

A HOUSE AND ITS PEOPLE - 39 HIGH STREET (PART ONE)

By Pat Perkins



As you walk up the High Street to the Leicester Road between The Angel Hotel and The Paddocks (Strutt and Parker) you pass two unimposing front doors numbers 38 and 39. No. 38 is now part of The Angel Hotel, and 39 part of Fisher German, chartered surveyors and rural property consultants.



HIGH STREET MARKET HARBOROUGH TODAY. NO. 39 IS ON THE RIGHT



NO 39 HIGH STREET AS IT IS TODAY

You may never have cast a glance at no. 39¹ but this late Georgian building has been very involved with the history of the town, its most noticeable features are the vents at the side of some of the windows.

The Pulfords: Monumental Stonemasons

The first occupants of the newly built house were William Pulford and his family, who purchased it in 1792 from Samuel Smith, whom had it built a year earlier. William Pulford was a stone mason who, in 1791 had a workshop adjoining St Dionysius Church. He was married to Anne Pulford, the daughter of a farmer from Kibworth Harcourt.²

The house in 1792 is described as having a kitchen and parlour on the east side and cellar and dairy pantry on the west side, with chambered closets and garrets over them. There is also a stable and cow house, and suitable workshops and office facilities as well as a toilet and washhouse. This was a grand house for the family. One problem for William was the narrow passage between 38 and 39 through which it would have been difficult to move large stones which his trade as a stone mason required. This might explain why William had a hovel and piece of land on Bowden Lane as a place to keep these larger stone works.

William's family in 1792 comprised his wife Ann, daughter Mary Ann aged 2 years and a new son William, in fact the parish records show Mrs Pulford as being churched, that is receiving the blessing of the church, on the birth or still birth of a new baby, in February 1791 at the cost of 6d. A later addition to the family was a daughter Frances born 1795. Death at a young age was common in these times, and a son, John, born in 1797 died in 1802, Mary Anne died at the age of 19 and another son, Thomas born 1801, died at 28.

William Jnr. worked with his father to build a reputation as monumental masons but tragedy struck again when William Jnr. and his wife Anne had a son Thomas in January 1831 but by the end of the month William himself had died and baby Thomas later died in March. After these tragedies William Jnr's wife Anne returned to her brother's home in Cossington where she died in December. Her obituary reads 'Mrs Pulford widow of Mr Wm. Pulford of Market Harborough, daughter of John Kirk of Mountsorrel.'³

A few remaining records show the type of work the Pulfords were engaged in as stone masons. In February 1813 a Mr. Jas. Scott, surveyor and builder of Market Harborough, submitted a design for a doric portico to Mr Basford the minister of Kibworth Church. Mr Scott then submitted to William Pulford a copy of the same design, for a quotation. Mr Scott suggested that Mr Pulford would be suitable to do the work and would provide the stonework, labour and house lime for £50.

Two examples of the Pulford's work can be found today in the churchyard in Kibworth (see right) and a plaque in St Helen's Church, Saddington, (below) dedicated to the Heycock family. The name 'Pulford Harborough' is inscribed on the supports at the bottom.



GRAVE STONE IN KIBWORTH CHURCHYARD
DESIGNED AND CUT BY THE PULFORDS



PLAQUE DESIGNED BY THE PULFORDS
IN ST HELEN'S CHURCH, SADDINGTON

William Pulford's standing in the town is indicated by the fact that he was a voter in the general Election of 1830. Before the 1832 Reform Act, which extended the vote to most of the middle class, the franchise was limited to property owners. A further indication of status is that William Pulford Jnr. is mentioned in 1838 (though deceased) together with Rev. William Scarborough and William Burton as the holders of the fund for the Thomas Ratten's Charity which was specifically for the benefit of the Sunday School at St Dionysius.

William Pulford Snr survived his son and partner and in 1844 he is recorded as living at the home of his daughter, Anne, in Mountsorrel with William his grandson who was then 17. Young William was to die later in the year of TB, and William Pulford Snr of old age in 1845. His body was brought back to St Mary in Arden's churchyard to be laid beside his family. Unfortunately the tombstones for William Pulford Snr and William Jnr designed by Yates are gone, but it is known from records that the words engraved on the stone read 'monumental masons for 50 years in this town'.

With William Pulford's death the house passed to his son in law Robert Adderly, who his daughter Frances had married in 1821. No 39, High Street was then rented out to become the offices of Leicester and Bedford Railway company.

Mr John Oldacres

In 1847 a Mr Oldacres and his wife rented 39 High Street, with a nephew, Frederick, and a niece who had returned from Richmond, Van Diemen Land (now Tasmania). John Oldacres was an eminent worsted spinner from Leicester and acted as agent for Charles Fauntleroy of London who wished to reopen the spinning mills in Factory Lane that had closed in 1844. John Oldacres worked in the mill with his nephew Frederick and with a Charles Sydney Fauntleroy perhaps son of Charles. Tragedy struck John in January, 1860 when he became seriously ill on a Saturday complaining of headache and

being very hot. He became worse on the following Monday, and unaccountably he dashed out of the house and up the road to the 14ft deep Folly Pond on Leicester Road jumped in, and unfortunately drowned. Mrs Oldacres died the following year but her niece stayed in the house for a little longer.

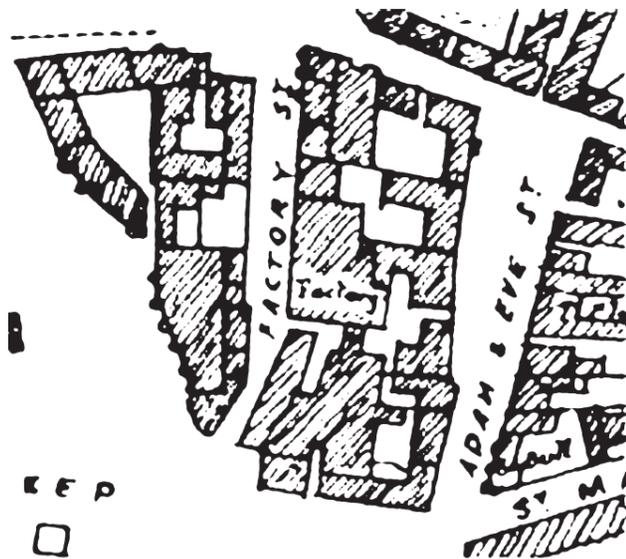
The Flints

With the death of Frances Adderly 1860, the son Robert put No. 39, High Street up for sale by auction at The Angel Hotel. It was purchased by James Flint, though it would not be until 1865 that Mr Flint was able to buy the garden that went with it. The garden had been used by the people who lived in the house since 1795 but had been a separate conveyance since 1824, when William Pulford bought it from James Flint's father, William Flint, the owner of The Angel Hotel.⁵

Mr James Flint and his brother Edward ran a wine merchants business in the town from what is now 36 High Street the offices of Moore and York. The full extent of their business would not be revealed until Mr William Flint (James's son) had to sell the

business in 1905. James lived at 39 and Edward at 36, with The Angel Hotel between them. James may not have had access to a stable for his horse and carriage, but may have kept them with his brothers in the stables at The Angel. James was also a member of the Monmouthshire Railway and Canal Company which built some track to Newport. James and Edward were also involved in the building of the Gas Company, St Mary's Road.

The Flint family were devout Catholics and gave the land and helped with the funding for the building of the Catholic Church on Coventry Road which opened in 1877. James sent his son to the newly opened Ratcliffe Catholic College, the first in the country since the Reformation. The Stages of the Cross in the Roman Catholic Church were donated to the memory of James and his wife by their children.



MAP SHOWING THE LOCATION OF FACTORY LANE IN THE TOWN



THESE ARE THE INITIALS OF JAMES AND EDWARD EACH SIDE OF THE ENTRANCE TO 36 HIGH STREET WHERE EDWARD LIVED AND FROM WHERE THEY RAN THE WINE MERCHANTS BUSINESS.

On the death of James, William, his older son took over the partnership with his Uncle Edward, it was only on Edward's death that the full list of the properties that the family owned became known when William had to sell some of them. The extent varied from hotels like The Angel to The Red Cow which they had rebuilt in 1899 and The Admiral Nelson in Nelson Street, which was built as The Sun Inn. They were also responsible for the demolition of The Coach and Horses pub which stood on the High Street, leading to the slums which stood at the back of The Angel Hotel and south towards Dairy Yard. The demolition of the Coach and Horses gave the opportunity to widen the lane and build Abbey Street as we know it today.⁷

The second part of this article will appear in the next edition of The Harborough Historian.

¹ According to the old records it was previously No. 3 High Street.

² In fact there is a field with the name Pywell's next to the top lock on the canal at Kibworth.

³ These are extracts from the Parish registers:

1794 for Anthony Caper £1.1s. Gravestone for M J Clark 6s 8d, Anthony Cooper £1.1s.

1812 John Pywell aged 54 (30 years the servant in one family) and perhaps a relation to Anne.

1823 Mary Stiles aged 5 daughter of John and Jane Stiles.

1825 Jane Stiles aged 12 daughter of John and Jane Stiles.

⁴ The candidates for the 1830 General Election were George A.L. Kerk, Lord Robert Manners, and Thomas Paget. The list was published and the voting took place from the 11th August and for the following 8 days of 1830. The length of time for the polling was from the 29 July 1830 to 1 September 1830.

⁵ Included in this conveyance document was a list of the previous owners of the piece of land. The list is mainly of the Walker family well known in the history of the town. William Flint snr. Together with other prominent members of the town was the proud owner of £500 worth of shares in the South Midlands Counties Railway.

⁶ This was where the first Fire station was built Mr Leo Flint was Fire Captain at one time.

⁷ This was where the first Fire Station was built and Mr Leo Flint, of the Flint family, was Fire Captain at one time.