

Wirksworth

Picturing Past & Present



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By Phil Richards

Images: Anthony Gell School Students



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Wirksworth
Picturing Past & Present



introduction

Our project “Our Place in Time” isn’t unique; it took its inspiration from similar projects in the Czech Republic at the turn of the millennium which were looking at villages that had disappeared between the 1930s when they were in the Sudetenland and the present day.

The idea was to:

- Find some old photos of Wirksworth and the surrounding area
- Try and take the same view today
- Compare and research the differences
- Share the results with the wider community

Anthony Gell School Camera Club were excited by the idea of a “now and then” photographic project and with help from the Centre for Modern Education and the support of the Civic Society and the Heritage Centre, we made a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund in summer last year. We held an initial meeting where the Camera Club were joined by other interested staff and students from Anthony Gell as well as members of the local community.

By the autumn we had received news that we were successful in our bid and we started the process of searching for old photos of Wirksworth. This wasn’t hard because we were able to draw on the Heritage Centre’s collection and, crucially, Tony Holmes’ vast store of old postcards and photographs. An appeal in our school newsletter and in Community Fayre brought forward photos from other local people. From hundreds of excellent candidates we managed to come up with a “shortlist” of some 300 old photos which we wanted to try and emulate.

At the beginning of this year we set about the task of taking our new versions of the photos, with junior members of the camera club concentrating on the town centre and 6th formers Oli, Bianca and Katy tackling Bolehill, Gorse Bank and Yokecliffe.

By Easter we had taken most of our new photos and needed to start researching the differences between old and new. Most of this work was done by Maggie Cunningham’s history class 8A. Making good use of our local studies collection and John Palmer’s wonderful website www.wirksworth.org, they were able to come up with some excellent suggestions for captions. However, some photos proved harder than others to research, so on an afternoon in May, we held a symposium in the school hall, where 8A invited all our local historians to come and share their knowledge.

After that it was a question of refining their questions and comments so that we could hand over photos and text to our design team. This included 6th formers Oli, Katy, Bianca, Giselle, Frances and Cara, who worked with Paul from Orange Box Design, to create designs for our book and our exhibition to be launched during Wirksworth Festival 2010.

In the mean time another 6th former Marco, started to add the photos to the website <http://anthonygell.beyondtheschool.org.uk>, joining other projects from the Czech Republic, other European countries and the UK.

In addition Alastair, worked on the creation of a “match ‘em’ up” game, for distribution to local primary schools using a selection of our pairs of photos. Junior members of the Camera Club kept up their involvement by creating some 21st century collages superimposing sections of our old photos onto our new image.

As we took our new photos, we were conscious that we would not manage to get an exact replica of the old view. Sometimes this was down to technology, - different lenses and different cameras. Other times it was because we just couldn’t get into the position of the original photographer- there are a lot of trees that have grown up in Wirksworth over the last 100 years!

In many cases the new photo looks much more mundane than its older counter part, even though we took the decision to take our new photos in colour.

Where there were people in the original shot, we have tried wherever possible to have people in our newer version.

We pondered long and hard about on what to do about CARS. In the end we decided we could not avoid them.

In this book and in our exhibition we have not provided long explanations: for those who want to know more, we would recommend that you look at some of the excellent books on our reading list, visit the Heritage Centre or investigate the wonderful www.wirksworth.org

As well as providing information we have deliberately posed some questions, most of these are not rhetorical. We would love to have your feedback so that we can add to our ever-expanding store of local knowledge. We have tried hard to check our dates and facts- please let us know if we have made any major errors

Many of our photos are over 100 years old, we would like to think that in a 100 years time a new generation will come up with their own version of **Our Place in Time**. Goodness knows what the camera will look like then, but we suspect many of the photos will still look very familiar.

Phil Richards

Project Co-ordinator

September 2010



PHONE WIRKSWORTH 3127 • EVENINGS 2370

JOHN PATTIN
WHOLESALE
Fruit & Potato Merchant

FRUIT & FLOWERS

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up and down St. John Street





1



2



3



4



5

1, 2, 3

The old south-facing Market Place was a real suntrap before Harrison Drive was knocked through in the late 1930's and let the North Wind in.

4, 5

Whichever way you look at it there was plenty of snow in 1931 - and they didn't have 4x4's then.



1



2



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1, 2, 3

Taken in 1925 this shot shows the buildings which previously stood on the present Market Place, including a cluster of shops around the Hope and Anchor.



4



5



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4, 5, 6

Marsden's was a business which existed for almost 200 years. It was an ironmongers emporium heated by paraffin stoves until it closed in the 1990's. The large Georgian house facing us was the Town solicitors residence for 250 years.



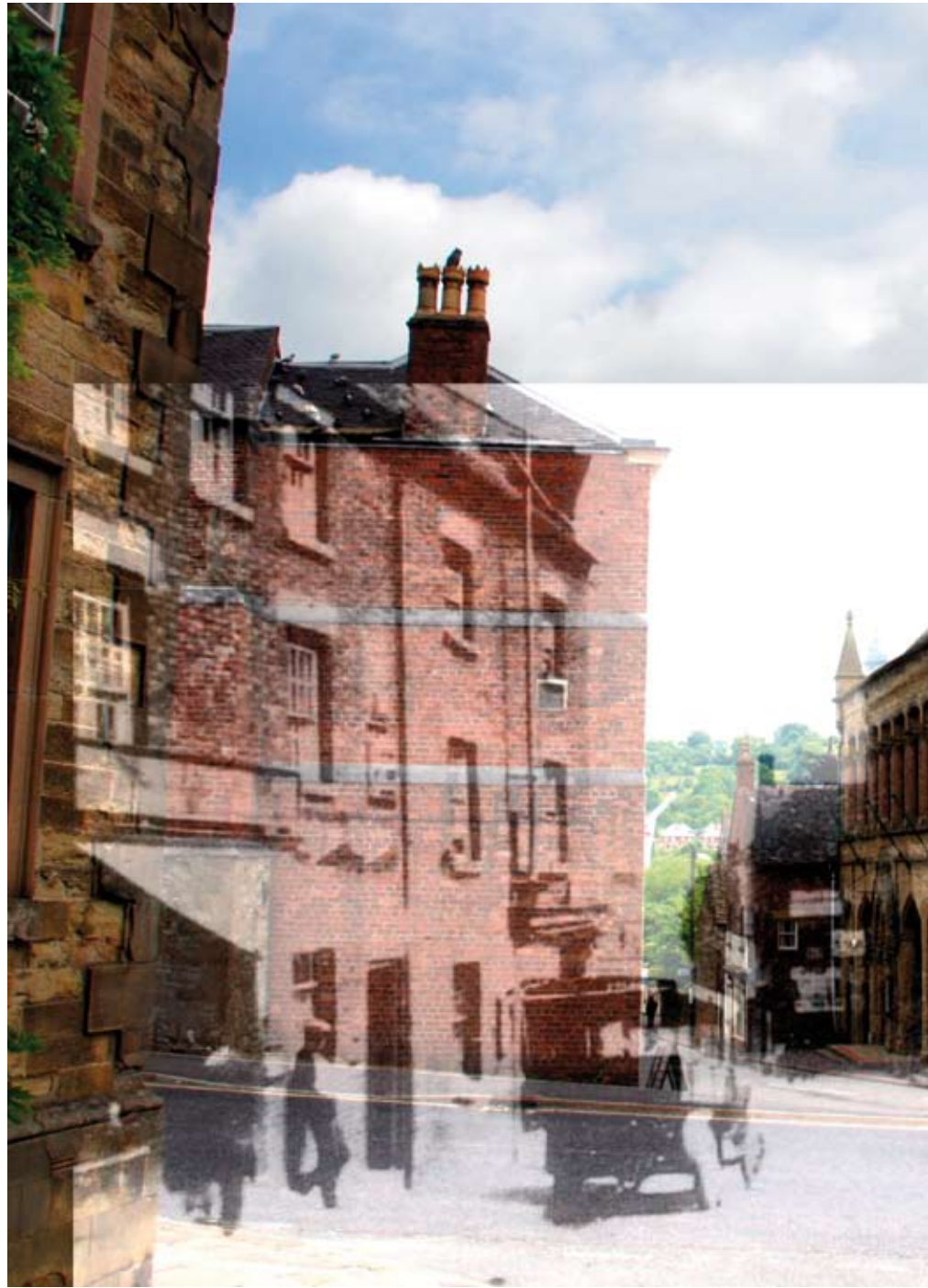
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1, 2, 3, 4

In the early the 20th century the gap which is now Harrison Drive was filled with Doxey's newsagent and tea-rooms and Watts wireless shop and taxi company.



4



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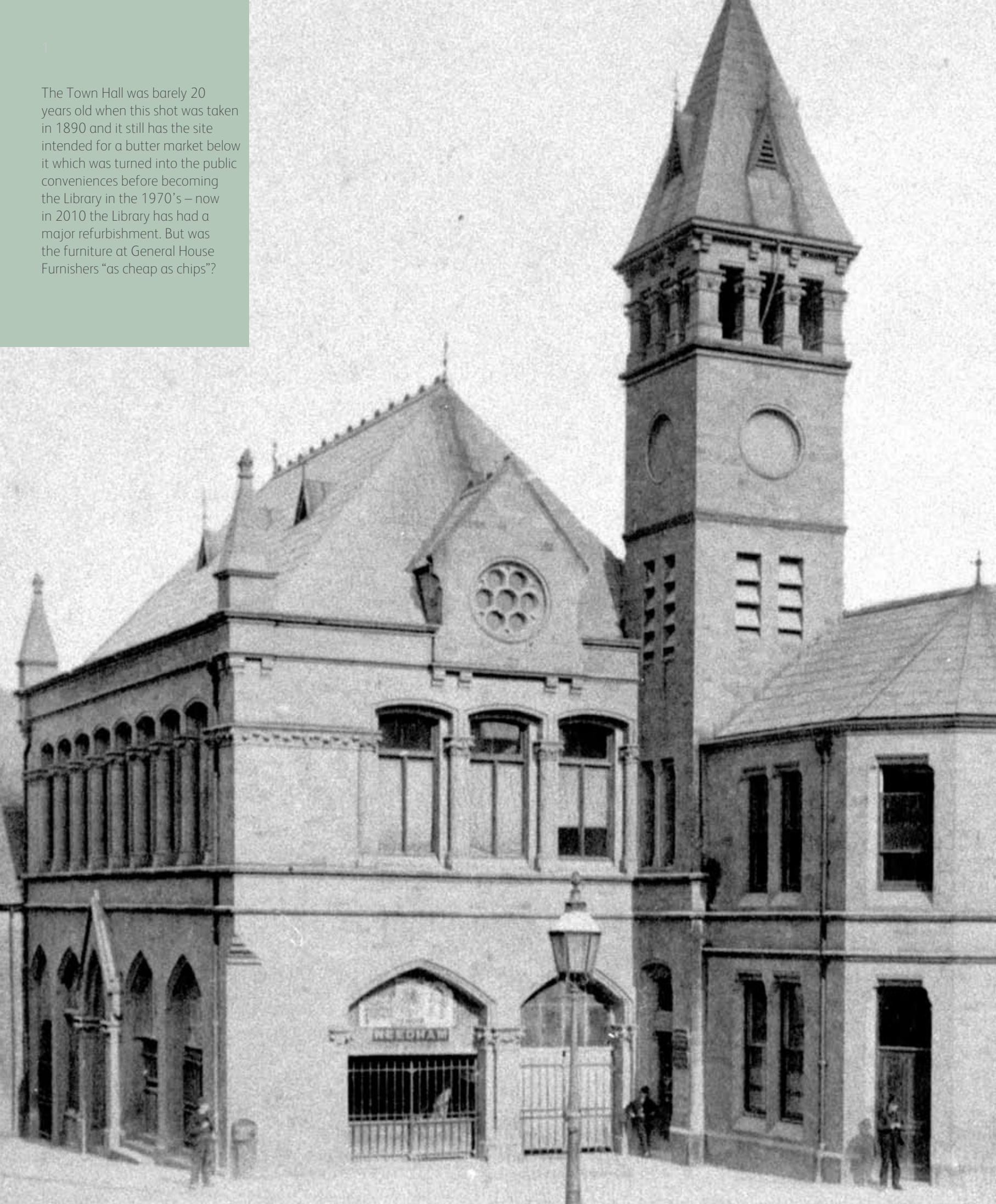


6

5, 6

Mr Fox sold his rolls of cloth in this shop until 1910 when it was taken over by the Co-op. There was only one "Ken's" in the 1970's until "Bagnalls" became "Bottom Ken's" in the early 80's.

The Town Hall was barely 20 years old when this shot was taken in 1890 and it still has the site intended for a butter market below it which was turned into the public conveniences before becoming the Library in the 1970's – now in 2010 the Library has had a major refurbishment. But was the furniture at General House Furnishers “as cheap as chips”?





1



2



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1, 2, 3

1900 - 1950 - 2010 but when did the Town hall tower get its clock?





1



2



3

1, 2

Still an imposing building now,
The Hope and Anchor must have
looked even more impressive at
the turn of the 20th century with
flowers at every window. The shop
has long since been incorporated
into the pub.



4

3, 4

With a precise date of 28th July 1904 this is perhaps the classic old view of St John Street as it was and in many ways still is. Cars may have replaced carts- and we caught particularly quiet moment, but people still like to stroll across the street without a care in the world. Looking down St John's Street about 1910, from the Market Place with the Hope and Anchor public house on the right and Hindle's chemist shop on the

extreme left. Mr Wigley, a baker from Middleton, is by the cart and the two men walking down the street are Mr Middlemass, on the left, and Mr Bowmer



1



2



3

1, 2, 3

Taken around 1905 this is another classic shot of St John Street with children and horses posing calmly for the camera. What became of those children as the century unfolded? Behind the cart we can make out Nether House a home to the Toplis family and then the Hurts. What would those chaps have said if you'd told them that

30 years later it had become a guest house and it would be knocked down to make way for a cinema? "A what??"



4



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8

4 - 8

Waltham House circa 1950
 A cottage hospital for some
 50 years and then maternity
 hospital after the second world
 war, Waltham House became the
 town's Health Centre in the 1970s
 until a brand new Health centre
 opened at Hannage Brook in the
 new millennium. Now 10 years
 later after an inspiring community

fund-raising effort an expanded
 Waltham House has re-opened
 as a much valued Care Home,
 Wirksworth's oldest resident Reg
 Dean (106) is happy to be there.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



5, 6, 7

We were very lucky that Rob stepped into the Viddie Box at Ken's just as we went passed so that we could emulate this photo of Ellen Owen (1868-1934) milliner and shopkeeper and mother of the much-loved and respected mid-wife Miss Mary Fritchley, seen here at her retirement in 1971.

1, 2, 3, 4

A triumphal arch across St John Street- to mark the end of the Boer War in 1902. Here and on the other monochrome photo we have clear view of the building which was knocked down in the 1960's to reveal the 16th century Cruck Beam. Notice how much the tree has grown since this 1990's shot when Dips really was Marts.

8, 9

In the late seventies and early 80's Judy Jones ran Kind Regards as a card shop and unofficial local information office. Nowadays Age Concern make good use of the shop.



8



9



10



11



12

10, 11, 12

The old Market Place was the gathering place for the celebrations in 1900 for the Relief of Mafeking and then in 1902 a stage was erected to welcome soldiers home at the end of the Boer War. Here is how the event was reported at the time:

"Wirksworth never does things by halves, and it culminated all its kindly and patriotic receptions of the returning warriors from the front on Tuesday afternoon, when each of the returned

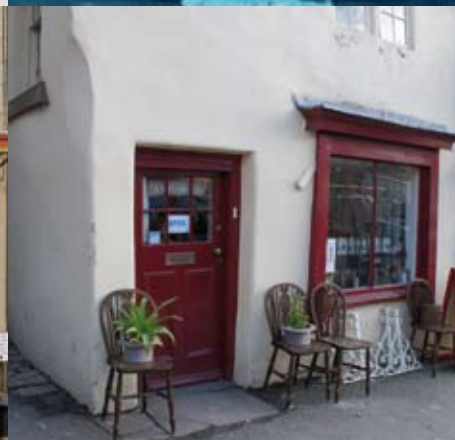
received a handsome token of the town's esteem. There was a fund raised, it will be remembered, for the purpose of giving the warriors some permanent token, and a considerable sum was quickly raised. The outcome of the arrangements was a public presentation and public evidence of thanks and appreciation of their splendid services to the town, to country, and King. The presentations took place on Tuesday afternoon, at 3 o'clock, in the Market Place, and in honour of the auspicious occasion the town decorated profusely, and all

the elite turned out in full strength to honour the occasion, while the RESIDENTS AS ONE MAN gave a general holiday. The weather was, fortunately, appropriate for an outdoor occasion and there was sunshine.

A stage had been erected in the Market Place by the committee, and on the front of it was a motto, as follows: "For God, for King, and Country" in coloured letters on a white ground. The stage was carpeted, and the steps were also laid with cloth, and on a table on the platform were the cups for presentation,.

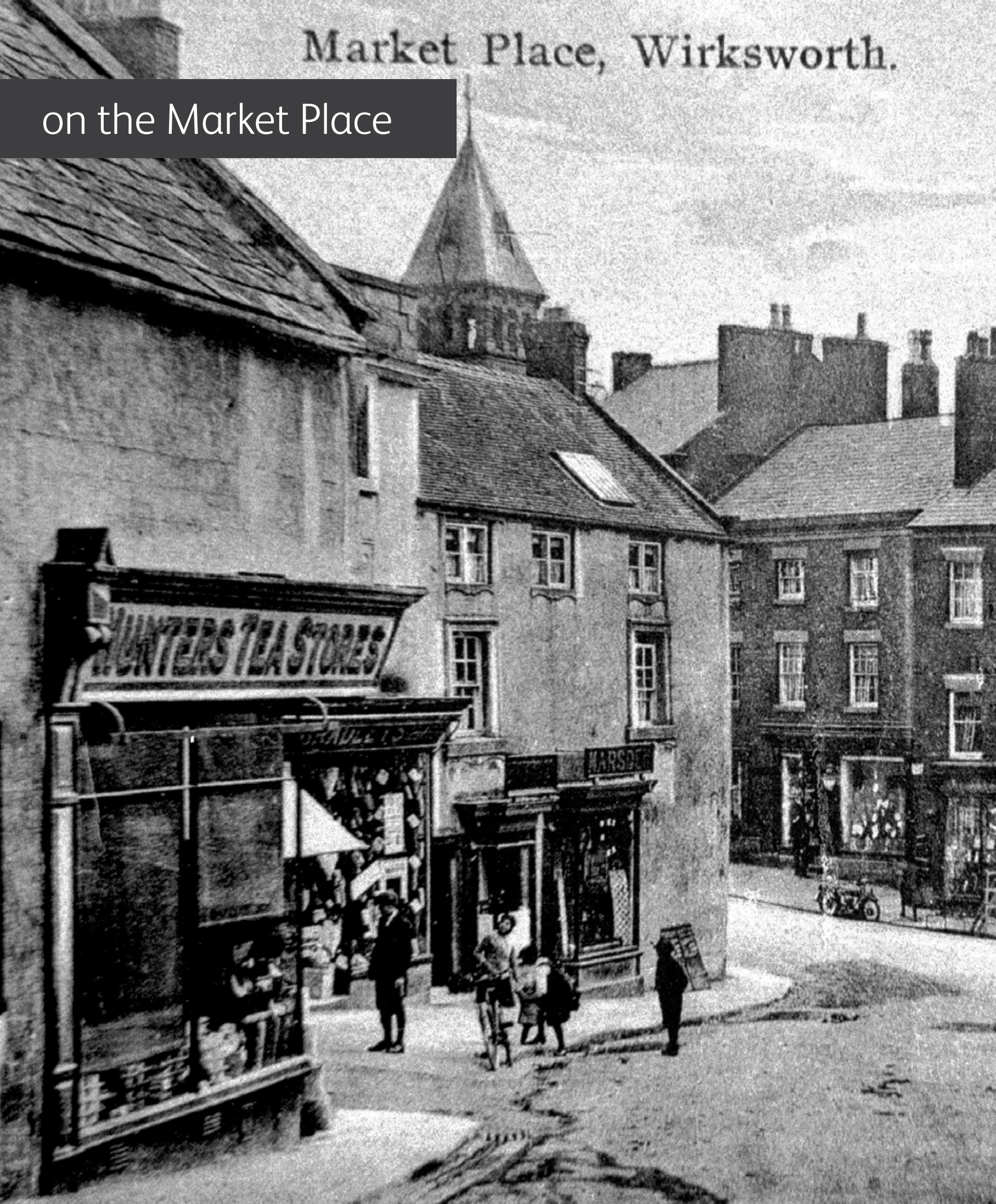
The cups were real gems. They were of very chaste design of solid silver with a rich gold lining. They stood on black pedestals. They were made for the occasion, by Hunt and Roskells, of London, and they had engraved the following inscription:- "Presented to -- by his fellow-townsmen of Wirksworth, in grateful acknowledgment of services rendered to king in the South African War, 1899 and 1902" Our modern photo was taken by Robin Stokes from his window above Traidlinks during the Carnival Procession 2010.





Market Place, Wirksworth.

on the Market Place





1



2



3

1, 2, 3

24 Jan 1931 - an accident between Mr Hatfield's lorry and Mr Palin's milk float- Hunters moved down to the " Mistral" site not long afterwards!



4



5



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4, 5, 6

Wirksworth has had a market on a Tuesday for more than 700 years. Our oldest old photo taken in 1886 shows some sort of fairground game on the Market Place. The shot of the hunt is from the 1950's.



1, 2

In the 1900's shot the Crown Inn is still visible on the left and a horse and cart stand outside Marsdens. By the 1980's the Market Place had new Yorkstone pavements courtesy of the Wirksworth Project and a refurbished Marsdens awaited new occupants.

3, 4

Before the market moved to its current site when Harrison Drive opened in the late 1930's there was an additional row of shops as shown in this shot from the 1920's. The largest was the Co-op, which later moved to what is now Top Kens.



3



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5, 6

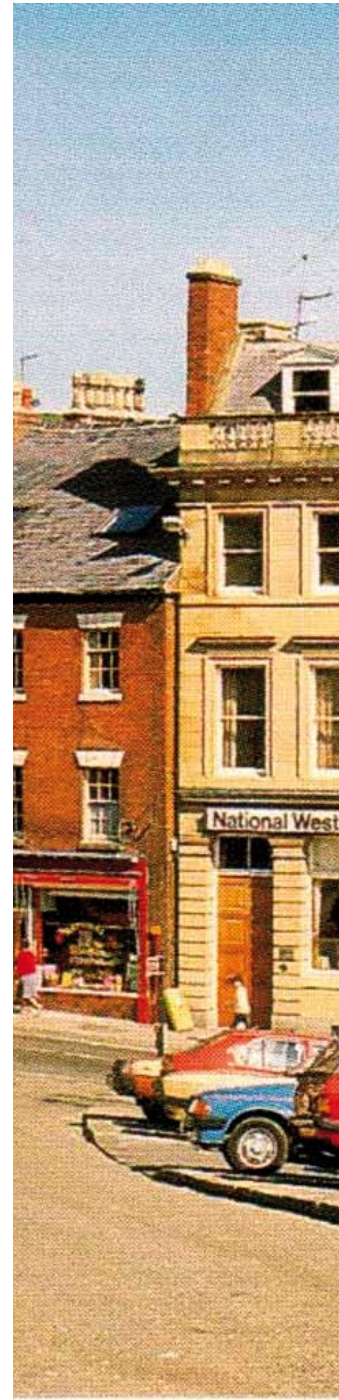
After Marsdens closed in the 1990's it took on a number of names and functions until Sally Ann chose the old name for her gift shop. So, a hundred years have passed and Marsdens is still Marsdens- though you can't buy prize churns (or nails) there anymore.



1



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4



5



6

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

The changing face of what is now the Mistral: since the turn of the 20th century it has been an ironmongers, a tea merchants, a grocers, a delicatessen, an estate agents, Raffles and Number 23. Next door, on the black and white image, we can still see The Greyhound, one of the 40+ pubs listed in Wirksworth during the 19th Century.



7



88

7, 8

Was life really more colourful in the 80's – or was it just the cars?



1, 2

After these buildings on West End were restored in the 1980's they became a base for Janet Reger's lingerie business - London-Paris and Wirksworth.



2



4

3, 4

The cars change shape but this view over the Market Place hasn't changed much in 50 years.

up Greenhill to Stonewood and down The Dale





1

2

1, 2

This fine Georgian town house at the bottom of the Dale was once the home of Lady Arkwright but most people think of it as two shops. In our 1980's shot we have a florists and one of the town's long-serving butchers (there were 12 butchers listed in Wirksworth in the 19th century and in the 1980's we were down to 4).

Today we have a bookshop and a real food store.



3



4



1



2

1, 2

In the late 1980's Sue Evans bought a splash of colour and a sense of fun to the entrance to the Dale with "The Blitz". Sadly it only lasted about 18 months –but it was fun while it lasted. Since then the shop has taken on many guises- we wish the latest incumbents AiRR Clothing a long and successful stay.

3, 4

There was once dilapidated old silk mill between the Dale and West End, then in the 1980's along came the Wirksworth Project and transformed into a wonderful Heritage Centre and Crown Yard Kitchen. Many thousands of volunteer hours and many many visitors later it's still going strong. Volunteers still needed!



5



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5, 6, 7, 8

Once owned by a wealthy lead merchant and famed for housing some Napoleonic prisoners of war, Hopkinsons House at the bottom of Greenhill was in a sorry state by the 1970's. The Wirksworth Project led by the Civic Trust and Derbyshire Historic Buildings Trust helped to restore it and now it houses several modern businesses.



1



3



2



4

1, 2

Perhaps the most striking example of the state in which many of Wirksworth's fine old buildings were in by the 1970's is this legal office at the entrance to the Dale- just as striking is the quality of the restoration in the 1980's- and it still looks good today.

3, 4, 5, 6

Our designers Orange Box Design have just moved into the right hand part of the old smithy building which was still being restored when Princess Margaret paid us a visit in 1984- Prince Charles had affectionately dubbed us Qwirksworth not long before when he visited the new National Stone Centre. (Who is that handsome chap with beard next to her?) So a few years later the Queen arrived to see what all the fuss was about and Henry and his friends gave her a right royal welcome'



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7, 8

The Wirksworth Project in the 1980's was about economic regeneration as well as restoration and many new businesses sprung up in the restored buildings. Some lasted –others faded and now stand empty awaiting the next brave entrepreneur.



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1 - 8

By the 1980's the plant in Stoneycroft Quarry lay idle though Middle Peak Quarry behind it continued in production for several years. Who would have dreamed that in 2010 this would be the stage for a very different production - Wirksworth's own take on "A Midsummer nights dream".

The size of the job of refilling Stoneycroft Quarry can be seen from this 1980's view. They didn't use a lot of topsoil but the trees don't seem to mind. The first trees were planted in Stoney Wood in 1995. The method was easy: take out a LARGE stone with your pick and put a small tree in its place-water and hope.



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13



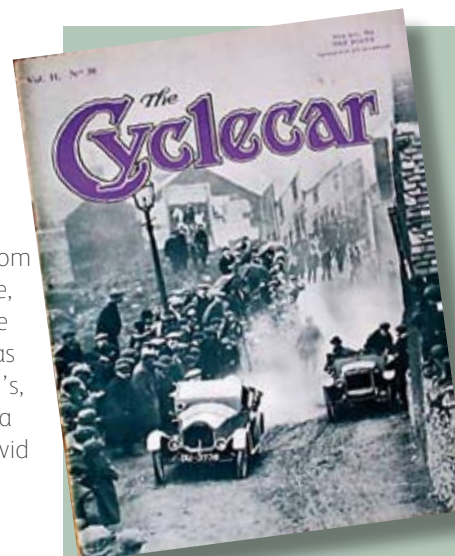
14

9 - 12

Walking up Greenhill can be struggle but carrying that bag of Sunday Pictorials back in the 1930's would have been really hard work though the fresher air at the top would be welcome after breathing in all that smoke from the chimneys.

13, 14

For 60 years Babington House was the cottage hospital for Wirksworth. It was built about 1630 as a private residence. From 1724-1829 it was a Workhouse, and from 1867-1927 a cottage Hospital. The house was used as a Bed & Breakfast during 1970's, 80's and 90's, and currently is a private residence owned by David and Ann Grattidge.



2

Greenhill is steep - very steep - so steep in fact that in 1912 Roll Royce used it to test their cars in preparation for the Austrian Alpine Trials the following year. Motorbikers loved it - trying to reach the top without stopping!

on the road to Derby





1



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3



4

1, 2, 3, 4

Walking down Warmbrook at the beginning of the 20th century, as in our oldest photo here, was a very safe occupation, and Agnes Fidler and friends in the photo from 1947 don't seem concerned for their safety either. Nowadays it's a different matter, so Meara from the Camera Club did a bit

of editing to show the girls the dangers that lay ahead. If the others are still around we would love to hear from them. By the way the house on the left of the photos belonged to the gasworks manager



1



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4

1, 2, 3, 4

Nether House was demolished in 1932 to make way for the new cinema. Dave Stone tells us that much of the original material was recycled straight into the new building. The cinema opened in the 1930s and in its heyday in the 40's and 50's with a 500 seat capacity queues like this were a common sight and that little sweet shop did a roaring trade even after the cinema closed in 1967



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5, 6, 7, 8

Adam Bede Cottage is named after the George Eliot novel: Eliot (real name Mary Ann Evans) visited her aunt and uncle who lived in the cottage in 1826. Our earliest photo, taken around 1905, may have been doctored, with the thatch drawn in for effect. For much of the 20th century there was a petrol station on the site, as in our photo from 1968. Adam Bede Cottage became quite dilapidated in recent years but the current owner is hoping to restore it to something like it looked in this shot from the 1920's. We wish him well!



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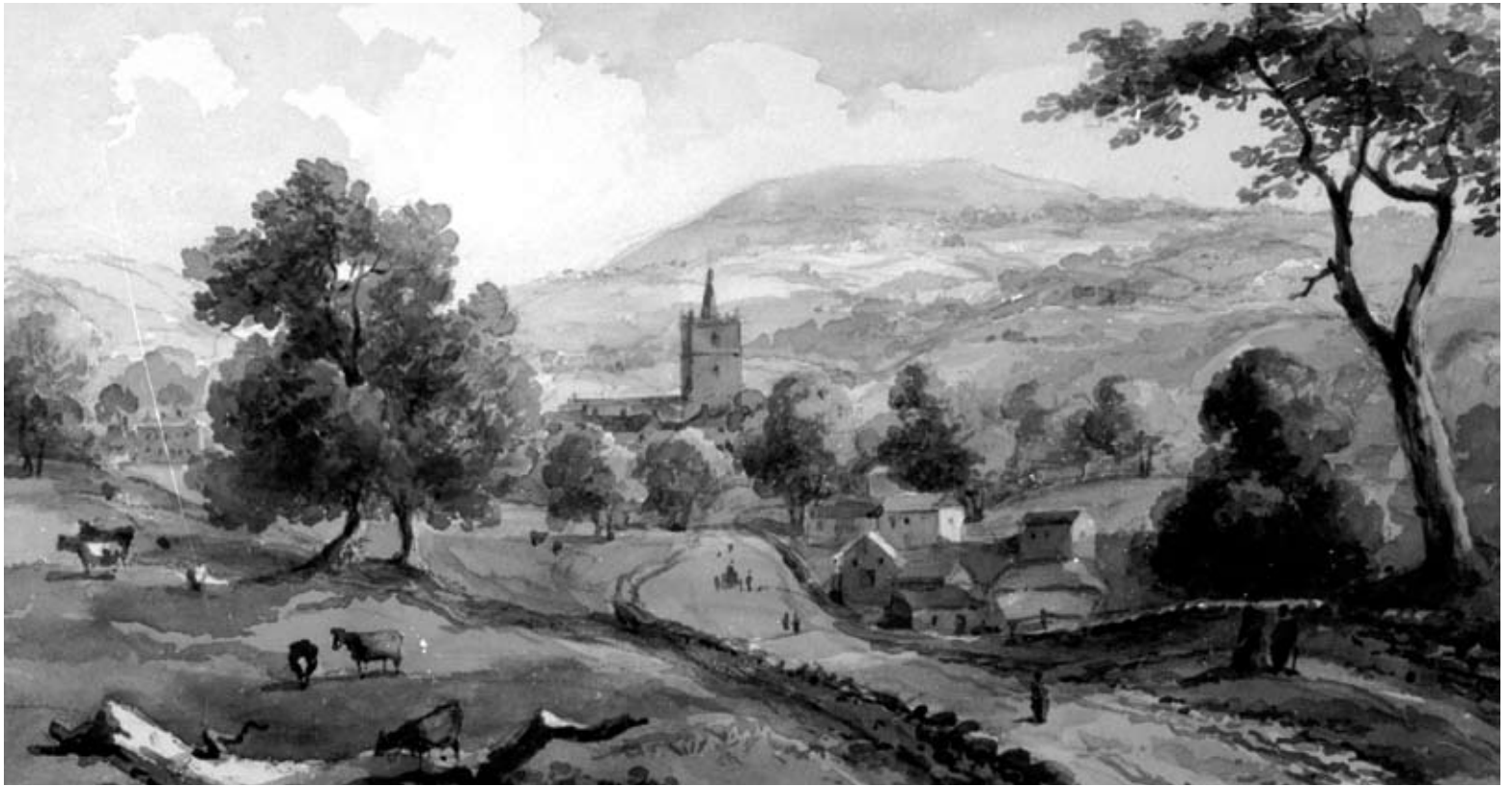
1, 2, 3, 4

We love trees! But we have to admit that at times we were wishing they had grown in other places as we tried to line up our old and new views. What you can't see in the new photo is how few houses there were on the other side of the road when this shot was taken in the 1930's.

By the early 1950's there were houses on both sides of Derby Road, but still very little traffic on a road that was not yet tarmaced- you could even park your bike against the railings!



4



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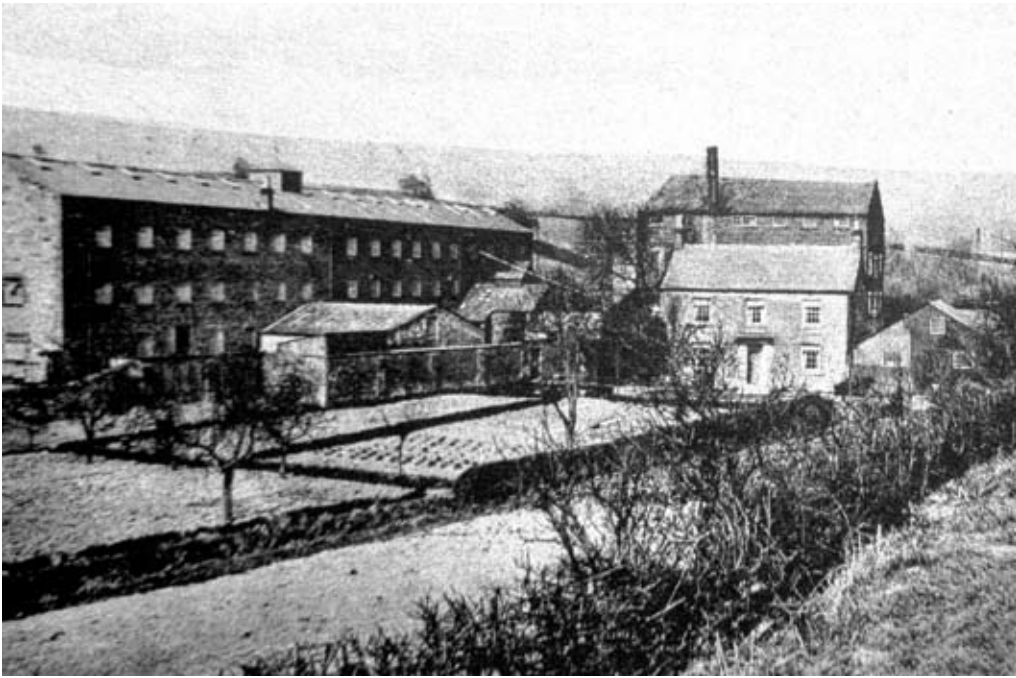
6



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5, 6, 7

The approach from Derby in these very early images is depicted as a true rural idyll but even allowing for artistic license the foreground was probably prettier than our modern view- though the parish church and Barrel Edge in the background have retained their splendour. Can you spot the Gatehouse with its commanding view on the top image?



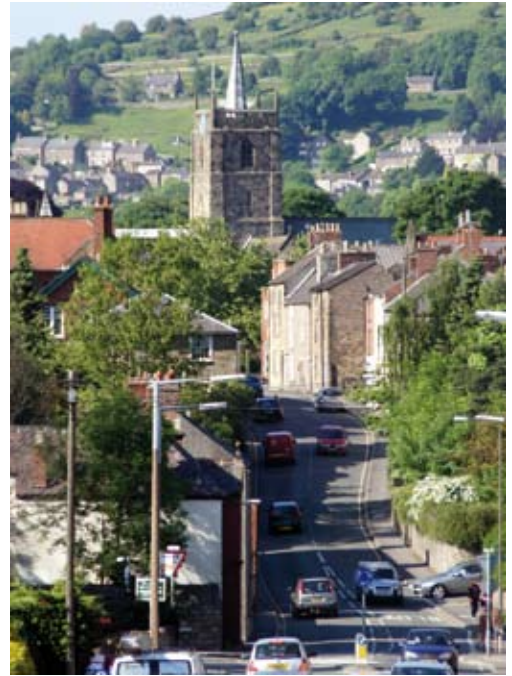
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1, 2

The building behind the house was the cotton mill built by Arkwright in 1777. the other buildings were added in the 19th century. In recent years the factory was used to make water purification equipment. What will happen there next?

3, 4

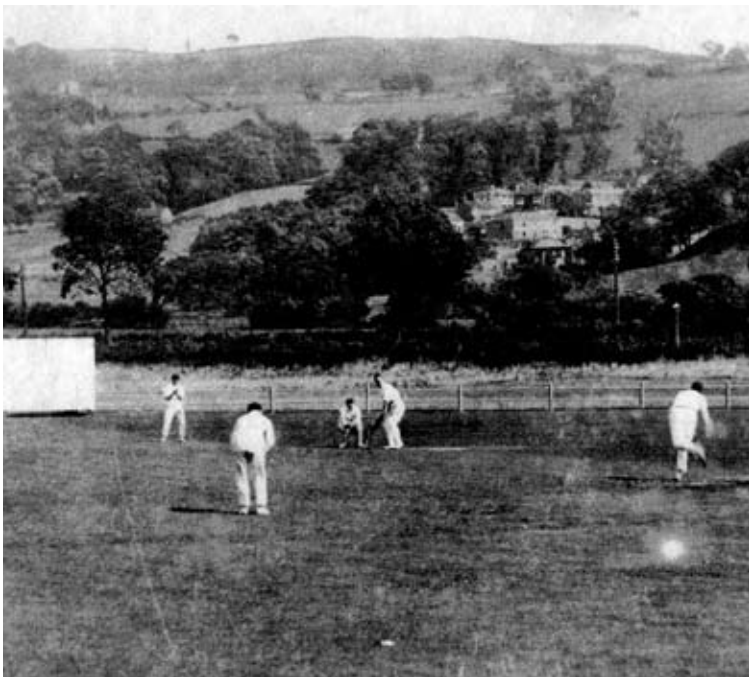
In the 1980s when our earlier photo was taken you didn't have to wait long to catch a quarry lorry making it's way to Derby and beyond. Since the closure of Wirksworth's quarries in the 1990's we have less lorries but far more traffic.



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5, 6, 7, 8

The Wirksworth Recreation Ground Trust which manages the Recreation Ground dates from Her Majesty's Jubilee of 1887. The ground was donated by Mr Alfred Arkwright, and the original Trustees were Frederic Charles Arkwright, Henry Alfred Hubbersty, Anthony Maclean Alsop, Henry Beesley and William Webb M.D. The minutes of the first meeting of the Trustees held on 23 February 1887 record acceptance

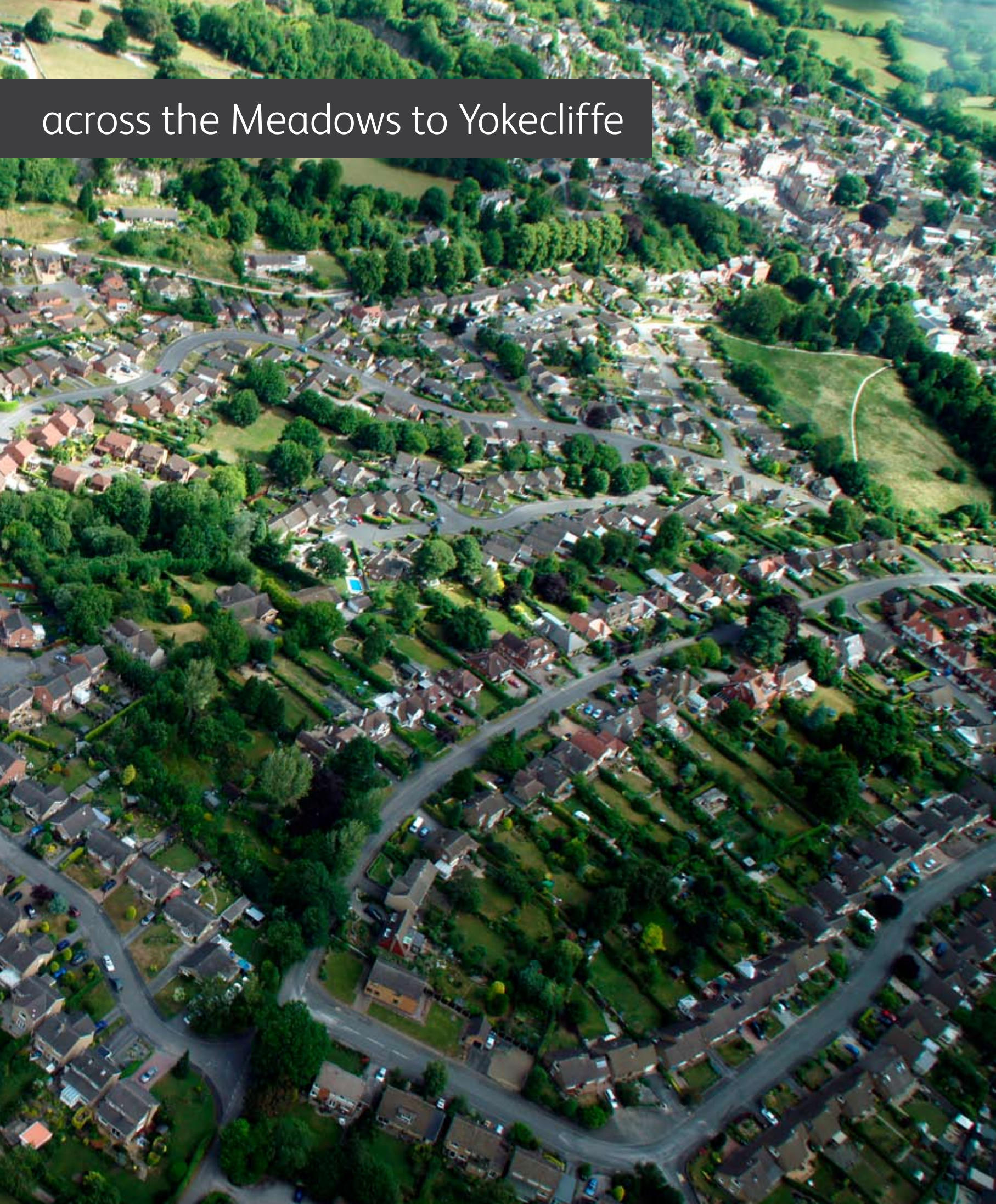
of a donation from Mr Joseph Wheatcroft of £200 towards the erection of a new pavilion. At a subsequent public meeting held in the Town Hall on 16 March 1887 it was agreed to appeal for donations to the fund for the cost of the pavilion and the cost of festivities for the Silver Jubilee to be held on 21 June 1887.

In the 1920's the cricket ground was surrounded by fields with few houses in sight. The pavilion has

been adapted over the years but a major rebuild is in the offing to bring it up to 21st century expectations.

The houses on Derby Road now partly obscure the view of Gorsey Bank that these cricketers enjoyed in the 1920's. Nowadays, of course, there's as much football as cricket played on "The Rec".

across the Meadows to Yokecliffe





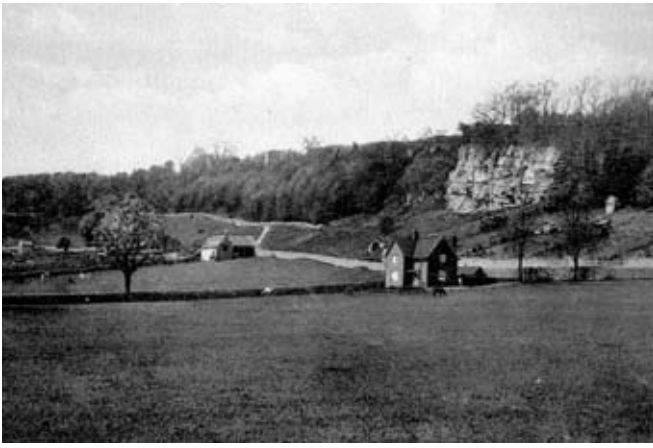
1



2

1, 2

The Gatehouse off the Meadows, once home to the Arkwright family, hasn't changed a lot since this early 20th century view- except that it now houses several families rather than one. The name is slightly puzzling until you realise that this substantial dwelling was in fact the gatehouse to the even more substantial Hopton Hall.



1



2



3

1, 2, 3

Our street level view is probably a more accurate rendition of this early 20th century photo but if we look from above we can see Meadow House now surrounded by the Yokecliffe estate which has grown up since the 1960's. Just to the left of the house on the old photo is a limekiln and then Yokecliffe Farm which was demolished in 1986.



4, 5

The Gatehouse had a clear view over the Meadows at the end of the 19th century but now the house is well hidden by trees. The grass on the Meadows is longer too these days! Who was he and where was he going? Into town or across the fields to the Rec? No houses on Summer Lane then! People have talked about "developing" the Meadows over the years but we like it the way it is - what about you?



4



6



7



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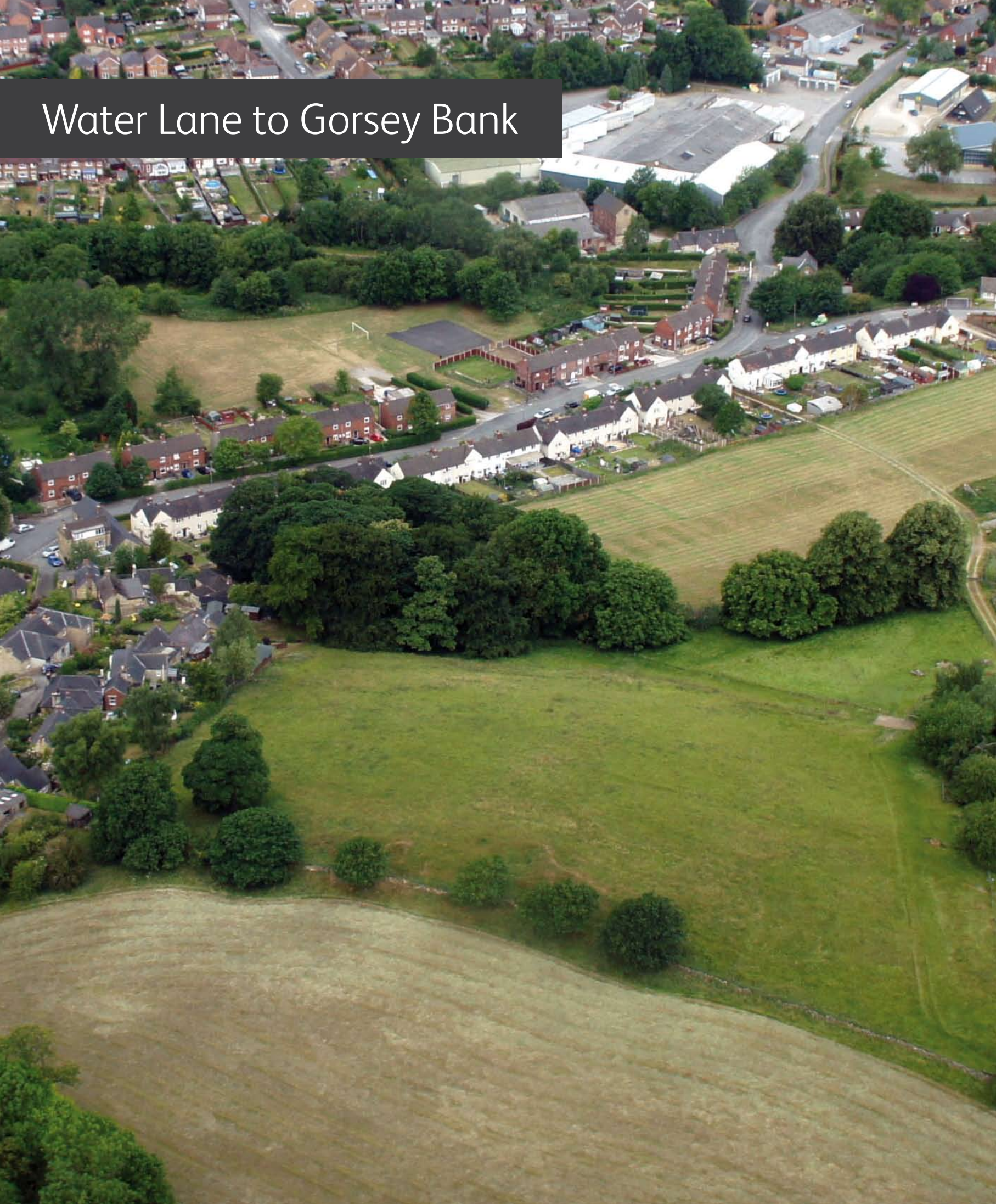


5

6, 7, 8

Taken in 1905 this idyllic view is not quite what it seems - if you look carefully you can see mineral tips from Yokecliffe lead mine. Our new view also turned out slightly differently than we imagined: from this angle its hard to see the hundreds of house that now make up this large housing estate- the nearest red-bricked row reminded us of a medieval town wall.

Water Lane to Gorsey Bank





1



2

1, 2

There were several haulage firms in the town in postwar Wirksworth and WH Phillips on Water Lane were one of the largest. When they left their yard in the 1980's Breasley Foam moved in and rapidly became one of the town's largest employers.



1



3



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6

1, 2, 3

Another shot where it's hard to get your bearings from the hand-coloured postcard from the early 20th century, but the monochrome view from the 1980's shows that we are looking over Water Lane from the south-east. Now much of the view is obscured by industrial buildings and trees.

4, 5, 6

We found it hard to recreate this view towards Gorsey Bank from the houses on Bournebrook Avenue but the outline of the village itself hasn't changed too much since the 19th century.



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7, 8

The 19th century shot of Gorsey bank was taken from the site of what is now St Teresas RC church but we managed to get a closer view of Gorsey Bank House.

9, 10

Our 19th century view shows Gorsey Bank stores- run by W Brooks at the time- now a private dwelling. Many of the older properties in the hamlet remain, though they may have had a makeover or two.



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2



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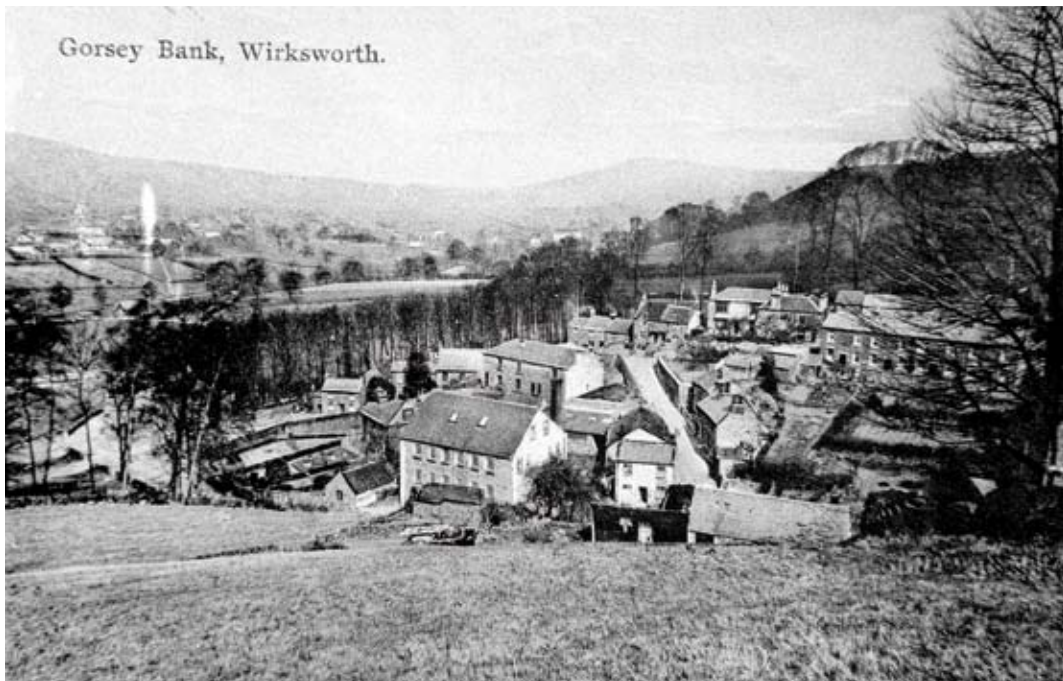
4



5

1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Ann and Brian Thompson and their family ran Gorsey Bank Stores for more than 30 years until it closed in the 1980's and it was always a focal point for the village on special occasions like the Queen's Jubilee. We don't recognise the horse-riders- do you?



6



7

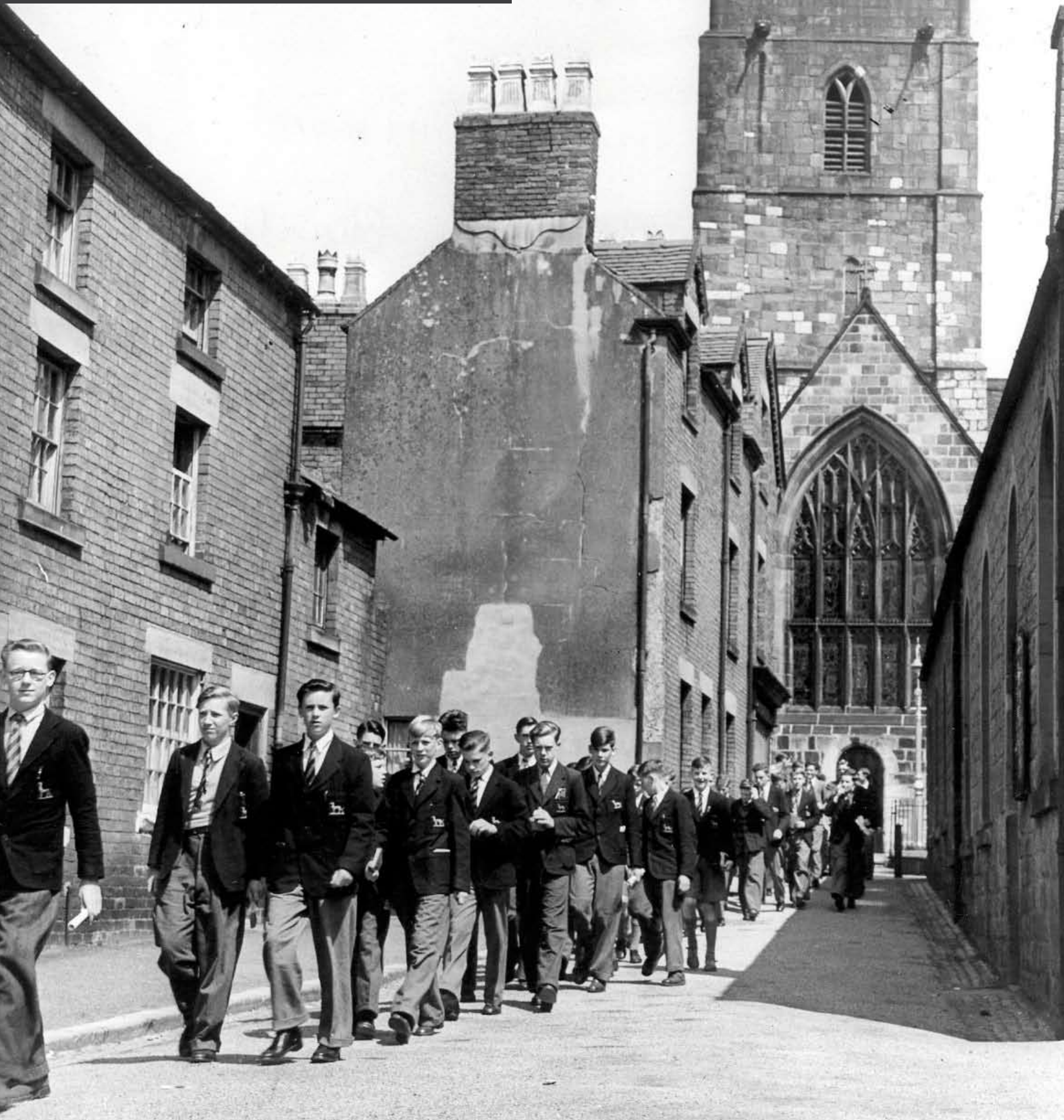


8

6, 7, 8

In this classic Edwardian shot Providence Mill dominates the foreground: it was one of several tape-mills in Wirksworth, which produced the Red Tape for government documents, for which the town was renowned. The view down the valley has been transformed but we can just make out the new grammar school in the distance on the left, opened in 1908.

Gell and the Hannages





opposite page and above

1, 2,

Our 1952 picture shows Grammar School pupils returning from the Founders Day Service down St Mary's Gate. In 2010 the choir sang during the Service and made the same journey to and from school.

In the 19th century School House was the home of the Headmaster of the old Grammar School on Church Walk, who also took in pupil boarders. Nowadays the right hand side of the building and the garden from a private residence, but there are still classrooms in the other half. Our new photo shows Year 7 2010 gathered on the lawn.



1



2



3

1, 2, 3

In this photo from the 1940's we see not only a wall that separates school from street but an internal wall with separate entrances for boys and girls. Dorothy Shimwell (nee Botham) joined the school in 1928.



6



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4, 5

6, 7, 8, 9, 10

The arrival of the Leisure Centre and the Large Astro together with the recent recladding of all the windows have transformed this aerial view of the school taken in the 1980s.

1950's- 1970's- 1980's- 2010.



1



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6



1, 2, 3

There used to be greenhouses and other rural science facilities on the Croft but by the late 1980s these had disappeared to be replaced a decade later by a small housing development. They enjoy a lovely view over towards Gilkin. Breamfield to the right now hosts a small domestic windmill.

4, 5, 6

If you look carefully at oldest photo taken not long after the new grammar school was built in 1908 and compare it with the other monochrome image from the 1950s you will see that there had already been additional wings built on in the same style- including what is now the school library. However in our latest view the old building is masked by the new part which was added in the 1960's to transform Anthony Gell into a fully comprehensive school. Old Wirksworthians from Gorsey Bank still bemoan the passing of that really useful diagonal footpath!



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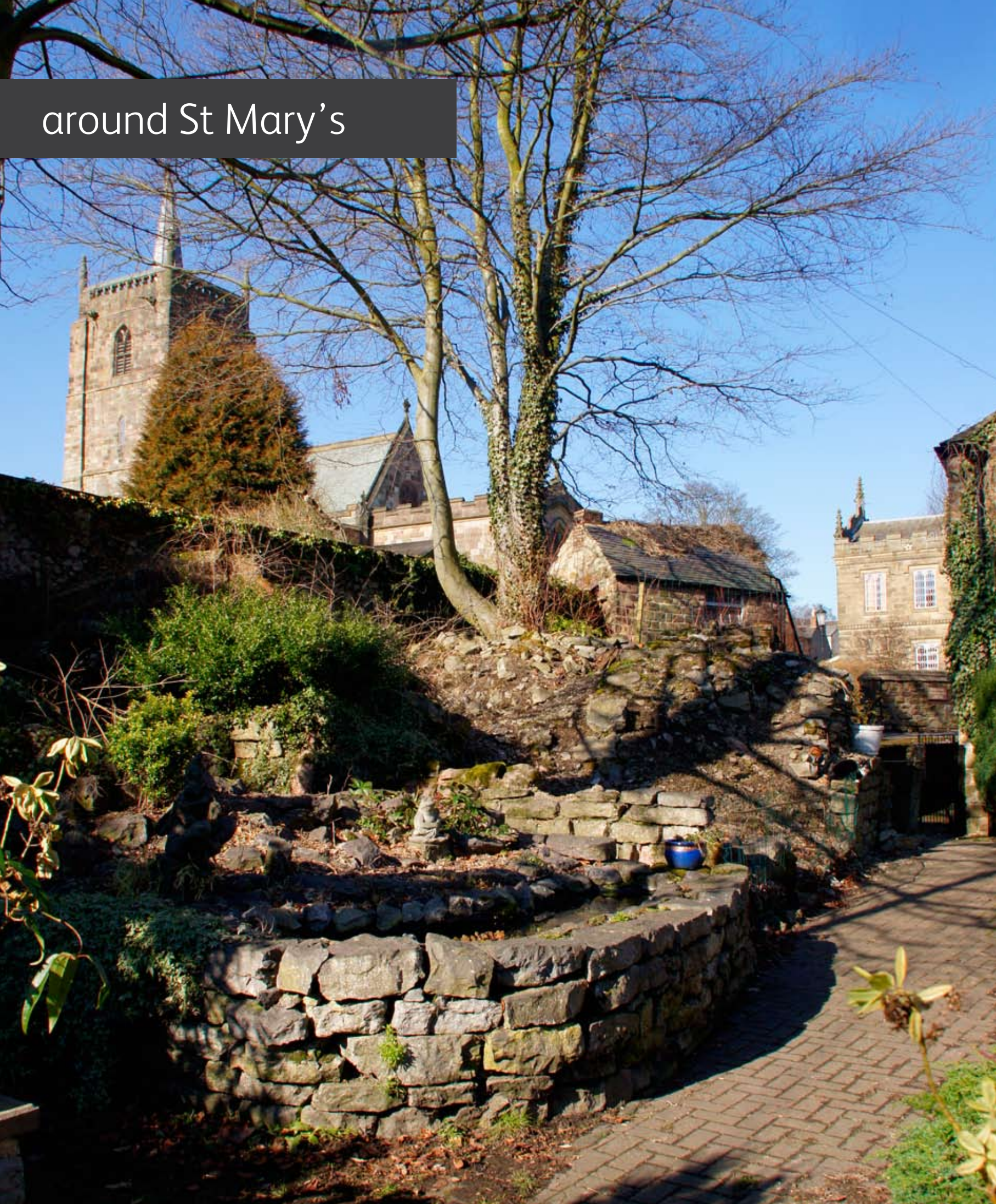
7, 8

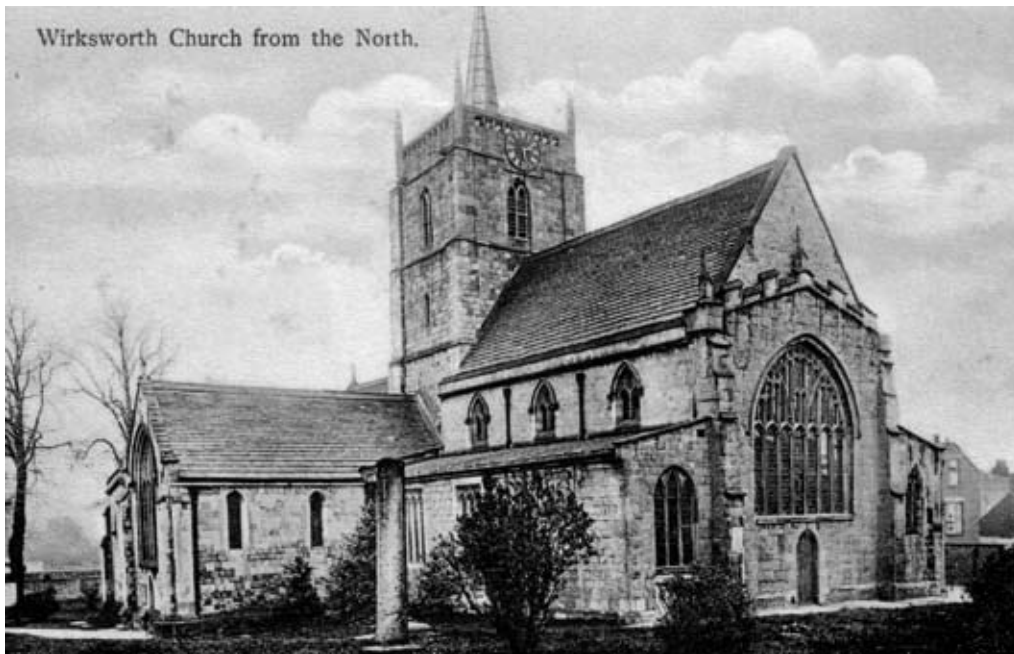
Nearly 45 years separate these two photos- but there is a generosity of spirit at Anthony Gell School which spans the generations. In the older photo taken in 1966, people from the newly opened comprehensive school are wrapped up warm for a sponsored walk to Duffield - along the main road! (Were you there?) Our modern photo shows students doing their bit for Sport Relief 2010

9, 10, 11, 12

The older photos show pupils preparing the school's ell dressing the in the mid-sixties. There are a few changes nowadays- we don't pick moss from the Gilkin and the Caretakers do the heavy lifting- but the traditional skills of puddling and petalling are still kept alive at our local schools.

around St Mary's





1



2

1, 2

Described as “Wirksworth’s crowning glory” St Marys its 13th century, 152 ft long church, with its surrounding circular pathway, from which loom up some very impressive buildings In 1272 the Dean And Chapter of Lincoln, to which Wirksworth belonged, appointed the first special vicar for the church.



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1, 2, 3

This pen and ink drawing is from 1864 showing castellations on the Nave, chancel and north transept; and upper windows of the north transept, all removed by Scott's 1870 restoration. Traces on the tower wall of the steep pre-1500 Nave roof can be seen.

The great restoration of Sir Gilbert Scott in 1870 put a very high-pitched roof over the nave. In 1926 his roof was lowered to its present level, leaving traces of its former steepness on the tower wall. The churchyard was closed for burials in 1856, since then the headstones have gradually been moved.

4, 5

The Hannages was a more open area with far less trees when this photo of the Priest's House was taken in the 1920's, so this is as close as we could get to the original view from what is now the school playing fields.

6, 7, 8

This early 20th century photo shows the Priest's House. It was built about 1500 and knocked down in 1957. It is said to be one of the earliest of its type in the country, but all that remains today are the stone steps that led to the first floor doorway.



9



10



11

9, 10, 11

This monochrome view from the 1900's could have been taken anytime in the last 150 years, but in our new version, the yellow wheelie bin is a dead giveaway.



1



2

1, 2

When this photo was taken at the end of the 19th century the almshouses on Church Walk were already more than 400 years old but the Grammar school building dates from 1828. How did those children spend their lives in a turbulent 20th century? What awaits Daniel and Louise in the years ahead? Underneath the children's feet in the older photo we can see the original York slabs, now covered in tarmac. The Civic Society have an ambitious plan to restore them- would you like that?



ESTABLISHED 1844
LUKE HALL,
 (SUCCESSORS TO BROSSELY & SON)
St. Mary's Gate, WIRKSWORTH.
 ALSO AT BOLEHILL.



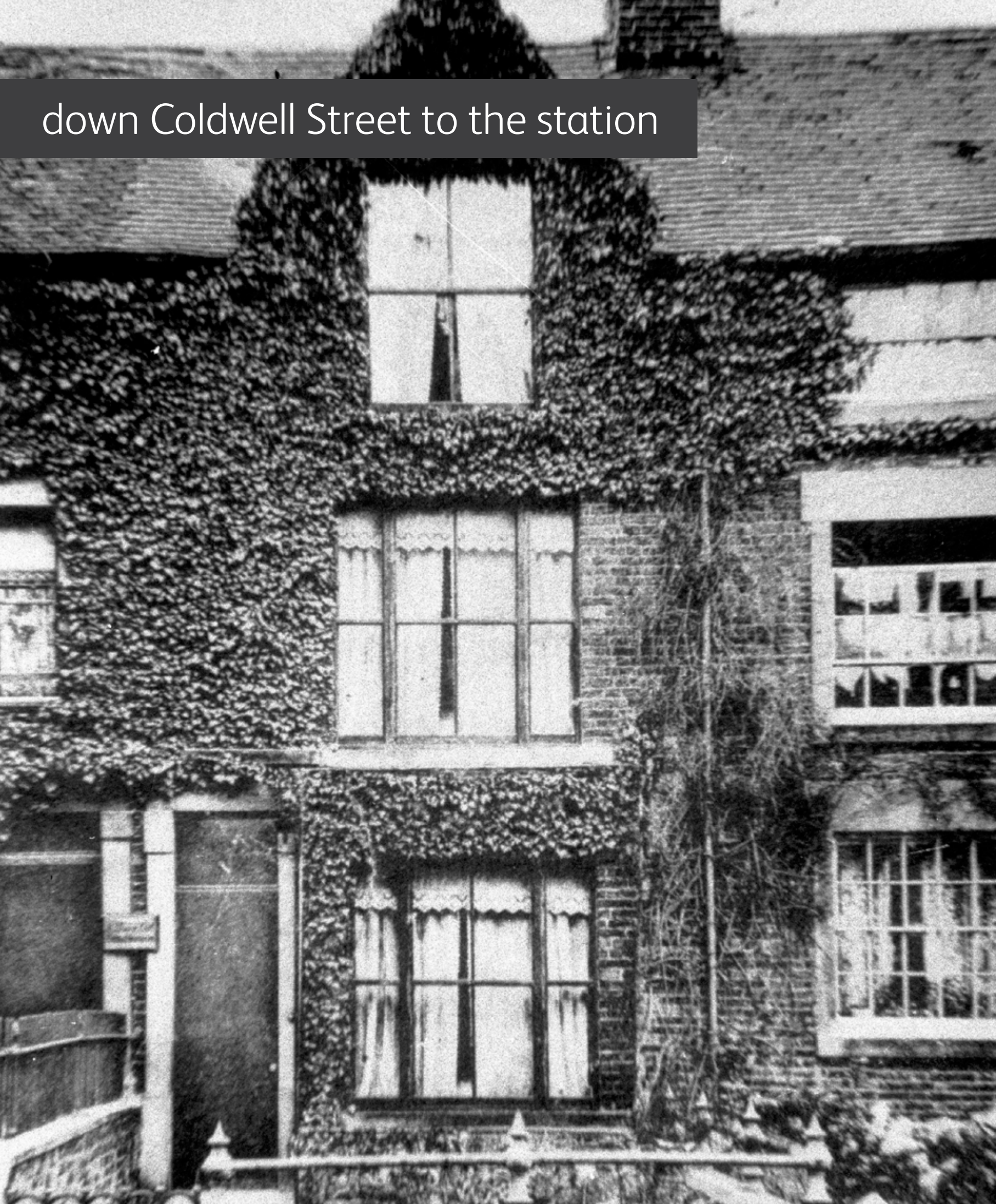
3, 4

5, 6, 7

Sarah, Elizabeth and John Slater stand in the doorway of their shop on St Mary's Gate early in the 20th century. The shop has been an Italian restaurant for a while now but Mel recently relaunched it as Gino's- named after her cat.

This shop has been a bakery for well over a century and still uses traditional coke ovens in a very old building at the rear of the shop. Officially it's now the Old Bakehouse but for locals it will always be Killers. During the Festival in September like many others in town the shop window hosts an art installation as part of the Art and Architecture trail.

down Coldwell Street to the station





1



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4

1, 2, 3

The Red Lion is said to be haunted by the ghost of a coachman whose horses bolted while he was trying to manoeuvre his coach through the archway, losing his head in the process. From the sign above the archway you can see that the inn also housed a garage and a bowling green!

4

Imagine the noise and the dust in Coldwell Street - not from the quarries but the horse hooves as these soldiers return from the Boer War in 1902.



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1, 2

When this photo was taken around 1920 Charles Wright's wine and spirit business on Coldwell was trading at home and abroad from what is now the Vaults

3, 4

A timeless shot of Coldwell Street (but taken around 1930). Newton's monument still stands, although that has been knocked over a couple of times. The large house facing down the street was once a circulating library.

5, 6

Dancing around the maypole in about 1910 - so many of the young men in this photo would have marched off to war a few years later. North End was the main road through Wirksworth then- but blocking the road didn't cause a traffic jam in those days.



7



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7, 8

The Greatorex family shop in Coldwell Street circa 1890. The shop has been in the family since 1860- and is Now run By May and Max as a popular tea-room and goodies shop.

9, 10, 11

This shop has seen many changes of use since Mr John George Southam sold his Fish Fruit and Poultry there in the 1930's.



1



2

1, 2

Before Harrison Drive was developed, the best route into the town from the North was via Coldwell Street and North End. Although the lamp in the foreground has clearly changed, the stone pillar on which it sits has clearly stood the test of time.



3



4

3, 4

The George was an inn for centuries and when the older photo was taken in the 1980's it was renowned for good food, friendly quizzes and a roaring fire. Nowadays it is a private house with state of the art decor inside.



5



6

5, 6

The streetlights on Church Street were pretty dim in the 1940s and it was a gloomy place at night. However the building next to the George used to be the Scout Hall, so it wasn't always quiet!



7



8

7, 8

Ians is no longer the "hair-in place" it was in the 1980's but you can still get a good haircut there-and catch up with all the local goings-off!



1



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1, 2

Wirksworth was a main postal town up to the turn of the 20th century and the post office on Church Street needed plenty of staff as our photo shows. Now the Post Office is on the market place, so Camera Club members had to re-enact the scene.

3, 4

Daniel Wright was the postmaster in the early 20th century. The post office had formerly been the rectory with the original post-office being next to the Red Lion on Coldwell Street. Now it's on the market place and Paddy and Debi and their family live here



5



6

5, 6

Taken around 1904 this delightful hand coloured postcard shows the view down Coldwell street towards the station with the Gilkin in the distance. The ivy-covered building on the right of the modern shot was part of the stables to Warksworth Hall - now it is the Children's Nursery.



1



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1, 2
The railway opened in 1867 and here we have the busy scene at the end of the 19th century with farmers rushing to get their milk to Derby. Don't let the Gatwick Express fool you in our modern rendition- you can't get to London on the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway – yet...

3, 4
Wirksworth Station in 1938 -more than 100,000 tons of stone per annum were passing through. In the very early days there was a link to the Cromford and High Peak Railway and on to Manchester but the gradients were just too steep.

5, 6
All the station buildings on the Wirksworth to Duffield line had the same design and EVR would love to rebuild the one at Wirksworth. In the meantime we think the temporary buildings look neat and functional



9



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13

7, 8

There are occasional steam trains like this one from the 1950's on the restored line, but this two-car diesel usually does the run to Idridgehay and Ravenstor at the moment. However the old photo is slightly deceptive- the railway had already closed for passenger traffic in 1947 and this is a one-off High Peak Railtour special excursion.

9, 10

When freight traffic ceased in 1989 the line gradually decayed, nature started to reclaim it and it became a dumping ground. However because of the station yard had "strategic freight depot" status the track was left in place- ready to be revealed by eager volunteers some 11 years later. Some 400,000 volunteer hours later the transformation is stunning.

11, 12, 13

The beginning of the revival? That wasn't the plan in 1985 when the Wirksworth Phoenix ran from Wirksworth to Derby and back as a Well Dressing Special – the freight line was still open then and the track in order. But somehow for those of us who made the journey a tiny seed of the EVR dream was sown that day. And in the future- Wirksworth to Die or Frankenau by train? Never say never - the track has already been cleared....

To find out more go to www.evr.org.uk

on the way to Cromford





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4



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1, 2,

The bridge over Harrison Drive dates from the late 1930's and in our 1950s photo we can see the War Memorial which wasn't erected until 1940. Nowadays it has pride of place next to the Peace Stone in the Memorial Gardens on St John Street.

3, 4

Harrison Drive was blasted through the wall of Baileycroft Quarry in the late 1930's, as part of a work creation scheme. The tracks in the older photo were used to transport stone down to the railway.

5, 6

In 1905 John Starkey a schoolmaster and his wife Catherine are standing outside their house "Charnwood" on Cromford Road. We couldn't get exactly the same angle for this shot of current owners Frances and Brian Rostron.



1



2



1, 2

There were not many cars around in Wirksworth when this photo was taken in 1926- in fact the bull-nosed Morris facing us belonged to the photographer. Over the door of the house next to it is a small sign which shows that it was the telephone exchange/ telegraph office. Notice how well the new houses in our modern photo blend in with the rest Ecclesbourne Terrace

3, 4

We liked the clean lines of these new Edwardian houses on Cromford Road and the lack of traffic to concern the people in the picture- no-one volunteered to stand in the middle of the road as we took our photo!



3



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5, 6

The photographer's bull-nosed Morris appears again outside Rose Cottage, Steeple Grange in 1926. Visitors were invited to partake of mineral waters and afternoon tea- many years before the High Peak Trail was even thought of.



1



2



3

1, 2, 3

Taken in 1906- we daren't ask the Camera Club to re-enact this photo on Steeple Grange, so we tried a bit of computer wizardry

4, 5

The names and numbers change but thank goodness we still have a decent bus-service to Derby and Bakewell- though, at Festival time especially, the buses are bringing people our way nowadays

6, 7

At the back of this photo taken in the 1930's we can just discern cyclists pushing their bikes up Steeple Grange, without a car(e) in the world. Perhaps they were staying at the Youth Hostel in Bradley House on the right. Note the lack of tarmac on the road- that didn't arrive until the 1950's.



4



5



6



7

Bolehill





1



2

1, 2

At the turn of the 20th century the village's busy post office was tucked away in this corner of Little Bolehill, though it later moved into the middle of the village and remained open until the 1990's. Now both buildings are private dwellings and the nearest post office is in Wirksworth



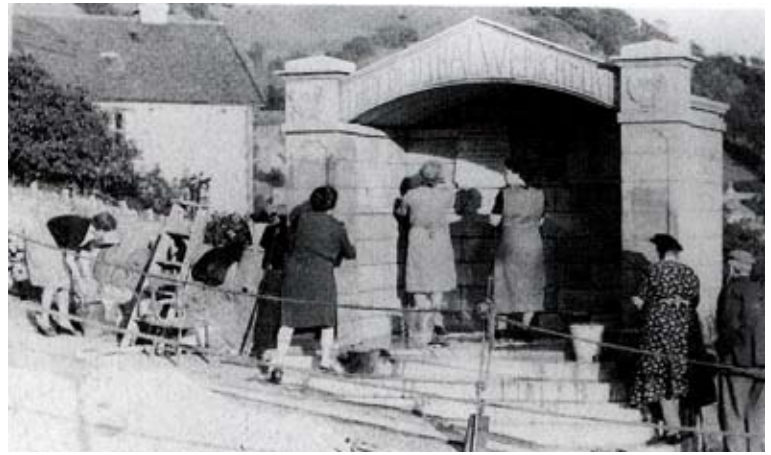
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1, 2

This view of Bolehill Green has changed a lot since 1905 but the Men's Institute built in 1889 stands proudly in the middle of both shots. The characters leaning on the wall would have been amazed to see so many cars in the village, but the new car park in the field on the left will soon fill up.

3, 4

Built by public subscription in 1925 Bolehill's War Memorial has been tended by members of the W.I. ever since. Marble was too expensive so they used Hopton-Wood Limestone which was first quarried about in the 18th century in Hopton Wood at the West end of Via Gellia, 1.5 miles West of Middleton. The limestone was very fine, almost like marble and was used for over 250,000 War Graves.

5, 6

The children in 1905 would have been able to play in a village free of traffic but the road markings in the modern shot show how much the car has impacted on life in Bolehill- we counted 15 passing cars in as many minutes while we were photographing!



7



8

7, 8

Another view of Little Bolehill taken around the turn of the 20th century. What happened to those children? Did they ever leave the village? Ollie and Bianca have a wider world to discover.

up in Middleton





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3



4



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1, 2

Gregsons store in Middleton was a thriving business in the 1920's, when there were several shops in the village. The houses in the background were demolished as traffic slowly but surely increased.

3, 4

The Basin on the Green was Middleton's main water supply for centuries. Mount Zion Primitive Methodist chapel was built on the site of the thatched cottage in 1906.- it is now a private house.

5, 6

New houses have appeared in the foreground since this shot of Middleton Hillside was taken in the 1930s but the line of the hillside stays intact- much of the stone extraction in Middleton happened underground in the mine which stretches for miles under the hillside.



1



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3



4



5

1, 2, 3

The bus shelter now stands where the basin stood since 1768 on Middleton Green. People were only allowed two buckets of clean water for drinking and cooking from the basin. For other purposes they had to save rain water, and many had a tub in the backyard.

Cllr Harry S Flint is shown switching on the the pumping station on the Via Gellia in the 1930's to give Middleton its first treated water supply.

4, 5

In the 1930s it was still safe to walk down the middle of Main Street Middleton- but residents now are glad they still have a regular bus service.



6



7

6, 7

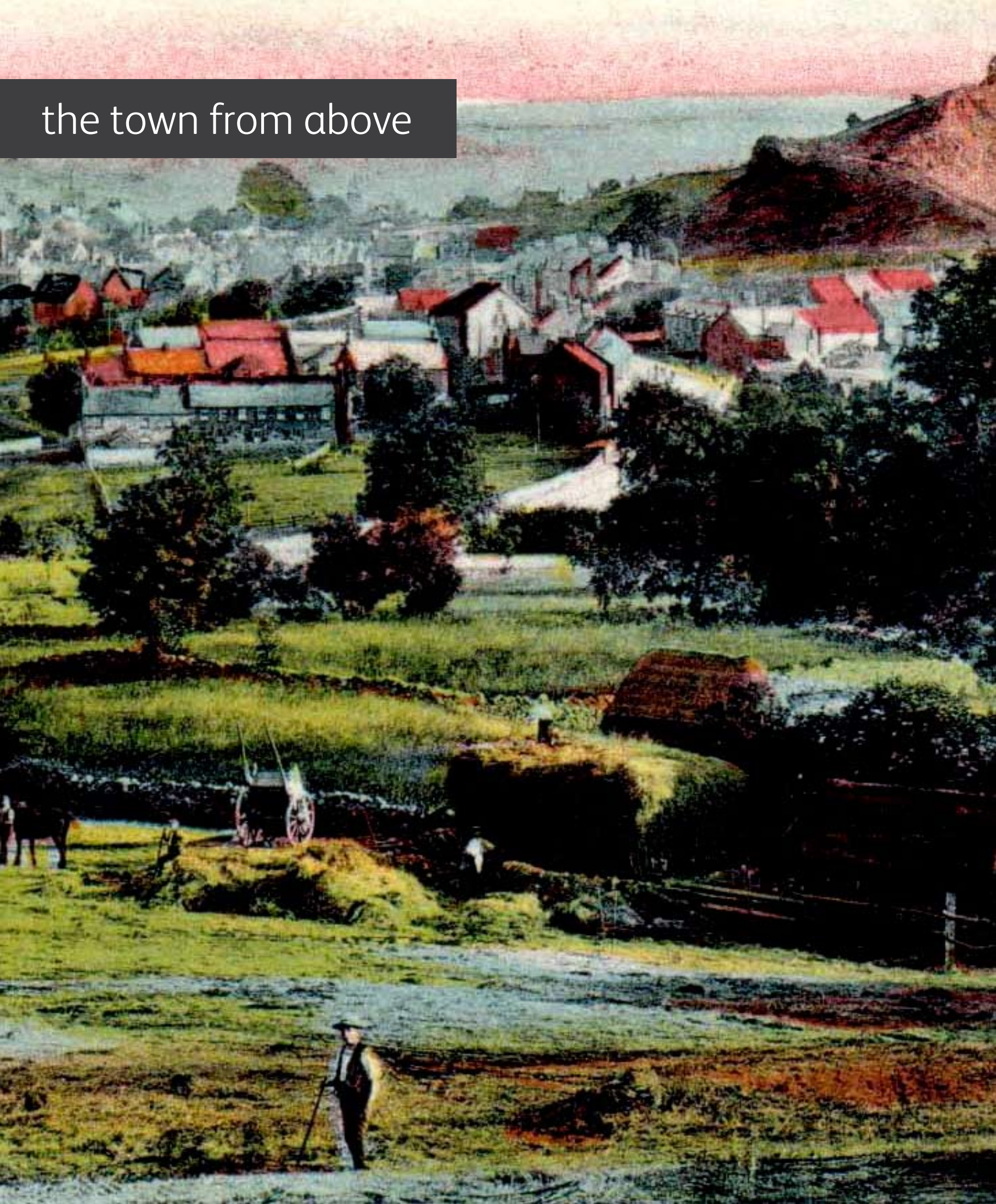
It was as steep a climb from the Nelson Arms to Mt Zion Chapel in the 1950's as it is today- the Chapel is now a private house

Sarah Slack

Wife of William Slack, Florence Slack's paternal grandmother. She was born in Hognaston. They had a large family and lived in Main Street, Middleton in 1881. The photo was taken by A & G Taylor of 63 London Rd, Derby. Sarah was 51 at the time of the 1891 Census.



the town from above





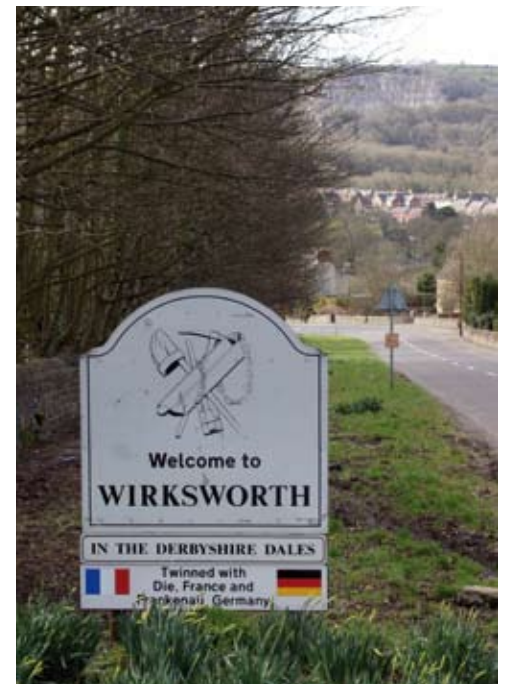
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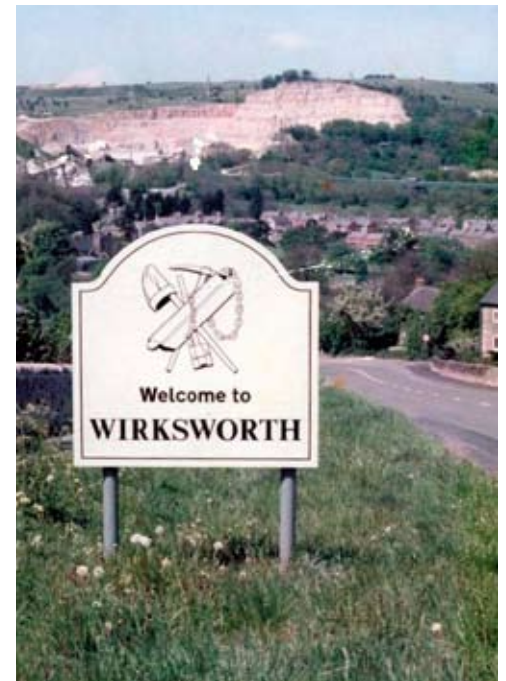
2

1, 2

Taken around 1950 the old photo shows the extent and depth of Dale Quarry – or the Big Hole as it was known - as mechanisation increased productivity. Now the quarry has been reclaimed- but will it ever become the town park promised on its closure?



3



4

3, 4

The Town's coat of arms, featuring lead mining implements- hasn't changed since the earlier photo was taken in the 1980's, but our welcome sign now reflects our well-established twinning links with France and Germany and shows us as an outward facing town with a keen sense of history



1



2



3



4

1, 2

In middle of this shot taken around 1900 Wirksworth Hall can be glimpsed in the trees to the right of the old Grammar School and on the hillside behind the parish church stands the impressive Leys House - both were demolished in the early 20th century

3, 4

The earlier shot was taken in the early 1980s before the closure of Webster's haulage yard in the foreground. In the background Dale Quarry lies idle but its steep sides have yet to be filled in with spoil from the neighbouring Middle Peak Quarry



5



6



7



8

5, 6, 7

Three panoramas taken in 1906, 1980 and 2010 seem to show a constant view across the valley but look carefully at the area in the middle of the rear of each one and you will see dramatic changes in the very shape of the hillside as Middle Peak Quarry grows and shrinks back, eventually making way for Stoney Wood on its reclaimed spoil heap.

8

Stone extraction has been an important part of Wirksworth's life for centuries. We are proud to have the National Stone Centre in the town and we look forward to visiting its new Eco Centre opening in September 2010

thanks

Heritage Lottery Fund for their generosity and their supportive systems

Wirksworth Civic Society and Wirksworth Heritage Centre for being such supportive partners and for the use of their archive

James & Ivan from CFME for their advice and encouragement

Tony Holmes for the use of his archive, for his patience and for always being there when we needed him

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John Palmer for his inspirational website,

Dennis Eardley, Bole Hill WI, Edith Spencer, Peter Haworth, Howard Sprenger, Max Hodnett, Eric Repton and Jack Doxey for their inspirational books

Recommended Reading

www.wirksworth.org
John Palmer

Wirksworth in old picture postcards
Holmes, Tony.

Around Wirksworth
Eardley, Denis

Reminiscences of a Wheatsheaf wanderer: time spent in Wirksworth - a market town in England and special to me
Haworth, Peter

The Wirksworth branch 2nd. ed.
Sprenger, Howard.

Memories of Wirksworth
Spencer, Edith.

Neil Houghton for the aerial view

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Paul from OB Design for understanding what we wanted and helping us get there

Naomi Smallman & Maggie Cunningham for their professional support

David Baker for believing in us

All the people of Wirksworth past and present who appear in the photos

Wirksworth for being Wirksworth

A Wirksworth Boyhood, 1941-1958
Hodnett, Max

A Wirksworth Well Remembered
Repton, Eric.

Memories of Middleton (By Wirksworth)
Taylor, Edith.

O'er back and on the hillock : reminiscences of The Dale and Greenhill, Wirksworth
Doxey, Jack

The Wirksworth story : new life for an old town : the report on the first stages of a town regeneration project.new life for an old town
Wirksworth Project



Wirksworth

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