing, notably at New Ollerton in the Dukeries coalfield in the 1920s. Butterley went on to develop a large housing estate around Ripley and are best known for their village of Ironville near their Codnor Park works. By no means all the other iron companies of this period followed their example. James Oakes & Co. built houses at Riddings near Ironville but Ebenezer Smith & Co. of Chesterfield seem to have built few if any, presumably because there was a ready supply of privately built housing in a town like Chesterfield, whereas Butterley and Oakes were operating in rural areas. Nor did Joseph Butler build houses at either his Wingerworth ironworks or his other sites in the Rother valley.



Butterley Co. housing of the 1820s at Hammersmith.
The housing is now much modernised. (Philip Riden)



<https://www.facebook.com/nediaschesterfield/?fref=ts>

In this issue: ■ Company Housing in the Derbyshire Coalfield ■ Homes fit for Workers (or, as yet, an unsolved mystery) ■ Robinson's "Model Village" ■ Robinson's "Model Village" further information on the subject ■ Piccadilly Road's Involvement in Social Housing ■ Further reading on Company / Industrial Housing ■

It is impossible from surviving records to decide why Butterley began building houses in Golden Valley in 1796. They may have been following the example of the Derwent Valley cotton mill owners, such as Arkwright, Strutt and Evans, or they may simply have decided that there was no alternative means of housing large numbers moving into a relatively remote area. What is clear is that rents were set to produce a normal commercial return (5–6 per cent) on capital tied up, possibly reluctantly, in house building.

When the north Derbyshire iron industry revived after the opening of the North Midland Railway in 1840, and the coal industry developed on a much larger scale, most of the bigger companies built houses and a few can be said to have developed whole communities. The work of George Stephenson & Co. at Clay Cross is the best-known example of this phase of development, together with the Barrow family at Staveley, who gave their name to Barrow Hill. Sheepbridge built rather fewer houses at their ironworks, possibly because it was close to Chesterfield, but did build villages near their collieries at Glapwell (Doe Lea) and Langwith (Whaley Thorns). Smaller companies built odd rows of cottages, rather than complete communities. Similarly, the Wingerworth Iron Company, which for a time operated blast furnaces on a scale comparable with those at Sheepbridge, Staveley and Clay Cross, do not seem to have built houses, relying on private enterprise to create the new suburb of Birdholme south of Chesterfield.

All the larger colliery companies continued to build as the coalfield expanded east in the late nineteenth century. Most of the new settlements were very close to the pits they served and consisted of bleak rows of terraced houses, typified by villages that have now disappeared such as Arkwright Town, which was isolated from any existing community, or Bond's Main, which was an extension of the older hamlet of Temple Normanton. Both the houses themselves and the layouts were clearly conceived to keep costs down and it is possible that the housing was not intended to last much longer than the expected life of the pit. Only the Bolsover Company embraced the 'garden village' ideal fashionable in the late nineteenth century, with their schemes at New Bolsover and Creswell Model Village of the 1890s. Both have been deemed worth conserving, despite being grossly atypical of the general run of housing on the coalfield, much of which has been demolished since the 1960s.



The 1890s Creswell and New Bolsover model villages, built for the Bolsover Colliery Company, were 'A' typical for the period, as they were designed on the 'garden village' principles becoming fashionable at the time. They were a big contrast with the monotonous terraces still being built at the time. New Bolsover is seen here, now (December 2020) in the final stages of a multi-million-pound restoration scheme. The properties are Grade II listed buildings. (*Philip Cousins*)

The output of the North Derbyshire coalfield expanded considerably during the First World War and in 1918 the major companies assumed that this growth would continue. Several new pits were sunk, mainly by the complex interlocking directorate that controlled Staveley, Stanton and Sheepbridge (as well as several companies in the South Yorkshire coalfield). Realising that large numbers of new houses would be needed, suspicious of the ability of the rural district councils to build them, and conscious of the economies of scale that could be achieved by combining resources, the companies established the Industrial Housing Association. This was a public utility company, funded by the constituent companies through securitising future rent income, which was strikingly successful in building large numbers of houses in both the North Derbyshire and South Yorkshire coalfields in the early 1920s, as their own very interesting publication, *The Building of Twelve Thousand Houses*, demonstrated.

Espousing the design standards of the Ministry of Health Housing Manual as well as the subsidies available under the 1918 and later Housing Acts, the IHA's architects designed a network of large estates quite different from pre-war housing. Houses were grouped in short rows with a varied building line and gardens back and front. Most had bathrooms, if often placed downstairs, and w.c. lavatories, albeit reached from an exterior door. The streets were laid out on curves, using the hammerhead cul-de-sac and other devices to create variety, and architects took advantage of

the often steeply sloping sites to create far more interesting layouts than the grid-plan terraces of the late nineteenth century. The dark red brickwork, with rather heavy detailing, and slate roofs of New Bolsover and Creswell was abandoned in favour of simple neo-vernacular elevations in a warmer, orangey brick, with tiled roofs. Roads were wider, there was reasonable public open space, and each estate had a group of shops at its centre.

Villages such as Hollingwood or Duckmanton, near Staveley, or Bramley Vale, near Glapwell, make a striking contrast with their neighbours at Barrow Hill and Doe Lea, and are an important element in the history of working-class housing in the coalfield. They are not dissimilar to contemporary Chesterfield RDC housing schemes (since both were partly funded by the Ministry of Health) but probably until at least 1925 the IHA was the larger provider of houses in the district. Ironically, all the colliery companies' housing stock, including that built by the IHA, was vested in the National Coal Board in 1947 and later transferred to the local authorities, who retain that which has not been demolished or sold to sitting tenants.



The Industrial Housing Association (IHA) built some 12,000 houses across the country in the 1920s, many for local companies such as the Staveley Coal & Iron Company and the Sheepbridge Coal & Iron Company. An example of a development for the latter seen here at Doe Lea (Bramley Vale), Glapwell, built for the nearby colliery. There are many similarities with council housing of the same period.
(Philip Cousins)

Philip concluded by pointing out that many of the ideas developed in the Derbyshire coalfield were transferred to the Dukeries coalfield in north Nottinghamshire in the later 1920s, since the new collieries there were almost all built by Derbyshire or South Yorkshire companies used to providing houses for their miners. In addition, the pits were sunk in a rural area, served by a district council that neither wanted the mines nor wanted to build large numbers of houses, nor did they have the technical expertise to do so, as the colliery companies recognised. It was against this background that Harworth, New Ollerton, Edwinstowe and the other mining villages of the Dukeries were built, forming the final phase of a story that begins at Golden Valley 150 years earlier.

The talk was followed by a lively discussion, to which Cliff Williams in particular made a useful contribution, drawing on his research on Clay Cross and adjoining communities. He pointed out that the Wingerworth Coal Company's activities at North Wingfield were on a sufficient scale to merit the description of 'community building', even if it was less extensive than that of Clay Cross Company.

HOMES FIT FOR WORKERS (or, as yet, an unsolved mystery)

by Darrell Clark

On July 5th 1918 in an address to the Robinson Company's Holme Brook Works' Council on Housing and Town Planning and chaired by Mr. P. M. Robinson, Alderman Rhodes explained the serious shortage of houses within the Borough of Chesterfield. He claimed the housing famine was fast becoming a menace to the health of the people of the borough. Giving proof of his statement, he showed that from 1911 up to 1917 only 608 houses were built in Chesterfield which, against the number actually required, left a shortfall of 800 houses.

Alderman Rhodes averred that the Government recognized the seriousness of the situation on a national scale, and as a means of providing work for our men returning from the war, it proposed to promote and finance a massive house-building programme. A worthy example of the fruits of Alderman Rhodes' address, and worth examining in some detail, is the formation of the Wheatbridge Housing Association by Robinson and Sons Ltd.

Early in 1919 a committee of management had been formed from four members of the various works councils, with Mr. W. A. Pursglove as secretary, with representation of the Directors of Robinson's, in the shape of Major W. B. Robinson, Mr. C. W. Robinson, and Mr. P. M. Robinson. By September that year the Association had been formally registered and negotiations had begun with the Duke of Devonshire for the purchase of 14 acres of land on Ashgate Road, opposite the recently remade entrance to Chester Street.

Quoting from the Robinson in-house magazine, *The Link*, "This land is considered by many to be the finest building site in Chesterfield, and it should soon be possible to make an extremely pleasant garden suburb there". By the December issue of *The Link* it can be seen that Mr. Bailey Deeping of Chesterfield had been appointed as Architect and was engaged on the layout of the land, envisaged to contain 112 houses.

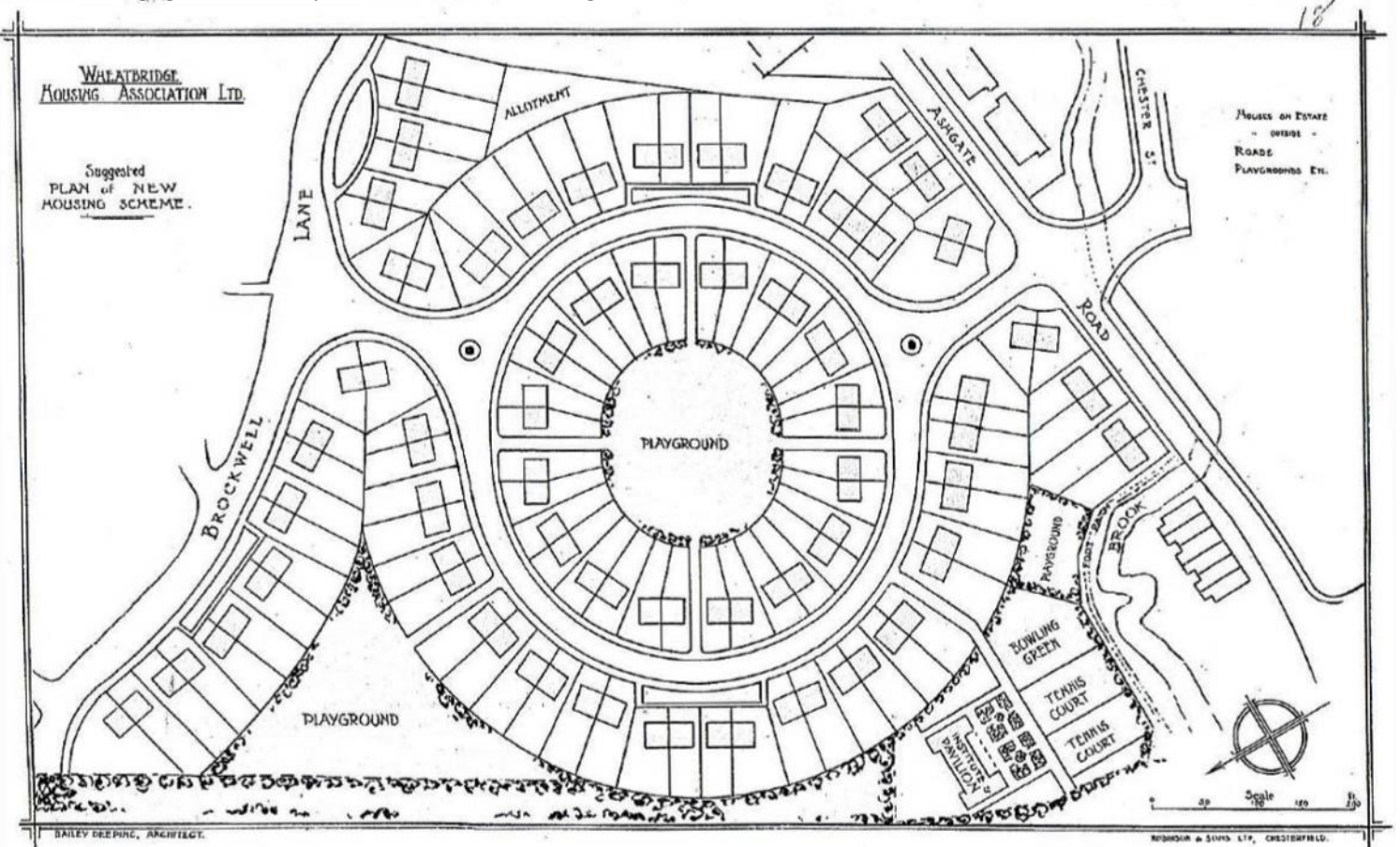


Fig 1: Original suggested plan of the housing scheme proposed by "Wheatbridge House-Building Association".

The ceremony for the Cutting of the First Sod on Saturday March 6th 1920 attracted many spectators. The task was given to Mrs. Robinson of Field House, who gracefully turned the first chunk of Mother Earth. It is also clear by now that the Housing Association was very well supported, having at this time 40 shareholders holding 2,400 shares of £1, although under the rules no shareholder was allowed more than 200 shares. A Mr. Jos. Henstock had also been appointed Clerk of Works and the brickwork contract for 48 Houses had been let.

At this point we find the first reference to the building of houses by a technique probably unique in Chesterfield, the use of Dorman Long steelwork for the main structure. 18 Houses were to be built to this format, on the Brockwell Lane side of the estate, and it is considered that the idea was suggested by one of the Robinson directors, who had examined the principle of this form of house construction, during a visit to the United States of America.

We now also have a plan of the estate, showing the intention to build two basic types of houses, lucidly described as a parlour house and a non-parlour house. However there was to be a considerable amount of variation in style both externally and internally, but all having bathrooms upstairs as well as entrance halls, while two, three and four bedrooms versions were on offer. Referring to *The Link* magazine of June 1920, there are said to be 10 houses under construction, with photographs of the pairs of semi-detached ones fronting Ashgate Road.

Emerging at this time, is something they appear not to have taken into account, the acute shortage of building materials. "The procuring of building materials is a thought provoking task, and from the first, we have been dogged with many vexatious delays. Bricks and roofing tiles present the greatest difficulty". The Committee, in an attempt to cure the problem of shortage of bricks, purchased the disused chimney of the Brockwell Brick kilns, so yielding a large quantity of serviceable bricks for the inside walls.

It is by now quite clear that the houses when completed will be rented, at a cost relating to the cost of construction, and only by the shareholders. The final reference found so far from the pages of *The Link* is page 7 in volume 17 of June 1922, which states, "The Wheatbridge Housing Association has now erected 32 Houses".

Now to the mystery: what happened next? Why did the Association never complete the intended 112 Houses on the estate? Part two of this mystery in the next issue!

[We are grateful to Robinson & Sons Ltd. for their kind permission to reproduce the cover page of *The Link* for June 1919 along with the map of the estate, as well as the use of material within the pages of its various issues. - Ed.]

Originally published in NEDIAS Newsletter No 10 – May 2003

Robinson's "Model Village"

By the late Jackie Currell

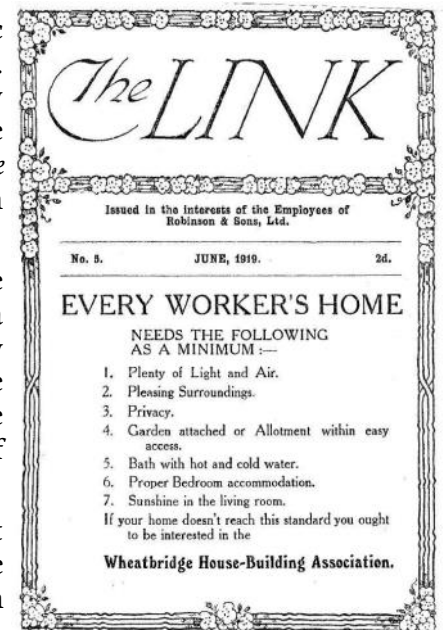
Ed – This is the sequel to Darrell Clark's opus "Homes Fit for Workers" in NEDIAS Newsletter 10, May 2003

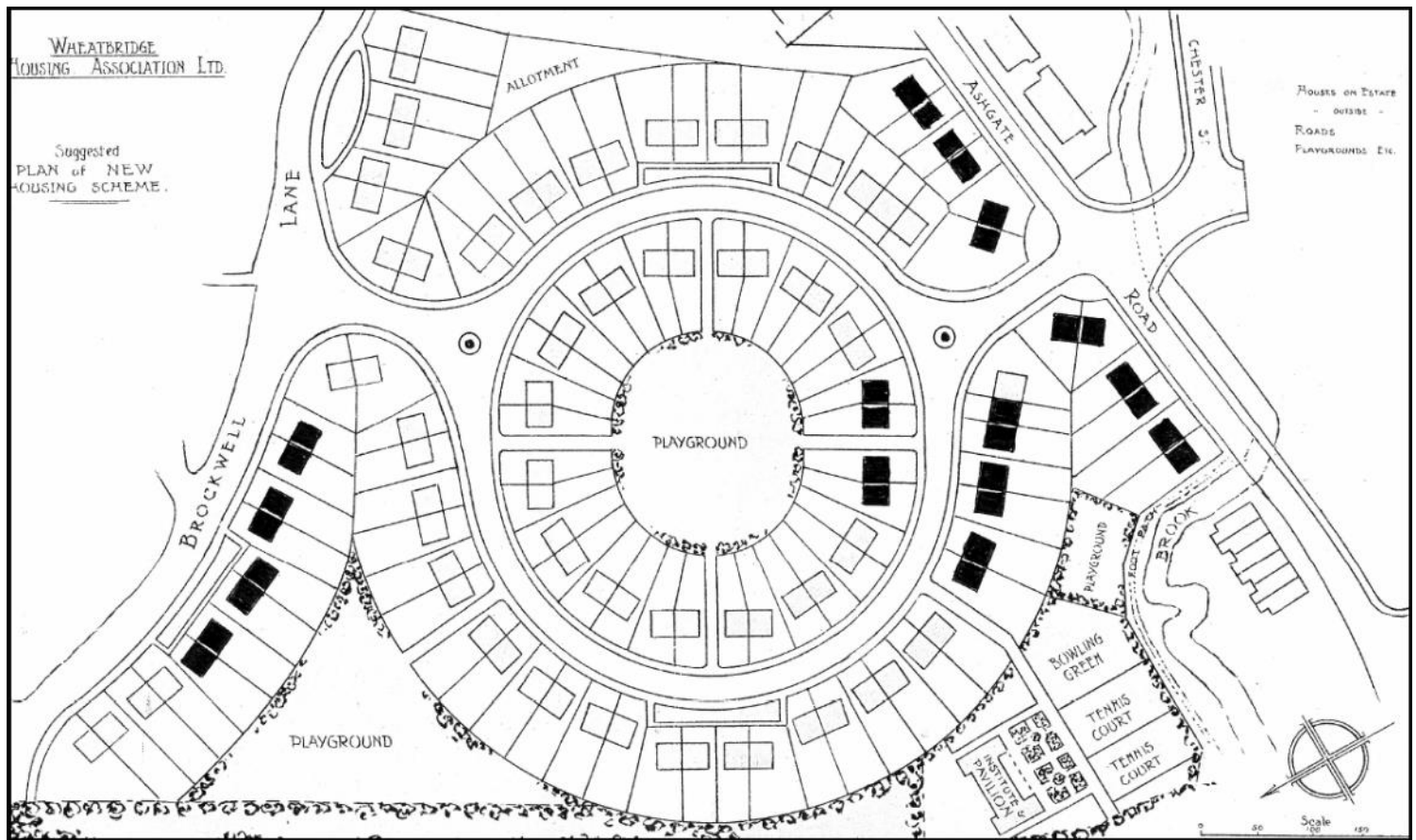
We are no nearer solving the mystery of the Robinson's "Model Village" houses that never got built – but have seen some fascinating histories of the ones that did, from relatives and friends of the original tenants. House deeds belonging to the present owners contain copies of the original indentures and conveyances from the Wheatbridge Housing Association in 1919, and a schedule with signatures of each tenant.

The plan overleaf shows the 30 houses from the "First Schedule", on Ashgate Road (to the left on the plan), and the lower end of Holmebank West, and four pairs along Brockwell Lane (to the right on the plan).

The houses on Brockwell Lane were built in 1920-1921, on the Dorman & Long steel-framed pattern. They overlooked the "Windmill" field, where gipsies had an encampment, their horses hobbled to stop them straying into the gardens. These houses were known as the "birdcages", because of their steel framing, and the original exteriors were of pebble dashed brickwork – the bricks presumably being in short supply. This eventually deteriorated, and was replaced by bricks – the tenants remaining in residence, protected by tarpaulins!

The houses followed the general pattern of having wide frontages – rather unusual at the time, and criticised by many – and an upstairs bathroom. They were gas-lit, and had Yorkshire ranges (from William Green on Whittington Moor), later 5 to be replaced by fireplaces, put in by G. F. Kirks, builders, and chosen by the tenants, with an oven at the side. A back boiler supplied hot water, and there was a cylinder boiler for the washing. There was a coal store and a pantry, and the rent was 10 shillings per week.





Houses under construction

The first tenants at No.5a – “Uplands”, were Harry and Mrs Fletcher – she had been a nurse at Robinsons – moving in in November 1921, just before their first child was born; Christine and her brother Stuart are now the only Robinsons tenants as all the houses were gradually sold. Next door lived Ada Churcher, her paraplegic son John, Nellie and Herbert and their two daughters. Many of the houses still have original features from the time they were built – wood panelling, doors and windows, the remains of the gas lighting pipes in the walls – and fireplaces with delightful local

tiles and handsome oak surrounds, or small cast-iron versions upstairs. Pot sinks, storm doors and quarry tiles still exist here and there, even if now relegated to the gardens.

People have memories of the houses as they were years ago – of painting the outsides for Harrison & Fletcher, a firm employed by Robinsons, of houses “saved” for letting to prospective printers, who were in short supply at Robinsons, of the eccentric tenant who went shopping in her nightdress.... So, what happened to the other 80 houses that were planned? Why was the road joining the two groups of houses not made up until after WW2? And, though the little playing field in the centre of the plan did exist, why did the tennis courts, bowling greens and pavilion never materialise? Was it simply lack of funds or shortage of building materials – or was it more profitable to sell the land to private developers at the time?

The Housing Association had such good intentions, and, indeed, the commitment to maintaining the existing houses and looking after the tenants for as long as they chose to stay. A completed “model village” would indeed have been a fine example of its kind, and an important part of Chesterfield’s landscape.

Originally published in NEDIAS Newsletter No 12 – November 2003

Robinson’s “Model Village” **further information on the subject from *the late Richard Robinson***

Following the articles by Darrell Clark and Jackie Currell I have been in contact with Mr Fred Rhodes, the retired Company Secretary and Director of Robinson and Sons Ltd. Before he retired about 10 years ago Fred had legal and financial responsibility for our buildings and housing. He says that the Wheatbridge Housing Association fell on “hard times” in the 1920’s and that the tenants could not afford the rents required to balance the books of the Association. After this Robinson and Sons Ltd took over its debts and the rents were subsequently paid to them – though some employees did buy houses themselves.

The Anchorage flats for retired employees were subsequently built on the site of the area allocated for the tennis courts. Mr Bill Pursglove, referred to as the secretary of the Works Council, was later pensions Secretary and Labour Manager. He retired aged 70 in 1945 in the absence of a qualified successor during the war.

Fred Rhodes remembers the names of most of the occupants of the houses as successive families moved in. There were also a good many other houses in Brampton owned by the company.

If anyone wishes to do further research there are a number of files in the Robinson Archives at the County Records Office covering the Wheatbridge Housing Association Ref D5395/2/10/43 and on P207 Ref D5395/25/1 to 25/7/3 up to /25/11/4.

Originally published in NEDIAS Newsletter No 13 – February 2004

PICCADILLY ROAD’S INVOLVEMENT IN SOCIAL HOUSING **by *Philip Cousins***

Introduction

This article explains how the small terraced, single storey cottages on Piccadilly Road, at the Hady Hill end, had their origins. Were these cottages a small development for Markham works or designed as some form of early 20th century alms houses? The answer is neither of these. But, as this article will seek to explore, they played a small part in early 20th century social housing in the Chesterfield area.

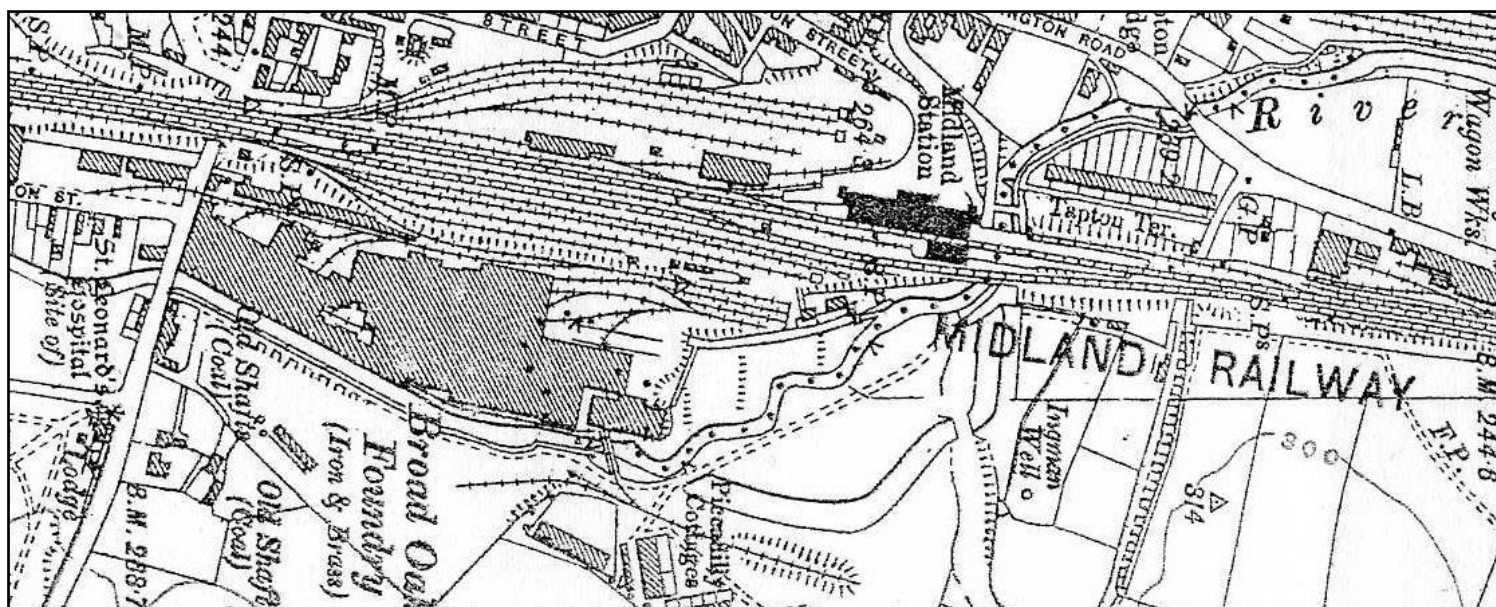
Additionally described is an outline of social/industrial housing locally and nationally in the period leading up to and after the Great War. The role of a sadly neglected body – the Industrial Housing Association, who provided another set of what today would be described as social housing on Piccadilly Road – is briefly explored.

The bedsitter cottages

Piccadilly Road runs south to north connecting Hady Lane to Crow Lane at its northern outlet. The six cottages that are the subject of this article are on the west side of Piccadilly Road, at its southern end. They appear primarily to have been the idea of local builder and town statesmen William Rhodes and Charles Paxton Markham, under the auspices of the ‘Chesterfield Development Company’. Fortunately the *Derbyshire Courier* of 21 February 1914 (then one of two Chesterfield based newspapers) records the submission and approval of plans to build the properties by Chesterfield Town Council. It also contains elevations and plans, reproduced in this article. Originally four cottages were planned, though six were built – all these survive today and are illustrated in this article.

The *Courier* makes the point that slum clearance was then displacing a number of people in Chesterfield, particularly those in receipt of a pension. Rhodes’ idea was to ‘provide the maximum comfort in the minimum space.’ The plans

were first submitted in September 1912 but had been reworked prior to their resubmission in 1914. At the former date they had included a separate bedroom, but this had been redesigned into a bedsitting room, the bed being 'draped during the day with a curtain . . .' The rework had been necessary 'as the prices of building materials has continuously advanced the conditions have made it imperative from the point of view of economy to amend the specifications in order that low rent advantage might be retained.'¹



This extract is enlarged from the 1921 edition, 6-inch to one mile Ordnance Survey map, re-oriented with the north to the right. The map was revised in 1914 and re-levelled in 1915. The six bed-sitter cottages can just be seen, somewhat isolated, near the legends 'Old Shafts (Coal)' to the left (south) of the map. Wharton's foundry, mentioned in the article, is the building facing the bottom of Hady Hill, across the river Rother from the Broad Oaks Foundry (Markham's works). That river follows a fairly straight course from the south until just before a third of the way along the map extract. From there the dotted lines, (which show the boundary of the borough up to enlargement in 1920) follow the course of the old river bed, partially built on by the Broad Oaks Foundry (Markham Works). A new river bed awaits the eventual further diversion of the river, complete with a bridge to take the new course of Crow Lane over it. The old Crow Lane, shown from half-way along the bottom of the map, follows a straighter route to Tapton Terrace than today. Note 'Piccadilly Cottages'; one range of which still survives on Piccadilly Road. (Ordnance Survey, 6-inches to 1 mile, Derbyshire sheet XXV. N.W., edition of 1921).

Other facilities included step-free access (apart from the one step into the property), a sink in one corner of the living room, pantry, water closet and coal place. There were two front windows – one into the living room the other into the water closet. The living room floor was to be laid with red quarry tiles – the bed portion having wooden blocks. The properties were to be erected on the Wharton works end of Piccadilly Road as soon as levels and sewer works were completed. The cottages were designed to be part of a much larger enterprise. 'A company is to be formed to undertake the building of the block and to proceed afterwards with the construction of larger cottages suited to the requirements of the poorer working class.' The *Courier* hoped that those who had expressed their interest in a similar earlier (but presumably unsuccessful) scheme would now support this project.² The *Courier* was able to report in early May 1914 that building of the cottages was up to the roof trusses, with rent 'to be kept in the neighbourhood of 2s 6d a week.'³

Builder and Chesterfield Corporation Alderman William Rhodes, who T. F. Williams describes in his volume of a *History of Chesterfield*, as having a 'notable grasp' on housing issues, went on to become a member of the National Housing and Town Planning Council. A report he prepared for Chesterfield Corporation in 1917 on reasons for the housing shortage chiefly blamed two Parliamentary Acts. These had proposed taxes on increases in the site value of urban land after it was built on. This had consequently depressed the market in rentable small property. Rhodes recommended that government and municipalities should act together after the war on planned estates.⁴ On Rhodes' death in 1941, the *Derbyshire Times* stated that;

Before the last war he drew up a scheme for the provision of small cottages for all people at small rents, and on the instructions of the late Mr C. P. Markham built four in Piccadilly as an experiment. The war held up the development of the scheme, but in more recent years a considerable number of cottages have been built in Chesterfield on similar lines.⁵

¹All quotations and details on the properties are from *Derbyshire Courier* (DC), 21 February 1914.

²ibid.

³DC, 9 May 1914.

⁴T.F. Wright, *History of Chesterfield Volume 4: Chesterfield – development of the modern town, 1851 – 1939*, (1992), p.221.

⁵DT, 10 January 1941. The four cottages were undoubtedly the six described in this article.

The Chesterfield Housing Company

But what of the Chesterfield Development Company? This appears to have morphed into the Chesterfield Housing Company. Reporting on a meeting of the Chesterfield Allotment Holders' annual meeting, the *Derbyshire Courier*, in its edition of 14 March 1914 has a Councillor Glossop reporting on plans for a new Chesterfield Housing Company.⁶ Two months later the same newspaper was able to announce 'rapid progress' towards floating a company 'which as Ald. C. P. Markham stated at the Chesterfield Town Council a fortnight ago, is being floated for the purpose of providing suitable houses for working-class tenants...' By this time the company prospectus had been sent to London for approval, with publication to follow. £1 shares would be issued – with the directors apparently being paid nothing 'until the shareholders can be paid a dividend of 5 per cent.' Tenants would also be able to purchase their dwellings 'on the basis of an easy payments system...' The *Courier* ended by extolling landowners to make available cheap land to the company;

Thus the whole scheme is one in which the capitalist, the land-owner and the workman can join to their mutual advantage, and – what is perhaps the greatest point of all – to the advantage of the town in its big development and improvement scheme.⁷

The same newspaper reported in its edition of 18 April 1914 that Markham wanted the town council to lease houses from this new company.

The *Courier*, in its edition of 20 June 1914, published the prospectus of the Chesterfield Housing Company. Ald. C. P. Markham was, according to the newspaper, the chief mover of the company. By this time Markham's interest in what might be termed industrial housing – loosely explained as housing for workers – was to the fore. He appears to have become especially interested in this subject and that of sanitary conditions during the 1910s.⁸ Markham pursued a policy at the Staveley Coal and Iron Company (where he was chairman and director) of providing housing for workers employed there. Efforts were made in Staveley to form a housing trust with dwellings built, probably those in the Lowgates/Netherthorpe area.⁹

It is difficult to comprehend today how much power local industrialists such as Markham could exercise. Markham (1865-1926) held a number of public offices. He was, for example, a member of Chesterfield Corporation from 1895 – 1920, Mayor of Chesterfield three times (when that office probably carried significantly more power politically than it does now), chairman and director of the one of the area's biggest employers and associated with many others. He was largely regarded as the 'uncrowned king of Chesterfield.' It is reasonably well-known that in 1912 Markham had contributed £10,000 out of his own pocket to help the corporation clear the notorious slums known as 'The Dog Kennels', which led to the driving of the aptly named Markham Road through the area.¹⁰ There were other gifts that he made in and out of the borough. Markham's utterances were keenly followed by local newspapers.

Usefully the *Courier* of 20 June 1914 places some context on the need for such an enterprise as the Chesterfield Housing Company. 114 houses were to have been pulled down due to the effect of Chesterfield Corporation's Improvement Act of 1914;

... there are many houses in the Borough in which two or more families reside, [consequently] there is an urgent need for additional accommodation. One of the objects of the newly-formed Company is to meet this demand and provide houses of a healthy and comfortable character, which may be rented at reasonable rates and purchased by the tenants. It is not intended to distribute large dividends amongst the shareholders, but, whilst securing an adequate return for the money invested, to provide the very best housing accommodation at the lowest possible rent or purchase price as the case may be. The share capital of the Company is £10,000 which is to be divided into 10,000 ordinary shares of £1 each.¹¹

The directors were listed as Ald. C. P. Markham, J.P. (of Ringwood Hall, 'Engineer, High Sheriff for the County of Derby'); Ald. G. A. Eastwood, J.P. (Brambling House 'Wagon Builder'); the Mayor Ald. E. Shentall, J.P. (The Bungalow, Walton, 'Fruit and Potato Merchant'); Major William Bradbury Robinson (Elm Lodge, Brampton 'Surgical Lint Manufacturer'); Ald. Samuel Hadfield, J.P. (The Bungalow, Saltergate, 'Pork Butcher'); Ald. William Rhodes, the managing director (Chatsworth Road, 'Builder'); Councillor George Clark (The Cedars, Chatsworth Road, 'Engineer')¹²; Councillor Robert Eyre, J.P. (Highfield Road, 'Hardware merchant') and Mr. William Murphy, J.P. (Gladstone House, 'Draper'). Councillor Alfred Glossop¹³ was listed as acting as secretary. The company's

⁶DC, 14 March 1914.

⁷DC, 2 May 1914.

⁸S.D. Chapman, Stanton and Staveley a business history, (1981), p. 170.

⁹Derbyshire Record Office, D 3808/1/2/10, Staveley Coal and Iron Company director's minutes, 29 January 1918, 31 May 1921. There are some references to this scheme at Staveley in contemporary newspapers, but this requires further investigation. See for example DC, 15 and 22 May 1920 (reporting a strike of workers employed on the company's housing scheme at Staveley) and 17, 24 & 31 July 1920. These references are too early for the development to be that at Hollingwood (see below), the land for which was not purchased until October 1920. The director's minutes of 29 August 1922 refer to rents of the Staveley Housing Association properties at Netherthorpe. Readers may remember my presentation on social housing, based around a case-study of Hollingwood, at the NEDIAS meeting in March 2013.

¹⁰Wright, (1992), p. 101. J. Hammerton, 'Story of a great industrialist', *Staveley Story*, (no date), pp. 11-19.¹¹DC, 20 June 1914.

¹²A mechanical engineer. Wright, (1992), p. 145.

¹³A solicitor, presumably with the family business W. & A. Glossop. Wright, p. 145.

bankers were Williams Deacon's Bank Ltd.; solicitors W. & A. Glossop, Holywell Street and auditors Carline & Watson of Gluman Gate. Each director held shares to the nominal value of £200. Applications for shares were to be with the company's bankers on or before 29 June 1914. Preliminary expenses had amounted to an estimated £150.10s.¹⁴

Initial progress appears to have been fairly rapid, with the new company advertising for freehold land in the *Courier* during July of 1914 'in any part of Chesterfield, which is suitable for 'Artizans' Dwellings'.¹⁵ The previous month the newspaper, an obvious supporter of the new company, had expressed hopes that land could be obtained by the company, in the vicinity of 'the new pensioners' cottages', for erection of dwellings, particularly as a new road was in the course of being laid 'from Hady Hill, just above Mr Wharton's foundry to Crow Lane. . . about 800 yards in length.
'.¹⁶

Presumably Chesterfield Housing Company's progress was impeded by the need to concentrate on the Great War, which was declared in August 1914. In December 1916, at its second annual meeting the company reported that '...several schemes for laying out land in Chesterfield for building purposes were under consideration, and that an active movement will be made as soon as normal conditions prevailed.'¹⁷ What happened to the Chesterfield Housing Company and whether it actually built any homes still needs research. In February 1919 the *Derbyshire Times* reported C. P. Markham, when accepting a gift from workers at his Broad Oaks Works, as saying he wanted each man to have his own home; 'They would have to see if they could arrange a utility society whereby each employee would have a nice little house with garden etc. They did start the idea some years ago, but for some reason it fell through.'¹⁸ If that idea was the Chesterfield Housing Company, it should be noted that the company carried on until at the least the 1950s. In December 1950 it held its annual meeting, at which Alderman G. Clark announced he was intending to resign as the chairman – an office he had held since 1934. He was then described as possibly the only surviving original director, a post he would still maintain. Major Compton Glossop would succeed him as chairman, the Major having been a director since 1943.¹⁹ In 1938, at the twenty-third annual general meeting it was reported that the 'usual dividend was passed for payment', the registered office was described as '38 Holywell Street.'²⁰

A renewed housing effort

Circumstances somewhat changed towards the end of the Great War as the country started to gear up for economic recovery – what follows is a very brief and perhaps over-simplified summary.

A reconstruction committee was formed in 1916 with housing amongst its elements. This morphed into a series of panels, with one for housing. In June 1917 a committee was formed with Liberal MP. Sir John Tudor Walters (Postmaster General and MP. for Brightside) involving Raymond Unwin as one of three architects on the committee. The so-called Tudor Walters report was published a few weeks before the November 1918 Armistice. Unwin's chief biographer Mervyn Miller has said the report 'represented the most comprehensive statement on low density building.' It contained recommendations on desirable housing types and sizes of rooms – much of it based on work by Unwin at Hampstead and Letchworth. From this was ultimately derived a new Housing and Town Planning Act (of 1919) which gave a statutory responsibility for housing (aided by the state) to local councils. There was also a housing design manual which was chiefly an Unwin work.²¹ (Raymond Unwin (1863 – 1940) (later Sir) had local connections. He had worked for the Staveley Coal and Iron Company in his earlier years and formed a partnership with his brother-in-law Barry Parker. They designed St Andrew's Church, Barrow Hill and several houses, forming a reputation for both design and planning. Unwin was influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement, Socialist ideals and Ebenezer Howard's 'garden city' concept. He went on to design and advise on housing and estates using low density principles, some with Parker. Unwin became known as perhaps the 'most influential [English town planner] of his time').²²

Locally Chesterfield made much progress in building so-called 'homes fit for heroes', particularly as the corporation had identified a need for low cost housing pre-war. As an example of the continuing housing needs in the borough, in October 1915 Alderman Spooner had offered to erect 'ten or a dozen working men's tenements within the next six months to ease the demand for such dwellings.' The need had been made more acute by the corporation's demolition of properties following closing orders.²³ Following a report by the Medical Officer of Health in December 1916 on overcrowding and the need to alleviate this, a special housing committee had been formed with chairman Alderman William Rhodes. In January 1917 this committee agreed a scheme was needed for at least some 200 houses. This was expedited by a special subcommittee comprising Ald. Rhodes along with Councillors Glossop and Edmunds.²⁴ The

¹⁴Information in this paragraph sourced from DC, 20 June 1914.

¹⁵DC, 11, 14, 18 and 21 July 1914.

¹⁶DC, 27 June 1914.

¹⁷DC, 16 December 1916.

¹⁸*Derbyshire Times* (DT), 22 February 1919.

¹⁹DT, 1 December 1950. Unfortunately there is no description of what, if any building schemes had been carried out.

²⁰DT, 26 November 1937. Again, there is no description of what, if any building schemes had been carried out.

²¹This summary is chiefly condensed from Mervyn Miller, *Raymond Unwin. garden cities and town planning*, (1992), pp. 160 – 171.

²²J.S. Curl, *Oxford dictionary of architecture*, (2000), p. 691.

²³DC, 5 October 1915.

²⁴Wright, (1992), p. 220.

construction of the St Augustine's estate progressed in early 1920.²⁵ These moves, though, were not without their critics. In October 1920, just before elections for the new council of the enlarged borough, seven Labour members resigned from the housing committee citing the 'slow pace of housing construction' as their principal reason.²⁶

Chesterfield Rural District Council (C.R.D.C. – which then included Staveley) was, unfortunately, not so quick off the mark with practical building – C. P. Markham becoming a leading critic of that council aided by the local press. 'Paper houses' according to the *Courier* in December 1920 when the C.R.D.C. admitted it had not laid a single brick of its 'wanted' 2,549 dwellings.²⁷ A particularly noteworthy outburst at the time was Markham describing the rural district councillors as a 'lot of old farmers'.²⁸

Piccadilly Road's involvement in what might now be termed social housing did not finish with the small bed-sitter development. In February 1919 local newspapers reproduced a plan for a large 'garden city' type development at Hollingwood, proposed by Markham.²⁹ A second scheme was planned, for, as the *Courier* put it 'the hillside in Tapton parish behind the Chesterfield Midland Railway Station and the Broad Oaks Works' and there was also talk of the forming of a public utility society to oversee these developments.³⁰ These developments were eventually handled by the Industrial Housing Association (I.H.A.), which was formed in 1922. Chiefly a vehicle of Lord Aberconway with C. P. Markham – this association could take advantage of government loans to build housing for its constituent members. Locally these included the Staveley Coal & Iron Company, the Sheepbridge Coal & Iron Company and Markham & Company (1925) Ltd.³¹ Thus, for the latter company, were built the 'new houses' on Piccadilly Road, not far from the original 1914 bungalows of William Rhodes.

The I.H.A. built some 12,000 houses in the 1920s. Estates were planned with generally standardised house and bungalow designs – not that different to those indicated in the housing design manual. This is perhaps one reason why I.H.A. developments are sometimes confused with inter-war council housing schemes. Other I.H.A. developments locally were at Hollingwood (though not the design announced by Markham in 1919), Poolsbrook and Duckmanton – all for the Staveley Coal & Iron Company; at Newbold (a small development at Littlemoor Crescent), Glapwell (Bramley Vale) and Langwith for the Sheepbridge Company. Those who are more interested in the I.H.A. are referred to the 1927 account of the company 'The Building of Twelve Thousand Houses' by its secretary Sir John Tudor Walters.³²

Darrel Clark and the late Jackie Currell have previously written in NEDIAS newsletters (numbers 10 and 12 respectively) about a further example of social housing in Chesterfield.³³ This was when Robinsons pursued their own Wheatbridge Housing Association in the 1918 – 1922 period, which appears to have commenced following an address by Alderman Rhodes to the company's Holme Brook Works Council in July 1918.³⁴ In February 1919 Mr P.M. Robinson 'presided over a meeting . . . under the auspices of the Committee of the Holme Brook Works' Council, to consider the question of forming a Public Utility Association for building houses for the employees of the firm.'³⁵ This envisaged 112 houses built on garden suburb principles on land between Brockwell Lane and Ashgate Road.³⁶ The first sod of this development was cut at Ashgate Road in March 1920.³⁷ Employees of the firm were encouraged to become shareholders.³⁸ In June 1922 it was reported that the Wheatbridge Housing Association had erected 32 houses.³⁹ By 1955, 36 houses were available for employees to rent.⁴⁰

Social housing in Chesterfield took great leaps forward under the auspices of the Chesterfield Corporation during the interwar period. In addition to the St Augustine's estate another large development was constructed at Boythorpe.⁴¹

The provision of what we would now term social housing before and after the First World War needs greater exploration than can be allowed here. Such provision must, however, be read in conjunction with the need for employers such as C. P. Markham at the Staveley Coal & Iron Company to attract and retain employees. Here the need was so great that, for example, the company had tried, largely unsuccessfully, in 1925, to attract miners from

²⁵DC, 14 February 1920.

²⁶Wright, (1992), p. 242.

²⁷DC, 11 December 1920. 100 houses were apparently planned for Staveley.

²⁸DT, 9 June 1923.

²⁹DT, 15 February 1919; DC, 22 February 1919.

³⁰DC, 22 February 1919.

³¹John Tudor Walters, *Building of twelve thousand houses*, (1927). See also P. Riden, 'Company housing in the Derbyshire coalfield', *North East Derbyshire Industrial Archaeological Society (NEDIAS) newsletter* 12, November 2003, pp. 3-4.

³²Tudor Walters, (1927).

³³D. Clark 'Homes fit for workers (or, as yet, an unsolved mystery)', *NEDIAS newsletter* 10, May 2003, pp. 3 – 5 and J. Currell, 'Robinson's "model village"', *NEDIAS newsletter* 12, November 2003, pp. 5 – 6

³⁴D. Clark, (2003), p. 3.

³⁵*Robinsons of Chesterfield centenary*, (1939), p. 39.

³⁶D. Clark, (2003), p. 3.

³⁷DC, 13 March 1920.

³⁸*Robinson & Sons Ltd., 1839 – 1989*, (1989), p.16.

³⁹Clark, (2003), p. 5, quoting *The Link*, June 1922, p. 7.

⁴⁰*The employees handbook of Robinson & Sons, Ltd, Chesterfield*, (1955), p.14.

⁴¹J. Murphy, *Aspects of Walton*, (2016), p. 6.

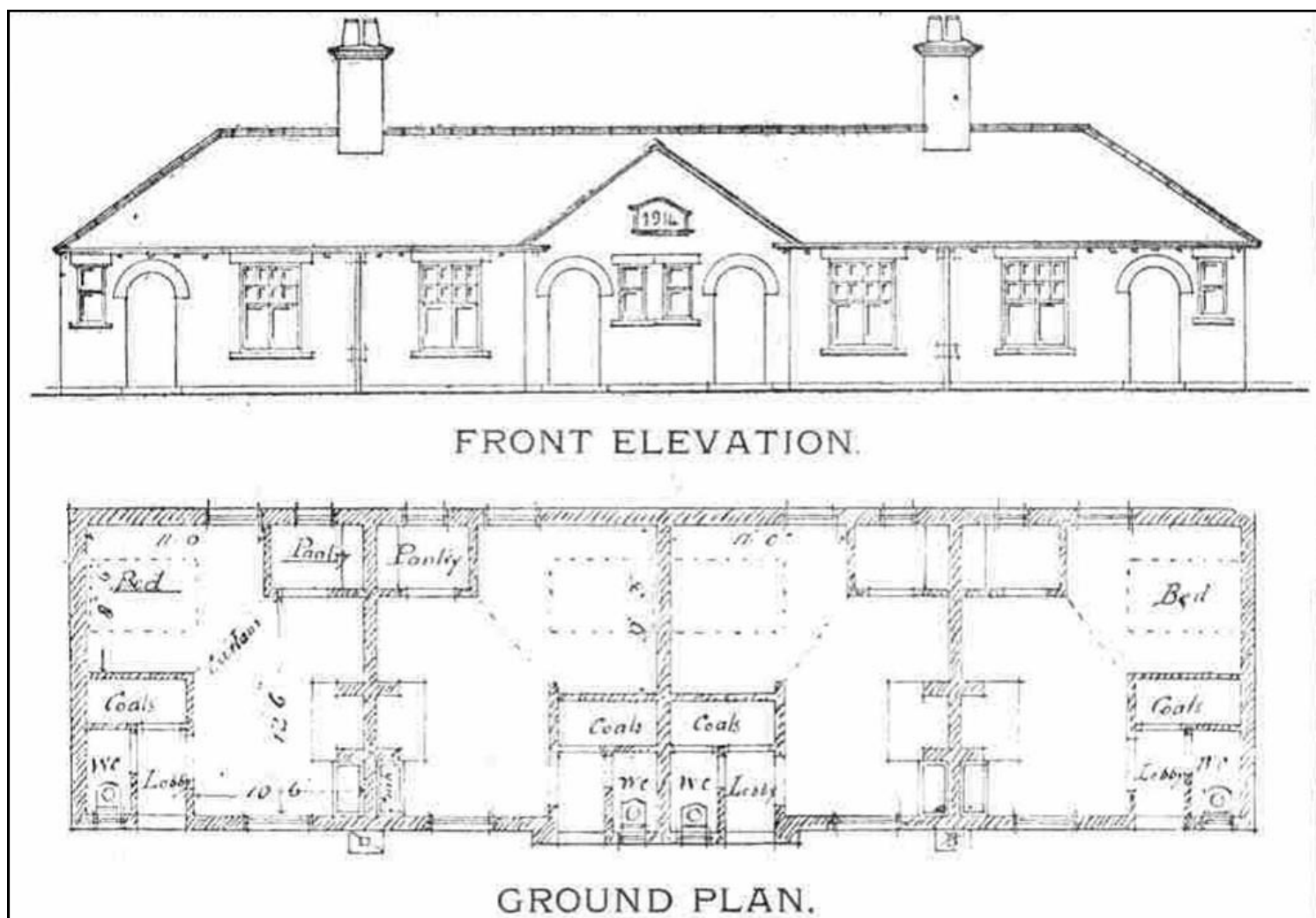
County Durham.⁴² The chief drivers for the Hollingwood development appear to have been the continued development of the Devonshire Works and a new Do Well colliery – the latter eventually failed.⁴³ The I.H.A. houses, like those of the Wheatbridge Housing Association were, of course, tied homes – if you lost your job you lost your home.

Conclusions

In Piccadilly Road can be found two attempts at social housing. One – the small ‘bed-sitter bungalows’ was an attempt by informed citizens (chiefly William Rhodes and C. P. Markham) to start a practical movement aimed at addressing some of the issues that demolition of sub-standard dwellings in the borough of Chesterfield were causing. Attempts were then made to start a local housing company, but unfortunately the First World War seems to have intervened.

After that war renewed attempts were made to construct social housing. Chesterfield Corporation made great strides at building new homes. Less successful were those by the neighbouring rural district council. This resulted in some friction between that council and local industrialists. Alternative schemes led by the Industrial Housing Association, perhaps at least partially resulted from this inertia. The I.H.A. built a scheme (also on Piccadilly Road) as part of a much larger programme across the country. The name of C. P. Markham features largely in such schemes.

Today the two social housing schemes on Piccadilly Road, though not greatly known, point us towards the schemes of yesterday which aimed to provide better housing stock and address the need to attract and retain workers to local industries.



Elevation and ground plan taken from the Derbyshire Courier of the 21 February 1914 for four cottages of the six planned and built by William Rhodes at Piccadilly.

⁴²DT, 20 February 1926.

⁴³DT, 16 January 1926. The mine was situated within the Devonshire works complex.



LEFT: The bedsitter cottages on Piccadilly Road photographed in March 2016. The date-stones, shown as having 1914 incised on them in the plan above, were not so adorned. Six were built – all survive today. (Philip Cousins).

RIGHT: 'New Houses' Piccadilly Road – a small 1920s Industrial Housing Association development, originally planned to be much larger. A gap was originally left in this development – where the relatively recently built house is, fourth block from right. It is thought that this would then have led uphill into a much larger estate. A March 2016 photograph. (Philip Cousins).

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Further reading on Company / Industrial Housing

This NEDIAS newsletter supplement has brought together some previously published articles on the area's industrial housing. We hope you have enjoyed it.

There are many other resources available on this subject. What follows is a very brief and selective review.

NEDIAS has previously published the following:

- 'Barrow Hill and a Load of Bricks' by Cliff Williams – *NEDIAS Newsletter No. 33* – February 2009

The article contains new research, much from the archives at Chatsworth. It identifies that Barrow Hill was built for workers at the nearby Staveley ironworks and colliery undertakings much earlier than previously thought. Mr Williams goes on to identify which parts of the village were built at what date, the types and even how many bricks it took to build them.

- 'Westhouses: Midland Railway Village' by Dudley Fowkes – *NEDIAS Newsletter No. 45* – February 2012.

Dudley Fowkes explains that this late 19th century village owes its existence to the Midland Railway's need for worker's housing, due to increasing traffic in the area and opening of an extension to the Blackwell branch in 1889. A locomotive depot was also constructed nearby.

- 'A provisional account of Clay Cross Company's housing' by Cliff Williams – *NEDIAS Journal Volume 1* – September 2006.

This is an important contribution to our knowledge of housing for workers in north eastern Derbyshire. This work is a development of the author's original 1993 thesis at Nottingham Trent University; 'Paternalism in the north-east Derbyshire coalfield'.

Other publications that readers of this supplement may find of interest include the following:

- H Hay and D Fordham, *New coalfields, new housing: reviewing the achievements of the Industrial Housing Association*. (2017).

This A5 size book, of 140 pages, is copiously illustrated, some in colour, indexed and basically does what the title

implies. There is a very useful gazetteer of Industrial Housing Association sites, including our local developments. It has been compiled and published on a not-for-profit basis. The book is published by Fedj-el-Adoum Publishing (email: Fedj-elAdoum@outlook.com), being very reasonably priced at £7.95 including postage. It is available from Mr D Fordham, 3 Adelaide Road, Norton, Doncaster DN6 9EW. Copies are available in Chesterfield Local Studies Library, though not for purchase.

- P Riden, *The Butterley Company 1790-1830*. (1990).

Published by the Derbyshire Record Society as their volume XVI of 1990, this, as one would expect, is a meticulously researched history of the company. Founded at Ripley in 1790, the Butterley Company was for many years by far the largest coal and iron concern in the East Midlands. Included is a review of the company's housing. The publication is currently out of print.

- John Tudor Walters, *The building of twelve thousand houses*. (1927).

Published by the Ernest Benn Ltd. in 1927, this is the contemporary account of the Industrial Housing Association written by its secretary John Tudor Walters. Within it is explained how the association was formed and functioned, along with a description of the developments it built, how they were designed and the reasoning behind particular design elements. It is probably best well-known for its reproduction of a series of attractive line drawings of street-scenes and houses. The publication has been out of print for many years.

- Still useful are the seven volumes of the Derbyshire Archaeological Society Industrial Archaeology Section's *Derbyshire industrial archaeology: a gazetteer of sites*, (various dates from 1984 to 2003).

Finally, there are a number of local, websites that might be consulted.

<http://socialhousinghistory.org.uk/> is a website that looks at social housing in north eastern Derbyshire. The site says that it is 'an exciting project at Derbyshire Law Centre supported by the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund. It explores the history and heritage of social housing in North Eastern Derbyshire through oral history, photographs, written accounts, documents and objects contributed by local people.'

<https://barrowhillheritagetrail.wordpress.com/history-of-the-village>

'The village' section includes a survey of the various village developments, newly researched, some using the work contributed by Cliff Williams, through his NEDIAS newsletter article cited above. There is also a down-loadable trail around the village.

<https://www.visitchesterfield.info/things-to-do/clay-cross-heritage-trail-p848311erfield>.

The Clay Cross Heritage trail, developed some years ago, can still be download from the Visit Chesterfield website.

The Editor and NEDIAS Committee wish you all a safe and comfortable Christmas, in the knowledge that 2021 will definitely be a much better year.

Contributions, no matter how short (maybe about a visit you have made), and preferably by email to editor@nedias.co.uk, for inclusion in future editions of this newsletter are most welcome.

COPY DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT EDITION OF THE NEWSLETTER: 5th January 2021

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