

# ***Rowell Heritage***

*The Rothwell Arts & Heritage Centre Magazine*



*No. 12*

*May—June 2016*

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**Rothwell Heritage.  
Issue 12.**

**We are dependent on advertisers because their financial support is vital to the funding of this newsletter. Your contribution however, is equally important so if you have anything you wish to submit for inclusion in future issues, please send it to either the manager or the editor at the address below.**

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I hope you enjoy this edition of Rowell Heritage. I would like to thank all our sponsors and contributors for their support.

*Editor.*

**Cover Picture:**  
**Outside the Blue Bell**

*G Davis. 2015*



**Rowell Fair Model Show**

Part of the entertainment on Rowell Sunday will be the annual model show in Tresham Hall. Admission is free and the exhibitors are always happy to chat about their models. The show does not have the pulling power of similar shows which are held alongside some of the largest fairs in the UK, but modellers always enjoy the warm welcome they get at Rowell. Yet again the show has attracted prize winning model makers from as far afield as Yorkshire, Oxfordshire and Hampshire. As well as working miniature fairground rides and transport, there will be a model railway, military memorabilia and pictures of past Rowell Fairs. We always welcome late entries so if you've got a model or craftwork you would like to show, ring 01536 712036.

Please spare a few minutes to support the show.

David Springthorpe.

*Pictures from the 2015 Model Show by David Springthorpe*



***Deadline for the July - August issue is:  
Friday 17th June 2016***

***Please note that while we take every care to be accurate, no liability will be accepted should any of the contents of this magazine be incorrect.***





## Rowell Fair Week

You will see from the above that the Rowell Fair Society has commissioned a new logo and we intend to use this logo as an up-to-date brand to remind people of the unique and unusual heritage that is behind the Rowell Fair Week. The week is comprised of The Charter Fair which had its inception in 1204 (and originally was a trading fair) and the Proclamation of the Charter by the Bailiff on horseback.

As a reminder for some (and stating the obvious to others), Rothwell, or "Rowell", has an Ancient Royal Charter (dating from 1204) that allows a Charter Fair to be held in the streets for one week of every year. The 2016 Rowell Fair Week is from May 21st to May 28th, with Proclamation Monday on May 23rd. The Rowell Fair Society was formed in 1968 to uphold the various traditions of the annual fair week as they were in danger of being lost.

The street fair starts on May 21st so do come and support not just the fair but also the traditions around the week as we want to ensure such unique traditions continue. The more people who attend the merrier, as so many work hard behind the scenes to organise events for the community.

On May 22nd (Trinity Sunday), there will be a model fair exhibition in the Tresham Hall, a celebratory classic vehicle parade, street bands and other entertainment including the Gretton Silver Band in the Methodist Church. The Town's Civic Service is also scheduled for May 22nd (usually 2pm) and we support the parades to and from the nominated Civic Service venue. The unusual Blessing of the Fair ceremony will take place in the fairground at 3pm followed by the fair opening again, with refreshments around the town. We also encourage the continuity of a local delicacy known as Rowell Fair tarts and these can be entered in the annual competition with prizes - May 28th at the Heritage Centre.

The focal point and unique tradition is, of course, the spectacle of the Proclamation of the Ancient Royal Charter on the Monday morning, starting at 6am at Holy Trinity Church, by the Bailiff (to the Lord of the Manor) who is on horseback. After paying respects at the War Memorial, the Bailiff, his ceremonial entourage, halberdiers and band visit every public house (and old sites of pubs) and after each Proclamation of the 1614 Charter, the National Anthem is played and a traditional drink of rum & milk is presented. At most points, once the Bailiff, his entourage and band have moved on, the halberdiers take part in a brief scuffle to prevent anyone else gaining hold of the staff that each halberdier carries with pride. As many of you will know, the streets are usually crammed with people (including many from Desborough, Kettering and surrounding towns/villages) all following the Bailiff. The atmosphere is very festive with many families being reunited for the celebrations. Breakfasts are served across the Town and the pubs also provide live entertainment during the rest of the day.

**Everyone is welcome to all of the above so watch out for posters that will include more detail.**

This magazine has included many a tale of Rowell Fairs of the past and we, the RFS, are working to ensure that such tales and (equally importantly) new ones will survive well into the future.



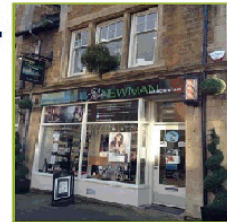
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Loyal members Sheila and Roy Owen received their honorary membership of The Rowell Fair Society from the President, Paul Johnson, at the recent AGM.

Ann Jones also received Honorary Membership of the Rowell Fair Society but was not available for the photo.

### Rowell Fair Society A.G.M.

The President of The Rowell Fair Society, Paul Johnson, with radio presenter and journalist Richard Oliff who entertained members at the society's recent AGM which was well attended despite it being a very wet and windy evening.

Pictures by Dave Springthorpe



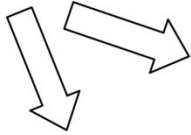


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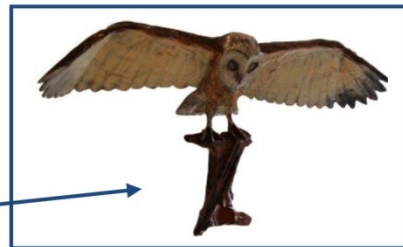
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## **MAY GARLANDING**

*by Helen Brown (nee Chapman)*

'May Garlanding' was common practice in the fifties in Rowell. It was usual for two or more girls to take a May Garland from door to door on the 1<sup>st</sup> May, collecting money for a worthy cause. This involved quite a bit of preparation leading up to creating the May Garland, as lots of flowers were needed for this.

At the end of April, I went with a friend – usually either Mary Martin (now Cox) or Jayne Atter (now Panther), knocking on neighbours' doors, asking if they had any spare flowers for our May Garland. We selected our houses with care, ensuring that they had large gardens with plenty of flowers growing in them. I recall that my Aunt Margery, who lived in The Avenue, was always very generous in giving us flowers. I remember we knocked on the door of a bungalow at the end of Littlewood Street, which had a large garden full of flowers. We didn't know who lived there, but we were attracted by the sight of so many colourful flowers. A man answered the door and to our great joy, started cutting lots of flowers for us – tulips, wallflowers and daffodils. We could hardly believe our eyes! I wonder what his wife said when she saw her garden devoid of flowers!!

We kept our flowers in buckets of water ready to use the following day. Traditionally a large washing basket was used as the basic structure for our May Garland. In those days, washing baskets were made of wicker (there was no plastic then) and had two handles, one at each end. Our mothers would actually create the May Garland by weaving the flowers in the wicker work and covering most of the basket with flowers. We used a doll as the centrepiece of the attraction and a mirror as a pretend pond. The bottom of the basket was decorated to replicate a small garden. Within the basket was a collection jar and people would place their pennies, threepenny bits and even sixpences into the jar in exchange for looking at the May Garland. We covered the whole May Garland with a sheet so that no-one could see the beautiful floral creation underneath and I would take one handle of the basket and my friend (Mary or Jayne), the other handle.

So we set off, knocking on all of the doors of Crispin Street and beyond asking "Please would you like to see our May Garland?" We also explained that we were collecting for 'The National Children's Home'. This was a Methodist Charity which my uncle, Mr Harry Cross, the Methodist Superintendent and Methodist Lay Preacher, supported. My sister Joan remembers that she went May Garlanding and that she collected for the people who were made homeless as a result of the dreadful floods on the east coast in 1953.

I cannot remember being turned away by anyone – so every house where we knocked, someone would ask to have a look beneath the sheet. What a thrill we had when they would shout for other family members to come and take a look or exclaim and praise us for our display and put some coppers in our collection jar. Of course Rowell was so much smaller then and most people recognised us and if they didn't, then they asked who our parents were. They were all delighted to see us and often gave us a few sweets.

As it started to get dark, we went home and counted the money we'd collected. This was always a very thrilling time, counting all of the small change. We usually ended up with about 30 shillings which was a lot of money in those days but only £1.50 in today's money. This money we then took to my Uncle Harry who lived in The Avenue. He was always delighted to send money off to The National Children's Homes as it was a charity very dear to his heart. When we gave him the money, he allowed us to choose a sweet from the tin which was kept on the writing desk beneath the window. Whenever I visited I was always allowed to choose a sweet – this was a real treat as the sweets were often coated in chocolate.

I cannot imagine children today being allowed to roam the streets asking for flowers or showing off a May Garland – it just wouldn't be safe. We were so lucky in those days to have such freedom in our small friendly town where everyone knew everyone else. The community around Crispin Street was very close-knit and children could wander around the streets freely without any thought of danger. They were happy, carefree days for kids even though no-one had much money.

*My thanks to Mary Cox (nee Martin) and Jayne Panther (nee Atter) for allowing me to use their names.*





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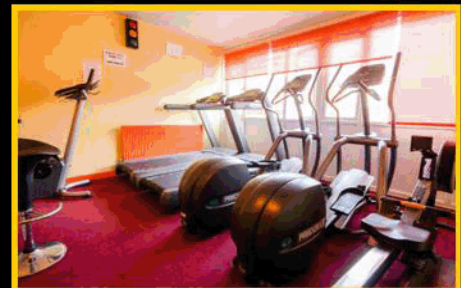
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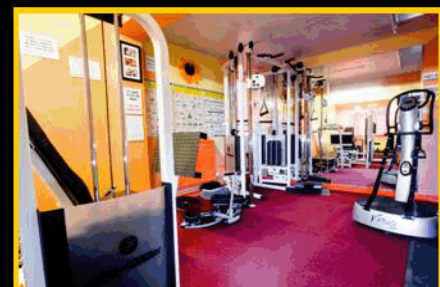
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## 'Memories of days gone by'

*by Alfred George Coleman (1897-1980)*

I was born into a wonderful and exciting world. The British Empire flourished and had great influence throughout the world. The 'Army' (Salvation Army) too was making a great impact wherever it went. As a child I was taken to the Army and grew up with its varied work. We had some wonderful teachers, who not only taught us on Sundays but were interested in our daily lives. Very often we were asked to tea on Sundays, which we appreciated very much and it brought us to a better understanding toward each other.

We had a large Sunday school, as large families were the order of those days. After some time had passed, a Young Peoples Band was formed which to my knowledge has never ceased to function. The chosen leader was a man who had been influenced for good by a Salvationist workmate, who, after his conversion became a bandsman (Band Leader David Oram). He was illiterate in that he could neither read nor write but his other qualities more than outweighed this, for he had tenacity of purpose, very strong willpower, was determined and forthright. He never gave up.

He commenced with a nucleus of four, (one of the founder members is still with us in the town) but soon the band rapidly expanded, being a great asset to the Corps. I was eager to join so my brother-in-law taught me the rudiments of music. I was given a flugelhorn and told to attend practice at the Band Leader's home. He worked at the ironstone quarry and had to walk long distances to work. He had his main meal at 5pm and we learners had to play and march round the table while he consumed a large plateful of food, interspersed with words of encouragement, or otherwise!



*Alfred George Coleman*

The young peoples' Corps held Open-Airs in Gas Street (now Meeting Lane) and the band was always on duty. Gas Street with its problem families was our battle ground, this was the first open-air meeting I ever spoke in and I know many of us were more established in the Faith because of those meetings.

We as a Corps were fortunate in having the Staff Band for a weekend. What excitement, - a great honour to be thus privileged. Rothwell Senior and Y.P. Bands marched to Desborough Road where we played the Staff Band into the town, causing considerable interest and enthusiasm. The Y.P. had the honour of playing to the Staff Band while they sat at the tea table. We gave a good account of ourselves and the visitors were delighted; you can just imagine how we felt.

We also had a visit from the famous Chalk Farm Band under the well-known and highly respected Bandmaster Punchard. He impressed us with his humility. Our band marched to Fox Street to await their arrival and take them to tea but unfortunately during the journey here they were delayed by fog, arriving two and half hours late but grateful for their safe arrival. The Festival arranged in the Congregational Church was still enjoyed by all, although it was obviously very late in starting. The next day was Remembrance Sunday and the Chalk Farm Band marched to the Memorial Service which was continued in the Parish Church. The visit of the band, and the re-dedicated service during the weekend raised the Army prestige considerably in the town.

Another band to visit us was the Village Band from Raydon, Suffolk. They were enthusiastic Salvationists and hardworking bandsmen. A wonderful fellowship existed amongst us and we had a very happy and enjoyable



time. They came for Easter and on Easter Monday their band challenged our band to a football match on the Recreation Ground. I was called upon to referee! And of course we won.



*Marching in Tresham Street*

What can I say of Corgie Band's visit to our town? They travelled from Scotland through the example of true Salvationism in the forces. Our friend Bill Sharpe attended meetings at Edinburgh Corgie, eventually helping out as a deputy drummer. His great spirit and fiery enthusiasm impressed the band, prevailing them to come down to us (Bill was a true Christian). Our band played them into the town and up to the Hall to tea. They were astonished to find such a good and enthusiastic Corps with so great a welcome for them. The weekend was a success and choice memories still linger with us.



The Corps Officer at Shepshed invited our band for a weekend and the outstanding feature was the late Sunday night open-air meeting; it seemed as if the whole town was there. Song sheets were provided and favourite hymns were sung and played. It was a wonderful and inspiring sight to see so many of all ages and to hear their singing bringing a mellowing influence on us all. About thirty children were there so I suggested they sang the children's song 'Gentle Jesus, Meek and Mild.' The children put their hands together as they sang and the band played very softly. A hush came over us all, a wonderful feeling of nearness to Him, and gradually we picked up the words, and once again, in Spirit, we became as children. Who knows but that many of them thought of bygone days and renewed their covenant with God. Coming from the open-air meeting, an old lady of 80 years expressed her appreciation and thanks for a wonderful time of blessing and strength.

I am honoured and privileged to be a Salvation Army bandsman, to be involved in its activities for God and the Salvation Army. I have had the opportunity to proclaim the Gospel, to play and pray to the sick and lonely, to bring consolation to the sorrowing, to encourage the weak and doubting, and to daily uphold the Army standards. I have found joy in service, more than anything. I was commissioned a bandsman on 6<sup>th</sup> February 1914 having played with the Y.P. Band for 7 years previously. Banding with all its sacrifices and responsibilities has been my life and no one has been happier or has enjoyed the wonderful fellowship of bandsmen more than I have. Bandsmen who were trophies of grace; some with exceptional talents, playing and singing, some for greater service as Salvation Army Officers, and some who have gone to pastures new but still maintain a good experience. The band has played a unique part in the Corps, participating in all its activities, also helping other organisations and fulfilling the town's need.

For well over fifty years my wife has been my support and encouragement, her sacrifice, has been outstanding and the needs of the band have always had first consideration with us both. I gratefully acknowledge her service both to the band and myself, thanking God for our years of service together.

Notes from Trevor and Diana Smith:

*These are the memories, of a dear, kind, gentle man and true Salvationist and 'Uncle Alf' to us.*

*Alfred George Coleman was born at Rothwell in 1897 and at the age of 13 years was listed in the census as being employed as a 'clicker' in the boot and shoe industry. He served in the 3rd Suffolk Regiment during the final days of the Great War. He also served in the Civil Defence Warden Service during WW2.*

*Mr Coleman died in 1980 aged 83 years - his musical instrument was presented to a member of the Young People's Band at that time. During his lifetime, the Salvation Army in Rothwell was in its heyday and had a huge enthusiastic following. The 'Open-Airs' were extremely popular, the band paraded regularly around the town on Sunday afternoons, stopping at various points, and would play special requests for anyone who was ill. At Christmas time the band would march and play carols around Rothwell and also Desborough.*



*The Salvation Army Young Peoples Band*



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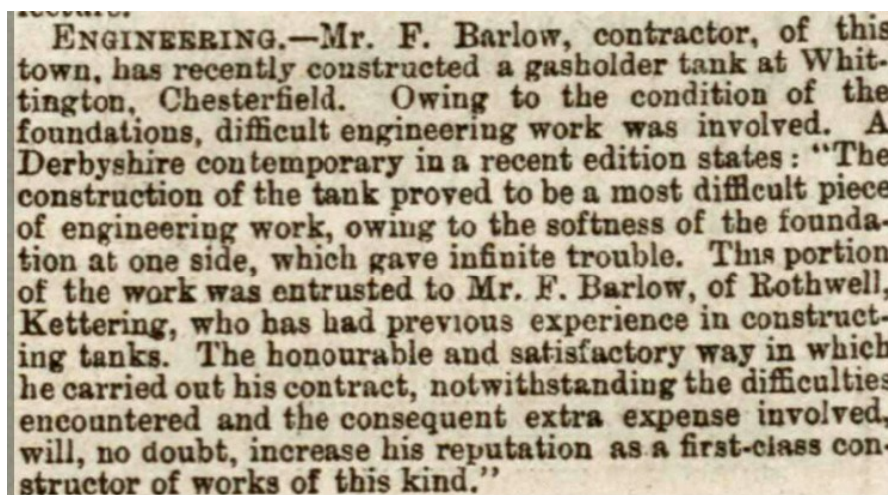


## **REMEMBERING FREDERICK BARLOW WHO DIED ON 4<sup>th</sup> MAY 1916**

*by Sylvia Davis*

Frederick Barlow was born in Rothwell on 18<sup>th</sup> April 1855, the son of stonemason/builder Edward Barlow and milliner Elizabeth Slow. Frederick married Sarah Ann Whyment (b. 1849) at All Saints Church in Clipston on 29<sup>th</sup> June 1876. The couple had 8 children, 3 of whom had died by 1911.

Frederick was a stonemason and builder. He was responsible for a great many local constructions including the Salvation Army Barracks in New Street (1888) and the new Wesleyan Chapel (1899) now known as the Methodist Church. Some of the Weldon stone left over from the latter was used on his own home 'The White House' at 13 High Street Rothwell. His fine reputation also resulted in work contracts much further afield:



ENGINEERING.—Mr. F. Barlow, contractor, of this town, has recently constructed a gasholder tank at Whittington, Chesterfield. Owing to the condition of the foundations, difficult engineering work was involved. A Derbyshire contemporary in a recent edition states: "The construction of the tank proved to be a most difficult piece of engineering work, owing to the softness of the foundation at one side, which gave infinite trouble. This portion of the work was entrusted to Mr. F. Barlow, of Rothwell, Kettering, who has had previous experience in constructing tanks. The honourable and satisfactory way in which he carried out his contract, notwithstanding the difficulties encountered and the consequent extra expense involved, will, no doubt, increase his reputation as a first-class constructor of works of this kind."

*Northampton Mercury 6<sup>th</sup> Apr 1897*

Frederick Barlow was a man of many talents and in *Kelly's Directory* of 1898 he is listed as a builder, brick and tile maker, contractor, carpenter and monumental mason. He has a steam joinery works and timber stores at Rushton Station, lime kilns at Rushton, brickyards at Rothwell and the main office of his monumental/stonemason works is at Clarence Road, Kettering.

In later life, Frederick took over the Ball's Agricultural Implements Works and his son Lancelot became the Managing Director.

It was as a public servant however, that Frederick Barlow really made his mark on Rothwell. He was elected to the committee of the British School whilst only 17 years of age and at 21 was Secretary/Manager of Rowell Gas Light, Coke and Coal Company. By 22 he had been elected as a District and County Councillor and he later became the first Chairman of Rothwell Urban District Council, having single-handedly fought the case for its formation in front of Kettering Council after the two representatives who were going to accompany him decided to drop out. He was quoted as saying that "this was probably the most momentous decision I was ever called upon to make". He was a Poor Law Guardian, deeply concerned about improving public health and sat on various committees including that of the Rural Sanitary Authority.

Councillor Barlow was instrumental in making major improvements to the town such as ensuring that there was reliable fresh water provision. His late father Edward, had started this work by laying pipes (at his own expense) to improve the area around the Jubilee Spring as well as establishing a water supply at the Glendon Road end of town. Frederick carried on with the task and was presented with a commemorative silver spade in 1902 when he cut the first turf at the construction of the new reservoir. He greatly improved the sewerage system, re-paved most of the streets, developed the new cemetery and completed the Market House so that it could become a library. He was appointed as a Justice of the Peace in 1894 and also stood as a Liberal candidate for North Northamptonshire in the 1900 General Election, receiving 3303 votes. It was however, a Tory stronghold and the seat was won by S.G. Stopford Sackville with 4559 votes.

Throughout his life, Frederick Barlow was a staunch Wesleyan and conducted their church choir. He had a great love of music and regularly sang at local events.

He was a local hero in 1883 when saving children from a house fire:

A FIRE broke out on the 2nd instant in a house in Foxes-lane, occupied by a widow named Butlin, who, having to go out on business, left her children at home. They played with some matches in a bedroom, and a bundle of old newspapers caught fire, which quickly communicated the flames to a washstand. Fortunately, Mr. F. Barlow was near the house at the time, and, finding it impossible to ascend the staircase, forced one of the windows open, threw a quantity of water on the burning mass, which was speedily put out.

*Northampton Mercury 10<sup>th</sup> Feb 1883*

....but there were also a few embarrassing incidents such as this court case:

**HE CALLED HIM A LIAR.**  
Frederick Barlow, builder, of Rothwell, was charged with assaulting Albert Guildford, at Rothwell, on the 1st inst.—The complainant said that he went up to Mr. Barlow's office on business on Saturday night last, and said a word or two to Mr. Barlow, who at once gave him a clout on the head and knocked him down.—Mr. Barlow, in his defence, stated that late on Saturday night the complainant came to his house, and after using very offensive language towards him, he ended by calling him a liar. He (Mr. Barlow) did then strike the complainant with his flat hand, and put him out of the house, but he did not use more force than was necessary.—The Chairman said while the defendant might be justified in ejecting the complainant from his house, he should not have struck him, and for the assault he must pay 1s. fine and 13s. expenses.

*Northampton Mercury 8<sup>th</sup> Dec 1888*

Frederick did have to face some difficult times including the loss of 3 children. A particular shock was the sudden death of his eldest son and business partner Ernest Alfred Barlow on 18<sup>th</sup> July 1906 at the age of 28. Ernest had complained of a headache two days earlier but it had not been considered to be of consequence.

Frederick himself suffered several accidents which illustrate the dangers of horse-drawn vehicles:

**ACCIDENT TO MR. F. BARLOW, J.P.**—On Thursday morning Mr. F. Barlow met with an accident. When driving by Sike's Lodge, at which point the road is very narrow, a dog ran out at the conveyance. The pony swerved to avoid the animal, with the result that the trap was instantly turned completely over, Mr. Barlow and his son Ernest being thrown into the hedge-side. Although much shaken, fortunately neither were much injured.

*Northampton Mercury 12<sup>th</sup> Mar 1897*

**ACCIDENT TO MR. F. BARLOW, J.P., C.C.**—On Saturday an accident happened to Mr. F. Barlow, J.P., which might have resulted in serious consequences. He and his coachman were returning home from Kettering, when his trap came into collision with a van belonging to Messrs. Wardle Bros. of Kettering. Both shafts were broken off Mr. Barlow's trap, which was overturned, and Mr. Barlow was thrown out. Fortunately he escaped unhurt, and is, we are glad to say, no worse for the mishap.

*Northampton Mercury 20<sup>th</sup> Feb 1903*



ACCIDENT TO MR. F. BARLOW, J.P.—Mr. F. Barlow met with a rather severe accident on Monday night. He was driving home about six o'clock, and, passing another vehicle on the hill leading into Rothwell from Kettering, his trap came into collision with a hydrant on the side of the road which could not be seen in the darkness. The tracings were broken, and the pony galloped wildly into the town without the trap. Mr. Barlow fell on his back, and was rendered unconscious by the fall. He was taken home in Mr. Eyre's wagonette, which was passing, and although very much bruised, it was luckily found no bones were broken.

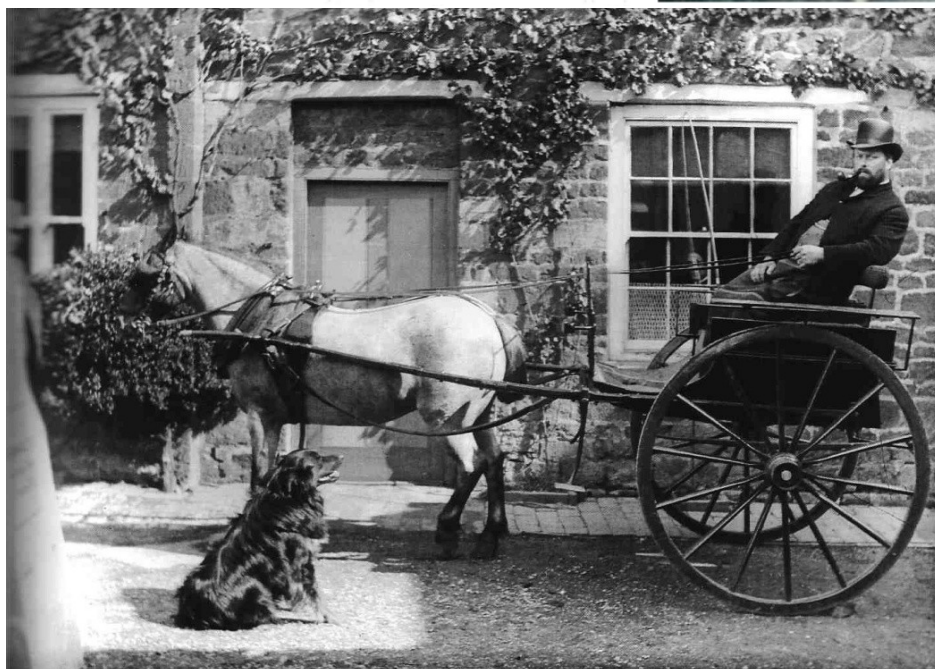
*Northampton Mercury 18<sup>th</sup> Jan 1907*

Frederick Barlow was sadly beset with illness for many years. He first collapsed in 1902 and was ordered to rest for several months when it was discovered that he had a serious heart condition. He never fully recovered and finally resigned from the Council on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1913. Many warm tributes ensued and he was left in no doubt of the lasting impression he had made on the town. Frederick died at his home on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1916 at the age of 61 and his funeral took place on 8<sup>th</sup> May in the Methodist Church. This was followed by a burial in Holy Trinity Churchyard in the presence of a large number of mourners.

A brass plaque is displayed in Rothwell's Market House along with a portrait of Councillor Barlow.

THIS TABLET IS ERECTED BY THE TOWNS PEOPLE OF ROTHWELL TO COMMEMORATE THE UNIQUE SERVICE RENDERED TO THIS TOWN BY FREDERICK BARLOW J.P. C.C. WHO WAS THE PIONEER OF OUR MODERN SCHOOL SYSTEM AND OF LOCAL SELF GOVERNMENT: HE WAS CHAIRMAN OF THE SCHOOL BOARD FOR 12 YEARS, CHAIRMAN OF THE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL AND MEMBER OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL FOR 22 YEARS. AMONG MANY WORKS WHICH HE ASSISTED TO INAUGURATE WERE THE ACQUISITION OF THE GAS AND WATER WORKS, RECREATION GROUND, AND CEMETERY: THE RE-SEWERING AND RE-PAVING OF THE TOWN AND THE COMPLETION OF THIS BUILDING.

July 1913



*The photo above is almost certainly of Frederick Barlow.*

*Taken from 'The World of Joseph Philemon Smith of Rothwell' by Trevor & Diana Smith.*





# The Red Lion Inn Rothwell

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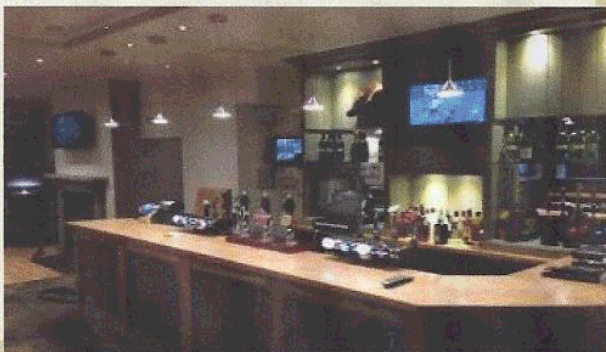
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## **MY MEMORIES OF ROTHWELL CHURCH SCHOOL**

*by Jim Malpas*

I was born in October 1939. My dad (Don) was enlisted into the army during the Second World War so I lived with my mum and my grandparents in Jubilee Street.

I started school in 1944. I went to Rothwell Church School (also called the Grammar School) which was situated where Rothwell Library is now. The school house was in front of the school and the playgrounds were behind where Rothwell Fire Station is now. We had a boys' entrance and a girls' entrance and separate playgrounds. As it was wartime there was an air-raid shelter along the side of the playground and it was very dark and smelly with no lights. It was for use by the school and local people. The school was quite small and only had three classrooms, - one for the infants, one for the juniors and one for the seniors, so there was a large mix of ages in each class. The senior class was from 11 to 16 years which is a very big difference in ages. I am one of the few remaining people who only went to one school and no other. Some pupils went to Kettering Grammar and High Schools or to Kettering Central School and pupils younger than me transferred to Rothwell Secondary Modern (Montsaye) when it opened. I don't have many memories of the infant class. My teacher was Mrs/Miss Norton and I remember walking to school during the bad winter of 1947 through very deep snowdrifts. These days the school would be shut down! I can remember three teachers from my time in the junior class, - Miss Buckby, Mr Jim Turnill and Mr Noel Manthorpe (who I believe is still around). Mr Manthorpe took us for Sports and P.E. As we didn't have a playing field, we played football down at the recreation ground and practiced sports there as well. We used to take part in the interschool sports which took place at Rothwell Football Club's ground.

In the senior class, our teacher was Mr Vickers who was a verger at Holy Trinity Church. The Rev. Collins was the vicar. Mr Vickers asked us if we wanted to join the church choir, so some boys and girls did. Once there we formed a choir football team which was very enjoyable. Mr Vickers was strict. We used to have a mental arithmetic test in the morning and if we got less than 5 out of 10, we had the cane! It must have been difficult to control pupils of such a big age range and different educational standards. We used to sit at individual wooden desks with an inkwell in the corner. These are the names I remember of some of my fellow pupils and some who went to other schools:

**Boys:** Stuart Tilley, Pat Butler, Alan Joy, Jimmy Nichols, Howard Cooper, Tony Gasson, Les Buckby, Mick Smith, John Goode, John Woods, Ernie Woods, Roy Fellowes, Roger Clipston, Brian Munton, Roger Hales, Pat Eden and Brian Lingley. **Girls:** Kathleen Clipston, Nora Clipston, Eileen Coles, Rita Schlossberg, Carol Lingley, Elaine Goode, Gwen Eden and Minnie Chester.

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
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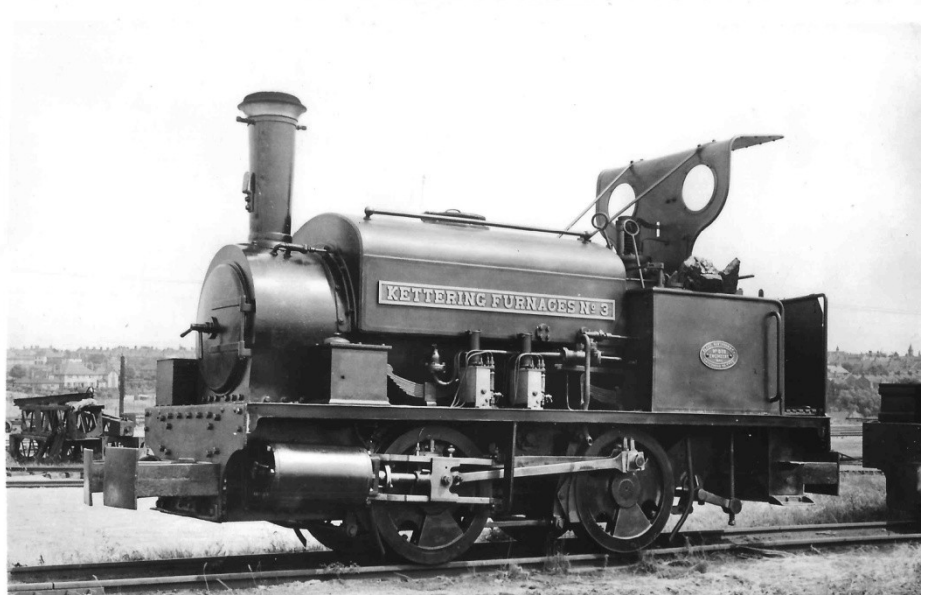


## Iron ore workings around Rothwell

*by David York*

Sitting here today, where I live now, I can still visualize how things were when I was living at the corner of Ragsdale Street and Glendon Road and I can recall what we could see from the front window of our house looking over towards the old A6 ( now A14 ) during the 1950s when I was a mere youngster. In summer, the fields surrounding Lodge Farm on that road were ablaze with red poppies and a little railway dropped down the slope from Violet Lane to a row of horse chestnut trees dividing two fields. It then turned upwards on itself to climb back to the A6 and under it, on its way to the extensive quarries over the hill on the land towards Loddington. There were little saddle tank engines puffing away on that track, hauling small ironstone wagons. At the same time I can also visualize seeing, from the top deck of buses travelling towards Kettering, the very same track passing the back of Lodge Farm coming up from the loop (nicknamed by rail men 'Chestnut Tree Loop'), going under a bridge at the top of Violet Lane and on towards Kettering Furnaces (demolished in 1963) which lay adjacent to the Midland Main Line across the valley from the top of Northfield Avenue.

On walking from our house down Glendon Road in those days, you passed allotments on the left hand side, several pig sties, orchards and clay pits, then it was up and over Bunkers Hill where you were met with an avenue of elm trees on both sides of the road on a very shady run down to White Stone cottages in the dip. All those trees have long gone due to a mix of Dutch Elm disease and felling, but in the '50s you could see (between the trees and hedges), quarry excavations on the south side



of the road and further workings farther down the road on the left. There would be navvy cranes deep in the pits and mounds of earth on either side which gradually moved as time went on and iron ore was extracted from one section then moved on to another while the original working was returned to agricultural land. Now what you see down that part of Glendon Road is several farms and the entire road stranded on land which is much higher than the surrounding fields with hardly a tree in sight. In ironstone language these were termed 'sunken fields'. Without the trees though, you have a good view of the large spinney on the left hand side that hides a deep quarry. That was there when I was a youngster so the excavation must have taken place between 1880 and the 1920s. You can tell how old it is by the brickwork of the bridge parapet (if that is still there - cannot tell from my Google Earth view of the area) on either side of the road at the top of Bunkers Hill. The railway serving it must have branched off the Kettering to Loddington railway across the Slade brook then up around the back of what we called, in my day, Pittam's Farm.

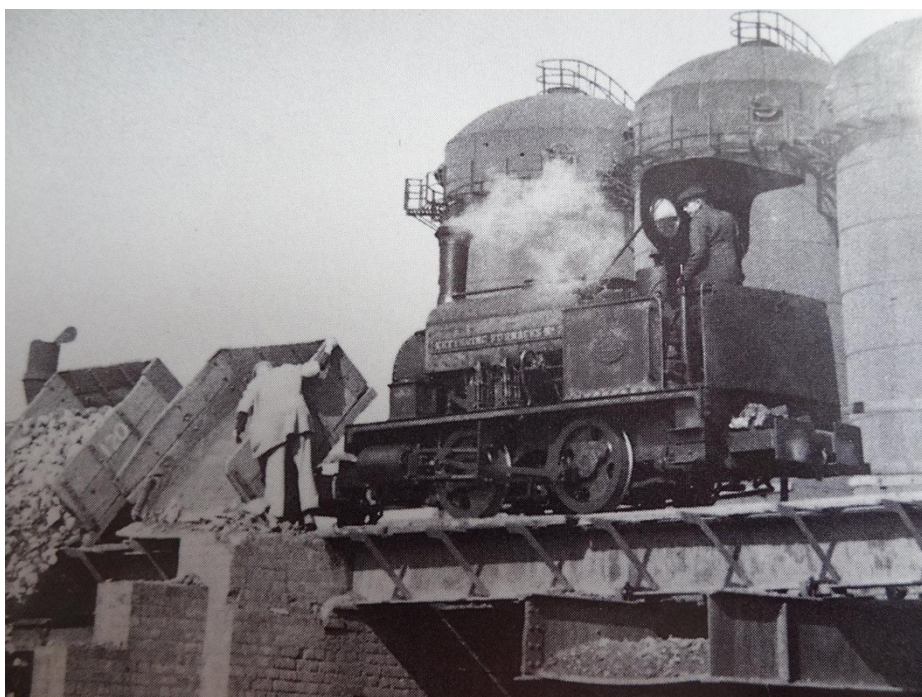
There are remnants of another quarry down the road called The Folly where iron ore was taken out at about the same period. This road, or track as it used to be, headed directly to the old waterworks by the River Isle but had to be diverted around the quarry and then later this deviated track was laid with tarmac and made into a road, at least as far as the waterworks. The trains that served this pit ran back towards the old A6 (now B576 ) Desborough Road and then beyond towards Thorpe Underwood where the ore was offloaded on to a narrow gauge tramway that ran over the River Isle and up and under Braybrooke Road linking up to the Midland Main Line north of Desborough. If you view a Google Earth map of this area you can still see where the old tramway went despite the building of the new A6 directly across it. Rothwell Gullet (now a nature reserve) is also part of the old quarry linking The Folly with Thorpe Underwood.



During 1959 in this section west of Desborough Road, once known as Rothwell Hill Quarry, there was a re-opening of the excavation and the iron ore was taken overland by aerial ropeway passing Triangular Lodge on the way to Great Oakley. From there it was transferred to a narrow gauge railway that took the mineral the rest of the distance to Corby Steelworks where it was smelted down into iron. The aerial ropeway remained in operation until 1966 then at a later date it was dismantled and taken down.

Along the Rothwell to Loddington Road past the cemetery, there were excavations on both sides and also on both sides of the Orton to Loddington Road. The pits here were larger than those around Glendon and the cranes were massive (called draglines) and had huge buckets. Deep down in the pits were a number of Ruston long jib and shovel cranes - both steam & diesel driven and transporters to help with the workload. The iron ore on the Orton side was taken over a large embankment across the valley and around the back of Loddington to a base above the south bank of Cransley reservoir to be transferred to British Railways iron ore wagons. It then travelled by standard gauge rail past George Cohen's old scrap yard (closed in the 1980s) around to where the Kettering Conference Centre now stands, into south Kettering's old marshalling yards usually hauled by an Ivatt 2MT mogul belonging to Kettering shed. I could hear these locos struggling to pull the loaded wagons up the hill from Geo Cohen's from where I used to train spot before school in the recreation ground below Kettering station. Before the Kettering to Cambridge cross country railway line closed in 1959, it wouldn't have surprised me if Kettering staff would use Cambridge locos to do this task, as they did for local shunting, in order to save on their own coal - a trick they probably picked up during the after war austerity years. Although you can still see where the old standard gauge rail bed used to run (zooming in on a Google Earth search), there are no longer any remains of the narrow gauge extension to Orton or the large embankment which must have been bulldozed. On checking details in an Eric Tonks booklet on Ironstone Quarries of the Midlands, I noticed that Geo Cohen's scrap yard was formerly the site of Cransley Furnaces which closed in late 1959, so originally the ore stopped there to be smelted down and wasn't brought into Kettering marshalling yards for onward delivery to Kettering furnaces until 1960 & later.

From the end of the bridleway alongside the cutting at Blue Bridge, just past the branch off of the line to Nottingham, was a connection with the main line to Leicester where another narrow gauge (usually 3ft) railway set off to serve the Rushton to Glendon excavations. At this junction, more or less opposite the Glendon North signal box, was a narrow gauge engine shed plus a water column and coal bunker to replenish the locos. The track used to run around to



the Glendon to Rushton Road and under it, where a bridge parapet still stands, into the fields opposite and across to Glenn Spinney. The whole of this area from Glendon Road to Rushton Road was excavated at various periods of time during the 1950s and earlier. The same happened on the other side of this road right across the fields to the bridleway and also under Glendon Road, where another bridge parapet still exists but much older, close by the hamlet of Glendon, into the fields to the south of this road. This particular south side working like the one at the top of Bunkers Hill and those on either side of Blue Bridge itself, was a very early one (1900s or well before) and perhaps even horse driven. For those interested, check out whether the parapets have any black soot left over the arches - if not they were horse driven narrow gauge railways. Iron ore from this area was brought to the bridleway terminus and transferred from the narrow gauge trucks to iron ore wagons marshalled on several rails between the bridleway and the main line, and were picked up by Johnson 2Fs or 3Fs allocated to Kettering shed and taken off probably to Kettering Furnaces.

A further iron ore railway branched off the Kettering Furnaces to Loddington track and ran down to the Slade brook where it crossed by an embankment and viaduct and headed up towards what in my day we called West's Farm (now Bunkers Hill Farm). It then ran parallel to Violet Lane and crossed under Glendon Road close to the road junction. I can no longer see the bridge parapet from a Google Map view as there has been a recent Anglian Water pipeline excavation that seems to have obliterated it - I might be wrong on that. Iron ore was taken out from both sides of Glendon Road all around West's Farm so those buildings and that road stand well above the surrounding fields. The viaduct was taken down but the embankment on the north side of the Slade still remains although it is now covered by mature trees. Mike Pateman, an old school chum, informs me that he and a few of his friends used to race the saddle tanks up Violet Lane on their bicycles - not too hard a task as the locos only ran at a moderate speed.

Looking further afield there were excavations on both sides of the A6003 Stamford Road from east of Blue Bridge to the west of Weekley and right up to Geddington, Great and Little Oakley, and eventually to Corby & beyond to Weldon. There was also quarrying north of the Desborough to Rushton Road right up towards Pipewell. To the south of Loddington there was quarrying all around the Great Cransley and Broughton area and westwards from Loddington to Mawsley. To the west of Orton, tracks ran in from the old Northampton to Market Harborough railway to work on pits between Fox Hall and Orton and also to quarrying around Lamport. Closer to home there were also 1920s/1930s workings on either side of Thorpe Malsor and even 1910 -1919 workings along Gipsy Lane close to where Kettering General Hospital now lies, both running by separate railways either side of the Crematorium to Kettering Furnaces. In fact, the Thorpe Malsor to Glendon Road that met the old A6 and carried over as Violet Lane was renamed Glen Baulk Road as far as the A6. Baulk means 'a strip of earth between excavation trenches for the study of the complete stratigraphy of the site'. The line that served this area came down on the west side of the Crematorium, under the A6, past an engine shed on its left, over a viaduct in the valley and on towards the pits at Thorpe Malsor. It also continued under the Glen Baulk Road just past the zig-zag at the bottom of the hill and on towards and under the Thorpe Malsor reservoir road at the top end to pits above the reservoir and over the Loddington Road up to Three Chimneys. From a Google Earth search you can still see where the viaduct crossed the valley, albeit covered in trees.

You could say that Rothwell and its surrounding area was at that time sitting on a goldmine! Well.....the ore was virtually the same colour! Apart from the land-owners who leased out their land to the iron ore companies, did Rothwell itself get any benefits from this?



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## **MR HARRY CROSS – A TRUE ROWELLIAN**

*by Joan Humphrey (nee Chapman)*

When I read the article in the March - April magazine, entitled 'Lacemakers of Rowell', I realised its significance for my family. I am a Rowellian but no longer live in the town. My sister, Helen Brown, collects the Heritage magazine for me and I enjoy reading and reliving the memories immensely. The lady in the photograph (Lizzie Cross) doing her lacemaking, is the mother of Mr Harry Cross who, after losing his first wife, married my Aunt Margery, my Mum's sister.

Harry Cross was a well-known Rowellian in the 1950's and early 60's. He was born in Spring Gardens in the house shown in the background of the photograph. His public service to the town was exemplary. He was a Town Councillor, Chairman of the Council, a School Governor and also a stalwart of the Methodist Church as Sunday School Superintendent and Local Preacher.

Harry was a very kind, generous person and I have happy memories of fun at Christmas, playing board games like Cluedo with him, my sisters and cousins in the dining room whilst the adults were chatting in the front room. Then there were walks down to Abbey Bridge, bicycle rides and fun on fireworks night. He would treat my sisters, cousins and me to concerts at the Methodist Chapel (sitting on the front row and peeping under the curtain!) He entertained the members of the Methodist Guild with slide shows of holiday destinations, showing many beautiful areas of this country and even places as far flung as Oberammergau for the Passion Play. I also remember winding up at his house in the Avenue for goodies after carol singing!

Harry's mother came from Wavendon in Bedfordshire to work for the Rector when he moved to Rothwell. The house in the Avenue, where Harry Cross lived for the whole of his married life, was given the name, 'Wavendon' - a nice reminder of his family's heritage!



## The School Canteen in Castle Hill

*by Stan White*



In magazine No 7 there was an article entitled 'Victoria Infants School' by Helen Brown and mention is made of the school canteen in Castle Hill, "a ramshackle building". I took a photograph of the building in 1981, knowing its days were numbered. The canteen had provided school dinners for pupils since the early 1940's, serving children from Victoria Infants School and the Gladstone Street School. It did however, have a far wider reach.

Each day, dinners were cooked and then packed into heat-proof containers which were taken to a number of village schools that did not have facilities to prepare their own hot meals for the children.

In the 1940's (and perhaps later) the containers were collected at 11am for delivery to the village schools by a black van which belonged to Fred Buckby's Garage in Harrington Road, Rothwell. Most times the driver was Walt Stanion who lived in Spencer Street. He delivered to Arthingworth, Maidwell, Kelmars and other villages. Of course the canteen staff had to prepare the village meals before starting on those for Rothwell. I worked for Fred Buckby before joining the army. We called that van 'The Black Mariah'.



*The School Canteen on Castle Hill. The area is now the school car park.*



## THE QUEEN PASSES THROUGH ROTHWELL ON 12<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1982

The Court Circular of Saturday November 13<sup>th</sup> 1982 described the events of the previous day when Queen Elizabeth II visited Northamptonshire:

### **BUCKINGHAM PALACE**

November 12: The Queen arrived at Kettering Railway Station in the Royal Train this morning to visit Northamptonshire and was received upon arrival by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant for Northamptonshire (Lieutenant-Colonel J. Chandos-Pole).

Her Majesty drove to the Queen Elizabeth School, Corby and having been received by the Chairman for Corby District Council (Councillor J. Thomson), toured an Exhibition of Work of the Corby Joint Industrial Development Committee, visited a display of work carried out by the Raven Workshop, and met some of the young people involved in the work.

The Queen, escorted by the Head Teacher (Mr John Sutton), afterwards unveiled a commemorative plaque in the School Hall, formally naming the School after Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother.

Her Majesty later honoured the Mayor of Northampton (Councillor R. W. Harris) with her presence at luncheon in the Guildhall.

Afterwards The Queen walked to the Royal Theatre and toured the Derngate Centre, escorted by the Chairman of Derngate Centre Sub-Committee (Councillor C. R. Benton).

Her Majesty later opened the Express Lift Company Limited's Lift Tower.

The Queen was received by the Deputy Chairman, GEC Ltd (the Lord Aldington) and the Managing Director, Express Lift Company Ltd. (Mr M. L. Dove), and after unveiling a commemorative plaque, toured the Lift Tower.

The Marchioness of Abergavenny, Mr Robert Fellowes and Lieutenant-Colonel Blair Stewart-Wilson were in attendance.



*Photographs courtesy of Mike Buswell*





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#### A couple of amendments to issue 11:



- 1 Joe Knight
- 2 Roger Cosby
- 3 Les Willis
- 4 Les Pratt
- 5 Ollie Parker
- 6 Len Sharp
- 7 John Gilbert
- 8 Chris Stone
- 9 **Dennis Wheat**

The picture on the right of Pentelow's shop and the Grammar School from the collection of Diana & Trevor Smith was taken by Stan White on Boxing Day 1968.

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