

Journal of the Southampton Local History Forum

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Southampton Local History Forum

Southampton Local History Forum is sponsored by Southampton Library Service. Membership is free and is open to everyone interested in the history of the city and its neighbourhood. A programme of evening meetings is arranged for the third Thursday of each month (August and December excepted) between 7.00pm and 9.00pm. Anyone interested in joining the forum should contact -

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The articles in the *Journal* are written by members of the Forum, to whom thanks are due. Contributions from members to future editions are always welcome.

Cover illustration: Block plan of the Central Library showing the site of New Place House. The plan is from the rejected designs for the new library by Sidney Robert James Smith.

Richard Preston

Abraham Abraham: a forgotten politician of mid-nineteenth century Southampton

This brief political biography is a study in unfulfilled potential. It draws inspiration from the discussion of Abraham's rise and fall by Professor Tony Kushner in *Anglo-Jewry since 1066: place, locality and memory*, published by Manchester University Press in 2009. Abraham's father, Moses Abraham, was London born but practised as an optician in Frome. Abraham was born here c.1799. He moved to Southampton, with his wife Esther and three youngest children, in 1826. This may be connected to the dissolution of a partnership between Moses and Abraham Abraham, silversmiths and watchmakers of Frome, gazetted on 12 February 1827. Southampton was not entirely virgin territory for the family. An unmarried uncle, Elhahan Davids, had been in partnership here in the early 1820s with Jonah Davids as a jeweller and toyman. The partnership ended on Jonah's death, aged 39 years, in December 1822. Elhahan, now described as late of Southampton, became bankrupt in February 1824. His petition was heard at the Audit House.



Figure 1. Engraving of the High Street with St Lawrence's Church and the Star Hotel, 1830s

Abraham embodied that resourceful and enterprising breed of new immigrants who were to transform the social and political structure of the town. He leased premises from the shipbuilder Edward Rubie in the commercial heart of the town at 147 High Street. They form part of those foreshortened buildings shown opposite the partially-rebuilt St Lawrence's Church in figure 1. Abraham had supported the restoration of the near-derelict church, so long a blight on the High Street. He set up as a jeweller, silversmith, goldsmith, watch and clock maker and optician. Abraham told a parliamentary enquiry in 1842 that as a highly respectable tradesman he was doing business to the amount of £20,000 a year (*Hampshire Advertiser*, 9 July 1842). A web of financial services supplemented the core business. A

bullion office and a foreign coin exchange shared the same secure premises. Abraham frequently acted as a discount of bills and an assignee of bankrupt's estates. He was agent to the Globe Insurance Company and the Freemason's and General Life Assurance Society. A licensed navy agent (appointed April 1828) he was authorized to collect prize money due to lower deck seamen. He was the first Southampton agent of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, first recorded in July 1838 when the line was trading as the Peninsular Steam Navigation Company. Richard Andrews told fellow councillors in November 1842 that Abraham "was perhaps more connected with the commercial prosperity of the town than any one" (*Hampshire Independent*, 12 November 1842). From such a source this is impressive testimony. Social acceptance came early to Abraham. Within a year of his first coming into Southampton – in 1827 – he was admitted to the Royal Gloucester Lodge of Freemasons. He proceeded to treasurer of the lodge in 1836 and to worshipful master in 1838. This put Abraham at the heart of one of the most influential political pressure groups in the town, a body which counted at least one half of the corporators as brethren. He also held office in the wider Freemasonry family as Provincial Grand Junior Warden in the Province of Hampshire.

Abraham had political aspirations. He was a Conservative – "a strong partisan" according to Henry Buchan (*Hampshire Advertiser*, 9 July 1842). He was active in both the South Division of Hampshire (a signatory in September 1832 to a memorial in support of the ultra Tory John Fleming of Stoneham Park) and the borough. Surviving poll books suggest that he had a record of Conservative voting broken only twice. In January 1830 he was unpolled but formed part of a strategic reserve who had promised support to the Tory James Barlow Hoy. In December 1832, following the example of many colleagues, he split between Hoy and the Whig John Story Penleaze. His role in the 1841 borough election is discussed later. Abraham's own ambitions lay in Southampton Town Council. He stood for his home ward of St Lawrence in December 1835, the first direct election for town councillors under the Municipal Reform Act. It was a ward in which he had political capital, appointed ward beadle by the Common Council in December 1829 and elected ward assessor (responsible for the purity of the election registers) in May 1836. However, the balance of party power was with the Liberals and Abraham was defeated. Election to the council had to wait until November 1838 when he was returned for the neighbouring ward of St Michael. He defeated the radical Thomas Dymott by 46 votes to 37. St Michael's was a three-member constituency, one councillor retiring by rotation each year. Abraham stood two further elections before leaving the council in November 1847 after serving three full terms.

Abraham was Britain's first Jewish councillor (Tony Kushner, *op cit*, p.152). A significant event in retrospect but one which contemporaries in the town allowed to pass without public comment. One possible difficulty proved no obstacle at all. Councillors were required to take a qualifying oath "upon the true Faith of a Christian". This Abraham could not in conscience take. His unsigned declaration (Southampton City Archives SC 3/9/2) is reproduced as figure 2. Similar void entries exist for his subsequent elections to municipal office and for his first re-election as councillor. The relevant clause in the original 1828 legislation (An Act for repealing so much of several Acts as imposes the necessity of receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper as Qualification for certain Offices and Employments) was preserved under the 1835 Municipal Reform Act. It was in effect unenforceable. Deselection was dependant on an action in the Court of Queen's Bench provided – to quote the Mayor Joseph Lobb on Abraham's election as senior bailiff – "any gentleman had the extraordinary taste to apply for the same" (*Hampshire Advertiser*, 14 November 1840). The requirement was annulled in 1845. Abraham himself was prepared to witness the Christian oaths taken by fellow

councillors (see Southampton City Archives SC 3/9/2, November 1839, for a series of declarations endorsed by Abraham and Joseph Rankin Stebbing). The secular oath demanded on first election was taken by Abraham without reservation (Southampton City Archives SC 3/9/1). Reaction focused on the apparent incongruity of Abraham's political affiliation. A Jew elected by a party which invariably voted against Jewish emancipation was the world turned upside down. John Wheeler, editor of the *Hampshire Independent* and sometime political reporter on the *Morning Chronicle*, claimed the victory for the Liberals. "They [the Jews] are too scattered, too powerless for harm, if harm were in them; and yet when the Bill for their emancipation is annually brought into Parliament see how the Inglises, the Chandoses, the Flemings, and the Dottins rush forward to defeat it ... Nothing binds a man so firmly as his religious interests ... and therefore it is that we hail the return of Mr Abraham, satisfied that it is another link snapped from the iron chain of Bigotry and Persecution" (*Hampshire Independent*, 3 November 1838). A subsequent letter (*ditto*, 17 November) strove to clear the reputation of Rous Dottin, one of the borough Tory MPs and – with a residence at Bugle Hall – a neighbour and customer of Abraham. Dottin, it was claimed, was the first to appear at the Audit House to vote for Abraham.

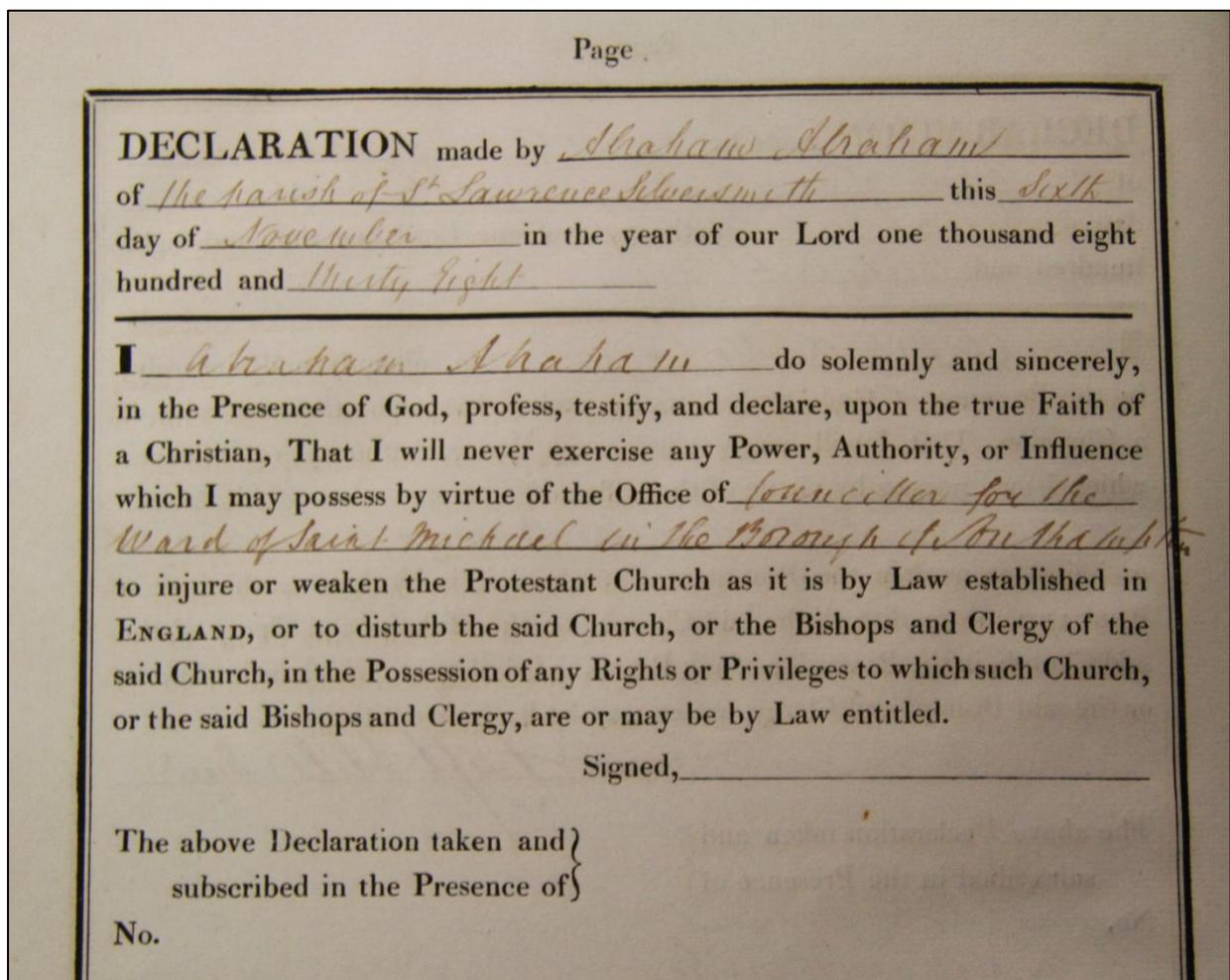


Figure 2. Southampton City Archives SC 3/9/2

The 1841 election was a more conventional party affair. Amidst a welter of lost seats, St Michael's was the only ward in which the Liberals made anything like a stand. They put up Ebenezer Williams, auctioneer by profession, Congregationalist by religion and, in the politically warped world of the *Hampshire Advertiser* (23 October 1841), "one of the smallest

of all small men”. It was a contest *a outrance*. The first Liberal objective was a majority at the poll. Supporters with dual qualifications were urged to reserve their vote for St Michael’s. The poll was to be artificially prolonged through keeping back a handful of voters each hour. Canvassing on both sides was exhaustive and unscrupulous. An alleged specimen of Tory canvassing was published in the *Hampshire Independent*, 6 November 1841:

“Mrs H [wife of a voter]: Law, sir, my husband always votes in favour of Church and State; and they tell me you are a Jew.

Canvasser: My good woman, I can assure you that I am no longer a Jew, but am a good Christian; I never shut my shop on Saturdays, and I regularly attend All Saint’s Church with my wife and family; and I, moreover, am a staunch supporter of Church and State.”

This is matched by a spoof address “to the worthy and enlightened burgesses of St Michael” from Ebenezer Williams published in the *Hampshire Advertiser*, 30 October 1841. It is reproduced below (figure 3).

**ADDRESS TO THE WORTHY AND ENLIGHTENED
BURGESSES OF ST. MICHAEL,**

Still anxious to give the vile Tories a tesser,
And for mischief made up, here’s your friend Ebenezer,
Yes, forward he comes, of your suffrages sure,
To cleanse from your ward all that’s foul and impure!
And, trusting to honor and honesty true,
You’ll return a good Christian in place of a Jew!
This hint, my good neighbours, most plainly denotes,
That humbly I purpose to canvass your votes;
Tho’ by this plain question I’m constantly floor’d,
“What pretensions have you to the Councillors’ Board?”
To be sure that’s a puzzler which augurs defeat,
And awkward it is by a Jew to be beat;
Though such is the lot that is waiting, I fear,
Him who craves your kind suffrage—the poor Auctioneer,
But *nil desperandum*, I do not despair,
Tho’ the hopes I once cherish’d have vanish’d in air;
For though the dark Hebrew, the Jeweller Jew,
Should beat me in numbers by twenty to two,
I still have a scheme, as decisive as plain,
To prevent him from sitting in Council again.
When you know what it is you’ll allow it is famous—
In three months I’ll oust him by *special mandamus*!!
And when I have sent my opponent to pot
Ebenezer you’ll own understands what is what.
So now worthy neighbours no longer I’ll trouble you,
But subscribe myself, your’s most sincerely, E. W.

Figure 3. *Hampshire Advertiser*, 30 October 1841

The spectre of disbarment was raised as a “second resource”. Failure to fulfil the full legal requirements of qualification would be challenged by *mandamus* in the Court of Queen’s Bench: an action according to the *Hampshire Advertiser* to be financed by the Southampton Reform Protection Association. Jacob Jacob, editor of the *Hampshire Independent* and himself (although an Anglican) the target of antisemitic slurs on account of his name, was characteristically provocative: “We think a shrewd Jew as fit a *Councillor* as a silly Christian, but the Tories think otherwise, and Mr Abraham cannot

complain if we insist on his swallowing the dose his political friends have prescribed for him” (*Hampshire Independent*, 23 October 1841). Abraham was elected by 61 votes to 42. The absence of any subsequent legal appeal shows the baselessness of the threat. There were no such pyrotechnics during the November 1845 election. With the Tories ascendant nationally and locally, Abraham was returned without even the pretence of an opposition.

Abraham was a strong ward councillor. He was diligent and conscientious. Joseph Lankester thought him “with the exception of Mr George Brown, who has left the Council, ...the most hardworking member of that body” (*Hampshire Independent*, 12 November 1842). He was near the top of the list of attendees in all but the last two years. He was an active committee man. The first council meeting he attended saw his election to the Highway Rate and Watch Committees. The Finance Committee and the Lease Committee were added to the portfolio in November 1840 and November 1844 respectively. He was soon chair of the Finance Committee, responsible for setting the borough rate and for regulating the work of the council’s finance officers. Appointment as mayor’s auditor in March 1841 increased his grip on the monetary affairs of the council. Similarly robust was his work as an *ex officio* member of the Improvement Board, the Pier and Harbour Board (often acting as chairman) and the Board of Waterworks. He was relentless in pursuit of the interests of his adopted ward, fighting for an equitable share of resources under the Southampton Improvement Act and endeavouring to preserve its economic well-being in the face of the monopolistic Southampton Dock Company. All this was underpinned by the St Michael’s Conservative Association, the pioneer in exclusively ward-based political organizations in the town. He was chairman in 1839 and president in 1840 and 1842.

Abraham was, with Joseph Rankin Stebbing (1809-74), the pick of the new intake of councillors in 1838. He had accelerated preferment as senior bailiff (1840-1) and sheriff (1841-2). Elements of the Liberal opposition put his name forward for municipal office in 1839, 1842 and 1843. In November 1839 his protagonists were James Whitchurch and John Traffles Tucker. They forced a vote for the election of sheriff, which was lost by 22 votes to three with two abstentions. The Tories put this down to mischief-making. However, Liberal support for Abraham in the following two elections in which he was successfully appointed to office suggests that there was genuine cross-party support for a man so clearly fitted to represent the town. The seconder of Abraham’s nomination as senior bailiff in November 1840 was Joseph Lankester, member of an important dynasty of iron founders, political radical, Congregationalist and himself mayor in 1852. The following February he was to move, with Abraham’s support, a council motion to petition the House of Commons to end Jewish municipal disabilities. The seconder of this petition, J T Tucker, openly endorsed Abraham’s unanimous election as sheriff in November 1841. He lauded Abraham as a man of independent spirit. The same Liberal faction proposed Abraham as mayor in November 1842.

1842 was a year of crisis for the mayoralty. There was no clear successor to the retiring mayor Peter Dickson. The office was, in the words of Richard Andrews, “hawked around the town” (*Hampshire Advertiser*, 12 November 1842). There was talk of legal penalties for defaulters. Four alleged refuseniks were exposed by the Liberal *Morning Chronicle*, 11 November 1842: Colonel Henderson, J R Stebbing, William Hooke Steere and Joseph Lobb. The nominee ultimately to emerge was Edward Mayes, a draper and mercer in the High Street and junior bailiff in 1839-40 (proposed by Abraham). It was rumoured that he was promised a council grant of £200 as remuneration for his time and expense in serving office (*The Globe*, 10 November 1842). Mayes was a very different kind of man to Peter Dickson who, as Master of Ceremonies – “*maître de danse de notre village*” to the *Hampshire Independent* – represented the old guard of the spa period. Joseph Lankester and Dr Francis Cooper (the latter at his first council meeting) counter-proposed Abraham. There was clearly a political edge to the nomination. Earlier in the session they had moved an amendment calling for the council to refuse its customary vote of thanks to the late mayor in condemnation of his political partisanship. This is reproduced in A Temple Patterson, *A selection from the Southampton Corporation journal, 1815-35 and Borough Council minutes*,

1835-47, 1965, pp 115-16. Richard Andrews, also in his first council meeting, spoke strongly in favour of the nomination. Mayes was elected by 19 votes to five with one abstention. It became part of Liberal party folklore that Tory failure to nominate Abraham was a racial slur. "He ought to have been Mayor, but the Conservative party, to which he was attached, thought they must draw the line at the office of Sheriff, and declined to confer upon him an honour to which he was fully entitled on the score of public service": *The Southern Reformer*, 21 August 1880, article on Henry Abraham). The truth is perhaps impossible to divine. Richard Andrews, a Congregationalist for whom freedom of conscience was a political axiom, gives some credence to the allegation: he "could not understand why he [Abraham] was thrown overboard, unless it was from a want of toleration on the part of some gentlemen in the council (hear, hear)" (*Hampshire Independent*, 12 November 1842). The nomination of 1842 is however a false hare. Abraham was by law and by the convention of the times ineligible to stand as mayor whilst still holding the office of sheriff, even if the overlap would be only a matter of minutes. No such sequential appointment had been made since 1487. It was not until November 1848, on the appointment of Richard Andrews as mayor, that a precedent of immediate succession was set. It became the norm in the twentieth century. To reinforce the normality of the 1842 protocol only two sheriffs who had held office since the passing of the Municipal Reform Act went on to become mayor: Thomas Griffiths (sheriff 1837; mayor 1844) and J R Stebbing (sheriff 1840; mayor 1867). Dr Cooper commended Abraham for mayor again in November 1843 as "justly entitled from previous services" to serve. Abraham declined and the nomination was dropped.

The 1841 general election cast a toxic shadow over the mayoral proceedings of 1842. The election was corrupt even by the undemanding standards of Southampton politics. It can be followed in A Temple Patterson, *A history of Southampton 1700-1914*, volume 2, 1971, pp 35-46. Abraham's shop in the High Street – strategically situated opposite the respective party headquarters at the Dolphin (Tory) and the Star (Whig) - was a major artery for Tory corruption. A Liberal petition against the Tory return, citing gross bribery and treating, was heard before a House of Commons Select Committee in May 1842. Abraham's name was barely mentioned, even though as one of the returning officers he was responsible for the conduct of the election. A second enquiry was held in June/July. Abraham was now at the centre of the investigation, his pivotal role exposed by the turncoat John Wren (see *Report from the Select Committee on the Southampton town election inquiry: with the minutes of evidence*, House of Commons, 1842). This coincided with a lawsuit initiated by Abraham for the payment of an unpaid bill of £653 4s 2d owed to the proprietors of the Star by the defeated Liberal candidates Captain Charles Mangles and Edward John Hutchins. He was acting as the assignee of the estates of the now bankrupt John Longman Shepherd and John Drew. It was probably not initially a political action. Shepherd had a previous financial involvement with Abraham in the assignment of bankrupt's estates and both were members of the Royal Gloucester Lodge of Freemasons. Nevertheless the action soon took on a political hue as the subsequent hearing in the Court of Exchequer in London revealed a trail of Liberal corruption to match, perhaps even to exceed, that of the Tories. A local attempt at compromise only heightened the political antipathy. James Sharp, acting for Mangles and Hutchins, offered £300 to settle all demands. It was accompanied, according to Abraham under cross-examination, by an unveiled threat: "At your peril refuse this offer, or abide by the consequences". Abraham instructed his solicitor "to proceed to trial and to get all or none" (*Hampshire Advertiser*, 9 July 1842). The contrast with events in the town council four months later is stark. It suggests that for many the worlds of election politics and town governance were far apart.

Abraham left the council in November 1847 at the end of his third term. It was, to judge from an aside in the *Hampshire Advertiser*, 30 October 1847, a personal and not a political decision: "Circumstances with which we can have nothing to do induce his retirement". It may be that he was a victim of the railway mania then sweeping the nation. He was a provisional director of the Direct London and Exeter Railway Company, the Kilrush, Kilkee and Belfast Railway Company and the Southampton, Petersfield and London Direct Railway Company. In each prospectus he is reassuringly described as Southampton town councillor. The appointments date from September or October 1845. All three speculations failed. That of the Direct London and Exeter Railway was the most spectacular with shareholders attempting to recover an estimated £30,000 to £40,000 deposited with the directors and never returned. Abraham's role is unclear although, elected to the committee of management in February 1846, it cannot have been unsubstantial. The company was wound up in 1851 with the original promoter (David Elwin Colombine) and the company secretary (Robert M'Intire Renwick) financially ruined. Abraham was a London director of the Kilrush, Kilkee and Belfast Railway, at times taking the chair at committee meetings. He was chairman of the meeting in October 1845 that appointed _ Hopper, a young man educated for the church but tempted by the excitement of things secular, London secretary. A prelude to a bizarre case before Hampshire Assizes in July 1846 in which Hopper, now out of work, took a personal action against Abraham for non-payment of wages. The full £100 claimed was awarded as compensation. To add to his joint-stock misfortunes, Abraham probably lost money on the abortive Manchester and Southampton Railway. He had subscribed for shares valued at £800 in July 1846. The timing of Abraham's railway adventures corresponds with a falling off in his council attendances: 11 attendances between November 1844 and November 1845 (bettered only by Henry Wooldridge), four between November 1845 and November 1846 and two between November 1846 and October 1847 (with only Edward Hunt below him).

Abraham left his adopted town in the mid-1840s. 1846 is the date given in his obituary (*Hampshire Independent*, 6 April 1887). This is clearly a turning point in his life, the year in which he gave power of attorney to his eldest son (18 May) and in which he quit the jewellery business (8 June). But it is hard to reconcile with a last council attendance on 2 October 1847. Abraham spent the next forty years in exile on the continent – twice the length of time that he lived in Southampton. It is a period lost in obscurity. A corporation lease dated 8 March 1851 describes Abraham as "of Brussels in the Kingdom of Belgium" (Southampton City Archives SC 4/3/1737). This has to be set against the statement in his obituary that he "left Southampton with his family and since resided in Paris". It is here that he died, on 31 March 1887, aged 88 years, at 7 Rue Blanche. He survived his eldest son by six years. Administration was granted 14 years later on 19 July 1901, his effects valued at £155.3s.9d. Probate was granted to his widow Julie Astruc (Astrue as given in the probate document is presumably a mistranscription as a Marie Henri Astruc is recorded at 7 Rue Blanche in 1878). This suggests that Abraham remarried. It also raises a possible, unproven connection with the family of Elie-Aristide Astruc (1831-1905), a powerful figure in Parisian Jewry who became chief rabbi of Belgium in 1866.

The Abraham family retained a strong footprint in Southampton. Abraham continued, according to his obituary, to make "occasional [visits] for brief periods". He attended the consecration of the Jewish synagogue in Albion Place, of which he was a trustee, in May 1865 (assuming he is the A Abraham recorded in the newspapers). His name remained on the burgess lists until 1868 and he was said (*Hampshire Independent*, 6 April 1887) to be one of the last voters in the town to hold the pre-1832 scot and lot qualification. His uncle Elhahan Davids returned to Southampton in the mid/late 1830s. He ran a jeweller's shop at 149 High

Street, two doors above the Abrahams. Elhahan was elected a guardian of the poor for the parish of St Lawrence in April 1841. Both uncle and nephew were Tories and both were office holders in the Southampton Hebrew Congregation: Elhahan treasurer and secretary, Abraham president (1842). Abraham's eldest son Henry (1824-81) succeeded to the family business at 147 High Street in June 1846. Five years later his great uncle moved in with the family, still recorded *chez* Henry in the 1861 census as 'assistant jeweller'. Henry and his descendants continued as jewellers and silversmiths at 147 High Street until the early 1930s: an occupancy of over a century. In politics Henry was a mirror to his father. He was part of the radical coterie led by Richard Andrews that controlled Southampton politics in the early/mid 1850s. He served as mayor in 1876-7. Abraham's youngest daughter Evelina married Frederick Perkins, then a young wine merchant, in December 1847. She died on the first anniversary of the wedding, aged only 21 years. Frederick Perkins was to become a seminal figure in Southampton Liberalism: mayor 1859-60, 1861-2, 1862-3, 1868-9 and 1869-70; knighted 1873; borough MP 1874-80. Their son, Arthur Frederick Perkins, was christened five days before his mother's death. A Gentleman Cadet at Sandhurst Military College, he was commissioned into the Ceylon Rifle Regiment. He later served in the territorials, retiring as colonel of the 3rd Volunteer Battalion of the Hampshire Regiment.

Roger Ottewill

Henry March Gilbert 1846-1931: ‘Staunch Liberal and Nonconformist’

Introduction

In his article covering five generations of the Gilbert family A.G.K. Leonard concentrated on their bookselling business (see Figure 1).¹ Adopting such a broad brush approach, the author devoted relatively little attention to individual family members, one of the most interesting of whom is Henry March Gilbert. His career straddled the late Victorian era and the first three decades of the twentieth century. He was the son of the founder of the business and responsible for opening a second shop in Winchester in 1895. As Leonard mentions, Henry also ‘made time to play a full part in public and religious affairs, as a staunch Liberal and Nonconformist.’² In what follows, it is these aspects of Henry’s life to which particular attention is given.



Figure 1: Gilbert’s Bookshop in Above Bar Southampton

Source: Adrian Rance, *A Victorian Photographer in Southampton: Thomas Hibberd James* (Southampton: Paul Cave, 1980), p.9.

To set the scene, what can be learnt about Henry’s life and career from census returns and similar sources? He was born in 1846, when his parents were residents of Halstead in Essex. This was still their home in 1851. By 1861 they had moved to Bernard Street in Southampton, where Henry was living with his widowed father and three sisters. In 1867 Henry married Mary Emma Stanesby who was the same age and had been born in Chelsea. Not surprisingly, perhaps, her father was a stationer and

bookseller. The marriage was registered in Westminster. At the time of the 1871 census, Henry and Mary were recorded as living in Bernard Street. By 1881, however, they had moved to Wandsworth. At some point they returned to Southampton, since the 1891 census return shows them as occupying a property named “Hailstede” in Archer’s Road. In addition to Henry and Mary, the household consisted of four daughters, a governess, two apprentice booksellers who were designated ‘boarders’ and a general domestic servant.³ Clearly, they were relatively well off.

In 1896 the family moved to Winchester and by 1901 Henry and Mary had set up home at 1 Grafton Road with two of their daughters, one son and a housekeeper. A visitor, William Parkhouse, was staying with them on census night. He had a jewellery and watch making business in Southampton and was also a Nonconformist and a leading member of Avenue Congregational Church. Ten years later, the family was still living in Grafton Road, the property having been named “Hamilton House”. Following Mary’s death in early 1918, a few months later Henry married Mabel Ann Read.⁴ They continued living in “Hamilton House” until his death in January 1931.



Figure 2: Henry March Gilbert

Source: A.G.K Leonard, *Images of England. Southampton: the second selection* (Stroud: Tempus, 2002), p.36.

Political Activities

It is not certain when Henry's political career began, but in 1872, at the age of 26, he stood successfully for Southampton Borough Council. He was one of the Liberal candidates for the four seats in All Saints Ward (see Table 1). This election generated considerable interest since it was the first held under the provisions of the Ballot Act 1872 which had introduced the principle of a secret ballot.

Table 1: Result of Election for All Saints Ward held on 1st November 1872⁵

Candidate	Party	Votes	Elected/Not elected
J.R. Weston	Lib	428	Elected
W.A. Kilby	Lib	329	Elected
J. Bailey	Lib	285	Elected
H.M. Gilbert	Lib	280	Elected
G.P. Perkins	Con	242	Not elected
A.J. Aslatt	n.d.	191	Not elected
G.T. Pope	n.d.	164	Not elected
T.A. Skelton ¹	n.d.	79	Not elected
A.L. McCalmont ¹	n.d.	38	Not elected

Note

1. It was 'publicly announced that ... [these two candidates] had not consented to their nomination and would not serve if elected.'

n.d. = not designated

With the formation of the Southampton Liberal Association in 1874 Henry was appointed Secretary and worked closely with the president Edwin Jones. He suffered a setback in 1875, however, when he failed to secure re-election to the Borough Council (see Table 2). On this occasion, the Conservatives vigorously contested All Saints Ward holding many public meetings. According to the Conservative supporting *Hampshire Advertiser* the Liberal campaign was somewhat lacklustre.

Table 2: Result of Election for All Saints Ward held on 2nd November 1875⁶

Candidate	Party	Votes	Elected/Not elected
W. Furber	Con	821	Elected
William H. Davis	Con	715	Elected
William Perkins	Con	696	Elected
Phillip Warren	Con	670	Elected
Dr Aldridge	Lib	518	Not elected
H.M. Gilbert*	Lib	482	Not elected
H.E. Robins	Lib	414	Not elected
E.R.V. Shuttle	Lib	373	Not elected

Note

* = sitting councillor seeking re-election

After an interval of 14 years Henry returned to the council in 1889 as an alderman, having been nominated for the post by the redoubtable James Lemon. Some idea of his interests can be gained from the fact that during the municipal year 1893-4 he

served on the Baths Committee, of which he was Deputy Chairman; and the Borough Boundaries, Free Libraries, Technical Instruction and Town Antiquities Committees. He remained an alderman until 1897 when he resigned following his move to Winchester, with the council members passing a resolution recording ‘their appreciation of Mr Gilbert’s services and their regret at his resignation.’⁷

For Henry the appeal of local politics continued and in 1904, after some hesitation, he agreed to stand for one of the two seats in Winchester’s St John Ward. His reasons for doing were set out in an election notice which he and a second candidate, Charles Godwin, placed in the *Hampshire Chronicle*:

We have been requested by the Winchester Ratepayers’ Association and by many influential inhabitants, to come forward as candidates for the seats ... [if elected] our purpose will be to safeguard the interests of the Ratepayers, and to oppose all extravagant and useless expenditure; at the same time we shall be prepared to vote for all such measures as are best calculated to promote the interests and requirements of the city.⁸

At a subsequent election meeting, he made clear that he was not opposed to public spending as such but simply that which he did not consider represented ‘value for money.’ For example: ‘He believed in having proper [swimming] baths but he did not believe in providing baths in an extravagant way.’ Like the baths in Southampton, they should pay ‘their working expenses.’⁹ These arguments must have resonated with the electorate because, on a turnout of 64.3 per cent, he and Godwin trounced the two sitting members who were seeking re-election (see Table 3).

Table 3: Result of Election for St John Ward held on 1st November 1904¹⁰

Candidate	Designation	Votes	Elected/Not elected
Charles E. Godwin	Solicitor	481	Elected
Henry M. Gilbert	Bookseller	431	Elected
Harry Easther*	Gentleman	164	Not Elected
Charles Salter*	Licensed victualler	108	Not Elected

Note

* sitting councillor seeking re-election

Again his interests were reflected in the committees on which he served. Initially, they were Museum and Library, Recreation Ground, Education and General Purposes.¹¹ In 1907 Henry was returned unopposed.¹² By now he was just a member of the Museum and Library and General Purposes Committees. However, he was prepared to make his views known on other subjects and from these some insights into his values and beliefs can be gleaned. For example, at the council meeting in August 1910, he raised concerns regarding the housing conditions of some of the poorest residents of Winchester:

... it was a common practice to find more than one family living in the same cottage. That was bad, and the Council should try to remedy it. While he did not agree altogether with the municipalities providing dwellings – because the Local Government Board being so very stringent in regard to their requirements that it made the building very expensive for the person who

was to occupy those premises – still it had to be done, rather than the overcrowding that was reported should be allowed to continue. By that the physical and moral health of the population was so much at stake that ... if private enterprise did not provide suitable dwellings it was laid on the Council that they should do their part, even if it did entail a little loss.¹³

In other words, questions of morality should take precedence even over those of finance. A few months later, at the end of his term of office, Henry ‘felt obliged to retire owing to the demands of his private business.’¹⁴

Henry had been appointed a city magistrate in 1907 and continued in this capacity until his death. Described in his obituary as ‘a man of excellent judgment, and imbued with common sense’, he was seen as being well suited for service on the magistrates bench. The same qualities were also deemed to have been of great value in the council chambers of Southampton and Winchester. Although allowance has to be made for the use of over-exuberant and eulogistic language on these occasions, a further indication of what motivated him can be gained from the following tribute:

He had a large heart, and was full of kindly sympathy for the broken, the destitute, the infirm, and those who had been worsted in the battle of life. He was a great lover of children ...¹⁵

Through his involvement in public affairs, he was, in many respects, an exemplar of what was known as ‘political Nonconformity.’ This embraced the notion of the ‘social gospel’ whereby Christians, inspired by their faith, sought to address problems within society through a combination of philanthropic and collective endeavour.

Congregational Activist

As mentioned earlier, Henry was a committed Nonconformist. According to Leonard, while he was living in Southampton he was ‘strongly identified with Portland Baptist and The Avenue Congregational Churches.’¹⁶ Indeed, Henry was one of the founding members of Avenue, when it was established in 1892, having previously been attached to Albion Congregational Church in St Mary’s Street. It is not known why he transferred his allegiance from the Baptists to the Congregationalists, but having done so he remained loyal to Congregationalism for the remainder of his life. Apart from the issue of adult or believers’ baptism there were, in fact, very few doctrinal differences between the two denominations.

Following his move to Winchester, he transferred to Jewry Street Congregational Church and ‘threw himself heart and soul into the place’ (see Figure 3).¹⁷ Within a few months he was elected to the diaconate and in this capacity was soon embroiled in a dispute between the deacons and the minister, Charles Dickinson, the cause of which appears to have been certain aspects of the manner in which the latter conducted services. As Ruth Godden records, ‘the internal life ... [of the Church] was difficult during the last years of the nineteenth century, with dissension between minister and deacons, and bitterness marking the resignation of ... Dickinson in 1899.’¹⁸ At one point during the controversy all the deacons, including Henry, resigned. However, after the matters of contention had been resolved, they took up their posts again.

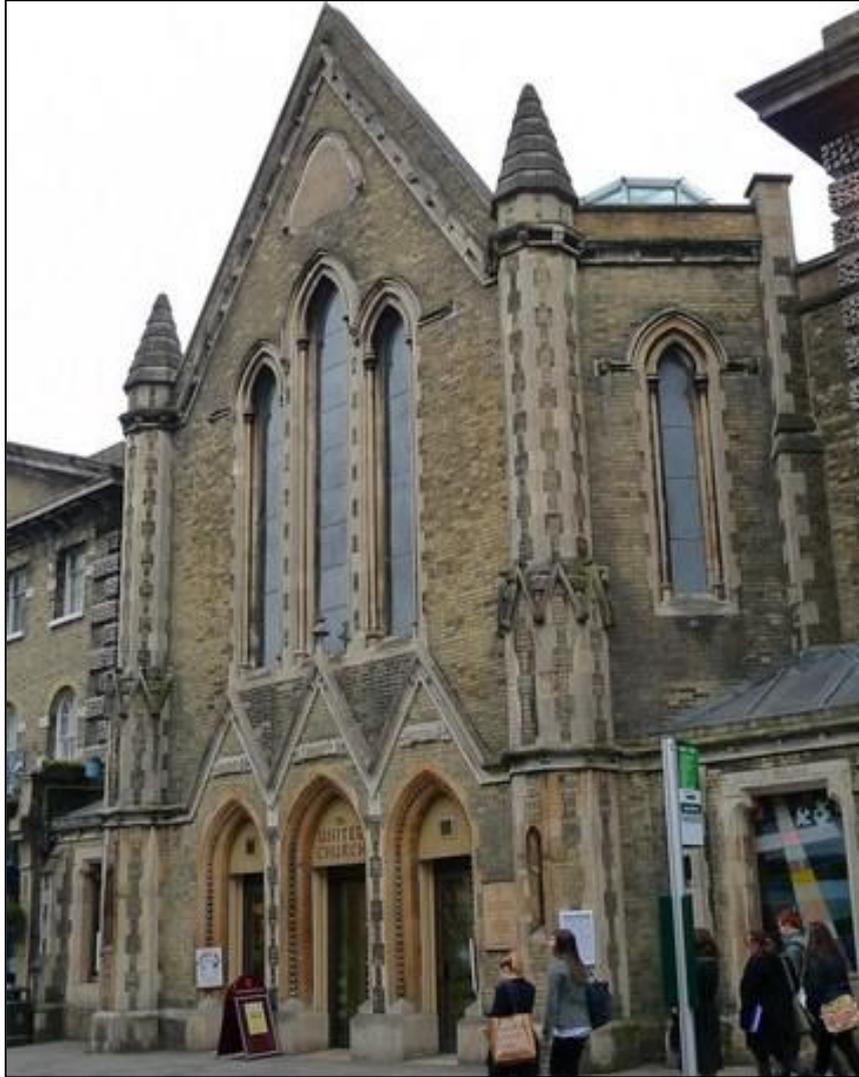


Figure 3: Jewry Street Congregational Church in Winchester

Notwithstanding these difficulties, Henry remained resolute in his faith. At the grass roots level he had ‘a close interest in Sunday School work’ and for well over 50 years he either taught or superintended the work in the churches with which he was associated. He was also a local preacher and ‘preached with acceptance in many pulpits in the county.’¹⁹ Arising from his bookselling interests, it is unsurprising that for a number of years he was President of Jewry Street Literary Society and Social Union.²⁰ As its title suggests, this promoted the causes of what today would be called ‘personal development’ and ‘lifelong learning.’ Henry remained a deacon until 1927 and then, in recognition of his many and varied services to the Church, was elected an honorary life deacon.

At county level, Henry was heavily involved with the Hampshire Congregational Union (HCU). The high regard in which he was held in Congregational circles was confirmed in 1907 when he was appointed Chairman of the HCU for the following twelve months. Each year a leading figure within the denomination held this post, alternating between clerical and lay. One of the major functions of the Chairman was to preside at the half yearly meetings of the Union held in the spring and autumn.

Since these events received a considerable amount of press coverage they afford traces of Henry's religious interests and preoccupations.

At the 1908 spring gathering held in Fareham his presidential address was entitled "Our Past and Present." In the course of his remarks, he argued that 'Congregationalists had entered into a glorious heritage' and reminded his audience of the sacrifices their forebears had undergone in order to 'hand down to future generations that unspeakable freedom of worship which they enjoyed today.' Reflected in these comments were an undoubted love of history and the anticipation of the 250th anniversary of the Great Ejection of 1662 due in 1912.²¹ He went on to contend that there was a need in the present day to prioritise 'their responsibilities as Church members' and to 'believe more in the power of prayer.'²²

At the autumn gathering, which was held at East Cliff Congregational Church in Bournemouth, the theme of the public meeting which Henry chaired was "Work amongst the Young". He was undoubtedly speaking for most if not all of those present when he maintained that 'he did not think anyone could overrate the importance and necessity of the work that they as a Christian Church had to carry out, earnestly and with diligence, amongst the young.'²³ In his view, it was work to which all church members should be committed in terms of not only sympathy but also practical assistance. While recognising that the work was 'hard and difficult', as he pointed out it was essential for the future well being of the church. As indicated earlier, in this sphere he clearly practised what he preached.

Henry was also ecumenically minded as far as other Nonconformist denominations were concerned and was actively involved with the Federation of Evangelical Free Churches of Hampshire, occupying a variety of offices and serving as President for the year 1898/99. A further example of his commitment to the wider Free Church constituency occurred in 1900, when he conducted a service at the laying of the foundation stone for a new Primitive Methodist church in Chandlers Ford, with Mrs Tankerville Chamberlayne taking the lead in the stone-laying ceremony.²⁴

At Henry's funeral service in 1931 the minister of Jewry Street, Richard Sirhowy Jones referred to him as being 'a deeply religious man, not flagrantly obtrusive of his religious profession, but he was not ashamed of his religion; he did not hide his light.' He had been 'a leading member of Winchester Congregational Church for more than half a century, and had held office as Church Secretary, Treasurer and Trustee.'²⁵ In the Church minutes it was recorded that 'every institution of the Church found in him a real friend and generous helper, for he always had at heart the best interests of the Church.'²⁶

Conclusion

With his dual commitment to Liberalism and Nonconformity, Henry Gilbert personified one of the distinguishing traits of the period in which he lived. As David Bebbington puts it, by the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth 'the leading men in the chapels were commonly leading men in the affairs of the localities too.'²⁷ Likewise, Alan Argent observes that: 'Those in the forefront of chapel life often were active in their communities – as mayors, councillors, members of school boards and as Liberal party members.'²⁸ As has been shown, in addition to being a prominent local businessman, Henry was for many years a diligent public servant. At the same time he had a strong faith, which served to inspire and sustain him, and motivated him to promote causes, such as religious education, in which he had a passionate interest.

Notes

- ¹ A.G.K. Leonard, "Gilberts ... Booksellers through Five Generations", *The Journal of the Southampton Local History Forum*, no 11, Winter 2003, pp.13-5.
- ² Leonard, "Gilberts", p.14.
- ³ According to the 1911 census, Henry and Mary had eight children, two of whom died in infancy.
- ⁴ In the 1911 census returns Mabel is shown as living with her parents in Colebrook Street. Her occupation was recorded as that of 'draper'. At the time she was 36 years old.
- ⁵ *Hampshire Advertiser*, November 2, 1872, p.4. The occupations of Henry's fellow Liberals were given as Weston, auctioneer; Kilby, solicitor; and Bailey, builder.
- ⁶ *Hampshire Advertiser*, November 3, 1875, p.2.
- ⁷ County Borough of Southampton Minutes & Proceedings of Council and Committees, 1896-7.
- ⁸ *Hampshire Chronicle*, October 29, 1904, p.1.
- ⁹ *Hampshire Chronicle*, October 29, 1904, p.6.
- ¹⁰ *Hampshire Chronicle*, November 5, 1904, p.10.
- ¹¹ City of Winchester Council Agenda and Minutes of Council and Committee Meetings, November 1904 to November 1905. Hampshire Record Office, Ref W/B3/41.
- ¹² *Hampshire Chronicle*, October 16, 1907, p.7.
- ¹³ *Hampshire Chronicle*, August 6, 1910, p.3.
- ¹⁴ *Hampshire Chronicle*, November 5, 1910, p.7.
- ¹⁵ *Hampshire Chronicle*, January 31, 1931, p.5.
- ¹⁶ Leonard, "Gilberts", p.14.
- ¹⁷ *Hampshire Chronicle*, January 31, 1931, p.5. His transfer and that of his wife were minuted on December 2, 1896, when 'they were cordially and unanimously received as members'. Winchester Congregational Church Meeting Minute Book, 1886-1906. Hampshire Record Office, Ref 65M77/5, pp.160-1.
- ¹⁸ Ruth Godden, "The Women of Winchester's Chapels 1851-1901'," (MA diss., University of Winchester, 2007), pp.72-3.
- ¹⁹ *Hampshire Chronicle*, January 31, 1931, p.5.
- ²⁰ *Hampshire Chronicle*, January 18, 1913, p.7.
- ²¹ For a discussion of these celebrations, see Rosalind Johnson and Roger Ottewill, "Memorialising 1662: Hampshire Congregationalists and the 250th Anniversary of the Great Ejection", in Peter Clarke and Charlotte Methuen (eds), *Studies in Church History 49, The Church on its Past* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2013), pp.236-47. Most Congregationalists associated the foundation of their denomination with the Great Ejection.
- ²² *Hampshire Post*, May 1, 1908.
- ²³ *Bournemouth Guardian*, October 3, 1908, p.6.
- ²⁴ *Hampshire Advertiser*, August 18, 1900, p.8.
- ²⁵ *Hampshire Chronicle*, January 31, 1931, p.5.
- ²⁶ Winchester Congregational Church Meeting Minute Book, 1906-33. Hampshire Record Office, Ref 65M77/6, p.489.
- ²⁷ David Bebbington, *The Nonconformist Conscience* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982), p.153.
- ²⁸ Alan Argent, *The Transformation of Congregationalism 1900-2000* (Nottingham: Congregational Federation, 2013), p.38.

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Alec Samuels

Chief Justice Richard Lyster 1480-1553

Richard Lyster was born in 1480 into an established Wakefield, Yorkshire, family. He came to London as a student in 1500 and studied law at the Middle Temple, one of the Inns of Court, and qualified as a barrister. He quickly attained success, originally through the patronage of Lord Darcy. He was Lent Reader 1516 and 1522 and Treasurer (i.e. President) 1522-1524. He became a law officer, Solicitor-General in 1521 and Attorney-General in 1525, then seen as a prelude to senior judicial appointment. Consulted along with other leading lawyers over the wish of Henry VIII to divorce Queen Catherine he was unable to come up with a legal solution. So the King broke with Rome and married Anne Boleyn. Lyster rode in the coronation procession. In 1529 he was duly appointed Chief Baron of the Exchequer, which today we would call the chief judge in Chancery, the property court, and he was knighted. After some 16 years in this office, in 1545 he was appointed Chief Justice of the King's Bench, the most senior of all the judicial appointments. Lyster cannot be said to have been an eminent judge and jurist, in the reign of Henry VIII it was prudent to "keep one's head down", and he was somewhat prolix, but at a time of growing trade he did develop remedies in commercial law, shipping law, marine insurance, factoring, partnerships, bills of exchange, debt recovery, guarantees and sureties. This work was achieved largely through technical procedural methods (still beloved of the lawyers to this day) and by attracting litigants away from the competing Court of Common Pleas. Lyster is believed to have kept meticulous notes and records of his cases, but these have been lost. In 1546 Lyster was one of the judges to whom the Duke of Norfolk made confession of treason and in the event the Duke was only saved from execution by the death of Henry VIII 12 January 1547 during the night before the morning fixed for the execution. Lyster signed the document appointing the Duke of Somerset the Protector of the new boy king Edward VI and he was re-appointed Chief Justice. In 1552 due to ill health Lyster resigned and retired to his "mansion" in Southampton, Tudor House. He had long had interests in Southampton, and a relative Thomas Lyster was Mayor 1517-1518. He had married as his second wife Jane Dawtrey, widow of John Dawtrey from Petworth, and thereby inherited Tudor House. After Jane's death he remarried, as his third wife, Elizabeth Stoke. He died in 1553. His elaborate monument, with effigy in judicial robes and collar of SS, erected by Elizabeth, in 1567, stands in St Michael's Church opposite Tudor House, but at some time was moved to its present location in a corner. Lyster remains one of Southampton's famous sons, albeit not native-born.

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St Michael's Church, D. Cotton, 1970.

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A G K Leonard

New Place House, Southampton

For ninety years, until demolished in the closing decade of the 19th century, New Place House stood at the centre of an island site south of Waterloo Terrace, tapering down in the form of an inverted triangle between London Road and Bedford Place at its junction with Cumberland Place. It was described in sales particulars of 1849 (Southampton City Archives D/S 1/4) as “a very valuable freehold mansion ... a substantial uniform building with two wings ... well calculated for a large Establishment.” Not as well recorded or recalled as other sizeable “country houses” which formerly ringed the town, New Place House did not feature in the exhibition of “The Lost Houses of Southampton” staged at Tudor House Museum in 1980, nor in Jessica Vale’s subsequent article “The Country Houses of Southampton” published in *Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society*, 39, 1983, pp 171-90. New Place House occupied a location mid-way between Archers Lodge (acquired in 1880 by the Sisters of La Sainte Union for their Convent High School, later the site of LSU College of Higher Education and now the New College campus of Southampton University – editor’s note: now demolished and replaced by flats) and Ogle House in Above Bar (sold for redevelopment in the 1870s and memorialised by Ogle Road then laid out across its site). The former, built in 1798 (see article in *Hampshire Magazine*, November 1979, pp 52-5), was clearly a “country house”, whereas the latter – an early Georgian mansion created by conversion and enlargement of a much older property – was then regarded as a “town house.” New Place House may have been initially conceived as a country house but by the mid 19th century Southampton’s northward expansion had changed it into a town house, albeit occupying larger grounds than others in Above Bar. When the time came for its redevelopment in the 1890s, its position in relation to the much-enlarged urban area was sufficiently central for it to become the site of the borough’s first purpose-built public library.

Although the date of its erection cannot now be exactly established (surviving All Saints parish rate books include none between 1795 and 1807), New Place House was evidently built just before 1800. It was shown (although not named) on Southampton maps of 1800 and 1802 by John Doswell, published by T Baker (nos. 13 and 15 in the portfolio of facsimiles produced for the City Council in 1964); the house did not appear on Milne’s maps of 1791 (nos. 11-12). T Lewis’s town map of 1843 gives a convenient representation of the site, by then more markedly separated from the area to the north, where smaller scale housing development had proceeded rapidly from the 1820s. The 60 to 1 mile Ordnance Survey map of 1845-46 depicts the house at the centre of its 1 ¾ acre site, with a carriage drive, shrubberies and trees to the south; north of the house lay a tree-girt garden of about an acre, with greenhouse, while at the north-east corner stood a detached stable block, double coach house and other “offices”.

New Place House comprised three storeys and basement – the latter including “excellent arched beer and wine cellars.” On the ground floor were a “capital dining room”, library, breakfast parlour, kitchen and associated stores etc; the first floor contained a large south-facing drawing room as well as four principal bedrooms and dressing rooms, with another six bedrooms on the second floor. More details were given in the auction sale particulars of 1849; there was no indication of any significant alterations having by then been made to the house erected fifty years previously – other than perhaps the water closets specifically mentioned.

When the house was sold in 1849 the site area was rather quaintly given as “about one acre and 28 parts of an acre”, with boundaries measured as N 246’; S 83’; E 325’; and W 204’. The land was described as “formerly part of a large close or field some time belonging to



Figure 1. Section of the 1845/46 Town Map showing New Place House

John Antram, called Great Mongers, together with other hereditaments formerly part of Bannisters Farm.” John Antram was listed in the first Southampton directory of 1803 as a butcher, in French Street; he was the nephew of another of the same name who died in 1799. Rate books show him holding fields known from medieval times as Great and Little Mongers, stretching up beyond Carlton Crescent, Rockstone Place, Archers Lodge etc. In the early 19th century New Place House, standing on the northern outskirts of the town, did not quite rank as a country house in the same league as Archers Lodge, Bellevue, Bannisters, Bevois Mount etc, to which guide books directed attention and described promenades and drives for visitors wishing to view them. The first mention of New Place House seems to have been in the 17th edition of Thomas Skelton’s *Southampton Guide*, issued in 1802, in the introduction to an itinerary taking in “the principal seats of the neighbourhood”; between paragraphs about Brunswick Place and the Barracks (which became the Royal Military Asylum in 1816 and the Ordnance Survey headquarters in 1841), the writer noted “the first which meets the eye (immediately facing the road leading to Winchester) is the seat of Andrew Williams esq, which for situation and extent of prospect can scarcely be surpassed.” The 1803 directory listed “Andrew Williams esq, Above Bar” but little more now seems to be recorded of him, although he may well have been the person for whom New Place House was built – and perhaps the Andrew Williams who died aged 76 in 1811, to be buried on March 25 of that year at All Saints, but who was not then living at New Place House. There is also an entry in the All Saints parish register for the christening on July 24 1795 of “Henry Bryan, son of Andrew and Elizabeth Williams.” Andrew would have been born in 1735, so then aged 60; perhaps he had taken a younger, second wife? Whoever he was, he did not long remain at New Place House, for the next edition of *Skelton’s Guide* (18th, c 1804) noted that “It is at present occupied by Mrs Challoner.” She was also listed in the next Southampton directory, published in 1811 – “Mrs Challoner, new place, near the polygon”, but must have

given it up soon afterwards, for rate books show B B Nembhard occupying the house from August 1811. Again, nothing more can be found about her.

Identification of the house is complicated by the absence of house names in the rate lists. One has to work back following names of known occupiers to establish changes and an added complication is that until 1821 New Place House was included under the Polygon heading, in the middle of a changing and expanding set of entries. Thereafter, it usually appeared under the heading Brunswick Place, which was more logical, until Bedford Place was developed. Rating assessments confirm the size and status of New Place House, which was valued at £60 – the same as Archers Lodge (which had two acres of additional land valued at another £4) and comparable with the largest house at the Polygon (£65 – others there were rated between £25 and £50) and Ogle House (£75); Bellevue House was then valued at £100.

The All Saints rate books indicate that in 1807-08 (and perhaps before and/or after, for these are the only two years between 1795 and 1811 for which they now survive in Southampton City Archives) New Place House was occupied by a Lady Manick. She is another shadowy figure; perhaps she leased the house for a while and then Mrs Challoner subsequently returned, some time before 1811? The several changes of occupiers during the first 10-12 years of its existence suggest that initially New Place House may have been “spec-built” for letting – or did Andrew Williams overreach himself and have to give it up, moving to a less expensive house, drawing his income from New Place?

For ten years from 1811 it was the home of the distinctively named Ballard Beckford Nembhard. His forenames were those of old Southampton families but his surname is unfamiliar. January 8, 1810 saw the christening at All Saints church of his son Thomas Hay Nembhard. The father and his wife Ann were then living elsewhere in Southampton – perhaps in one of the large private residences in Above Bar – but a year later they established themselves at New Place House. No doubt there was much excitement there and at All Saints on March 29, 1817 when Letitia Nembhard married William Raynford Taylor; she must surely have been a daughter. B B Nembhard died in 1821, buried on June 20 of that year in the catacombs (number 55) of All Saints. Until bombed in 1940, the classical pillars of this church, as rebuilt in 1792-95 to the design of architect John Reveley, were a prominently incongruous feature of the High Street. In the 19th century this church served a fashionable congregation of the “carriage classes”. Most of the “best people” of Southampton were laid to rest there – in lead coffins placed in brick vaults.

New Place House – although not named – was mentioned as “the seat of B Nembhard esq” in the 1818 (23rd) edition of the *Southampton Guide* printed by E Skelton and Co. This guide counted it as the first of “the principal seats etc about the neighbourhood”, but the rival series of guidebooks issued by T Baker referred to it only incidentally in editions from about 1812 onwards. “Passing through the turnpike gate [i.e. the Junction] and continuing straightforward, [the stranger] will observe on his right Brunswick Place and on his left a lane. At the entrance to this lane stand New Place House and Cumberland House (This survived until demolished in 1995, adapted on the ground floor as offices). Pursuing his course up the lane he will soon arrive at the Polygon.” A footnote added “between the two houses is a short lane off which a gate admits to a path by the side of a field giving a good view of Archers Lodge.” The first lane must have been the forerunner of Cumberland Place; the second was soon developed into Bedford Place. Baker’s guidebooks were still repeating these sentences in the 1840s, altered only to name Bedford Place, “which consists of a number of small houses, built of late years” – they date from the early 1820s onwards.

Southampton City Archives holds an original coloured map by John Doswell Doswell of Albion Place (subject of a chapter in *Old Southampton Shores* by J P M Pannell) at a scale of 66 ft to the inch, titled “Plan of freehold land situated on the west side of the London Road opposite Bellevue (i.e. the grounds, not the house itself which stood above Ordnance Road) for sale in building lots.” It showed a total of 56 plots, of 20 ft frontage and average depth 150 ft, nos. 1-30 along the west side of London Road, running up from Waterloo Terrace (not yet named) and nos. 31-56 similarly extending up the east side of what soon became Bedford Place. This Doswell map is undated but is probably of the period 1815-20; it names B. B. Nembhard as the owner of New Place House – again not identified by name.

After Nembhard’s death, the property soon changed hands, the new occupier being Thomas Conway, whose name was pencilled in as replacing Nembhard’s in the rate book for the first quarter of 1822. Conway was evidently living in Southampton before then, well enough known to have a letter from Paris in 1820 addressed to him simply as “Thomas Conway esq, Southampton” – with neither country nor street needing to be specified. This letter – now in the postal history collection of a Dorchester philatelist – related to the payment of dividends, so Conway was obviously a man of means. Maybe he was the father of William Conway, who had two sons christened at All Saints on September 27, 1833. He was then described as a captain in the East India Company’s service, living in Carlton Crescent; he had moved to Brunswick Place by June 19 1835, when another son was likewise christened at All Saints. The parish register noted him as Captain, 53rd Bengal Light Infantry. Perhaps he followed in his father’s footsteps? “Nabobs”, both military and civilian, seem to have favoured Southampton as a place of retirement on return to England.

Thomas Conway did not live long to enjoy his time at New Place House, for he died on September 25, 1822, aged 56 – to be buried in catacomb no. 52 at All Saints. By his will, dated August 23 that year, he left the house to his widow, Margaret Ann Conway, for the rest of her life, with his trustees empowered to sell it after her death.

Mrs Conway was listed at New Place House in the rate book of 1824, after which there is a gap until 1831 when the entry was Thomas Griffith esq. Some time between these dates the widowed Mrs Conway had married him; they continued to live at the house until 1848, when they both died. Captain Griffith was recorded in Southampton directories of 1834 onwards – his name sometimes given as Griffiths – and since RN was not appended to it, he was presumably a retired army officer. The lives of the Griffiths at New Place House were probably quietly domestic. By present standards, both died young; Thomas Griffith was 57, buried in catacomb no. 86 of All Saints on September 20, 1848. His widow, Margaret Anne, was laid to rest there on December 14 the same year, aged 61.

Following her death, New Place House was put up for sale by auction on Monday April 23, 1849, the proceedings be conducted on the premises, “starting at one o’clock punctually,” by the auctioneer R H Perkins. His particulars described the house, “for many years the residence of the late Capt and Mrs Griffith”, as “a very valuable freehold mansion, commanding most extensive and varied views of the Southampton Water, Isle of Wight and surrounding country ... with spacious walled garden, greenhouse and forcing pits, double coach-house, four-stalled stable, all requisite domestic offices, well calculated for a large Establishment and fit for immediate occupation, most desirably situated, near the entrance of the Town of Southampton, and in a most respectable neighbourhood.” It included “a good pew in All Saints Church, the vendor’s right and interest in which we will pass with the property.” This was not, in fact, required by the purchaser – who topped the bidding at £2,800 – for he was the Rev William Wilson DD, vicar of Holy Rood from 1824 until his

death in 1873. This church may have been less fashionable than All Saints but it was then regarded as the “Mayor’s Church” for Corporation services and its “Proclamation Porch” was the place for both royal and civic announcements, also for election hustings.

William Wilson, born in Kendal in 1783, made his way to Queen’s College, Oxford in 1801 and took his BA and MA degrees in 1805/08. He was ordained in 1806 and from 1808 served as a curate in Essex until his appointment in 1811 as headmaster of St Bees grammar school in Cumberland. There he discovered grave abuses in the school’s affairs, especially in relation to the lease of a coal royalty dating back to 1742; his efforts to expose them brought him into conflict with the school governors and, as a man of integrity, he was obliged to resign in 1816. His action at least helped to draw official attention to the mismanagement of educational charities and the need for their reform. In 1827 the second Earl Lonsdale, Sir William Lowther, representing the original grantee, was ordered by the Lord Chancellor to pay £5,000 for the benefit of the school. Returning to Oxford, Wilson took his BD and DD degrees in 1820/24 and served as a fellow of Queen’s College, dean and bursar in 1822, before accepting the College presentation in July 1824 to the benefice of Holy Rood. He also became Warden of God’s House and as there was no vicarage attached to Holy Rood, he lived for the next 15 years in the Warden’s House in the quadrangle there (demolished in 1926).

On February 18, 1830 he married Maria Sumner at Godalming, Surrey. She was the sister of Charles Richard Sumner (1790-1874), who, as a young clergyman-tutor, had gained the favour of George IV, which brought him various positions and preferments, leading to his appointment in 1827 as Bishop of Winchester. Their elder brother John Bird Sumner (1780-1862) rose to higher office, becoming Archbishop of Canterbury in 1848. The first-born of the Wilson family was a son, christened Sumner Wilson at Holy Rood on May 22 1831. He followed his father’s vocation, although more humbly, serving for 54 years as vicar of Preston Candover. There in the 1950s his aged daughter gave the late Elsie Sandell a collection of family papers relating to her grandfather’s manifold activities and his ownership of New Place House. These documents – now held in Southampton City Archives – provided the basis for a chapter on Dr Wilson in her book *Southampton Panorama*, 1958; they have been further used in this article.

The Holy Rood parish register includes a poignant pair of entries for April 18, 1834 – one for the baptism of Jane Caroline Wilson, the other for the burial of her mother, Mrs Maria Wilson, who died in childbirth, aged 40 (In her book Elsie Sandell quoted the detailed account for mourning and funeral expenses for W and J Joliffe, mercers, drapers and undertakers of 135 High Street, amounting in all to £137 17s 5d – then worth at least 100 times as much as today – a large sum for an elaborate celebration of death). Thereafter, the bereaved Dr Wilson devoted himself even more zealously to his numerous parish and other church duties and to scholarly works.

Ahead of his marriage to Maria Sumner, her brother had appointed him Rural Dean in 1828. There was doubtless an element of patronage in this appointment but Bishop Sumner was an energetic reformer and a conscientious administrator of his diocese, promoting the building of many new churches and schools; his brother-in-law was very active on his behalf, undertaking annual inspections of churches, churchyards, properties, charities and schools, as well as supervising the behaviour of individual clergy – some of whom occasionally caused problems! The *Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club*, (47, 1991, pp 197-202) contain an account by W T Gibson of Dr Wilson’s activities as Rural Dean, based on his letters and other papers preserved in Southampton City Archives. In both his roles Dr Wilson was

involved in important negotiations about the provision of more burial space for the rapidly expanding town. The Rector of St Mary's – Rev Francis North, Earl of Guilford, a notorious absentee pluralist – declined to make available any of his extensive glebe lands for relieving the gruesomely overcrowded condition of St Mary's churchyard. This was effectively the only one then serving the whole town, for neither Holy Rood nor St Michael's had their own, while that of All Saints was both small and full. In the event the problem was amicably resolved by the Corporation securing powers to lay out in stages a large new cemetery on a section of the Common. Part of it was consecrated by the Bishop of Winchester in May 1846; other parts were allocated for use of Dissenters, Catholics and Jews.

Dr Wilson was a popular preacher at Holy Rood, which he made a centre of evangelism. He preached the sermon at the memorial service for the 24 brave men who died in the great fire at a warehouse in the lower High Street on November 7, 1837 – commemorated by tablets on the front of the gutted Holy Rood building. The present shell, as left after bombing in 1940, represents the partial survival of the substantial rebuilding of the old church which Dr Wilson was instrumental in carrying through in 1848-49 – at a total cost of £3,815 3s 9d. This provided the occasion for removal of a butcher's shop beside the west door and of the obstructive pillars of the "Proclamation Porch" – thus making possible the widening of Bridge Street (Bernard Street). Later, the energetic vicar of Holy Rood promoted the building of a parochial school, on the site previously part of the Warden's garden at God's House, abutting Gloucester Square. It was opened in 1861, initially for 150 children (at a cost of £852) – another victim of wartime bombing in 1940. Among other parish endeavours, he instituted evening classes, a clothing club and a forerunner of the YMCA. Also in 1861 was initiated the restoration of St Julian's church (the "French Church") and the rebuilding of the old almshouses at God's House.

Meanwhile, in the late 1830s Dr Wilson had moved home from the Warden's house there to Grosvenor House, a large "town house" on the east side of Grosvenor Square, where he was recorded in directories of 1839-45. It is not clear whether he bought or leased this house but by 1847 he had bought No. 1 Cranbury Terrace, then recently erected, and moved his home there, vacating Grosvenor House. This was afterwards taken by William Colson Westlake, a Quaker corn merchant and sack maker, much respected for his tireless public service, actively identifying himself with most of the town's voluntary societies, welfare institutions and schools. After his death in 1887 his widow remained at Grosvenor House for another decade, then from about 1900 it briefly accommodated a private school for girls, until taken over about 1903 by the redoubtable Miss Mocatta as a private nursing home. It continued there until closing on her retirement in 1929. Walter Brazier, principal of the old-established Southampton family building firm, then acquired it but disposed of the property about 1935 for demolition and redevelopment.

Dr Wilson's occupation of 1 Cranbury Terrace ended in 1849 when he purchased New Place House (by conveyance dated August 25 that year) but retained ownership and leased it to the Misses Shum – three maiden ladies who quietly lived out their lives there, relying on candlelight since they refused to admit gas, much less electricity. 'Townsmen' devoted a few paragraphs to them in his *Occasional Notes* (p5), mentioning their involvement with St Luke's church where there is a memorial window to two of them, Margaret and Emily. The last died in 1903 and the contents of the house were auctioned on April 12, 1904; a copy of the catalogue is preserved in Southampton City Archives (D/S 1/6). Why Dr Wilson gave up this house after only 2-3 years is now unclear. Perhaps he wanted New Place House because it offered more space for his library and study. He was a learned and distinguished Hebrew

and biblical scholar, who in 1850 published a very full *Bible student's guide to the correct understanding of the Old Testament by reference to the original Hebrew and Chaldee lexicon and concordance*...His several earlier theological works and collected sermons were followed in 1860 by his two-volume exposition of the *Book of Psalms*.

Dr Wilson spent the rest of his life at New Place House, receiving an annually renewed license from his bishop "to reside in (this) fit and convenient house... on account of there being no house of residence belonging to your said benefice and the said house being within the distance of one mile from your church of Holy Rhod, you performing the duties of your said benefice." The census enumerator of 1851 recorded his household there. It included three resident servants – cook/housekeeper, housemaid and a 21-year old man described simply as a "house servant", who perhaps combined the duties of valet and gardener. It seems unlikely that Dr Wilson kept his own carriage and horses. Living with their widowed father, then 67, were his two daughters Anna Maria (18) and Jane Caroline (16). The former was his second child, born in 1832; her death early in 1853, aged only 20, was another domestic tragedy. In 1861 her younger sister was still at home with her father – although on census night he was away, presumably on diocesan business. The three living-in servants were recorded as cook, housemaid and a man of 30 identified as a gardener. In 1871 the domestic staff likewise numbered three – cook, housemaid and 28-year old Joseph Cummins, described as a valet. Then 87 but still active, Dr Wilson doubtless valued his help –but did he also attend to the grounds and garden? Jane Wilson was by then no longer living at New Place House, having left a few years earlier on her marriage to Rev William Mariner.

William Wilson's long and purposeful life ended at the ripe age of 90, on August 22, 1873, at the Close, Winchester. His body was laid to rest at Preston Candover, where his son, Rev Sumner Wilson, was the incumbent. By Dr Wilson's will, made on May 13, 1873, his estate passed to him and his sister, Mrs Jane Mariner. They retained ownership of New Place House but put the contents up for sale: Perkins & Sons held a two-day auction there on Tuesday and Wednesday, November 17-18, 1874 to dispose of "the entire equipment and contents of this large residence."

An annotated copy of the 20-page printed catalogue held in Southampton City Archives (D/S 1/4/5a) shows that most of the 345 lots were sold, for a total of £536.16s, and provides a detailed inventory of the contents of a large house in mid-Victorian times, listed room by room – five reception rooms, ten bedrooms, kitchen, scullery, housekeeper's room, butler's room, lobby and entrance hall, also the garden equipment. Much of the furniture was mahogany, including several large bookcases, but antique oak pieces fetched higher prices, e.g. 10 guineas for "an 8 ft settee with elaborately carved back, on 8 twisted legs" and 15 guineas for a 4 ft 6 in bookcase standing 10 ft high. Nobody wanted "a massive and valuable 14 day black marble striking clock with gilt embellishments" but "a large magic lantern with fittings in box and quantity of slides" went for £4.15s and "an expensive brass telescope on stand" sold for £2.6s. An extensive dinner service of about 100 pieces went for £2.4s and "a white and gold tea and coffee service comprising 40 pieces" was knocked down for £1.5s. Outside, there was no bid for "a nearly new Bradford's patent mangle together with washing and wringing" but "an excellent lawn mowing machine, Green's patent" fetched £3 and "a capital 2-light cucumber frame" went for £1.10s.

The title page of the auction catalogue noted the reason for the sale – "the auctioneers having let the residence for a term unfurnished." The tenant was Thomas Ridley Oswald, an enterprising shipbuilder who had started his own yard at Sunderland while still in his twenties. Over a period of 17 years, he had by 1875 built 149 ships, mostly iron sailing

vessels of under 1,000 tons but also some steamers, notably the 1,736 ton *Severn* for the Royal Mail Company in 1873. To expand his business Oswald moved his operations (and many of his workforce) in 1875-76 to Woolston, where previously only small scale shipbuilding had been undertaken. The first ship laid down in his new yard was the *Aberfoyle*, a barque of 853 tons, using iron frames already made up and brought down from Sunderland. During the thirteen years 1876-1889 another 103 vessels were launched from the Woolston yard of the company, which was restyled Oswald, Mordaunt & Co in 1878, when Oswald took into partnership John Murray Mordaunt, who presumably provided additional capital for further expansion of the business.

Mordaunt had a house at Midanbury, while William Rudd Oswald, who acted as manager of his brother's shipbuilding works, lived at Woolston, as did the marine architect Hercules Linton (designer of the famous *Cutty Sark*) who was involved with many of the yard's projects. T R Oswald, however, preferred to make his home in Southampton. He presumably hired horse cabs to take him to and from the floating bridge across to Woolston: if he kept his own carriage at New Place House, his coachman was non-resident, at least at the time of the 1881 census. The enumerator then recorded five living-in female domestic servants (cook, parlour maid, kitchen maid, nurse and under-nurse) attending Oswald, then 44, born in Stepney, Middlesex, and his Irish-born second wife Mina (29) with their three young children aged 1-4. The Oswalds seem to have been content with their home at New Place House. Miscellaneous letters amongst the Wilson papers show him arranging the continuation of his initial lease, agreeing in 1881 to remain another year and in 1882 considering buying the house – although it was not without its maintenance problems: sending a cheque for his rent in 1884 he complained that “Udall (builder) had not yet made a proper job of the west wing, still leaking into my dressing-rooms.”

The census taker of 1881 noted Oswald as “shipbuilder and engineer (1,200 men)”. This figure may have represented the maximum number of yard employees when the order book was full: *White's Hampshire Directory* of 1878 stated that the yard “in full work employs 1000 hands: all the details of the vessels and their engines are made on the premises.” The majority of the yard's output – and its speciality – comprised sturdy and well styled three-mast full-rigged iron sailing ships of 2,000+ tons, mostly for Liverpool owners, to serve worldwide as economical long-haul bulk carriers in the period when sail could still undercut steam for cargoes of *e.g.* coal, lumber, grain, nitrates etc.

Some of these hard-sailing Woolston-built windjammers were remarkably long lasting. One veteran, built for and originally named as *Leyland Brothers* in 1886, sold to Portugal in 1912 and later converted into a motor ship, was not finally retired until 1967. The oldest and best-known of the Woolston sailing ships is the 2,170 ton *Wavertree*, launched on December 10, 1885. Her sailing career with the Leyland line ended in 1910 when she was battered and dismasted off Cape Horn but she continued to serve as a storage hulk and sand barge off Buenos Aires, until recognised as a unique veteran by American enthusiasts, who bought her and had her towed in 1970 to New York, where she has been painstakingly restored as a showpiece of the South Street Seaport Museum – visited by Prince Philip in 1980. Nearly a third of the 104 vessels launched at Woolston from the Oswald, Mordaunt yard were steamships. The largest, built in 1883, was the 5,085 ton *Bitterne*, unfortunately wrecked in 1890. Another 1883 iron screw steamer, the *Test* – half her size – was torpedoed in 1917. The *Solent* (1878, 1,908 tons) did thirty years service with the Royal Mail company. The last ship built by the company at Woolston, in 1889, was a steel and iron barque of 1,254 tons, for a

French company, to carry petroleum in bulk – miniscule though her capacity may now seem by comparison with the huge modern carriers, of which she was a forerunner.

Despite its good repute and large output, Oswald Mordaunt & Co got into financial difficulties, leading to liquidation in 1889. T R Oswald himself lost little time in cutting his losses and setting up a new company, as T R Oswald & Co, and finding a new site at Milford Haven, where he soon resumed shipbuilding. Oswald had nevertheless firmly established major shipbuilding at Woolston. After his departure, a company called the Southampton Naval Iron Works Ltd was formed to re-open the yard early in 1890. It built 18 ships in three years, before itself going bankrupt. The yard was closed from 1893 to 1897, when it was taken by J G Fay & Co, a yacht building firm seeking to expand from Northam into steel sailing barges, tugs, pontoons etc. In 1900 the yard was bought by Mordey, Carney and Co, who already had extensive shipbuilding interests in Wales. They built 34 ships and barges, before selling the yard in 1904 to J I Thornycroft & Co Ltd.

After T R Oswald gave up his tenancy on New Place House, the Rev Sumner Wilson and Mrs Mariner quickly decided to put the property on the market and on April 5, 1889 they effected its sale for £4,000 to J J Burnett, in his capacity of secretary to the County of Hants Freehold Building Society. This was one of a number of such positions held by John James Burnett (1826-1915), principal of the family firm he had enterprisingly developed as a many-sided business, embracing “stock, share and insurance brokers, public accountants and auditors, auctioneers, estate agents and valuers.” (Its offices in an impressively fronted Georgian building at 2 High Street featured in many old postcard photographs of the south front of the Bargate, until demolished in 1931 for creation of the eastern side of the traffic circus around it. Subsequently specialising in audit and accountancy work, the firm is now styled Burnett, Swayne, chartered accountants) That J J Burnett was also the long-serving steward of the Southampton properties of Queen’s College, Oxford – a post he held for over fifty years from 1863 – may have influenced the vendors to dispose of the New Place House property to him.

Within a few days of its conveyance (which may not even have then become known) the Borough Council took an interest in it. At its meeting on April 10 the council adopted the motion of Councillor Gaytor “that as this very eligible site is about to be used for building purposes the Lease Committee be instructed to make enquiries as to terms upon which it could be obtained by the Corporation for the erection of a Town Hall and other public buildings.” In June the committee was informed that the new owners would accept £4,500 for the New Place House estate but members felt the site to be too small for the purposes of the Corporation and too far north of the centre of town to be suitable for a new Town Hall. Their recommendation not to entertain the proposal was confirmed by the Council in July. Before the year was out, J J Burnett had made a profit of £500 for the Freehold Land Society by selling the property for £4,500 – by conveyance dated December 3, 1889 - to William Francis Gummer Spranger. Having presumably received a sizeable legacy following the death of his father-in-law, he was seeking a substantial residence in which to establish himself in Southampton. If he took up occupation of New Place House, his stay must have been short, for he soon seized the opportunity of buying Springhill Court in Hill Lane, which he engaged the then well-known firm of Joseph Bull & Sons (whose largest contracts a decade earlier were the Law Courts in the Strand and the Parliament Buildings in Cape Town) to enlarge and reconstruct in ornate high Victorian style. (An article on the firm appeared in no. 9 of this *Journal*)

Spranger (1848-1917) was a discriminating and practical philanthropist who for the last thirty years of his life served Southampton in many ways, particularly in the sphere of education and, most notably for posterity, as the purchaser and restorer of Tudor House and the Norman House behind it. His first offer of these historic buildings, at a fraction of what he had spent on them, was rejected by the Council in 1905 but it accepted his renewed offer in 1911 and established its first public museum there, officially opened on July 29, 1912. (for the full story, see the booklet *The Saving of Tudor House*, published by the City of Southampton Society in 1987)

Having settled in Springhill Court and thus having no further interest in New Place House, Spranger was willing to cut his losses by effecting a quick sale of the latter. By conveyance dated December 30, 1890 he sold the property for only £3,800 to a building developer, Thomas John Jones, of “Campsie”, Hill Lane. By this time, New Place House was obviously ‘ripe for redevelopment’ rather than any further residential use. Jones presumably prepared for new building on the site by having the old house demolished soon after he bought it. The house does not appear on a plan of May 1891, preserved with the property titles of 1849-89/90/91 in Southampton City Archives (T 895); this shows the land then owned by Jones as comprising only the southern part of the site, with the northern part marked as belonging to E Sandon – to whom Jones had evidently sold it. Directories of the period contain entries for “Edward Sandon, builder, house and ship plumber, painter, decorator, house and estate agent. Office and works, 6 Fanshaw Street, Northam; residence 54 Bellevue Road.” Sandon’s section of the New Place House estate, with frontages to London Road and Bedford Place, up to Waterloo Terrace, was soon commercially built up, on the pattern still to be seen there. Like the High Street, Bedford Place retains its original street numbering, running 1-56 northwards on the east side and from 57 onwards back down the west side. This was left unaltered when six properties were added at the bottom of the east side in the 1890s; they were given separate numbers 1A-6A, preceding the older sequence starting at 1, Waterloo Terrace.

Meanwhile, the Corporation had renewed its interest in part of the New Place House estate, specifically as a site for its first purpose-built Free Public Library. Although a prosperous expanding town, Victorian Southampton was curiously slow to adopt the 1855 Act authorising expenditure of a penny rate on providing public libraries. In 1886 the Council declined the proposal of the Hartley Council for a public library to celebrate Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee but the suggestion was taken up by others, leading to the formal adoption of the Public Libraries Act by a town meeting held at the Hartley Institution on June 13, 1887, called by the Mayor in response to a requisition initiated by the Southampton Parliamentary Debating Society. The Free Library Committee set up by the Council the following January, under the energetic chairmanship of Timothy Falvey (acting as a councillor after retiring from his 21 years as editor of the weekly *Hampshire Independent*), gathered an initial stock of some 5,000 volumes and opened a temporary library in rented premises on January 15, 1889 – having taken a three year lease at £75 *pa* of St Mary’s Hall. Adjoining the Kingsland Tavern, this had started as a “Hall of Varieties” in 1887; after serving briefly as a library and then for the Hercules Private School of Physical Culture, it was taken over about 1908 by a Holiness Mission, which continued there until the 1980s.

The Free Library Committee sought a site for a permanent building to replace these temporary premises, whose size and location made them no more than an unsatisfactory expedient. In 1890 the Council sought to appropriate part of its Houndwell parkland near Vincent’s Walk and Pound Tree Road, but the Local Government Board refused its approval.

Other possibilities were the pursued and in February 1891 the Free Library Committee settled on New Place House as “the most convenient and central of the sites now available.” The Council referred back this proposal for further consideration, some members preferring use of the land reserved for a market at Kingsland. The committee adhered to its proposal, which was accepted at a Council meeting on February 25, 1891 – by a Liberal-Tory party vote of 18-13.

Negotiations with T J Jones were then put in hand. His solicitor that month refused the Corporation’s initial offer of £750 for two strips of land required for widening London Road and Bedford Place and obliged it to pay the £1,000 he asked. Perhaps this prelude facilitated agreement on a price of £1,500 for the “parcel of land formerly part of the site of New Place House”, for which the conveyance was dated July 30, 1891. That afternoon members of the Free Library Committee were summoned to the Municipal Offices to sign the cheque and consider conditions for appointing an architect to design the new building. A competition produced 37 entries, from which the scheme by A E J Guy of Portsmouth was selected. He had later to scale it down somewhat to reduce the cost on tender to £3,405 – plus £500 for furniture and fittings. With work in hand and flags flying from the scaffold poles, the foundation stone was laid by the Mayor, James Lemon, on August 31, 1892. Thomas Morgan, who had become Library Committee chairman following the death of Timothy Falvey in 1889, spoke proudly of this “municipal temple of literature.”

The building, of red brick with Ham Hill stone dressings, was much admired at the time, not least for its 40ft tower – although this had to be reduced in height in 1904. At first the Electric Light Company’s mains did not reach there, so the library was equipped with its own gas-powered dynamo. By the time of the official opening on July 29, 1893, the book stock had been trebled to 15,000, including many donations and Falvey’s own library, purchased and presented by Sir Frederick Perkins. The opening ceremony was happily performed by Dr Kitchin, Dean of Winchester, who recalled his boyhood visits to New Place House when it was the home of his father’s old tutor, Dr Wilson. A marble bust of Timothy Falvey, presented by a memorial committee, was unveiled in the entrance hall. It has survived more than a century, for the latter part of which it stood at the top of the stairs to the Reference section of the Central Library, until its modernisation. Today, it languishes unseen but deserves to be displayed again as a link between past and present (editor’s note: it now stands near the entrance to the Central Library in the Civic Centre).

Superseded by new accommodation in the Civic Centre in 1939 and demolished after bombing in 1940, the 1893 library is now only a memory for a dwindling number of older readers. The cleared site was left as grassed space and paths in front of advertising hoardings for many years until it was made available for the building in 1988 of new offices for the Municipal Mutual Insurance Co. – which vacated them in early in 1995. They are now occupied by the solicitors Paris, Smith & Randall (editor’s note: now Paris Smith LLP)

APPENDIX

Road Widening

In 1986 the area of the site was reduced by road widening works along Cumberland Place. This was nothing new – the Corporation was wrestling with problems of widening Bedford Place and rounding off the bottom of the New Place House site over a century ago.... In mid-Victorian times the high wall around it caused difficulties for people using Bedford Place. In the Southampton City Archives among the Wilson papers is a neatly written letter,

signed only “Senex” (old man) and undated, so it may be of any year between 1849 and 1873. “Good Dr Wilson would confer a benevolent boon to the public and would be the means of preventing many an accident and possibly preserving lives, if he would cause the corner of his garden wall leading into Bedford Place to be rounded so that the turning may be less dangerous, for collisions are continually occurring unavoidably from the situation of the wall projecting.”

What, if anything, Dr Wilson did in response to this appeal remains unknown but the problem evidently persisted. The City Archives contain a plan drawn in the office of the Borough Engineer, W B G Bennett, dated May 2, 1881, showing “land required for proposed improvements” to widen the pavement around the Bedford Place/Cumberland Place junction at the foot of the New Place House site. Nothing seems to have come of it then; Rev Sumner Wilson and his tenant T R Oswald may have been understandably reluctant to agree to demolition of a section of their boundary wall.

With the sale of the property in 1889, first to J J Burnett, then to W F G Spranger, the issue became live again and in February 1890 the inhabitants of Bedford Place and neighbourhood got up a petition to the Corporation; “being continually inconvenienced by the narrowness of the road leading from Cumberland Place”, they asked the Council to “acquire ground and widen the road and footpath on the east side and so remove not only the inconvenience but prevent danger to foot passengers.” Before signing themselves, they sensibly secured the support of notables to head the list – Charles Day of Terrace House, R W Morris of The Elms, Polygon (after whom an Edwardian road was named), the ex-Mayor James Bishop of Grosvenor Square and Ernest Westlake of Grosvenor House. The corporation secured Mr Spranger’s agreement to a draft conveyance for him to sell it a strip of land, receiving £250 and part of the footway in London Road along the east or south east side of his garden, but this deal fell through when he sold the property to T R Jones. The Corporation then negotiated with him to buy a 10 ft strip along Bedford Place south of Waterloo Terrace and another strip 8 ft wide along part of London Road – at a price of £1,000 by conveyance dated October 2, 1891. (Southampton City Archives T892)

This seems to have resolved the problem; the library site was defined accordingly and the road line remained as settled in 1891 until new traffic demands required a further road widening and setting back of the pavement in 1896.

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Richard Preston

John Plaw, John Kent and John Taylor: three late-18th/early-19th century Southampton architects

The following short biographical sketches were written for the forthcoming online *A-Z of Southampton's History* and were intended to be stand-alone articles (editor).

John Plaw

John Plaw is one of the most original and frustratingly elusive architects of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. He practised as an architect in Southampton between *c.* 1795 and 1807. John Plaw was baptized at St Mary's, Putney on 8 January 1745. Apprenticed to the Tylers' and Bricklayers' Company in London at the age of thirteen, he was by 1763 - when only eighteen years old - described as an "architect and master builder in Westminster" (*Oxford dictionary of national biography*). Little of his architectural work survives - the most famous being the idiosyncratic house on Belle Island in Lake Windermere designed for Thomas English in 1774-5 and the church of St Mary, Paddington, built 1788-91 in the form of a Greek cross. It is for a series of three pattern books that he is chiefly remembered: *Rural architecture* (1785), *Ferme ornee, or rural improvements* (1795) and *Sketches for country houses, villas, and rural dwellings, calculated for persons of moderate income, and for comfortable retirement* (1800). Each went through many editions. These were pioneering works, and did much to popularize both the growing taste for the picturesque and the use of rustic and vernacular building materials.

John Plaw and his wife Mary (*nee* Burrough who he had married in 1768) left London to settle in Southampton in about 1795. He was then fifty years of age, a well-known name in architectural circles and with connections in the county. *Ferme ornee* (published 1795) includes illustrations and descriptions of designs for entrance gates, fishing lodge, keeper's dwelling and domed bath-house (complete with shower bath fed by warm water from a nearby brew house in the garden) for John Morant of Brockenhurst House. This probably relates to the redesign of the estate by William Eames and John Webb commissioned in 1793 and abandoned on Morant's death in March 1794 (Gill Hedley and Adrian Rance, *Pleasure grounds: the gardens and landscapes of Hampshire*, 1987). The authors of *Hampshire: Winchester and the north* (the Buildings of England series) published in 2010 suggest that Houghton Lodge, an exquisite Gothick *cottage ornee* overlooking the River Test near Stockbridge and dated to *c.* 1786-90, might be by John Plaw. The attribution is also made by Geoffrey Tyack in the *Oxford dictionary of national biography*.

Plaw became involved in two major building speculations almost immediately on his arrival in Southampton: the development of Albion Place and of Brunswick Place. Three lots of land on the west side of the High Street, opposite the new All Saints Church completed two years earlier, had been sold at auction on 30 August 1794. These were the former gardens of the Reverend John Hoadly, rector of St Mary's and chancellor of the diocese of Winchester, and had come on the market following the death of his widow - Elizabeth Hoadly - and the settlement of a subsequent case in Chancery involving her nephew the Reverend Robert Ashe, vicar of Eling (*Ashe v Keate*). Plaw's designs for the newly-named Albion Place - "a perfect *rus in urbe*" - are described in detail in *The Universal British directory* (volume 4, compiled 1795/6). The principal street, forty feet wide and with paved footways, was to be a mixture of eight houses of Grecian

character on the north side and ten houses in the Venetian style on the south side. A further ten houses were to be built on the approaches. The views over Southampton Water towards the New Forest were expected to be “truly picturesque”. The extremity of the principal street was reserved as a public terrace and “a bastion [?Catchcold Tower] with a pleasure-seat for the use of the inhabitants and their friends, each inhabitant to be furnished with a key” (for which, according to an 1807 auction catalogue, the tenants paid 2s 6d annually). The catalogue relates to a sale of four properties in Albion Place on 8 April. Lot 1 was a recently-built house “leading in to Albion Place now in Plaw’s possession”: an occupation confirmed by All Saints rate books. The house contained “6 rooms, 2 rooms on each floor, the 2 best rooms about 15 feet square, and neatly finished, a dry cellar, the house fit for the immediate reception of a small genteel family” (*Salisbury Journal*, 23 March 1807). It is possible that Plaw’s work in Albion Place melds into the development of the castle and its precincts by the Marquis of Lansdowne. An indenture of 21 June 1805 (Southampton City Archives D/MH 2/46/1), by which Lansdowne acquired four messuages and land on the east side of Castle Lane, named Plaw as a trustee appointed by the



Figure 1. Section of the 1845/46 Town Map showing Albion Place

Marquis (see Jean Watts, ‘The Marquis of Lansdowne and his castle in Southampton’ in *Journal of the Southampton Local History Forum*, no.16, Winter 2010). A plan of Albion Place in 1845/6 is shown as figure 1. The land on which Brunswick Place was later built – bordering on the

southern edge of the gardens of Bellevue House at the upper end of the Marlands - had been leased for potential development in 1792 by a local auctioneer, John Simpkins. Eighteen houses were planned which, when completed, were expected to form "a very desirable, healthy, and pleasant situation, and a great acquisition to the visitants of Southampton" (*Universal British directory*, 1795/6). Building lots were leased by Simpkins in 1801, the lessees including John Plaw (Southampton City Archives D/MW/64/1/3), but development was slow. Nothing had been built by 1804 (Thomas Baker, *Southampton guide*). The terrace shown as figure 2 is among the earliest building on the site. Plaw was simultaneously engaged on a government contract to build a cavalry barracks near Belle Vue, on a healthy gravelly site of about two acres. A "neat plain building", the barracks were for "the accommodation of a troop of horse, officers house, guard-room, farriery, foraging-shed, and suttlng-house [canteen], with a spacious yard inclosed by a wall" (*Universal British directory*, 1795/6). The barracks were later demolished and the site became headquarters of the Ordnance Survey on its transference from London.



Figure 2. The central section of Brunswick Place, photograph 1941

A E Richardson, an authority on English domestic classicism and soon to be professor of architecture at University College, London, gives two further attributions within the town: houses in Cumberland Place (figure 3) and Bugle House on Bugle Street (A E R, 'The architecture of Southampton' in *Architectural Review*, February 1919, pages 32 and 35). The later – now 53 Bugle Street and home to the Southampton and Fareham Chamber of Commerce – he describes as "built to accommodate a retired sea dog". Records of Plaw's other architectural work whilst at Southampton are sporadic and often equally enigmatic. Designs for a house at Warrens for George Eyre on his Bramshaw estate are held in Hampshire Archives and Local Studies (COPY/745/57: letter of 6 April 1799, with two elevations and two floor plans). An

advertisement for the sale of a house “on the side of a hill near the church at West Cowes”, naming Plaw as architect, appears in the *Salisbury Journal*, 15 July 1799. His *Sketches for country houses*, published in May 1800, add as putative or completed works a small farm house in the New Forest, a building lately erected near Lymington, a situation near the Bursledon [Hamble] river, a summer retreat on an elevated spot at East Cowes, a situation near Titchfield, “a small house I have lately built for a gentleman in the New Forest” and a design in contemplation on the banks of Southampton Water.



Figure 3. Cumberland Place. Photograph from the *Architectural Review*, February 1919

John Plaw and his wife lived for over a decade at Spring Place, in the settlement of Hill, just over the western border of Southampton in the parish of Millbrook. He was appointed second lieutenant in the Loyal Southampton Volunteer Infantry on 31 March 1799, a corps that comprised the social elite of the town. Major William Tinling, Captain Frederick Breton and First Lieutenants William Lintott and John Keele were fellow officers. He was gazetted first lieutenant on Lintott's promotion to captain on 14 January 1800. The "many services he [Plaw] had rendered the Corps" were marked on the unit's disbandment in May 1802 by the unanimous request that he "favor them with his portrait". It was to be executed, *gratis*, by an artist member of the volunteers and was to be deposited in the Long Room of the Blue Boar Inn kept by Sergeant Major Cotterell (*Salisbury Journal*, 31 May 1802). Plaw did not rejoin the corps on its revival the following year.

Plaw left Southampton in 1807 "discouraged and disappointed in his art ... which he loved and laboured to promote" (*Repository of Arts*, new series, 14, 1822, quoted by Geoffrey Tyack in *Oxford dictionary of national biography*). His household furniture and other effects were sold at auction on 9 April (the day after the sale of the Albion Place properties) consequent on his "going abroad". He emigrated, with his wife, sister and nephew, to Canada, setting up as an architect in Prince Edward Island. There he died on 24 May 1820. He has an entry in the *Dictionary of Canadian national biography online*. Plaw left behind a string of creditors. He was declared bankrupt in 1809 (*London Gazette*, 18 November 1809). The fact that Plaw's final examination (30 December) followed so closely on the date (4 December) that he was required to surrender himself suggests that the proceedings was conducted *in absentia*. His interests were represented by Charles Pitt, a surveyor and architect who in August 1809 had opened a house and estate agency in Above Bar. It was Pitt to whom creditors had to report in September 1809 and to whom bills drawn on Plaw were submitted (eg an unpaid Prince Edward Island bill for £87.18s dated 19 December 1808: *Southampton notarial protest books 1756-1810*, ed Geoffrey Hampson, 1973). It was Pitt, as Plaw's attorney, who witnessed a parish apprenticeship indenture dated 11 August 1809 whereby Henry Chissell, aged 11 years and a poor child of Lymington parish, became apprentice to "John Plaw of Charlotte Town, Prince Edward Island, North America, artisan" (Hampshire Archives and Local Studies 42M75/PO1/135): a transaction both intriguing and inexplicable. The two architects had been neighbours in Spring Place (Pitt is recorded there in June 1803) and both had diversified into the house agency business, Plaw acting for clients wishing to purchase property in Titchfield (October 1804) and in the neighbourhood of Southampton (June 1805). It was a business he resurrected in Canada. An advertisement in the London-based *Morning Chronicle*, 26 July 1809, from Plaw as "Assistant Surveyor-General, Prince Edward Island", offers his services to those wishing to buy land in the province. Charles Pitt (now described as statuary and surveyor) followed Plaw into bankruptcy in January 1811 and later that year was involved in a series of court cases following a land deal that went bad. The opposition barrister thought "the whole business was as pure a piece of rascality as ever disgraced, by discussion, a Court of justice. It was all a trick, a fraud, an endeavour to put his right hand into the pocket of his employers [the vendors], and his left into the pocket of his unfortunate dupe [the putative buyer]" (*The Times* 7 September 1811).

John Kent

John Kent, builder, architect and surveyor, is first recorded in Southampton in a directory of 1783/4. He is mainly known for three important domestic commissions: Chessel House, Leigh House and Poultons. None of these houses now survives. Chessel House (figure 4) was built for David Lance in 1796 on the east bank of the River Itchen. It is described in a sales notice of July 1840 as "based upon the Grecian order of architecture ... happily adapted from a Roman villa" (*Hampshire Advertiser*, 18 July 1840). Leigh House, in Havant parish, was rebuilt for William Garrett in 1802. The attribution of Chessel House to Kent comes largely from *Notices of the Leigh Park Estate, near Havant*, written in 1836 by its then owner, Sir George Thomas Staunton: Leigh House "was considerably enlarged, and indeed almost completely rebuilt under the direction of Mr Kent, an architect of Southampton, who built Chessel House, and some other residences in the neighbourhood" (quoted in Derek Gladwyn, *Leigh Park: a 19th century pleasure ground*, 1992). An 1819 sales catalogue (also quoted by Gladwyn) describes the elaborate internal arrangements: a "very handsome" central entrance hall 21 feet in diameter with niches for sculptures; six main rooms off the hall - including an oval-shaped "noble reception

room" - entered through elliptical arches; and a "geometrical staircase handsomely stuccoed with fluted doric columns" leading to eight principal and eight servant's bedrooms. The front elevations of both Chessel House and Leigh Houses show a remarkable similarity. The condition of Leigh House, in particular the pervasiveness of dry rot, was questioned in a three-day trial in the Vice-Chancellor's Court in February/March 1819. It followed complaints about the condition of the house by its new purchaser John Julius Angerstein. In evidence, John Kent "admitted a decay to exist in the cellars, which he called a sap-rot, occasioned more by air being excluded from the cellars, and the house being built on a quick sand". He estimated that the defects could be repaired for £500 (*Hampshire Chronicle*, 8 March 1819). Paultons, near Ower, was remodelled for Hans Sloane between 1805 and 1807 (contracts for the work are in Hampshire Archives and Local Studies 46M48/352-354). Arthur Oswald (*Country Life*, 17 September 1938) refers to a circular top lit hall as a rotunda off which the principal rooms open [a version of the lofty dome which was a feature of Leigh House] and talks of "his [John Kent's] fondness for the fret ornament he shared consciously or unconsciously with his early Georgian namesake [William Kent]".



Figure 4. Chessel House. Photograph c.1915

References have been found to two domestic commissions closer to Southampton. The RIBA drawings collection contains a plan of a house with hollow walls built by Kent "in or near Southampton", with a note that "it did not answer" (Howard Colvin, *A biographical dictionary of British architects 1600-1840*, 4th edition, 2008). A sketch of a portico to an unidentified house in Southampton, built by John Kent in 1806, is reproduced in A E Richardson and H Donaldson Eberlein, *The smaller English house of the later Renaissance 1660-1830*, published 1925 (figure 5). It is used to illustrate the architectural device of concentrating interesting forms at one point: "the semi-circular portico, the so-called Palladian window above it, and the elliptical light just beneath the eaves constitute a decorative panel, so to speak, for the front of the porch projection, while the plain walls at the sides act as foils".

These are dwarfed by the influence that John Kent had on the early development of the west bank of the River Itchen in Southampton. In September 1802 he took out a 40-year Corporation lease on 370 yards of the west bank between Chapel and Northam. It lay immediately to the

south of Robert Adams's shipyard (Southampton City Archives SC4/3/1076). Kent had already begun to develop the property which - by the time he was forced to relinquish the lease in September 1813 - comprised a wharf (occupied in 1812 by Edward Knapp), a blockmaker's shop (occupied in 1812 by William King and _ Woodford), a corn store (built for the cornfactor Edward Westlake of Chapel Quay), deal yard and windmill. The project was a financial disaster. Kent was hounded through the courts in both Winchester and London by the Southampton ropemaker John Major in pursuit of a long-standing debt. An arrest warrant was issued in October 1807 against Kent "who is a builder & resides here [Southampton] but has now been some time at Gosport & I learn is building a house for Mr Jukes the banker there. There has been a writ against him in this town for some time past & he keeps out of the way" (Southampton City Archives D/PM Box 68/3: Thomas Ridding to John Handley, sheriff's officer at Gosport, 29 October 1807). Following a spell in the debtor's gaol in the Marshalsea, Kent was brought before the King's Bench at Westminster in 1808 charged with "contriving and fraudulently intending craftily to deceive and defraud the said John Major". An unconnected court case in 1808 - Chaplin and others v Kent - also involved the partial seizure of goods and chattels (Southampton City Archives D/PM Box 69/14/1). A draft indenture of 27 June 1809 (Southampton City Archives D/PM Box 44/171) suggests a willingness by Kent to explore unconventional means to extricate himself from his "ticklish situation". The sale of all the building materials ("except the fixtures and shelving of cupboards and closets there") of Grove Cottage near St Mary's Church raised £300. This money was used to pay off a debt to the Southampton ironmonger Edward Toomer. The recycled material, purchased by the Southampton bookseller Thomas Baker, was used to build a cottage on land owned by Baker on Shirley Common. Kent was engaged in "the whole of the taking down, removing and putting up again with all the alterations specified [by Baker]".

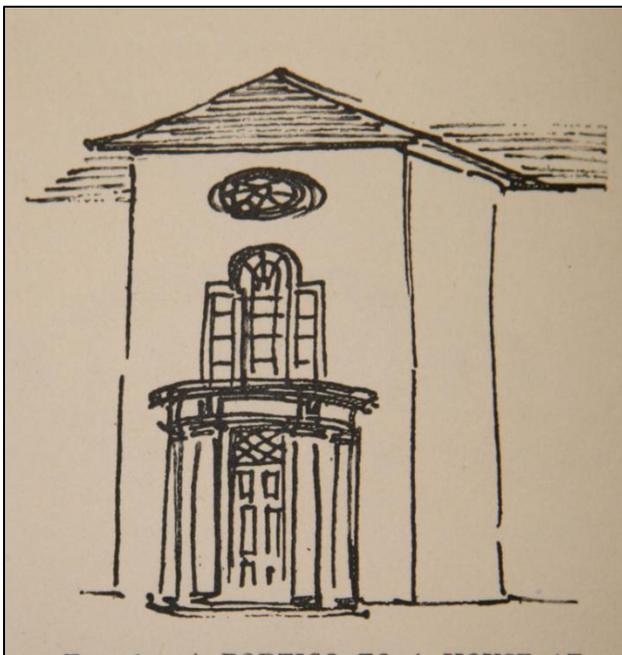


Figure 5. Sketch of a portico of unidentified house built by John Kent in Southampton in 1806

John Kent was declared bankrupt on 10 December 1810. His financial affairs began tortuously to unravel. His assignees (Henry Bloomfield Lankester and William Dell) proposed in April 1811 the sale of the two-thirds of a vessel belonging to Kent, two patents in his name and the recovery of title deeds in the hands of Edward Jukes, John Langley and George Morfs Jukes, bankers and merchants of Gosport, now bankrupt. This connects Kent with a complex of bankruptcy cases involving the Jukes which was still unresolved in 1832. Kent's household goods and stock in trade were sold at auction on 16 April 1811. These consisted of "goose-feather beds, bedsteads, tables, chairs, pier and other glasses; a quantity of building materials, timber, locks and keys,

sashes, marble slabs, register and Rumford stoves, ladders, patent lathe (mahogany) with circular wheel, a camera-obscura, and many other articles". A further assignees' auction on 27 April 1811 offered for sale a horse mill, with a pair of stones for grinding malt; a dressing machine; and a large brewing copper capable of boiling off five hogsheads. The remainder of Kent's estate and his interest in the properties fronting the River Itchen were auctioned on 28 February 1812. Lot 5 offered the material of the windmill on the shore at Northam "to be taken down and removed at the expense of the purchaser". The mill was taken down in 1814. The Corporation lease of the Mudlands - as we have seen - was surrendered in September 1813. Final release from bankruptcy came on 24 August 1815 with the payment of a final dividend.

Bankruptcy did not end Kent's career as an architect. Ryde Pier in the Isle of Wight – built of timber and 527 metres long - was designed and built by Kent between 1813 and 1814, when he was still subject to the commission of bankruptcy. The cost was £12,000. It is one of the earliest piers in the country and, although heavily altered, still stands. Similarly extant is St James church in Poole, rebuilt in collaboration with the Christchurch architect Joseph Hannaford between 1819 and 1821. It is in simplified Gothic, broadly Perpendicular. It replaced a medieval church and cost £11,740. Now Grade 2*, it is described by English Heritage on the *British listed buildings* website as an "exceptionally complete and virtually unaltered late Georgian church of high architectural quality". Its builder, Thomas Benham, set up as an architect in Southampton a few years later. Benham's Southampton works include the development of Portland Street and Portland Terrace for Richard Evamy, the development of Grosvenor Square and the design of St Paul's proprietary chapel on London Road. John Kent is named as architect in advertisements in September 1820 and September 1821 for the sale of building lots on either side of a newly built street - now Bernard Street - between the High Street and Orchard Lane. Finally, reviving the recycling theme, Kent is the contact for the private sale in October 1818 of part of the frontage - including two bow windows, the intervening pair of sash doors and handsome entablature - of a property then standing "about the centre of the High Street".

Three patents are in John Kent's name. A patent of 3 July 1810 was for 'certain improvements in the method of making artificial stone'. The other two - of 5 January 1799 and 12 March 1810 - are in pursuit of the philosopher's dream of perpetual motion: the first "a new method of applying power to effect a rotatory motion, substituting weight or pressure for animal strength", the second "an improvement on the principle of a lever on a moving fulcrum". *The Monthly Magazine*, July 1799 reported of the first: "Mr Kent is very sanguine in respect to the practical effect of this oblique pressure on the peripheries of wheels. He concludes that a perpetual motion may be effected by it, and that wheel carriages, ships, etc may be moved forward by its varied application". Of the second, the patentee himself wrote "that by inspection any competent mechanic can apply my said invention to any machinery he may think proper", and that the invention, although specifically designed for raising weights, "yet is also applicable to mills, pumps, moving carriages on iron railways and to various other kinds of machinery" (*The Repository of Arts, Manufactures, and Agriculture*, January 1811). Could this dream be one cause of Kent's financial woes? To quote the *Gentleman's Monthly Miscellany*, 1 April 1803, the impossible quest for perpetual motion "is always expensive, and is sometimes the ruin of a family"?

We have four addresses for John Kent in Southampton: Rattler's Yard [not identified] in 1803; St George's Place, Houndwell in 1820-1, Brunswick Place in 1824 and 18 South Front, Kingsland from 1830. In politics he usually voted on the Liberal side. Little is known of his personal life. St Michael's parish register records his marriage, as a widower, on 25 September 1795 to Sarah Roper, a 30-year old spinster. She died, aged 65 years, at Brunswick Place on 6 August 1825. John died in the summer of 1837. He is probably related to John Kent of Gosport, builder, who went bankrupt in 1793 and to John Kent the younger of Southwick, builder, who went bankrupt in November 1806.

John Taylor

John Taylor was an architect and builder in Southampton between the 1790s and the 1840s. He became a pupil - effectively a three-year apprenticeship - of John Plaw in 1797 or 1798. A later advertisement by Plaw for a pupil specified "a youth of genteel connections, liberal education, and who has a taste for drawing" (*Salisbury Journal*, 18 April 1803). John's immediate family were in the building trade. His grandfather, Joseph Taylor (died 1 February 1782), was a builder and carpenter. His father (also Joseph) was a house carpenter and builder, the business apparently being taken over by his mother (Elizabeth) when she became a widow. There were three uncles: Daniel, a bricklayer and ne'er-do-well who his father threatened to leave out of the distribution of the family's property "if he continued his indolent & wicked course of life" (will of 18 February 1779: Southampton City Archives 4/4/452/21); Richard, a stonemason; and James, a plumber. John Taylor showed – as an honorary exhibitor - five drawings at the Royal Academy between 1797 and 1800. These include All Saints church, Banister Court and Chessel House (all recently built) and, in 1799, a design for a bridge over the Itchen Ferry at Northam. His address is given between 1798 and 1800 as "at Mr Plaw's", suggesting he may have been living at his patron's house in Spring Place.



Figure 6. The new King Edward VI Grammar School

Most of John Taylor's architectural work was focused around the southern end of Bugle Street. He lived at 1 Bugle Street (on the west side near Bugle Hall) between 1811 at least and 1866. He succeeded to the family's traditional tenancy of 160 feet of prime Corporation-owned waterfront between the entrance to the pier and West Quay baths (the family had been Corporation lessees of a wharf and premises in Cuckoo Lane from the late-eighteenth century: Southampton City Archives SC 4/3/1611 and 1792). A boat house was added under John's tenancy. Eight allotments of building land - four in French Street and four in Bugle Street - were put up for auction in May 1820. John Taylor was named as builder. A major part of the development involved demolition of the medieval grammar school in what had been West Hall. The new grammar school was rebuilt between 1820 and 1821 to plans by John Taylor. A later photograph of the new school is given in C F Russell, *A history of King Edward VI School, Southampton*, 1920, opposite p 302 (figure 6). Only slightly away from this close assemblage of property and interests lay five messuages, with gardens, on the north side of Simnel Street, family property which passed to John Taylor in 1811 (Southampton City Archives SC 4/4/452/22).

Only one further work by John Taylor can be identified: "an elegant portico" added pre-1805 to Portswood House, originally built in 1776 by John Crunden (Howard Colvin (*An architectural dictionary of British architects 1600-1840*, 4th edition, 2008). Taylor seems to have been active as a builder up to the early 1840s. He is thereafter described (as in the 1851 census) as a retired builder. He did not marry, living until her death in August 1849 with his unmarried sister Mary. He died on 8 September 1866. He left his property to the six children of another sister, Elizabeth, and her husband William Mortimer, builder and timber merchant of Niton in the Isle of Wight. John Taylor is buried in Southampton cemetery.