

5A. The Meadows, Nottingham Canal & River Trent Appendix – Further Information on Sites along the Walk

The walk routes are drawn using Open Street Maps from the internet <https://www.openstreetmap.org>, with some use of Google Maps <https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-e&q=google+maps>, and old maps are from Old Maps Online <https://www.oldmapsonline.org/en/England> and National Library of Scotland, Ordnance Survey Maps <https://maps.nls.uk/os/6inch-england-and-wales/>

Facts, descriptions, old photographs and historical information used in the walks are from sources openly available on the internet. The sources are recorded with links – readers can use the links (available at time of writing - 2024) to obtain further information.

1. The Meadows

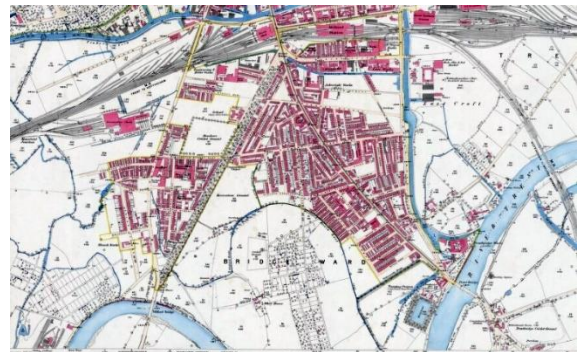
Much of this walk description is about the great changes that have occurred in the relatively short history (c160 years) of The Meadows as an urban area, impacted by rapid growth from open space to dense housing, dominant railway infrastructure and, later, partial demolition and rebuild. So, before we embark on the walk, let us go back to the early C19th when the Meadows was a very different place.



This old map (1832) shows that, what is now The Meadows was indeed that – meadows and wetland/floodplain. Part of Wilford Parish was north of the Trent, including the area of The Meadows below the red line which was anciently called Wilford Pasture. The northern meadow was known as the King's Meadow due to it having been owned by Nottingham Castle.

By the time of the map below (1880), the 'second industrialisation' was advancing and the railways were having a massive impact – lines and sidings dominating the top of the map. The need for housing became desperate as the population boomed, so the wetland was drained and gradually developed.

Terraced housing, public houses, factories, warehouses and public buildings such as libraries and baths were built. But, the southern part, separated by a dyke (which later became the route of Wilford Crescent), is still open land. Note that Queen's Walk is marked but the Great Central Railway (Great Central Main Line) had yet to be built.



By the early C20th (map of 1915) the urban Meadows had fully expanded with the Great Central Railway dominating the southern part adjacent to Queens Walk.

In the 1970s, housing in the Meadows was deemed unsuitable by the council and a large part of the Meadows was demolished to make way for a new development of modern council housing.

The new development was based on the Radburn model of planning which consisted of segregating traffic and pedestrians by constructing cul-de-sacs, feeder roads and underpasses. In 1975, the viaduct carrying the Great Central railway and Arkwright Street station was demolished as the new development started to take shape. However, there was a period of anti-social behaviour problems in the area: Nottingham City Council has stated that *"the problems associated with the layout of the New Meadows Radburn style layout... contribute to the anti-social behaviour and crime in the area."*

In 2009, the City Council commissioned consultants Taylor Young to examine the problems facing the Meadows, as a precursor to putting in a bid for Government funding. Plans were put forward to make changes which involved removing some buildings, including blocks of four storey deck access maisonettes that were unpopular with residents and the police, and constructing new family sized housing. In November 2010, the government announced that a £200 million grant would be made but this was promptly withdrawn by the incoming Cameron coalition government as part of its austerity package. However, the city council has continued with a more limited scheme, with some significant reduction in the problems.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Meadows,_Nottingham

2. ng2 Business Park

Developed on the site of the former Royal Ordnance factory (see below), the ng2 Business Park became the largest development in the United Kingdom at the time of its inauguration and remains one of Nottingham's premier business addresses. The development combines a series of large iconic headquarter office buildings together with smaller units known as The Triangle.

Development of ng2 commenced in the early 2000s, before NET Line One had opened and well before any approvals had been obtained for Phase Two. Nonetheless, the site planning included the requirement for a dedicated corridor for NET and, with some foresight, the developers Miller Birch strongly marketed the development with a giant hoarding showing a NET tram as "coming soon". Later the hoarding was changed to include the words "we are connected". They are – via the NG2 tramstop.

Data giant Experian was the first company to announce it was consolidating various offices around the city to move to ng², completing its flagship building in 2005. The building, which dominates the entrance to the park, is named The Sir John Peace Building in honour of Sir John Wilfred Peace, the Lord-Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire, who was born into a mining family at Mansfield and attended school there before going to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.



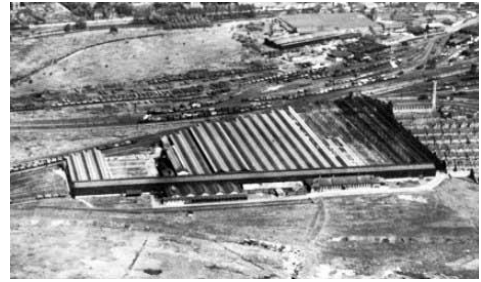
Sir John has had a long and distinguished career across the technology, financial services and retail sectors and was knighted in 2011 for services to business and the voluntary sector. Since February 2016, he has been independent chair of sub-national transport body Midlands Connect, which was set up in 2014 to produce a long-term transport strategy for the Midlands region. In June 2016, he was appointed chair of the Midlands Engine, which was set up by the government to raise productivity and economic growth in the Midlands region, and of which Midlands Connect is the transport arm. He has been Chancellor of Nottingham Trent University since 2017 and he was appointed Commander of the Royal Victorian Order in the 2023 Birthday Honours for services as lord lieutenant.

<https://www.ntu.ac.uk/about-us/governance/chancellor> https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Peace

3. Royal Ordnance Factory

The Royal Ordnance Factory was located here until 2001 but its history goes back to WW1. In July 1915 Cammell Laird & Co Ltd were asked to build and manage a National Projectile Factory. Preliminary estimates for the factory were to produce 2,000 9.2" and 6,000 6" shells per week – these estimates were exceeded. In October 1917 the factory name changed to the National Ordnance Factory. After the war, work continued but with some different activity including the building of railway wagons through the 1920s and some of the site was used to house Nottingham Corporation buses at the time of changeover to trolley buses.

During the 1930s the factory changed ownership to the Metropolitan Cammell Carriage, Wagon and Finance Company and then Metro Cammell Carriage and Wagon Company Ltd. In the late 1930s, war was seen as a possibility, and a sizeable rearmament programme began. The factory was bought back by the War Office in September 1936 as the Royal Ordnance Factory (ROF) Number 23. Considerable effort was expended in turning the ROF Nottingham into a modern gun factory. By March 1938, 2,272 people were working here and 3,796 a year later.



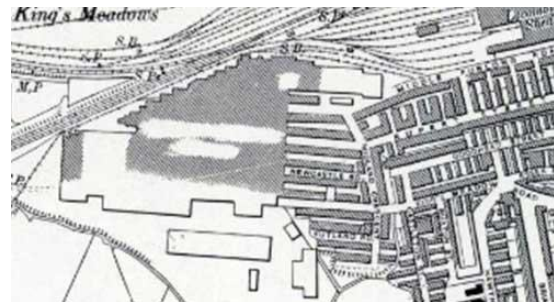
Aerial view of the R.O.F. Nottingham. 1936

No doubt the ordnance factory was a likely target for German bombers and there were residential streets - Middle Furlong Road, Rupert Street and Newcastle Street - with the end houses very close to the end of the main manufacturing unit. Apparently, therefore, it was decided, as a camouflage measure, to paint a series of stripes running east-west across the factory roof, in tune with the roads, so that the factory resembled a continuation of the houses when viewed from the air. In addition, Ordnance Survey Maps show attempts were made to obscure the presence of the factory – the name 'National Ordnance Factory' is just about visible on the 1920 map but has been 'whitewashed' in the 1938 map.

<https://maps.nls.uk/os/6inch-England-and-wales/nottinghamshire.html>



1920



1938

After the end of WW2 armament production reduced and the factory output diversified into products including tunnelling shields, parts for hosiery machines, structural parts for band-saws and other light wood working machinery, generators, gearboxes for Guy motor-buses, printers guillotines and forging dies for Raleigh pedal cycle cranks.

ROF Nottingham was finally closed in 2001. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ROF_Nottingham

4. St George in the Meadows Church

St George in the Meadows is a parish church in the Church of England. It is Grade II listed.

The foundation stone was laid on 8 July 1887 by Henry Smith Wright MP and the nave was consecrated on 12 June 1888 by the Rt. Revd. Dr. Edward Trollope, Bishop of Nottingham, acting for the Bishop of Southwell.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_George_in_the_Meadows,_Nottingham

5. Queen's Walk Recreation Ground

The Meadows was a traditional place for playing cricket and, to make sure this could continue after the fields were developed for housing, an area here was included in the 1845 Nottingham Inclosure Act. This protected a number of areas including Queens Walk, Queens Walk Recreation Ground, Victoria Park, Robin Hood Chase, Corporation Oaks, The Arboretum, The Forest and others. All this land was given to the citizens of Nottingham "forever" by the Act, which furthermore requires the council to maintain it and keep it fenced.

<http://www.ng-spaces.org.uk/the-nottingham-inclosure-act-1845-why-it-is-important-today/>

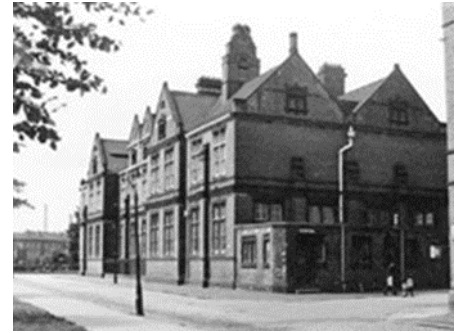


Meadows Cricket ground in 1884.

The Meadows Cricket Ground was created in 1860. It was extremely well used with many club matches being played there during the season, well into the 20th century. As football grew in popularity, the cricket pitches doubled as football pitches. Today the recreation ground has, a small field for football, sensory garden and a play area which was refurbished in 2008 when a basketball area was installed.

Immediately to the north of the recreation ground is the Welbeck Primary School. This is on the site of Queen's Walk Junior School, which was known in later years as Welbeck School. The original building (see map above and photo right) was demolished in 1971 and replaced with the modern Welbeck Primary School.

http://ournottinghamshire.org.uk/page_id_582_path_0p31p39p67p117p122p.aspx



6. Queen's Walk

Queen's Walk follows an ancient pathway that ran from the River Trent ferry crossing at Wilford into the centre of Nottingham. In early times it crossed wet and boggy ground and its route was marked by white posts.

The path was laid out formally in 1850 and named Queen's Walk in commemoration of Queen Victoria's visit to Nottingham in 1843. In 1927, when the walkway was opened to traffic, the name was changed to Queen's Drive but reverted to its original name following the redevelopment of the area in the 1970s and 1980s.



c1920

The Walk is characterised by its avenue of Lime trees and when this route was chosen for the NET Phase Two line to Clifton it was recognised that some trees would have to be felled. Those that were cut down have been given to the community for reuse and the Meadows Tree Project was formed. Twelve of the trees have been carved into 'Story Poles' that now line Queen's Walk (except one near the Arkwright Walk/Meadows Way junction). The story pole carvers worked with over 200 people of all ages to create these works of art, which are themed around the activities and communities past and present in the immediate neighbourhood. Other felled trees were given to other woodcarving projects, while replacement lime trees have been planted on Queen's Walk to maintain the avenue.

http://www.ournottinghamshire.org.uk/page_id_333.aspx?path=0p31p39p344p67p154p386p
<https://www.geograph.org.uk/snippet/11540>



Queen's Walk tram works looking North, Dec 2013

Near Arkwright
Walk/Meadows Way
Welcome



Sport
OK – my bias here!



11 poles are located along Queens Walk, from north to south

Queen Victoria



Friendship



Youth



Faith



Green



Industry



Old Meadows



Transport



Armed Forces



River



In 2015 Lilian Greenwood MP unveiled the last statue, representing Queen Victoria.

<https://michaelmedwards.wordpress.com/2015/02/06/meadows-tree-project-queens-walk-story-poles-celebration/>

Welcome Carved by Dan Sly	With thanks to local primary school children and teenagers from Crocus Fields for their drawings.
Queen Victoria Carved by Mark Manders	To commemorate young Queen Victoria, who visited Nottingham in 1843 on the way to Belvoir Castle. Queens Walk was named in 1850.
Youth Carved by Dan Sly	Local youth clubs helped to design this street scene which includes club members' footprints.
Green Carved by Karl Wilby	Inspired by Thomas Hawksley's Trent Waterworks which first provided safe water for Nottingham, this pole shows how Meadows people care for their environment.
Sport Carved by Dan Sly	Meadows sporting heritage, as depicted by local children's drawings which have inspired this design.
Friendship Carved by Dan Sly	"That's the thing for me, the cosmopolitan nature, the ethnic mix is unbelievable: there's no room for intolerance" Meadows resident
Faith Carved by Dan Sly	The candle symbolising the light of the world, with six icons of different faiths.
Industry Carved by Karl Wilby	Meadows History Group reflect on what a busy workplace the Meadows was years ago.
The Old Meadows Carved by Dan Sly	Inspired by stories of a bygone age, the film strip captures images of old Meadows life and its cinemas.
Transport Carved by Karl Wilby	Trains, buses, trams and bikes, depicts Meadows transport past and present. Designed by pupils of Nottingham Emmanuel School.
The Armed Forces Carved by Karl Wilby	The British Legion's Lion - still important today as it was to the men and women in the forces in World War One and World War Two.
The River Carved by Karl Wilby	The River Trent - depicting its journey through the Meadows, winding around the pole, under bridges, providing opportunities for recreation, fun for fishermen, canoeists and rowers.

7. Poets Corner Pub

A 1970's replacement for a Victorian pub of the same name on Kirke White Street and demolished in 1975. The Victorian pub took its name from the street, which in turn was named after the Nottingham poet, Henry Kirke White (1785-1806). The son of a Nottingham butcher, his best known work was "Clifton Grove".



8. Arkwright Street

Arkwright Street was originally a main thoroughfare running almost north/south along the eastern edge of The Meadows area of Nottingham. Most of it was demolished during re-development in the 1970s.



Early 1900s



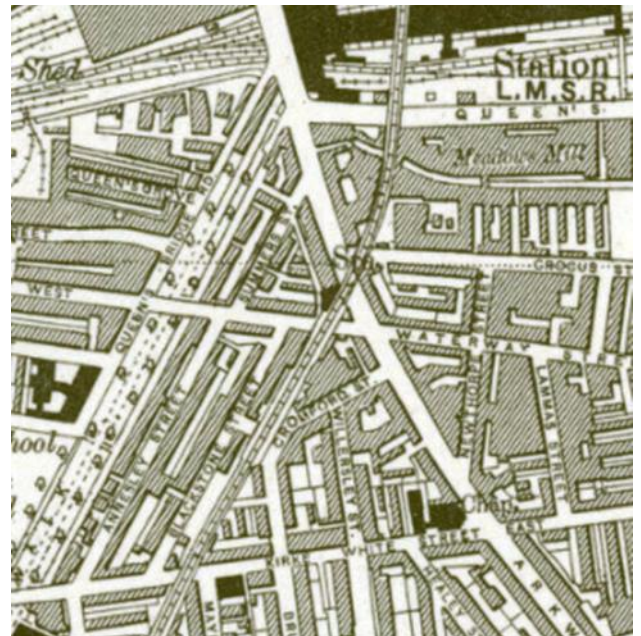
1960s

For more photos, go to: <https://www.nottinghampost.com/news/local-news/gallery/take-look-back-life-meadows-2624018>

There used to be a railway station at Arkwright Street, just to the left of this picture which shows the bridge carrying the Great Central Railway (Great Central Main Line - GCML), which was built in 1899. There was a station serving Arkwright Street, close to the bridge. The elevated railway then went through where the Bridgeway Centre is now and continued through The Meadows to the River Trent.

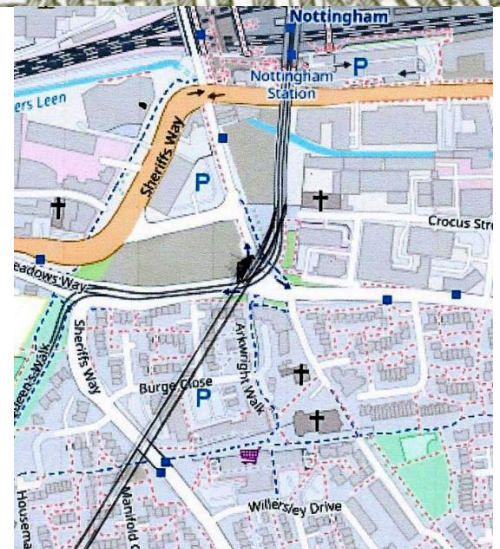


Early 1970s – Arkwright St looking north. On the right, just beyond the bridge is Crocus Street and the bus in the distance is near Nottingham Station.



A very different view in 2024, taken from just south of where the railway bridge crossed Arkwright Street.

I have marked the approximate alignment of the old railway and the location of Arkwright St Station on this map. The NET tram alignment follows the old route (but not on a viaduct) as far as Crocus Street where it curves west towards Queen's Walk / Meadows Way.



Arkwright Station had two side platforms built onto the viaduct spanning Arkwright Street. The entrance and booking office was at street level in Crocus Street where two brick towers housed the stairs up to the platforms. The platform buildings were constructed largely of timber with the main building on the down side platform (towards Nottingham) and a waiting shelter on the up side. Arkwright Street closed with the country stations on 4th March 1963 but reopened on 4th September 1967 as the terminus of the line from Rugby following the closure of Nottingham Victoria. It remained in use until closure of the line on 5th May 1969. The station and viaduct were demolished in 1975 and today no evidence of the station can be seen.

http://disused-stations.org.uk/a/arkwright_street/index.shtml



1957 photo

9. Castle Rock Brewery & Vat and Fiddle Pub

When Chris Holmes first opened the Old Kings Arms in Newark in the 1970s he wanted “to prove a point and to break monopolies in Newark, as there was no real ale available. Having a simple free house in the middle of a town with a row of hand pumps serving real ales was a revolutionary concept then”. He made his point successfully and in

1977 he set up the Tynemill company which grew to 12 pubs by the time it began brewing its own beers in 1997. In 1998, the company transformed into Castle Rock.

The brewery was established as a partnership with Bramcote Brewery and opened next door to the Vat and Fiddle on Queensbridge Road close to Nottingham railway station. The Vat and Fiddle became the 'Brewery Tap' and *"thirteen cask beers greet you on entering the Vat, showcasing the largest available range of Castle Rock beers. They are joined by guest beers from local and national breweries, and an award-winning assortment of ciders. You'll also find a great selection of beers in keg, bottle and can, alongside a full menu of wines, spirits and soft drinks"*.

The company was catapulted into the spotlight when Harvest Pale was crowned Supreme Champion Beer of Britain in 2010. There are now over twenty pubs in the Castle Rock extended family and it brews a huge variety of skilfully crafted beers. In 2024 Castle Rock was named Pub Group of the Year at the National Pub & Bar Awards.

Chris Holmes is a former chairman of CAMRA - the Campaign For Real Ale, and the company state that *"Running great pubs and brewing great beer is still our humble life's mission"*.

Designed by W.B. Starr & Hall in 1938, the Vat and Fiddle is an art deco-style building. Next door is the brewery with its iconic blue tower.

<https://www.castlerockbrewery.co.uk>

<https://leftlion.co.uk/features/2007/04/chris-holmes-interview-castle-rock-tynemill-camra-founder/>

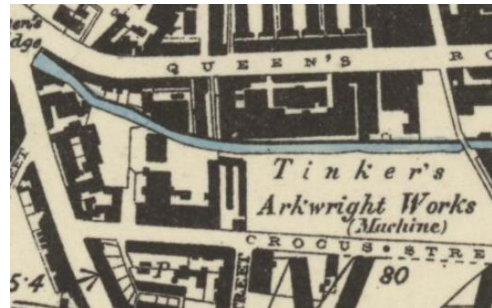


10. The Glassworks

The Glassworks apartments are set within a Victorian building originally built as a manufacturing factory circa 1870.



As indicated on this 1885 map, the mill was then used by 'Lee & Hunt Machine Tools, &c. (New and Second Hand), Arkwright Works, Nottingham'.



The building was originally named the Arkwright Works after the nearby street and Richard Arkwright (1732 - 1792), inventor of the water frame to spin a yarn that was stronger than that produced by the spinning jenny. Arkwright moved to Nottingham in 1768 and a patent was granted in 1769 for the frame to 'Richard Arkwright of Nottingham, clock-maker'. The frame was too big to be powered by hand and was initially driven by horses at the Nottingham factory at the bottom of Woolpack Lane (Hockley). It was soon realised that horses were unable to provide sufficient power to operate a large number of frames and waterpower was investigated as an alternative. The sluggish River Trent was unsuitable for use with waterwheels and a mill was built in 1771 next to the River Derwent at Cromford, Derbyshire. <https://www.knittingtogether.org.uk/behind-the-scenes/the-people/richard-arkwright-1732-1792/>

11. Alumedix

According to the company's website, Alumedix is a science-driven company and recognized leader of best-in-class albumin-enabled solutions. Established in the UK in 1984, with a mission to empower excellence, Alumedix has supported its life-science partners to deliver hundreds of millions of safe doses of clinical and marketed therapeutics, globally. Alumedix is headquartered in Nottingham with both research and large-scale manufacturing facilities.

Human serum albumin (HSA) is the most abundant protein in human blood, constituting approximately half of the total plasma proteins. Albumin enters your bloodstream and helps keep fluid from leaking out of your blood vessels into other tissues. It also carries hormones, vitamins, and enzymes throughout your body. Without enough albumin, fluid can leak out of your blood and build up in your lungs, abdomen (belly), or other parts of your body.

Albumin has a long history of medical use dating from the 1940's. Originally prepared from pooled plasma, its unique properties have been exploited in a range of medical applications. Albumedix enables the effective formulation of otherwise hard-to-stabilize drugs, cell therapies, and vaccines.

<https://albumedix.com/>

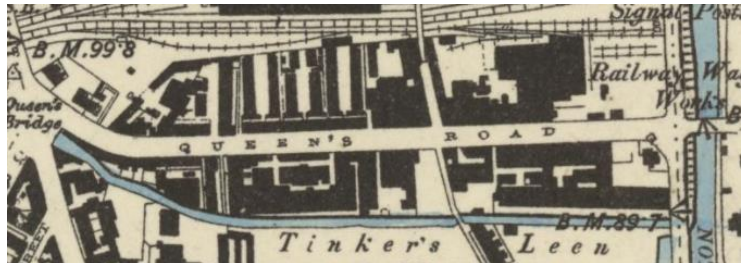
12. Queen's Road

Queen's Road was built in the 1840s and, according to an article on the Nottinghamshire History website (J. Holland Walker, An itinerary of Nottingham: London Road, Transactions of the Thoroton Society, 29 (1925)

<http://www.nottshistory.org.uk/articles/tts/tts1925/itinerary1925p4.htm>):

Queen's Road gets its name in rather a curious manner. In 1846 Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort had been staying at Chatsworth and they were proceeding to Belvoir Castle. The railway of course was only open in those days as far as Nottingham and so Queen Victoria and her husband had to leave the train at the terminus, which is now the goods yard in Carrington Street. They stopped for a little time interviewing the important officials of the town and finally entered their carriage and drove down the new road which was in process of formation across the West Croft and whose completion had been hastened for the occasion. As Queen Victoria was the first person to pass over it, it was christened Queen's Road in honour of the event.

As indicated in this 1885 map, the area around Queen's Road, between the railway and Tinkers Leen used to be full of warehouses and other buildings associated with cotton and then lace as well as works connected to the railways. Today it is mainly blocks of apartments, some new build and some old building conversions.



One of these is the Hicking Building which was built in 1873 and is now apartments and the bar/restaurant Hooters. It is named after George Hicking who was born in Eastwood in 1834. He entered the service of the Midland Railway Company in 1851, as Clerk in the office of the Superintendent of the Line at Derby, and was promoted, at the age of twenty-three, to be Station Master at the Midland Railway Station, Nottingham. Later he entered into partnership with his cousin in the wine and spirit trade in Market Street and afterwards, in conjunction with his sons, established the businesses of George Hicking and Son, wine merchants and grocers, Carrington Street, and G. and W. N. Hicking, lace dyers and dressers at the Queen's Road Works (the Hicking building) and Station Street Works.



He relinquished his interest in the former business in favour of his son William Norton Hicking in 1893. William was created a baronet in 1917 and was director of many firms, including the associated Hicking & Pentecost and others in the same line of business: Lindley & Lindley, Dobsons & M. Browne, and Lamberts. Also on the board of the Westminster Bank, W.N. Hicking lived for many years at Brackenhurst Hall, near Southwell.

<http://www.nottshistory.org.uk/monographs/biographies1901/commercial3.htm>

The Tinkers Leen is the onetime course of the River Leen, now an overflow from the Nottingham Canal just below the Castle and then flows partly through culverts before flowing back into the canal.

Hooters has been at the Hicking building since 2006 but has been in Nottingham since August 1998 when this US company opened in a property that had previously been Sam Fay's, a bar on the opposite side of London Road (see 18 below).



A Nottingham Post article [<https://www.nottinghampost.com/whats-on/food-drink/how-hooters-became-worldwide-sensation-8681543>] informs us that *six businessmen with no restaurant experience whatsoever came up with the idea for the first Hooters in Clearwater, Florida. Hooters was incorporated on April Fool's Day in 1983 because they never expected it to take off, let alone become an international success story. With jobs in real estate, painting and bricklaying, what did they know about running a restaurant? One of the founders famously said: "We were six clueless knuckleheads who called ourselves the Hooters Six. We wanted to open a neighbourhood joint with a beach theme - that we couldn't get kicked out of."*

Fast forward 40 years and the name Hooters is synonymous around the world for chicken wings, cold beers, sport and waitresses wearing tight white vest tops and orange shorts. Hooters has nearly 500 restaurants worldwide, mostly across the US. Others can be found in South Africa, China, Germany, Singapore, Indonesia and Hungary.

Hooters relocated to the Hicking Building on the corner of London Road and Queens Road in 2006. A squad of the famous scantily-clad Hooters' girls, carrying placards, stopped traffic on London Road as they marched from the old to the new site to mark the official launch.

Joining them was Katherine Ryan, the comedian, who started her Hooters career as a waitress... in Toronto, Canada.



The way the girls are dressed caused some controversy with *Women's rights and equal opportunities campaigners in Notts protested, with one saying: "This restaurant's staff policy raises all sorts of issues about the exploitation of women and sexual discrimination. They will be using women's bodies as a selling point and discriminating against men at the same time. The whole thing sounds very sexist and unpleasant."*

13. Nottingham College

This is the automotive training department of Nottingham College, which is appropriate as the site used to be Cowie Ford Car Showrooms. (photo 1995)



14. Eastcroft Incinerator

Operating since 1973, the incinerator takes around 180,000 tonnes of non-hazardous waste from households and businesses within Nottingham and the wider county for treatment by high temperature incineration and energy recovery.

Residual waste is brought to the facility after recyclable materials have been separated out either at home, household waste recycling centres or other waste recycling and treatment facilities. The use of energy recovery at Eastcroft vastly reduces the amount of waste sent to landfill as well as Nottingham's reliance on fossil fuels to supply the City's energy needs.

The energy recovery process at Eastcroft generates steam, which is delivered via a pipeline to EnviroEnergy Limited, just north of the canal at the London Road bridge. The EnviroEnergy power station was originally built by the Boots Company in the 1950s for its own industrial works and powered by coal. Now a company wholly owned by the City Council, it supplies or supplied heat to a wide range of customers, including 5,000 domestic premises in the city, as well as public buildings including the Broad Marsh area, Victoria Baths, Nottingham Trent University's Newton Building, the Inland Revenue building, the Magistrates Court, Nottingham City Council offices and the National Ice Centre.

<https://www.fccenvironment.co.uk/green-energy/eastcroft-efw/>



15. Eastcroft Depot

The Clocktower building dates from c1880 and the building beyond and to its left is from 1878. Now depot buildings and offices for City Council contract works.

They are both Grade 11 listed buildings.



The one on the left was a former hide, skin and fat market. This specialist market sold the inedible parts from the nearby Cattle Market. These could be processed to become leather, candles, glue, fertiliser and many other products.



photo 1977

16. London Road

The original track here was called the Flood Road, because it *carried travellers over the flood plain of the Trent, often inundated by the river. In 1796 an Act of Parliament was obtained 'For raising, maintaining, and keeping in repair, the road from the north end of the Old Trent Bridge to the west end of St Mary's Churchyard...' The Flood Road was subsequently rebuilt on a renewed range of embankments and bridges, and, consequent on the construction of the Nottingham Canal, realigned slightly to the west of its previous site. Of key importance to the town in peace and war, the road was for centuries a vital link for the town, as its only exit to the south.*

http://www.nottshistory.org.uk/articles/sneinton/sm90_12-27.htm

An article on the Nottinghamshire History website (J. Holland Walker, An itinerary of Nottingham: London Road, Transactions of the Thoroton Society, 29 (1925) <http://www.nottshistory.org.uk/articles/tts/tts1925/itinerary1925p3.htm>) describes the road in the late 1700s:

It is difficult to realise as one walks down the modern London Road with its wilderness of brick and mortar that less than two hundred years ago it was one of the favourite promenades of the good folk of Nottingham.



Nottingham from London Road, c.1808.

*And even more difficult is it to understand that it was an ipse dixit [an assertion without proof, or a dogmatic expression of opinion] amongst travellers by stage coaches **that the mile that separated Trent Bridge from Nottingham was the most beautiful mile near any town in Great Britain.** But it must have been beautiful. The road crossed a lovely open space, the common lands of the town which in spring were carpeted with the ethereal blue of the crocus that we have now destroyed. On the western side of the road was the West Croft between the Tinker's Leen and the Canal. It was commonable [land that could be used for grazing cattle] for the burgesses from July 6th to August 13th and again from October 3rd to Old Candlemass. Each burgess had a right to turn three head of cattle or forty-five sheep into the common fields during these periods. On the eastern side was the canal and then the East Croft. The East Croft was also commonable, but a small fee was charged for the accommodation of cattle.*

Certainly, The Meadows was an area of natural beauty that was popular for walks and recreation, as described by Matthew Henry Barker in his 1835 book Walks Round Nottingham:

"There are but few places in the kingdom that can boast of sweeter spots for recreation than Nottingham," he wrote. "How delightful it is, when weary with the bustle and the noise of business, to escape from the narrow streets filled almost to suffocation and to spring over the bridge near the Navigation Inn, bursting at once upon Nature, arrayed in her richest verdure!"

Every spring, thousands upon thousands of lilac Crocus flowers would bloom in the Meadows (hence the street named Crocus Street). The beauty of the Meadows in Spring inspired local poets and painters: for example, Mary Howitt wrote a poem titled The Wild Spring Crocus in Nottingham Meadows, and Thomas William Hammond painted Nottingham from the Meadows at Crocus Time (1890).

Mary Howitt (1799–1888) was an English poet, the author of the famous poem *The Spider and the Fly* (*“Will you walk into my parlour?” said the Spider to the Fly.....*).

Born Mary Botham, at Coleford, Gloucestershire, she began writing verse at a very early age. In 1821 she married William Howitt and they lived in Nottingham from 1823 to 1843. It is presumably during those years that she wrote this poem:

The Wild Spring-Crocus in Nottingham Meadows, by Mary Howitt

Ah, though it is an English flower,
It only groweth here and there:
Through merry England you might ride,
Through all its length from side to side,
Through fifty counties, nor have spied
This flower so passing fair.

But in these meadows it is growing,
And now it is the early spring;
And see! From out the kindly earth
How thousand thousands issue forth:
As if it gloried to give birth
To such a lovely thing.

Like lilac-flame its colour glows,
Tender, and yet so clearly bright,
That for miles and miles about
The splendid meadow shineth out;
And far-off village children shout
To see the welcome sight.

I love the odourous hawthorn-flower;
I love the wilding’s bloom to see;
I love the light anemones,
That tremble to the faintest breeze;
And hyacinth-like orchises
Are very dear to me!

The star-wort is a fairy-flower;
The violet is a thing to prize;
The wild-pink on the craggy ledge;
The waving sword-like water-sedge,
And e’en the Robin-run-i’-th’-hedge,
Are precious in mine eyes.

Yes, yes, I love them all, bright things!
But then, such glorious flowers are these
And dearer still. I’ll tell you why:
There’s joy in many and many an eye
When first goes forth the welcome cry
Of – “Lo, the Crocuses!”

Then little toiling children leave
Their care, and here by thousands throng,
And through the shining meadow run,
And gather them; not one by one,
But by grasped handfulls, where are none
To say that they do wrong.

They run, they leap, they shout for joy;
They bring their infant brethren here;
They fill each little pinafore;
They bear their baskets brimming o’er,
Within their very hearts they store
This first joy of the year.

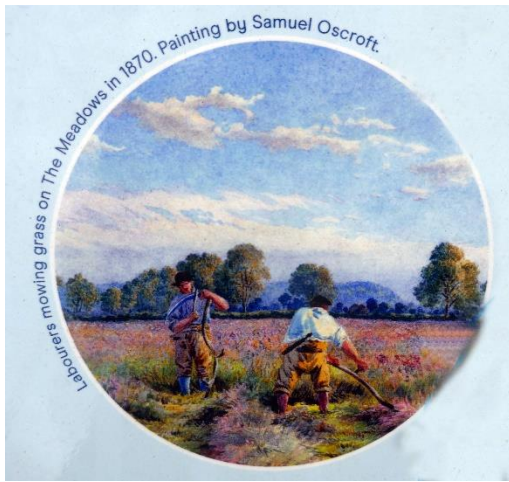
Yes, joy in these abundant meadows
Pours out like to the earth’s o’erflowing;
And, less that they are beautiful
Than that they are so plentiful,
So free for every child to pull,
I love to see them growing.

And here, in our own fields they grow –
An English flower, but very rare;
Through all the kingdom you may ride,
O’er marshy flat, on mountain-side,
Nor ever see, outstretching wide,
Such flowery meadows fair!

<https://original-ufdc.uflib.ufl.edu/UF00026233/00001/92j>

This pastel drawing, by Thomas William Hammond, is looking towards Nottingham across The Meadows in 1890 – with the crocuses in bloom.





Crocus pickers collecting bunches of flowers in The Meadows in the 1900s

The people of Nottingham filled their homes with crocuses, which they put *"in mugs, in jugs, in saucers, in broken teapots, cups – in short in almost every domestic utensil capable of holding a little fresh water; and very beautiful they look..."* (The Gardeners' Chronicle and Agricultural Gazette, 1872)

Two hundred years ago, Nottingham had a severe housing crisis with the vast majority of the working population living in deeply unpleasant slums. Building houses on the Meadows was one step towards alleviating this crisis and making conditions better in the town; it was the only real option the town had, and on balance the loss of the Meadows as a beauty spot and recreational area was the lesser evil compared to allowing Nottingham's unhealthy overcrowding to continue.

Nevertheless, the development was unpopular with many Nottingham residents. Local poet Anne Taylor Gilbert wrote *The Last Dying Speech of the Crocuses*, lamenting the death of the crocuses (only part of the poem – for more go to http://www.ournottinghamshire.org.uk/page_id_1063.aspx?path=0p31p39p344p67p363p):

'While o'er its head a coming spring in brick-red trance is seen,
As factory, mill and wharf besoiled our home of meadow green.
One gentle shriek the silence broke, one quiver of despair,
'Our fatherland, farewell!' we cried, 'Farewell, ye meadows fair!'
'Dear children born of yester-spring, —dear children, yet to be—
Ye shall but read of Crocuses, no more alas! to see.'

In 2021 the Nottingham Crocus Volunteers Facebook group started crocus planting in green spaces across The Meadows.

<https://leftlion.co.uk/features/2021/09/crocus-focus/>

Back to London Road – the flooding continued to be a problem and *a bridge of ten arches was erected in 1790. However, it had hardly got up when there came a terrible flood, one of the worst ever known, for in 1795 it so badly damaged the bridge as to render it quite unsafe, and it was decided to pull it down.* But how this should be done and who would pay led to *endless bickering and disputes in the course of which the bridge became entirely unsafe and positively dangerous.*

But a fresh power was arising in the land. Coaching traffic was developing and in order to provide for its accommodation, roads were being improved out of all recognition, and one of the greatest forces in this improvement was the establishment of turnpikes. In theory the turnpike system is thoroughly sensible and simple. It was felt that those who benefited by the improved roads should pay for them, and so Trusts were formed by Acts of Parliament which were authorised to construct new roads or to improve ancient roads and to levy toll upon all wayfarers using these roads, the Trusts using these tolls for the upkeep of the roads, Of course this led to a great deal of hardship, for it prevented impecunious people [those having very little money] from using roads at all...

Anyway, in 1796 an Act of Parliament was passed establishing a Turnpike Trust with jurisdiction over the road... It crossed the Meadows upon many arches which permitted the flood water to get away.

<http://www.nottshistory.org.uk/articles/tts/tts1925/itinerary1925p3.htm>

In the early 1900s a tram line ran along the road until 1935, when the service was converted to trolleybus operation which continued to the mid-1960s.

c1904 Electric tramcar on London Road



By the early 1900s The Meadows was fully developed and, running along its eastern side, London Road was important for traffic and also for premises serving the community.

There was a school at the junction with Kirkwhite Street. It was known by locals as "London Road School" but was actually named the Arkwright School.

http://www.ournottinghamshire.org.uk/page_id_421.aspx



Part of the original building remains and is occupied by TAD, 'the art department', a business artwork and signage company.



There were four pubs on the west side of the road:

The General Gordon on the corner of Queens Road. Closed in 1995, having been known as The Old Tracks since 1992. Presumably the first name was after the British officer Charles George Gordon (also known as Chinese Gordon) who was famous for his adventures in Asian countries and for his dramatic death at the siege of Khartoum in 1885. (photo1972)



The Norfolk Hotel on the corner of Crocus Street. Closed in 1990s (photo 1972)



The Sir John Franklin, on the corner of Kirkwhite Street. Demolished in the 1970s. Presumably named after the accomplished Arctic explorer, Captain Sir John Franklin who is best remembered for his tragic 1845 expedition to find the Northwest Passage. Both the ships involved, HMS Terror and HMS Erebus, were lost and all 129 men on board perished. It is the worst disaster in the history of British polar exploration. (photo 1973)



The Globe, on the corner of Ryhill Street, was originally named The Greyhound Inn. It was built in the summer of 1857 (with a newer front added c 1920's) and closed in 2012. It became an Indian restaurant but closed after a few years and then demolished in 2019. (photo 2009)

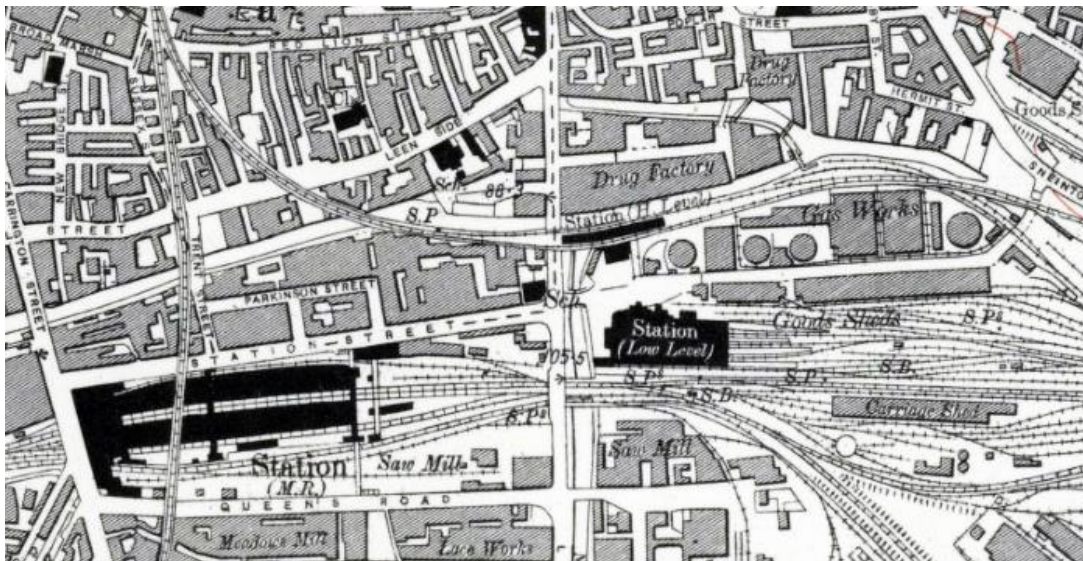
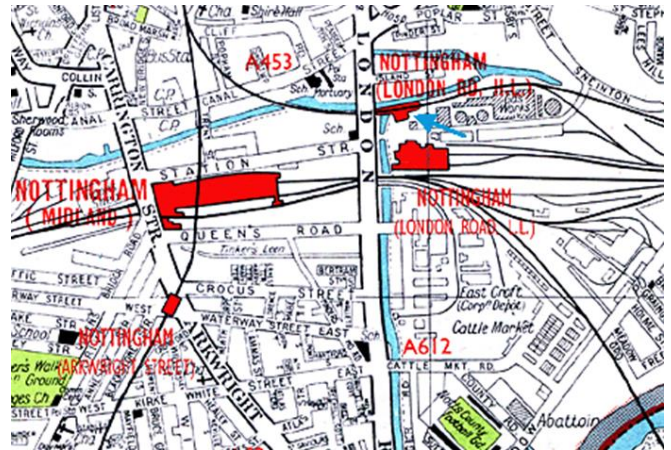


Photos: <https://www.nottinghampost.com/news/local-news/gallery/london-road-nottingham-past-present-3442101>

17. Railway Stations

This area of Nottingham used to have 4 railway stations:
Nottingham (Midland) Station, the only remaining station,
Arkwright Street Station (see **8** above),
London Road Low Level Station (now a health & fitness club), and
London Road High Level Station, demolished.

From the 1840s the railways boom saw competing railway companies building many new railways and stations across the country. The Midland Railway opened the Nottingham Midland Station in 1848, replacing an older station on the other side of Carrington Street. Today's station was a rebuild in 1904.



1920 map

The London Road High Level Station was opened in 1899 on a viaduct that carried the chord linking the Great Northern's line into London Road with the Great Central running into Nottingham Victoria. The station closed in 1967 and the viaduct demolished.

The railway viaduct ran alongside the Eastcroft Gas Works and the Poplar Arm of the canal (see **19**). The buildings in the centre bottom of the photo are the Boots the Chemist's Island Street factory.

Virtually all the buildings, the viaduct and the canal arm in this aerial photo have long gone (Image: Picture Nottingham).



The London Road Low Level Station was opened in 1857 by the Great Northern Railway (GNR) on the line to London Kings Cross via Grantham

The Low Level Station was designed by the local architect Thomas Chambers Hine (1880 photo)

The last passenger service to this station ran on 22 May 1944. The station remained open as a mail depot for troops during the Second World War before becoming a parcels depot until the 1970s.



Although severely damaged by fire in 1996, the station building has been restored and was converted to a Holmes Place health and fitness club. It is now used as a Virgin Active Health Club. (2024 photo)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nottingham_London_Road_railway_station

http://www.nottshistory.org.uk/articles/sneinton/sm05_13-19.htm

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nottingham_station

<https://www.nottinghampost.com/news/history/see-photos-nottinghams-long-lost-1535752>

<http://www.disused-stations.org.uk>



18. Binks Yard restaurant

The Cleaver & Wake Binks Yard restaurant was named after Henry Binks, a Victorian beer retailer who worked around the original Island site. This is an early development of the Island Quarter masterplan, which received outline planning approval in April 2019, and will include hotels and hospitality, office space and community living and green spaces.



This was the view in 2019, before the new building. It was the site of the London Road High Level Station.



The entrance to the station was through the building below and then up stairs to the platforms. After the closure of the railway the building was occupied by the Nottingham Antiques Centre (photo 1980)



By 1987 it had a new tenant, the Grand Central Diner. A Peckett 0-4-0ST tank engine reminds diners of the building's history.



By 1991 the engine had been given a 'Thomas' face. The banner on the viaduct promotes the diner; 'Family out special - Thomas the Tank - Three course meal £4.95 - children £1.95'.



Later it became Sam Fay's Bar and Restaurant (Sam Fay was the general manager of Great Central Railway from 1902 to 1923). This closed in 1996 and in 1998 became Hooters (see [12](#)) until 2006, after which the building was demolished.

19. Poplar Arm Corner

In some references this is called Poplar Arms, with an 's', as though it is named after a pub, but I believe it refers to an 'arm' or branch of the canal. As shown on this 1885 map, there used to be a branch of the canal which was built in 1835 and named the Poplar Arm; it served warehouses and works in the area between Island Street and Poplar Street (top of map). This 'arm' was further extended by Earl Manvers, Sneinton's chief landowner at the time. The Earl Manvers Canal, as it was named, ran further east to Sneinton Hermitage, where there was a wharf for the handling of coal and other cargoes. It was shortened in the 1890s, when part of its site was taken for the new Great Northern Railway line into Victoria Station, built on a viaduct along the Hermitage and Manvers Street.



The construction of this canal arm meant the area became almost surrounded by water and was renamed 'The Island' – hence the use of this name for the new 'Island Quarter' developments today.

After the Second World War, all the canal arms were abandoned and their traces gradually obliterated. The last vestige of the Poplar Arm was closed in 1982. http://www.nottshistory.org.uk/articles/sneinton/sm90_12-27.htm

This was the Poplar Arm Corner in 1895. The main line of the canal turned left under London Road with the Poplar arm to the right. The Trent Navigation Company's warehouse in the centre is now the site of The Premier Inn. The building on the left of the old photo was the Great Northern Hotel and now is the site of EnviroEnergy Limited (see 14).



In the late 1890s a viaduct was built to carry the GNR railway and the London Road High Level Station. The viaduct was demolished after the station closed in 1967.

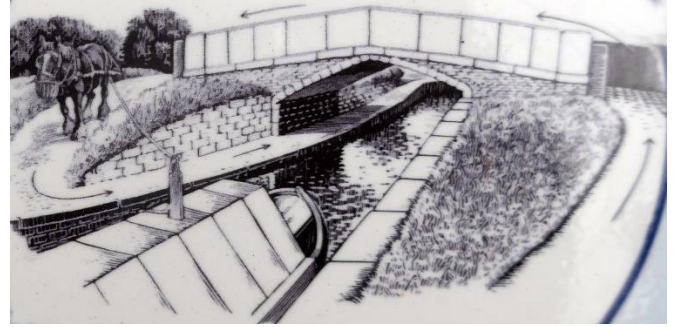
Today, the remaining part of the canal has a sharp bend. On the inner corner you will notice a short wooden post on the towpath – the purpose of this is explained in the nearby information board



A canal barge loaded with 30 tons of cargo is not an easy vehicle to steer around a sharp corner like the one found here. In the days of horse towing, there was a danger that as the horse turned, the barge would only be able to make a very wide slow arc around the bend, causing congestion, or even colliding with other boats.

The wooden post on the towpath by the bend is a 'strapping post' to help solve this problem. The barge skipper throws a rope as he goes past which his assistant wraps around the post. The boat turns around the post like the hands of a clock until the rope is cast loose again.

Looking the other way, the path on the right of the photo below goes from the canal towpath up to the Great Northern Close bridge allowed the horse towing a boat to cross over the canal and down the other side to the towing path on that side without being unhitched from the boat. The bridge was therefore known as a 'turnover bridge'.



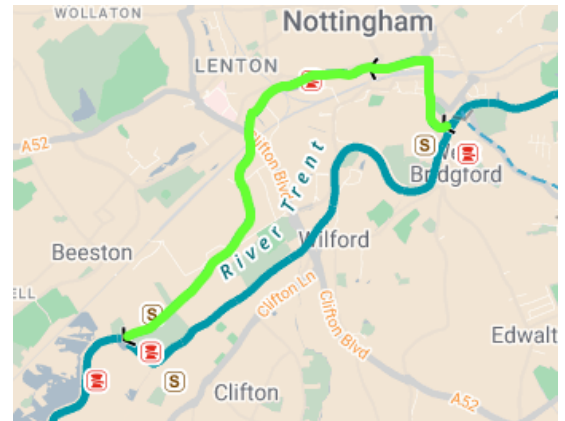
20. Nottingham & Beeston Canal

The Canal & River Trust website describes the canal as:

“once part of a much longer route, which is now derelict. The present-day stretch remains a vital link for boaters, allowing them to bypass an unnavigable section of the River Trent.

The coalfields of Nottinghamshire brought great wealth to the region, but transport by the local roads was slow and expensive. As Canal Mania swept the country in the 1790s, the citizens of Nottingham resolved not to miss out, and planned a new waterway from the city to Langley Mill. There, it would connect with the Cromford Canal, which was already busy with coal traffic.

The canal opened in 1796, 15 miles long with 20 locks - most of which were grouped into a flight at Wollaton. The geography of the waterways in central Nottingham was, and is, complex. The city was built on the River Trent, but river navigation immediately upstream of the city had always been difficult. While the Nottingham Canal was being constructed, the Trent Navigation Company built an artificial canal - the Beeston Cut - to bypass the river from Trent Lock to Lenton. There, it met with the Nottingham Canal, which therefore became part of the river through-route. Two hundred years later, this is the only part of the Nottingham Canal to survive”.



A Nottinghamshire History article tells that: *The opening of this canal was an occasion of much ceremony, a procession of three decorated barges was formed, each barge being loaded with stone. In the first barge was placed the engineer of the work and he was accompanied by the regimental band of the Light Horse then in garrison at the Park Barracks. As the first lock was filled these heroes played "Rule Britannia" and during the voyage to the town they played "Hearts of Oak," "God Save the King," and other similar patriotic but singularly inappropriate nautical pieces.*

J. Holland Walker, An itinerary of Nottingham: London Road, Transactions of the Thoroton Society, 29 (1925)

<http://www.nottshistory.org.uk/articles/tts/tts1925/itinerary1925p3.htm>

As one of the Canal Trust's information boards tells us, *when the canal was fully opened it made it possible to bring huge amounts of coal into the heart of the city and carry Nottingham's products out to any part of the country. Companies scrambled to build warehouses and factories along the waterway, adding wharfs, canal arms and basins for their own boats.*

21. Canalside Street Art



During 2022 this street art was created on the wall alongside the canal towpath, also visible from London Road. The work was commissioned by the Canal & River Trust as part of the Nottingham Canal Improvement Partnership and was painted by local street artists Boaster Yard.

At the Nottingham end the painting shows a series of pipes, valves and taps with the name Thomas Hawksley.



Hawksley (1807-1893) was the son of a worsted manufacturer in Arnold. He was educated at Nottingham Grammar School and then apprenticed to a firm of architects and engineer, in which he soon became a partner.

In 1830, when he was only 23, Hawksley undertook the construction for the Trent Waterworks Company of a new pumping station on what is now Victoria Embankment close to Trent Bridge (demolished in the early 20th century). Water was obtained from the River Trent by filtration through natural beds of sand and gravel and pumped by a cylinder steam engine through a 15 inch main to a reservoir on Park Row, near the Castle. In 1832 Hawksley personally turned on the tap which supplied water under pressure twenty four hours a day to the streets, courts and alleyways, so that at any hour the housewives of Nottingham could fill their pails at the tap in the yard.



The main part of the painting shows the canal with carton figures of animals and boats – here are three of them.



At the Trent end is a quotation I included in **16** above, which comes from
An itinerary of Nottingham: London Road, by J. Holland Walker in the *Transactions of the Thoroton Society*

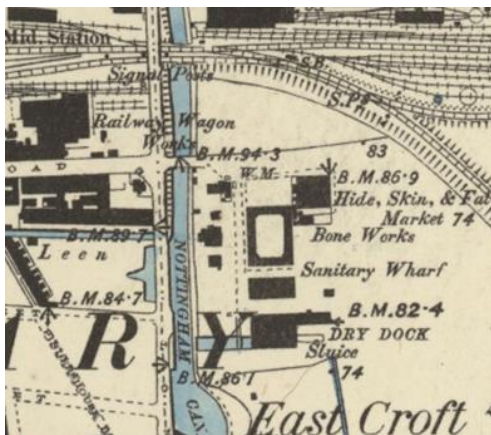
Nottinghamshire History website:
<http://www.nottshistory.org.uk/articles/tts/ts1925/itinerary1925p3.htm>



22. Sanitary Wharf

As another Canal Trust's information board tells us, in the 1800s, contrary to the pleasant scent from the crocus plants on the west side of the canal, the east side of the canal was home to some of Nottingham's less lovely smells. As well as the smell from the hide, skin and fat market (see **15**), there was also smell from human excrement. Before the modern flush toilet became widespread, the contents of the city's cesspits were brought here to Sanitary Wharf. This 'night soil' was then taken away by canal and used by farmers as fertiliser.

This map (surveyed: 1880 to 1881, published: 1885) shows the Hide, Skin & Fat Market as well as Bone Works and Sanitary Wharf (the wharf is just under the large Y). On the other side of the canal is the channel of the Tinker's Leen.



This 1977 photo shows the wharf. The canal is immediately beyond the bridge in the centre of the photo. The bridge carried the towpath over the entrance to the wharf.



The 'sanitary' or toilet waste was known as 'night soil'. Faeces were excreted into a container such as a chamber pot, and sometimes collected in the container with urine and other waste ("slops", hence slopping out). The excrement in the pail was often covered with ashes or earth (soil), which may have contributed to the term 'night soil'.

A night soil collector usually arrived during the night, hence the name. The vehicle used for collection has been called a night-cart, and its operator a night-man or night-cart man. The 'night-man' could have been a source of childhood fears – 'go to the toilet before bed; you don't want to go in the middle of the night – the night-man may come and take you away!'

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Night_soil

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:-2019-11-16_A_night_soil_cart_%28Honey_cart%29,_c1920_Norwich.JPG



Mick Barrett, from the West Bridgford & District Local History Society, told me more about the local the night soil collection:

As a child growing up in the 50's, living in a new council house on the edge of West Bridgford, I was privileged to be able to roam freely amongst the fields that comprised the ever-diminishing greenbelt that stretched beyond our close towards Gamston, Bassingfield and Tollerton. One of the joys of our adventures was unearthing the "treasures" that lay waiting to be discovered amongst the sods newly turned by the plough. Hundreds of items were exposed. Pottery shards, bits of old bottles, the stems of clay pipes (and the bowls of them if you were lucky), and all manner of bits and pieces that filled our pockets for the walk home. We never gave much thought to where they came from, just delighted in finding them!

Roll back the years to the age of Queen Victoria and we discover that Nottingham was attracting thousands of workers to its newly industrialised job opportunities. Housing for this influx however failed to keep up with demand and by the late 19c the city was notorious for its slums, back-to-back housing and insanitary conditions. Thousands packed into tenements, families living in a single room with the cold water tap and toilet for all in the yard. And it was not a flushing toilet! Routinely the toilets would be cleared by the "night-soil men", characters of terror for children, loaded onto a horse and cart and taken to a wharf of the Nottingham Canal on London Road. Here it would be loaded onto "Sani-Boats", shipped across the Trent and thence up the Grantham Canal to be sold to farmers as nitrogen fertilizer for their fields. Clearly these toilets also acted as household waste-bins. Anything broken or no longer required joined the pool!

Here is a sample of the many fragments collected by Mike. The throwing out of these items is perhaps not surprising as many households did not have a dustbin – indeed, it was not until the late 1800s that public health legislation first called for waste storage receptacles in every dwelling in the UK, and placed responsibility on civic authorities to service these containers.



23. Trent Navigation

The Trent Navigation building dates back to c1842 when the most effective way of transporting heavy goods such as coal, iron, sand, grain and foodstuffs was by water. The Trent Navigation served as a watering hole to the workers on the horse-drawn canal boats and their horses would bed down for the night in the stable block while the workers enjoyed a well-earned libation.

In 1876, the Trent Navigation Inn was a fully licensed establishment under publican George Tomlin.

The Navigation brewery used to be located behind the pub, housed in former stables for canal boat horses, but the brewery closed in late 2023.

<https://www.navigationbrewery.com/about/>

<https://whatpub.com/pubs/NOT/257/trent-navigation-nottingham>

In October 2023 this mural, showing the former Nottingham Forest and Notts County managers, was painted on the London House wall opposite the pub by artists at MurWalls. It is based on a photograph taken of the pair at Trent Bridge in 1985. Forza Garibaldi, a Nottingham Forest supporter group, planned the work which commenced at about 18:30 BST on Monday 16th October and was completed within a day.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-nottinghamshire-67134885>

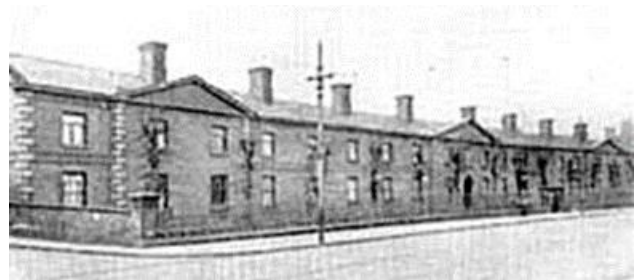


This map (Surveyed: 1880 to 1881) shows the building with stables behind.



24. Burton's Almshouses

The 4 stone columns – 3 seen in the photo, the fourth being just beyond the road sign on the right – are all that remains of a wall and gateway in front of Burton's Almshouses.



The almshouses were established in 1859, the donor was Miss Ann Burton, and they were intended for the accommodation of twenty-four widows, widowers, or unmarried persons over sixty years of age, in needy circumstances, and of whatsoever religious persuasion they might belong. Miss Burton lived in Spaniel Row (between Hounds Gate and Friar Lane), and was the daughter of a prosperous saddler, and upon the death of her father she inherited his very substantial fortune. Being of a quiet and retiring nature, and having few expensive tastes, she allowed the income from her patrimony to accumulate until she was possessed of a very considerable sum of money. Part of this sum she devoted to the establishment of these almshouses.

http://www.nottshistory.org.uk/whatnall1928/burtons_almhouses.htm

25. Turneys Court

Before its conversion into residential flats, with more housing behind (Quayside Close), this building was a tannery founded by Edward and John Turney in 1881. The leather businesses in Nottingham almost became extinct and the Turney brothers are credited with reviving the dying industry.

There are references to leather tanneries as far back as 1395 across the city, including reports that tanners had polluted the River Leen. Tanneries would have been focused on producing accessories for horses and shoes at that time. By 1838, the industry was in serious decline

And many of the tanneries were sold off or closed. The Turney brothers wanted to revive the industry and decided in 1861 to open their leather factory in the small area between the canal, the river Trent and London Road.

The factory had its own basin and wharf connecting it to the canal.

Although the site was quite small when it started, it rapidly expanded into a much larger site by the 1920s and became a Nottingham landmark.



1927 aerial view



It imported specialist machinery from around the world to become a cutting-edge producer of leather goods, including pocketbooks and gloves.

Turney Brothers Limited were apparently well known for producing "Trent Bridge willow calf", one of the first UK "full chrome calf leathers" in many colours for the ladies shoe trade.

Production continued through much of the C20th but in the 1970s the company, as the only remaining tannery in the city, went into decline and made the decision to close in 1981 citing increased prices for raw materials and also the economic slump at that time.

The building fronting London Road was then converted into flats.

The factory buildings to the rear were demolished and new housing built. Early adverts for the new homes being placed in the Evening Post included a three-bedroom home for £45,950 in 1985. The development was described as 'most impressive' and 'a little piece of Amsterdam' as it overlooked the river.

You can still read Turney Brothers Ltd as you pass by.

<https://www.nottinghampost.com/news/history/history-landmark-nottingham-building-became-7992154>

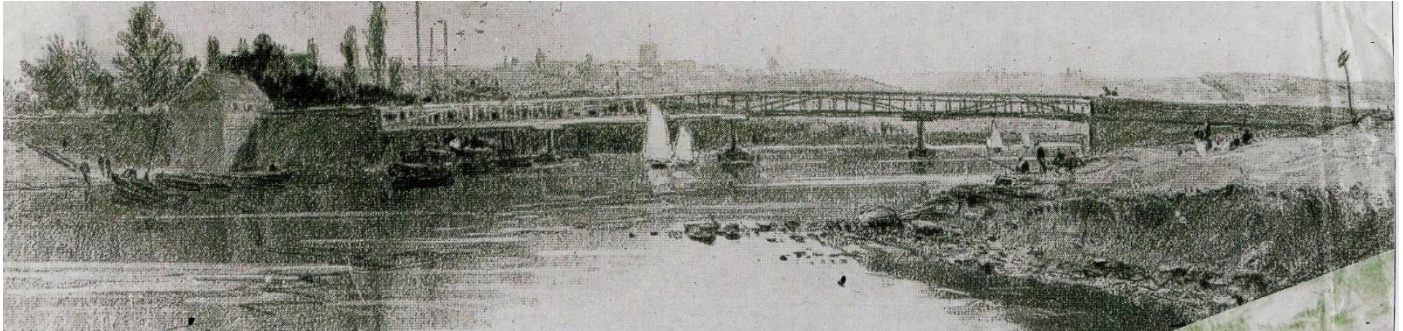


26. Navigation Bridge

In the time when the canals were a vital part of industrial activity many canal barges travelling between the Nottingham Canal and the Grantham Canal had to cross over the River Trent. At that time all barge traffic was horse-drawn and so a barge coming from the Nottingham Canal had to go through the Meadow Lane Lock into the Trent and be hauled upstream to the old Trent Bridge. There the horse was unhitched and the barge was warped (pulled by a rope) across the river – a job undertaken by a regular 'pilot' employed by the Trent Navigation Company. The horses were walked across the bridge, for which tolls had to be paid, and then the horses were re-hitched on the other side.

However, the time lost and cost of this was not popular and also, apparently, there were reports of dishonesty regarding the tolls.

To avoid this, a flimsy-looking bridge (named the Navigation Bridge) was erected in c1842 by Trent Navigation Company. It stretched from the mouth of the Nottingham canal to the West Bridgford bank of the River Trent, cost over £1000 (worth £100,000 today) and was used only by the Navigation Company, never as a public thoroughfare.



A newspaper cutting from an 1872 drawing by Thomas William Hammond.

The bridge was severely damaged in severe floods in October 1875 and it was considered too expensive to repair, so was dismantled. The only remaining part is the buttress on the city side.

West Bridgford Local News; Mick Barrett, West Bridgford & District Local History Society

27. Tinkers Leen



The walk crossed the Tinkers Leen at Summer Leys Lane. From that point the stream went eastwards and then disappears into a culvert under London Road, the canal, Eastcroft Depot, Cattle Market Road, the Jimmy Sirrel Stand at Notts County and Meadow Lane before emerging into the River Trent alongside Trent Bridge Quays.

28. Meadow Lane Stadium

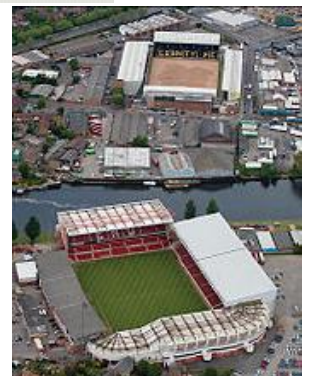


Notts County is the oldest professional association football club in the world, having been formed in 1862.

It is often noted, with some curiosity, that the Meadow Lane ground, which is referred to as 'the County ground', is within the City, while Nottingham Forest play at the City Ground which is outside the City but in the county.

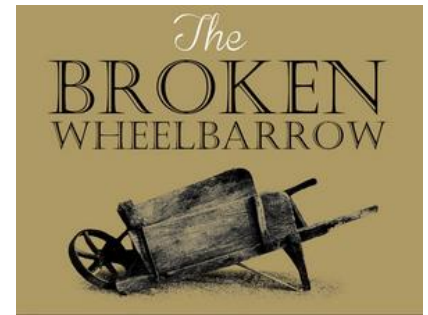
It was not always so.

The two clubs are actually the closest in England, only 300 yds apart – as seen in this aerial photo. At one time they were even closer.



Prior to 1910, Notts County played their home games across the river at Trent Bridge as a tenant of Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club; so outside the City; in the County. Cricket took priority on the ground and the football club often had to play early and late season fixtures at other venues to avoid a clash. Apparently, the Football League eventually deemed that this practice was inappropriate and demanded that Notts either seek more favourable terms for the use of Trent Bridge or relocate to a new ground on which they could fulfil all of their fixtures. In 1910, a plot of land near the cattle market on Meadow Lane was leased from the city council and a new stadium erected. Part of the new stadium was a temporary stand from Trent Bridge which was literally floated across the river. On 3 September 1910, County moved to Meadow Lane, the first game was a 1–1 draw with old rivals Nottingham Forest, played in front of 27,000 fans. (The Magpies by Keith Warsop)

29. The Broken Wheelbarrow.



In June 2022 Notts County FC announced in its Club News that:

"The Broken Wheelbarrow has a 'new' title.

Following consultation with supporters, the Broken Wheelbarrow has been renamed the Meadow Lane Sports Bar with immediate effect. The decision sees the supporter bar, which was renamed under previous ownership, return to a title which was popular with fans in the past".

Notts County supporters have a song about a broken wheelbarrow.

According to an article by Simon Lloyd:

Its origins are disputed, but many are in agreement that it started in the away end at Gay Meadow [Shrewsbury Town's ground] on a Tuesday evening in April 1990. Attempting to cement a spot in the old Division Three play-offs, the Magpies... had found themselves two goals down to Shrewsbury Town when a chant - to the tune of On Top of Old Smokey - went up from the home support.

The Shropshire accent making it difficult for them to decipher the exact words, County fans responded with their own nonsensical version: "I had a wheelbarrow, the wheel fell off, I had a wheelbarrow, the wheel fell off, County, County, County"

Were it not for what followed, it's possible the song would have long been forgotten. But within minutes, goals from Tommy Johnson and Kevin Bartlett helped Notts salvage a 2-2 draw. They went unbeaten from that point on, clinching the first of two successive play-off promotions at the end of the season.

And so, the song stuck, becoming synonymous with the club's ascent to the top flight of English football. In the time since, it's taken on a different meaning altogether.

"We're the only club in the world that has an anthem about something going worse," says Colin Sisson, a lifelong fan "The wheelbarrow and the wheel falling off - that's typical of Notts. There's a dark humour about supporting this club. I suppose it typifies what it's like to be a Notts fan. The wheels - or in this case the wheel - can fall off. You kind of know and expect things can go wrong".

www.joe.co.uk/sport/notts-county-putting-the-wheel-back-on-the-barrow-237824

30. Cattle Market

Nottingham Cattle Market was opened for business selling livestock in 1886. There had been a livestock market on Burton Street where the Guildhall is now, but the smell and noise was too much, so it was decided to build a designated cattle market that was near main roads and the canal.

The 'Official Handbook' of Nottingham Corporation, 1946, describes the Cattle Market:

THE CATTLE MARKET

The Cattle Market is on the southern side of the city, its situation being convenient for road and rail transport. Accommodation is provided on a site of about 9½ acres for 1,000 head of cattle, 3,000 sheep, 600 pigs and 400 calves, in addition to space for the sale of horses, hay and straw, agricultural implements, vehicles and live poultry. Special accommodation is provided for imported cattle, and for sales of attested stock. There is a railway siding in the market, good covered lairage accommodation for cattle, and a large car park with space for vehicles used for the conveyance of stock, and cleansing facilities for them. A comfortable building is provided for the "Corn Exchange and Farmers' Room," and there is good office accommodation for auctioneers, banks, etc., and a licensed refreshment room. Market days are: Fat Stock on Mondays, Dairy and Store Stock on Saturdays.

Most of the trade of the market is carried on through four firms of auctioneers, three of whom work in combination for the greater convenience of their clients. The fourth firm handles most of the trade in pigs. Three auction rings are provided in which different classes of animals are sold separately. In normal times about 120,000 animals are sold every year. Since January, 1940, the market has been used on Mondays as a collecting centre for Fat Stock under the Government's control of livestock and meat.

A scheme for an entirely new cattle market on the existing site and land adjoining is in preparation.

After the Second World War, when the surrounding roads became increasingly clogged with traffic and the logistics of getting thousands of animals to and from the market made things less practical, trade in livestock started declining in a big way. Eventually, in 1993, the hammer came down on the last cattle ever to be sold there.

However, business has continued; it is home to one of the most serious live auction houses in the country, an open-stall market selling pretty much anything you can get in the high street but cheaper, a flea market, and an open-air thrift store. There are five salerooms of Arthur Johnson Auctioneers, dealing with antique, hand-crafted furniture, vintage objects and rare, eccentric collectables, alongside contemporary and ex-catalogue furnishings, machinery, hardware and electronics.

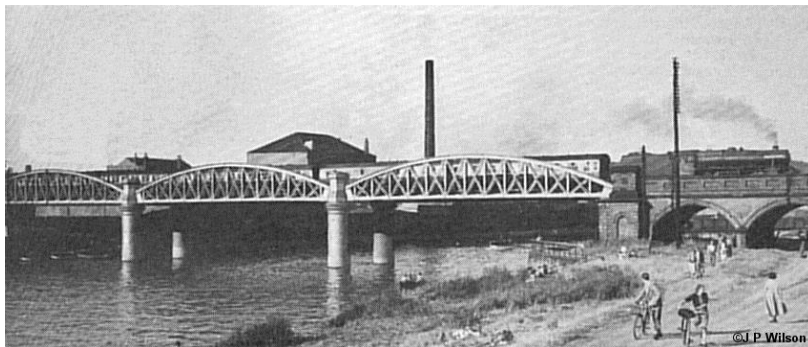


<https://www.nottinghampost.com/news/nottingham-news/gallery/11-fascinating-photos-show-what-9107366>

<https://leftlion.co.uk/features/2019/01/cattle-market-fire/>

31. Lady Bay Bridge

Originally opened in 1878 as a railway bridge link between Melton Mowbray and Nottingham Station. When the Nottingham direct line of the Midland Railway was abandoned in 1968, plans were made to convert the river crossing and so relieve pressure on Trent Bridge. However, these works were not complete until 1979.



London bound steam engine train over Lady Bay Bridge in 1953.

http://www.old-dalby.com/images/45227_ladybay%20JPWilson.jpg

The bridge was used as an Eastern Bloc railway crossing in 1982's TV series 'Smiley's People' - film adaptation of John Le Carre's novel starring Sir Alec Guinness.

<https://www.ladybay.co.uk/history.html>



32. Nottingham Office Equipment building

This possibly 1920s or 30s building with a large bay window used to be part of a Co-op Bakery on Meadow Lane.

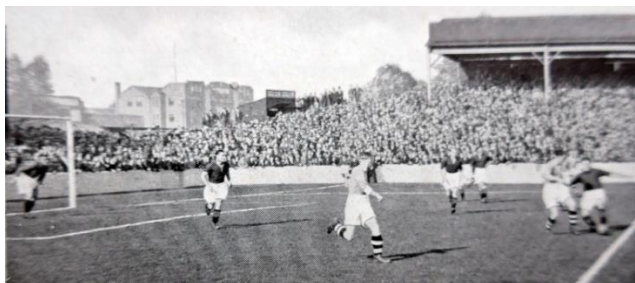
The room with the large window was apparently used for cake decorating to provide maximum light to the mainly female workforce. On the night of 8/9 May 1941 part of the Bakery site was hit in a Luftwaffe bombing raid that resulted in the loss of 49 lives and another 20 injured. (Ray Teece www.nottingham21.co.uk/build_coop_bakery).



This raid also caused the deaths of 43 West Bridgford residents and 47 injured. 34 houses were badly damaged and about 900 more had some damage.

33. Nottingham Forest City Ground

Nottingham Forest Football Club was founded in 1865, three years after Notts County. Forest have played home matches at the City Ground since 1898. At the time, this area was within the City boundary (see map below) so the name 'City Ground' was appropriate. Before that, they played at a number of other grounds within the City, starting at Forest Racecourse (1865-1879) and later the Town Ground on Bathley Street, the Meadows, which became the site of a tram depot and is now a NCT bus depot (see 45).



Forest in
the 1940s

and
today



As this 1938 map shows, the Nottingham boundary used to be on the West Bridgford side of the Trent. As well as The Hook beside Lady Bay, the land along the river from Loughborough Road to Lady Bay bridge, including the City Ground, and the area around County Hall, were part of the City.



The boundary moved to the centre of the river in 1952.

34. Nottingham Rowing Clubs

With the River Trent running through Nottingham, rowing became a pastime during the mid-1800s. Attempts to popularize the sport through regattas met with considerable support. The clubs were often supported by men of some standing within the county. The first club to open was the Nottingham Rowing Club in 1862 and became the most established of all the Nottingham rowing clubs. Sir John Turney of Turney Leatherworks (25) was a founder member of the club and became President in 1890. The Nottingham Britannia Rowing Club was to follow and opened in 1869 and was an offspring of a canoe club and it was not until 1892 that the club had its own boat yard. The Nottingham Union Rowing Club was the next club to be opened in 1871 and initially based on the City side of the river. Increased membership needed new accommodation on the opposite bank in 1899.

<http://www.nottsheritagegateway.org.uk/themes/sport/rowing.htm>

35. Pavilion Building

This early C20th aerial photo shows the River Trent at Trent Bridge, with Turney's Leather Factory and the Town Arms, bottom left, the Trent Bridge Cricket Ground, top right, and the Forest Ground and boat clubs, top left and centre. Between the boat clubs and the Bridgford end of Trent Bridge is a large white building – I believe this was the Pavilion Cinema, which is, presumably, the origin of the names Pavilion Building and Pavilion Road.



There was another building here before the Pavilion Cinema, as told in a Nottinghamshire Live article from September 2021:

<https://www.nottinghampost.com/news/history/nottingham-once-incredible-ivory-palace-5810731>

In 1903 the Midlands Industrial Exhibition was held here in a purpose built majestic building.

'Dubbed the 'Ivory Palace',... it cost £50,000 - at today's prices that would have been more than £6 million. The two-storey building was an eye-catching Indian Mughal architectural design - like a scaled-back version of the Taj Mahal.

The aim of the exhibition was to display products and inventions from all over the world and entertainment for visitors.... In the grounds were a Japanese tea house, Canadian water chute - nearly 100ft high and with a 600ft slope - an American roller coaster, Tom Thumb miniature railway, Hampton Court maze, and a Fairy River that took visitors through caverns past walls set with magical scenes and down a lane of stalactites a mile long.

The Exhibition - described as a 'schoolhouse of all nations' - opened in May 1903 and during its first fortnight the extravaganza attracted 320,000 people, including royalty. Queen Alexandra and the Prince of Wales (later King George V) were amongst the visitors'.

The exhibition was intended to continue for up to five years 'but the impressive building had only been up for 14 months when disaster struck. Fire broke out on July 4 1904, caused by an electrical fault in one of the Fairy River caverns.

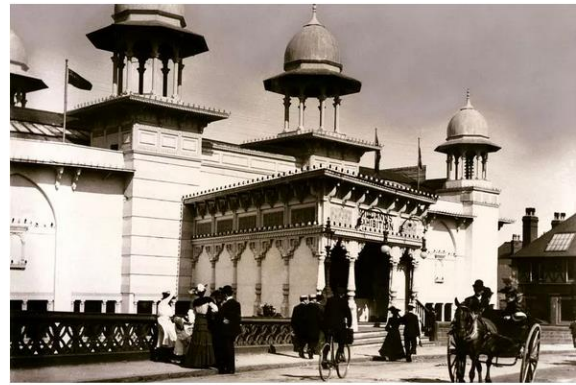
Visitors were evacuated to safety as 100ft flames spread, threatening nearby houses. The homes were saved but Nottingham Forest's pavilion, board room and dressing rooms were burnt to the ground'.

On the site of the Midlands Industrial Exhibition, the Pavilion Theatre was built, opening in 1913. It was rebuilt as the Pavilion Picture House & Gardens, opened in May 1915, but closed in 1927. It reopened as the Palace Theatre later that year but it closed again in December 1931.

Altered internally & externally with a new Egyptian style entrance by Nottingham architect Alfred John Thraves and opened as the Plaza Cinema in May 1932 (prices 7d to 1s6d). The Plaza was closed in March 1942 and was then used for storage and demolished in 1955.

<https://cinematreasures.org/theaters/57877>

<https://www.bridgfordhistory.org/photo-gallery/photo-gallery-trent-bridge-plaza-cinema>



Midlands Industrial Exhibition, also known as the Ivory Palace (Image: Nottingham Historical Film Unit/Picture Nottingham)



The blaze at the Midlands Industrial Exhibition in 1904 (Image: Nottingham City Council/Picture Nottingham)



Aerial photos from:

<https://www.transportnottingham.com/bridging-generations-150-years-since-iconic-trent-bridge-opened/>



36. Trent Bridge Inn

As it says on the front of the building, this is The World Renowned Trent Bridge Inn, famous for its location beside the Trent Bridge Cricket Ground and known locally as the TBI.

The tithe map of this area, made in 1838, records that this was occupied by Samuel Chapman and was an inn named The Three Horse Shoes and Crown. It later became known as 'the pub next to the bridge over the Trent'. It was 'a country inn', providing overnight accommodation for travellers on their way into Nottingham from the south. The original inn was smaller and was demolished after the present Trent Bridge Inn was built in 1890.



The Inn in 1850 by Robert Bradley
Nottingham City Museums & Galleries



The old inn before it was demolished, with the newly built inn behind, c1888.

37. Trent Bridge Cricket Ground

Trent Bridge Cricket Ground is used for Test, One-Day International and county cricket as the headquarters of Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club. As well as international cricket and Nottinghamshire's home games, the ground has hosted the Finals Day of the Twenty20 Cup the final of the One-Day Cup.

As early as 1783 Nottingham played a match 'near Trent Bridge' and in 1822 West Bridgford played Samuel Chapman's XI in a 'field near Trent Bridge'. It is not clear exactly where these were. However, during the 1830s but certainly in 1838, matches were played in an open grass area behind the TBI and belonging to Mrs Chapman, the landlady of the TBI. The area was enclosed as a cricket ground and formally opened in 1841 by William Clarke, Captain of the All England Cricket Team, who had married Mary Chapman. It is the world's third oldest test ground; the first Test match here was in June 1899, with England playing against Australia – result: a draw.

<https://www.trentbridge.co.uk/trentbridge/history/seasons/1838.html>



c.1900



38. Trent Bridge

In *Aspects of West Bridgford's History* by the West Bridgford and District Local History Society, 1991, states that the name 'Bridgford' not unexpectedly means 'a settlement by a ford near a bridge....[Indeed] within living memory it was possible to cross the river on foot, in a dry season, near Nottingham Forest football ground'.

A Nottinghamshire History article [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trent_Bridge_\(bridge\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trent_Bridge_(bridge)) says that:

There was a ford here in Roman times and in the year 920 Edward the Elder, a son of King Alfred, built across this passage the first stone bridge in England since Roman times. Edward the Elder was then in the midst of his campaigns against the Danes, and was being ably seconded by his noble sister Aethelfleda the Lady of the Mercians.

The southern approach to Edward's bridge was protected by a fortification called a 'burgh', and [it might be that the modern name of Lady Bay may originally have been] 'Lady Burgh', and refer to this burgh which was erected by the Lady of the Mercians.

The accuracy of the description of the bridge being made of stone and the date of 920 is conflicted by a description in the West Bridgford Handbook, 1938, issued by West Bridgford Council, which refers to *the building of a timber bridge by Edward the Elder in 924* and that *A wooden bridge beam dredged from the River Trent is preserved in [Bridgford] Hall.*

A second bridge, known as Hethbeth bridge, Heath-beth bridge, or Heck-beck bridge (the bridge by the “hythe” or “wharf” near the “beth”, “wath”, or “ford”), was started in 1156 and had more than 20 stone arches and a chapel dedicated to St. James at one end. It was maintained by a religious organisation.

On 21 February 1551 the responsibility for repair passed to Nottingham Corporation, through a Royal Charter which created the Bridge Estate (primarily to provide for maintenance and repair, with any excess funds being allocated to the improvement of the City of Nottingham and the public benefit of its inhabitants).

During the Civil War (1642-51) both the Nottingham and Bridgford ends of the bridge were defended by forts. One arch was broken through and a wooden drawbridge was used to cross the gap. The bridge was also damaged by floods several times, and the northern half was washed away in 1683. The repaired bridge had fifteen arches across the river and flood areas. Although it was repaired, the foundations had become unsafe and a project to replace it was started in the 1860s.

Construction of the present bridge started in 1868 and was completed in 1871, at a cost of £30,000 (equivalent to £2.8m today). There were three main cast iron arch spans each 100ft (30 m) braced by wrought iron girders. The width between the parapets was 40 feet (12 m). It is a Grade II listed building. Between 1924 and 1926 the bridge was widened to 80 ft.

The old bridge, painted in 1863 by Thomas Cooper Moore (1827 - 1901). It shows the Town Arms with what was a flour mill (Trentbridge Mill) to its left.



This crayon drawing by T W Hammond, 1870, shows the old bridge, with the Town Arms in the background



Old and new bridges pictured together in 1871

This and more great photos can be seen at:

<https://www.visit-nottinghamshire.co.uk/things-to-do/trent-bridge-the-bridge-p587611>

The new bridge in 1910, again showing the Town Arms



It is interesting to note that, for much of the centuries of the bridges' history, indeed well into the C19th, West Bridgford was a typical English village with its small grey church and red brick cottages, a farm house or two and the square-fronted squire's hall [Bridgford Hall, completed 1739] standing aloof in its own park. Bridgford Road was a narrow country lane, shady in summer, deep rutted in winter (West Bridgford Handbook, 1938).

39. County Hall

During much of the 20th century the County Council was based at the old Shire Hall in the Lace Market in central Nottingham. In 1936 it was decided that the premises were inadequate for the council's needs, and a new site for a replacement building was selected beside the River Trent on what was athletic and cricket grounds – as shown in this 1900 map and the 1901 photo below.

The building was designed by Emanuel Vincent Harris (who is also credited with designing Leeds Civic Hall, Bristol City Hall and Sheffield City Hall) and the foundation stone was laid by the Lord Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire in November 1939 two months after the declaration of war. However building work stopped in 1941 and it was only completed in 1954, with some of the interior not being completed until 1975.

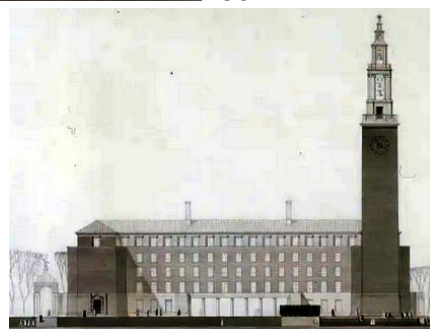
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/County_Hall,_Nottinghamshire



1901

The original plans included the construction of a landmark bell tower which would have been three times as tall as the main building. When construction resumed after the war this part of the plan was abandoned to reduce overall costs.

<https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/design-for-nottinghamshire-county-hall-nottingham-4-drawings-elevation-to>



The entrances to the Hall are flanked by statues of miners and farm workers by Nottingham artist Robert Kiddy (1900-84).

https://www.bbc.co.uk/nottingham/content/articles/2009/09/11/trent_council_buildings_feature.shtml



Nottinghamshire County Council recently announced that it will move its civic and democratic base to a new building at Top Wighay, near Hucknall, *to bring long-term savings for the taxpayer and environment.*

The proposal comes off the back of a review which has found that it is no longer practical to keep the building, which opened in 1946, as the Council's main base in the long-term, as it will be too expensive to maintain and improve to meet the Council's environmental ambitions. <https://westbridfordwire.com/council-to-leave-west-bridfords-county-hall-in-2024/>

According to a Nottinghamshire Live article in July 2023, no decisions have been made as to the site's future use but the *"initial thinking" included about 350 residential units and about 2,500 square metres of commercial use.*

<https://www.nottinghampost.com/news/early-vision-350-homes-county-8598483>

40. Wilford Suspension Bridge

Owned by Severn Trent Water, the Grade II listed Wilford Suspension Bridge, listed as Meadows Suspension Bridge by Historic England, is a combined suspension pedestrian footbridge and aqueduct – apparently (according to a West

Bridgford & District Local History Society, Local News article) the only bridge in the country constructed for these joint purposes. The bridge's principle purpose originally was to carry a water supply between the Wilford Hill reservoir and the Meadows. The pedestrian facility was provided to relieve local people of the long distance and tolls incurred using the Wilford Toll Bridge. It now also carries a gas main.

Built in 1906 the bridge was designed by the engineer Arthur Brown, of Elliott & Brown (Civil and Structural Engineering Consultancy). The plans were drawn up by Frank Beckett Lewis, the City Architect. It was constructed by the Nottingham Corporation Water Department at a cost of £8,871 (c. £1m today)

There is no public right of way along the bridge, and so it can be closed by Severn Trent Water whenever it is deemed expedient to do so.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilford_Suspension_Bridge

The bridge is a popular location for the fixture of 'love locks' or 'love padlocks'.

According to Wikipedia, the history of love locks dates back at least 100 years to a melancholic Serbian tale of World War I, with an attribution for the bridge 'Most Ljubavi' (lit. the Bridge of Love) in the spa town of Vrnjačka Banja. A local schoolmistress named Nada fell in love with a Serbian officer named Relja. After they committed to each other, Relja went to war in Greece, where he fell in love with a local woman from Corfu. As a consequence, Relja and Nada broke off their engagement.

Nada never recovered from that devastating blow, and after some time she died due to heartbreak from her unfortunate love.

As young women from Vrnjačka Banja wanted to protect their own loves, they started writing down their names, with the names of their loved ones, on padlocks and affixing them to the railings of the bridge where Nada and Relja used to meet.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Love_lock



41. Plaisance

The house with a conical roof is currently boarded up and the site up for sale with planning permission for 'demolition of existing disused office building, erection of a new building comprising a total of 6 apartments'.

Next door there used to be another house of the same period which was named 'Plaisance' (Middle English meaning 'pleasure or a source of pleasure') and was Jesse Boot's summer house. Built around the end of the C19th, it was demolished in 1960 when Rivermead was built.



1920



1960

I provided a brief history of Jesse Boot in the Appendix of Walk 4, so will not repeat it here, but the following extracts from the book 'Jesse Boot of Boots the Chemists' by Stanley Chapman, 1973, tells about his time at 'Plaisance'

'Up to his late forties, Jessie Boot was a strong, well-built man who loved the country and strenuous physical exercise'. However, in his early 50s he developed rheumatoid arthritis, initially in his legs. This 'was cumulative and

gradually paralysed him. By 1908 he had to be moved about in a wheel chair and had a Rolls-Royce limousine specially fitted to accommodate the chair. His leisure was confined to week-ends on a couch at 'Plaisaunce', watching the river run by.'

Early in his illness, Boot 'acquired some land by the River Trent a few hundred yards from Trent Bridge, built a pavilion in stone and wood and laid out a recreation ground with tennis courts, summer house and children's amusements. He called it 'Plaisaunce', and took his family there almost every week-end in the summer....[his wife] Florence Boot loved entertaining and, regally dressed, moved easily among a large company of guests, while Boot sat in his bath chair on the veranda dressed in his immaculate brown velvet jacket and surveyed a sequence of convivial occasions with paternal satisfaction'.

Boots employees were invited to Plaisaunce on 'several carefully-planned dates each year....[with entertainment from] Boots Plaisaunce Brass Band ...and Boots Choral Union. Boots Athletic Club...held their meetings at 'Plaisaunce', and Boots Baden-Powel Boy Scouts held parades, inspections and demonstrations there. [There were] athletics, water polo and swimming races [and] in the evening, the dance hall....or fire-work displays....became the centre of attraction....The employees thoroughly enjoyed the fun and cherished the memories for years afterwards'.

42. Victoria Embankment

The Victoria Embankment was the name given to a 1¼ mile long Victorian flood defence engineering works with a promenade and carriage-way opened, along with the New Meadows recreation ground. At the end of the C19 much of the land alongside the River Trent was in private ownership and prone to flooding. The land-owner, Mr H R Clifton, donated c9ha to the Nottingham Corporation so that flood defences could be built. The earthworks and construction took place between 1898 and 1901 when the Victoria Embankment was opened with a public walk of c2km between the Trent and Wilford Bridges.



Further work was undertaken on filling and levelling to create recreation and sports grounds in the western section of the land; the Meadows Recreation Ground was opened in May 1906. In 1906 the Arts & Crafts style Cricket Pavilion was officially opened along with several new football pitches.

In 1920 the Clifton Estate offered for sale the land in the eastern section. It was bought by Sir Jesse Boot, who gave the land to the Corporation of Nottingham so that it could be preserved as open space and a memorial site in perpetuity. At the time it was called New Park. The gift in total comprised c14.7hectare, of which c12hectare were dedicated to recreation grounds and playing fields for the adjacent Mundella Secondary School, Collygate School, and Trent Bridge School.

The eastern edge of the site was laid out as the Memorial Gardens to commemorate those who had lost their lives in WW1. The classical triumphal Portland stone Memorial Arch (listed Grade II), designed by the city engineer and surveyor, Mr T Wallis Gordon, consists of a three-span archway flanked by colonnades, with a terrace overlooking the Gardens. The foundation stone was laid by the Prince of Wales on 1 August 1923 and the Arch was unveiled and dedicated on Armistice Day 1927.



The bandstand with terracing, in the Moderne style, was opened to the public on 12th May 1937, the Coronation day of King George VI. It is listed at Grade II.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1001506>

A new Great War Memorial was officially unveiled by HRH Duke of Kent on Friday 28 June 2019. It features the names of all 13,501 from Nottinghamshire who lost their lives in the 1914 – 1918 War, as well as civilian casualties, including nurses, two people killed in a Zeppelin air raid in September 1916 and the victims of an explosion at Chilwell shell filling factory in July 1918.

The new memorial is an elevated, circular design constructed with a Portland Stone cladding and Welsh slate panels to the entrance walls and upstand allowing a protected space for reflection.

A five metre high inscribed monument is featured in the middle of the memorial and poppies are fixed upon it. Names of the fallen have been etched into the circular stone surrounding the monument.

http://www.bonsersrestoration.co.uk/projects/ww1_war_memorial_victoria_embankment_nottingham/



Close by is a memorial plaque with the names of the 21 military people from Nottingham and Nottinghamshire who have been awarded the Victoria Cross.

The statue of Queen Victoria was recently restored as part of a £1.7m restoration of the Victoria Embankment's Memorial Gardens.

The Grade II listed statue was created by the sculptor Albert Toft and was unveiled in 1905 - four years after the queen's death.

Originally located in the Market Square, the statue was moved to the Victoria Embankment in 1953.



We are most fortunate to have Victoria Embankment; it's a nice place to walk or jog or just sit and watch the river go by and admire the birds and the various boats.



It is also, of course, the venue for many great events, including (photos with a C in the top left corner are internet copies; the rest are mine)....

The Riverside Festival, with its terrific fireworks display



The Nottingham Triathlon



The Caribbean Carnival



For this participant it was all – yawn – a bit tiring!



And The Robin Hood Half Marathon.

I ran in the 1st Robin Hood Half Marathon in October 1981, along with over 3,000 runners, but the event caused some difficulties for traffic.

The organisers asked the County's highways department for help in planning a Half and Full Marathon for 1982 and I was given the task. I ended up with the official role of traffic planning (road closures, diversions, etc.) and the voluntary role of actually planning, measuring, re-planning and re-measuring (repeatedly) the route and then co-ordinating the marshals.

One significant factor in assessing the traffic implications is the time taken for all the runners to pass a particular point and the length of the 'procession' from the fastest runner to the slowest – for example, if the leader is at the 20 mile point the last runner is about 10 miles back (so a 10 mile long queue of runners) and will take about 90 minutes to get to that point.

All quite exciting and rewarding and the result was a success with 7,000 entries. Of course, I couldn't actually take part in the run – my role was going along the route (in a car) a few minutes in advance of the runners, checking that the marshals had all final arrangements made and the route was correct and safe.....all with the frightening threat of something being wrong and 14,000 pounding feet not far behind me!

Unfortunately, avoiding traffic problems meant the route chosen did not attract many spectators, particularly around the Water Sports Centre, and "failed to meet runners' expectations" and so the Full Marathon was scrapped in 2018, but the Half Marathon and Mini Marathon remain popular.



43. Town Arms

This pub has had many names – Riverbank, Casa, Bridges, Aviary, and now Brewhouse & Kitchen – but was originally the Town Arms, built in 1869-71.



On the pub's front wall there is the Arms of the Town of Nottingham (hence 'Town Arms'), which was described by the College of Arms in 1898 as "*Gules, issuant from the base a ragged cross coupé vert between two ducal coronets in chief, and the lower limb of the cross enfiled with a like coronet*".



The building now stands alone but, as this 1869 drawing by T. W. Hammond and the 1880 map show, there used to be a flour mill (Trentbridge Mill) and a corporation pumping station.



<http://www.nottshistory.org.uk/books/hammond1926/hammond5.htm>



As noted at **21** above, the pumping station was from a time when water from the Trent was a major part of Nottingham's water supply. In 1826 the Trent Waterworks Company was established. Its engineer, Thomas Hawksley (1807-1893), built innovative waterworks at Trent Bridge, inaugurated in 1831, which extracted water from the River Trent, filtered it through natural beds of sand and gravel in the reservoir, and pumped it under constant high pressure to taps situated in streets and courts. The buildings were demolished in the early C20th.



Trent Bridge Pumping Station, c.1896.

[http://www.picturethepast.org.uk/\(NTGM006601\)](http://www.picturethepast.org.uk/(NTGM006601))



Woman collecting water from a communal water pump on Malt Mill Lane,

Narrow Marsh area, 1931. [http://www.picturethepast.org.uk/\(NTGM000962\)](http://www.picturethepast.org.uk/(NTGM000962))

The 1880 map above shows that behind the pumping station, about where Victoria Embankment road is (built 1889-1901), there is a length of water labelled Old Trent which must have been a previous alignment of the river. Note also that there are no streets or houses shown south of Bathley Street, so before the building of Turney St, Pyatt St, Fraser Road, etc.

44. London Road/ Arkwright Street junction

The buildings in this photo are all quite old but, even so, the view is significantly different than it was in the early 1900s as seen in the photo below.



Other than the change in vehicles the most obvious difference is the building in the centre, which I will come to. However, the buildings on the left remain.



The first one, on the corner of Victoria Embankment, dates from the c1900s/1910s.



The next one, on the corner of Turney Street, is The Embankment pub.



The Embankment is a Grade II listed building. Designed by Albert Nelson Bromley, the architect behind some of the most distinctive Boots pharmacy buildings, it used to be a Boots dispensary; indeed it was opened by Jesse Boot in 1907 as 'Boots Store 2'.

In 1919 the Boots Social Club was formed on the same site and became so popular it soon expanded throughout the building and, following the closure of Boots Store 2 in 1979, used the whole site.

Castle Brewery took over the site in 2015 and have provided interesting history of the site. What was the shop now houses The Dispensary, a real ale and craft beer bar with a nod to the medicinal history of the site. Upstairs, Jesse Boot's office remains as it always has; a beautiful Arts and Crafts style wood-clad room with a gallery view of the main bar – it is said Jessie Boot would keep an eye on his employees' behaviour from here.

The building in the centre of the old photo above was the Globe Picture House.

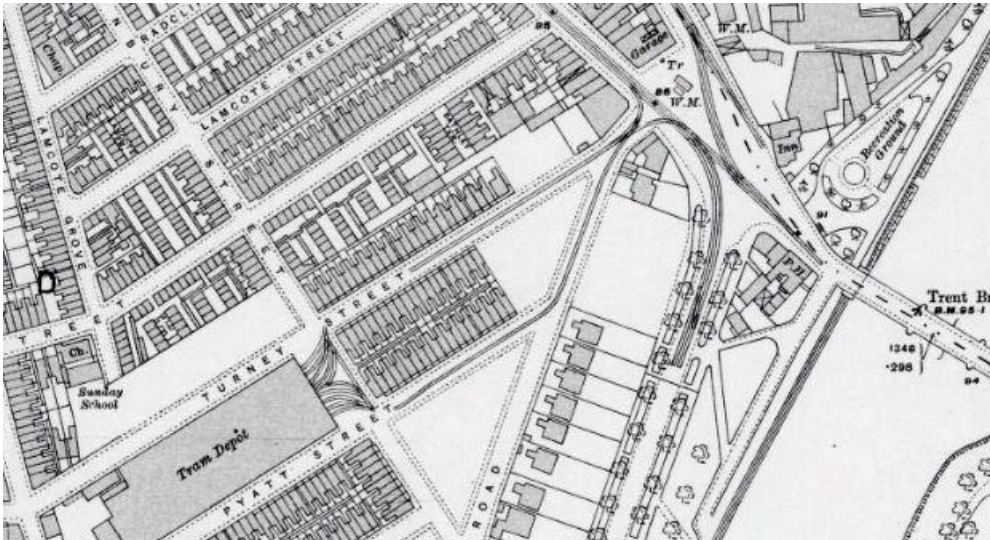
This cinema was opened on 12th January 1914. It closed in June 1961 and was converted into a bingo club, which only operated for four months. It re-opened as a cinema briefly in 1961 but closed permanently in June 1962.

The building was later demolished as part of the major redevelopment of the area.



45. Nottingham City Transport depot

This bus depot was originally a tram depot as seen on this 1913 map. Note the multiple lines along some of the streets – indicating tram lines.

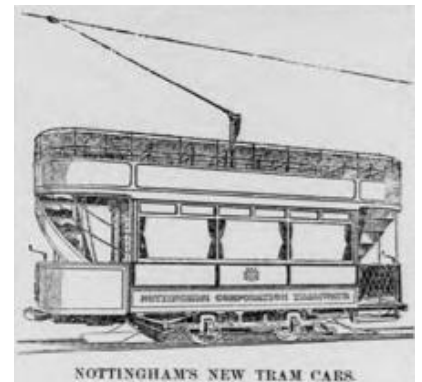


Plans for tramways in the town of Nottingham started at least as early as 1870 and, in 1872, the Nottingham Tramways Company was established by several prominent business men. In 1875 it changed its name to Nottingham and District Tramways Company Limited and over the next few years plans for three routes, going north to Carrington, north-west to Basford and south to Trent Bridge, were proposed and powers gained for their construction. The southern route was from St Peter's Square, down Albert Street, Lister Gate and Carrington Street and then east along Station Street and south along Arkwright Street to London Rd at Trent Bridge. The tramway, using horse drawn cars, was formally opened on 17 September 1878.



Horse Tram outside St. Peter's Church

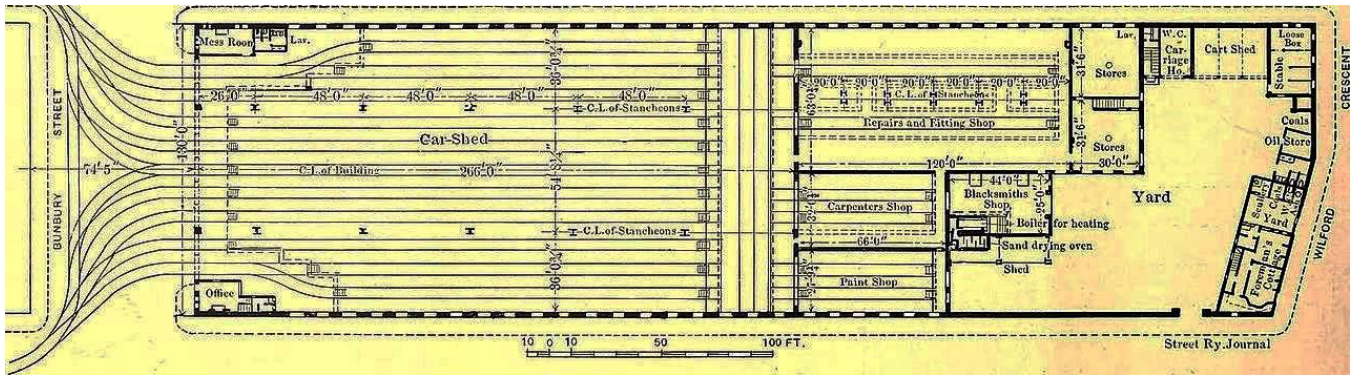
Tram Stables on Muskham Street – 1880 map



In 1897, Nottingham Corporation purchased the tramway and all vehicles were re-painted in maroon and cream with 'Nottingham Corporation Tramways' replacing the company name.

The system continued to grow and, in 1899, powers were obtained to construct and operate electric trams. The proposed new tram cars were shown to the public by Nottingham Evening Post on 17 October 1900 and the first electric trams ran between Sherwood and the Market Place on 1st January 1901.

In October 1901 the Trent Bridge route was electrified and construction of a new tram depot was started on the site of the old Nottingham Forest Football Club's Town Ground on Bathley Street (near its junction with Bunbury St and alongside what is now Turney St), where the last game played by Forest had been April 1898. (The Town Ground only existed for about 10 years and it does not appear on the maps).



Layout of the tram depot



The tram sheds today – used by NCT buses

By 1935 the deisel bus had become the vehicle of choice, there were no more conversions from tram to trolleybus and the last tram ran on 6th September 1936. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nottingham_%26_District_Tramways_Company

An additional tram shed was built on the opposite side of Turney Street in 1920.

The tram system eventually reached nearly 26 miles, with over 100 trams, but, in 1927, some routes started to be operated with trolleybuses (and a green and cream livery was adopted for all vehicles, replacing maroon and cream).

Nottingham City Transport have continued to use the depot and, in August 2019, they wanted to “modernise” facilities and planned to demolish two buildings at the rear of the depot. Heritage concerns about this resulted in the building being granted Grade II Listing in January 2020, so was not demolished. Instead, in 2023 Nottingham City Council and Nottingham City Transport (NCT) were successful in securing funding from the government’s Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas fund (ZEBRA). This money is being used to turn the site into a fully electric depot and NCT is in the process of aquiring over 70 new electric buses.

46. Mundella School

Mundella Higher Grade School & School of Science, later becoming Mundella Grammar School, 'built to meet the growing and advanced educational needs of the City of Nottingham', was a splendid Victorian building opened in 1899. The date plaque on the school said 1897 but the construction of the school was delayed by floods.



The school's name came from Anthony John Mundella, the son of an Italian political refugee and an English mother. Born in 1825, he left school at the age of nine yet went on to become an important hosiery manufacturer and later Liberal MP for Sheffield. Mundella and Hines factory, built on Station St in 1851, was the first steam-powered factory in Nottingham. The building later became Boots main offices before they moved to Beeston in 1969.



Mundella School buildings were demolished in 1985. The school pupils transferred to the Roland Green Comprehensive School in Wilford, which became the Wilford Meadows School, was later closed and then re-opened as the Nottingham Emmanuel School.



<https://www.mundella.org.uk/component/content/article?id=79:service-of-rededication>

47. Great Central Railway

As this 1915 map shows, a large area of the Meadows used to be occupied by railway lines, goods yards, engine sheds, sidings, etc – the Great Central Railway (Great Central Main Line - GCML) which was built in 1899.

The GCML was the last main line railway to be built in Britain during the Victorian period. It extended an existing Manchester - Sheffield line south via Nottingham, Leicester and Rugby to London Marylebone.

Its construction through Nottingham involved over 2km of tunnelling, under the city centre, north to Carrington, and almost 1.6 km of viaduct, from below High Pavement, via the Arkwright St station (8 above), to the River Trent.



In the 1960s, the line was considered by Dr Beeching as an unnecessary duplication of other lines that served the same places, especially the Midland Main Line, and most of the route was closed between 1966 and 1969. Today there is no obvious trace of the Great Central Railway in the Meadows (other than the community centre building). The closure of the railway enabled housing to be built on land that was once the railway sidings, etc. Indeed, in the 1970s, almost all the housing shown on the 1880 map in the introduction to this walk was deemed unsuitable by the council and was demolished to make way for the development of modern council housing. Photo from 1970s, looking east, of the viaduct which supported the railway.



48. Queen's Walk Community Centre and Pilgrim Church



The Queen's Walk Community Centre was formerly the Central Railway Goods Office.

It is believed to have opened in 1901 to coincide with the opening of the railway sidings behind it.

The map at 47 above shows the site of the goods yards and the location of the Goods Office - next to the church (top, just left of centre).

The Pilgrim Church was formerly a Congregational Chapel.

On 1st December 1869 a small Congregational mission church was established in an old warehouse in the Meadows. It was an outpost of the main Congregational church in Castle Gate Nottingham – one of the oldest Congregational churches in the Midlands. The mission church was soon thriving and was financially viable, however it suffered from poor accommodation – one report says that the flooring of the warehouse was so rotten that a visiting minister was unfortunate enough to fall through the floor!

During the 1870s the Castlegate Church sent a young enthusiastic minister, Mr William Lee, to the mission. He stayed at the church for many years and saw it re-housed in a brand new building – what is today the Pilgrim Church.

<http://www.ournottinghamshire.org.uk/>

Finally, an addendum to this walk, part of which is alongside the River Trent.

I was once walking along the Embankment going upstream when my mind started to wander and dream.....

A Walk by the Riverside.

As I walked along the riverside I heard a noise from behind,
so I turned my head back to see what I would find.

A boat was approaching; four young men out for a row,
their backs to the fore, the front of the boat, or is it the bow.

Each man in the row is working an oar, pushing against water– that's what they're for.

They're probably not going too far; just up to the bridge and then back to the bar.

But they're putting their backs into it, for all they are worth,

bending from the waist and with strong arms pulling, back and forth.

All the oars moving in time together....

Back and forth, like a metronome, tick tock, but not a clock.

Their backs to the front, the fore or the bow, their fronts to the back, the aft or the stern.

They can't see the way forward, just back, where they've come and would go back to on their return.

So they check to the side to see how far they are from each of the banks,

but the first of the four, or is he the forth, the others he outranks,

the one at the back of the row,

at the front of the boat, the foremost of the four, near the bow.

He has the best vision when looking over his shoulder,

He's perhaps more experienced, perhaps just older.

He will control the rudder which is at the back of the boat, in front of the row.

A cable, out of sight, is attached to the toe. That's the toe of his boot, not his bare toe, so he can pivot about the ball of his foot, moving the cable left or right....

Back and forth, like a metronome, tick tock, but not a clock.

Those who row do it in twos, fours or eight, and some have a small chap, perhaps a boy, of low weight.

He's called a cox, that's short for coxswain, he sits at the rear, his hands near his lap, holding ropes to the rudder, fully alert in his brain, no fear.

Looking front, or 'forward' or just fore, so he can direct the boat – that's what he's for.

He can either move the rudder one way or the other, or shout at the others to put pull harder

the oars on one side so they pull the boat over to the other side.

So the rowers have to do what they're told, by this boy, even though he's not old,

But because the rowers are facing the back, so they do not have a view forward.

That sounds as though they are a bit backward; perhaps they are. Just obeying orders.

All they have to think about was pulling the oars, not looking ahead, over the head of the rower in front, but looking back, still over the head of the rower in front of them, or should I say further back than them, except of course the one at the front of the row – no, at the back of the row...whatever!

The only forward thinking they probably have is about looking toward,

the end of the row and getting to the pub afterwards

and probably making cock jokes about the cox.

Each telling poor jokes, about the small boy they mocks...

Back and forth, like a metronome, tick tock, but not a clock.

But, back to the boat approaching. I guess they aren't going too far, just going up and then back – that's up-stream, not up in the air.... they were rowing not flying!

There were just four, in a row, out for a row, without a cox, just four cocks. I say cocks because they've now stopped rowing and seem to be having a bit of a row, as to who isn't putting enough effort into the row, and then one was saying they needed to pull the boat more to the left

and another saying the rules say keep near to the bank on their left,

so the other rower wasn't right to say they needed to move the boat to the left but stay on their left, close to the 'left' bank, not to their right, closer to the 'right' bank because the 'right' bank of the river was on the right when you were going downstream and they were going upstream so they needed to be near the 'left' bank, so row harder with their right oars to pull to the right, looking forward, which of course they couldn't do because they were looking backward.

This did mean that if they needed to move to the left side of the river – the right or correct side according to the rules, as said by one of the four – that was on their left side as they were looking backward, that is down-stream, to follow the rules you fools.

This was still not what the first of the four thought, he was angry and effed,
shouting they needed to go to the left.

It was unclear on which side the other two of the four were, that is which 'side' of the row but also which side of the river they should row,

but they did put their views forward, as they were no longer putting their backs into the rowing, but it was all a bit of a silly rowing – like I said, four cocks having a row while out for a row.

The shouts continued....

Back and forth, like a metronome, tick tock, but not a clock.

It was made worse as there was a man on a bike going along the river bank, the right bank, using a megaphone to give instructions to the four,

like a cox but not a cox, telling them whether or not they were on the right course,

whether or not they should take a course further to the left, nearer to the right bank side, the side he was on, which was his left, as he was facing forward, but it was the four rowing rowers, right side as, of course,

the four were facing backward, so the left of the row boat going forward was on their right looking backward.

Or whether they should move to a course further to the right, on their right but nearer the left bank, the bank on the other side than the man on his bike with the megaphone was on, but, as it happens, the side that I was on – the physical side – I was, of course, not really on either side of the row, although I did wish they would stop the rowing or at least get back to rowing so that they would go further forward, away from me and also row further over to the left, towards to the right bank, so I would be less aware of the noise of the row.

Best if the just did the rowing and not the rowing and for the guy on the bike to stop shouting into his megaphone, which was such a row, him shouting at the four and the four shouting back.

Back and forth, like a metronome, tick tock, but not a clock.

The bike man had a posh voice which made it worse. He probably went to Oxford or perhaps Cambridge, on a Uni course.

I imagined he and his posh friends would go out for a row, putting effort into their straight backs, going along the river they call 'the backs', with a cox in tow, and then, after the row, they would come back for a posh dinner,

the starters of fish roe and mains of venison from deer, a roe; for their taste, a winner,

and when they had finished the dinner, the four would brag about their forefathers,

which ones were most renowned, lorded and gowned.

First their four fathers and then their four fathers' fathers and their four mothers' fathers,

and then their father's and mothers' grandfathers and great grandfathers.

Lauding those most great and most grand, keeping quiet about those less great and not grand.

And then the talk would move to politics; he'd be for the right,

the others saying his views aren't right, he saying they weren't thinking right.

Loudly arguing while they downed pints in the bar, their voices heard from afar....

Whoa.... this is going too far.

My head's in a spin, I must pull it in.

Stop my brain racing round, with all this incessant sound, get myself back on safe ground.

It all makes no sense, and I hope no offence.

I need to row back my thoughts, of words the mind might distort;

rows and rowing, rows and rowing, back to back, backwards and forwards, front to fore, four fathers and forefathers, for this or for that, to go right, to be right, to think right.

I must stop this mad talk and get right back to the walk, use my legs, not brain dregs, one leg fore then the other, and more....

To and fore, like a pendulum, tick tock, just like a clock.

Pat Armstrong, 2024.