

## Extracts from Matthew Boulton's Diary, 1836-1841

Sidney Raine of 38 Reddings Road hand-copied extracts from the 1836 to 1841 diary of Matthew Boulton, in the twentieth century. The original is now 'lost'. He copied them into a hard-covered unlined book, possibly from a book lent to him by Lucy Cranmore. Sidney Raine is shown in the census as born in 1884 and in the 1911 census as working as a brewer. The 1939 register supports this as does the fact that he published an article in the Mitchell's and Butler's Deerstalker Magazine, 1953, Volume 5, No.4 on 'M&B Houses: The Old Royal'. This book of extracts, donated to the Moseley Society History Group, is not a complete replica of Matthew Boulton's diary: Sidney Raine picked out particular elements of interest in 1969. However, it tells us a considerable amount about the lifestyle of a young man and local and national events of the period 1838-1841. The article quotes directly from the extracts and includes information gained elsewhere to round out the story of the people, events and places mentioned.

Matthew Boulton was born 3 January, 1807 and baptised at Turvey, Bedfordshire, on 10 November, 1807. He went to live early on with a distant relative, his cousin, Joseph Dyott (1755-1837) of Wake Green, Moseley. Joseph Dyott married Elizabeth Barker on 24 February, 1781, but she died on 6 September 1808, aged forty-nine years. 'After having been by him carefully brought up, and liberally educated', Matthew Boulton 'was retained as the attentive and useful companion of his declining years, and, finally, by his request, was appointed the successor of his property'.<sup>1</sup> Joseph Dyott was a landowner who lived in Moseley for more than thirty years. The Dyott farm and farm land bordered Wake Green Road between Billesley and Cotton Lanes and he had property in Birmingham. He died on 23 October, 1837, aged eighty-three years.<sup>2</sup> According to Matthew Boulton's diary, Mr Dyott had been unwell in 1837, because Mr Cox called to see Mr Dyott and 'found him much better' on 11 February.<sup>3</sup> On 13 May Mr Dyott had been recently complaining 'of something the matter with his heart. Mr Cox has consequently been to see him today'. On Sunday 13 August Mr Dyott was very unwell and Mr Cox called again. Mr Dyott died on 23 October 'at 20 past 9, O Lord receive his soul into thy Kingdom to dwell with thee for ever'. On the 30 October Matthew Boulton wrote, 'My dear departed Friend and Relative Mr Dyott was buried at Moseley Chapel in the same vault in which his wife was buried; in consequence of the smallness of the vault I was obliged to have it enlarged and Mrs Dyott put in a new coffin not having been buried in lead'. The procession of Mr Dyott's funeral included James Dowell and J. Collins (Mutes), Mr Lawson, the vicar and Mr Cox and Mr Simcox, professional gentlemen. The pall bearers were Mr J. Barker and opposite Mr Bedington, Mr Salmon and Mr Jarvis and Mr Reeves and Mr E. Barker.<sup>4</sup> Mr S. Rogers and Mr M. Boulton followed the

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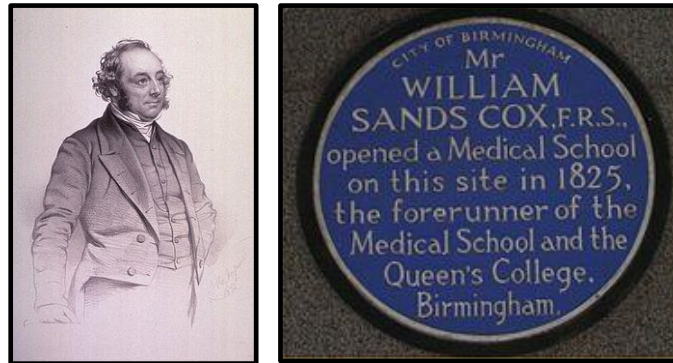
<sup>1</sup> Mural Tablet in St Mary's, Moseley Parish Church, transcribed by Mr F.G. Elcox, September, 1955.

<sup>2</sup> Mural Tablet St Mary's, Moseley Parish Church.

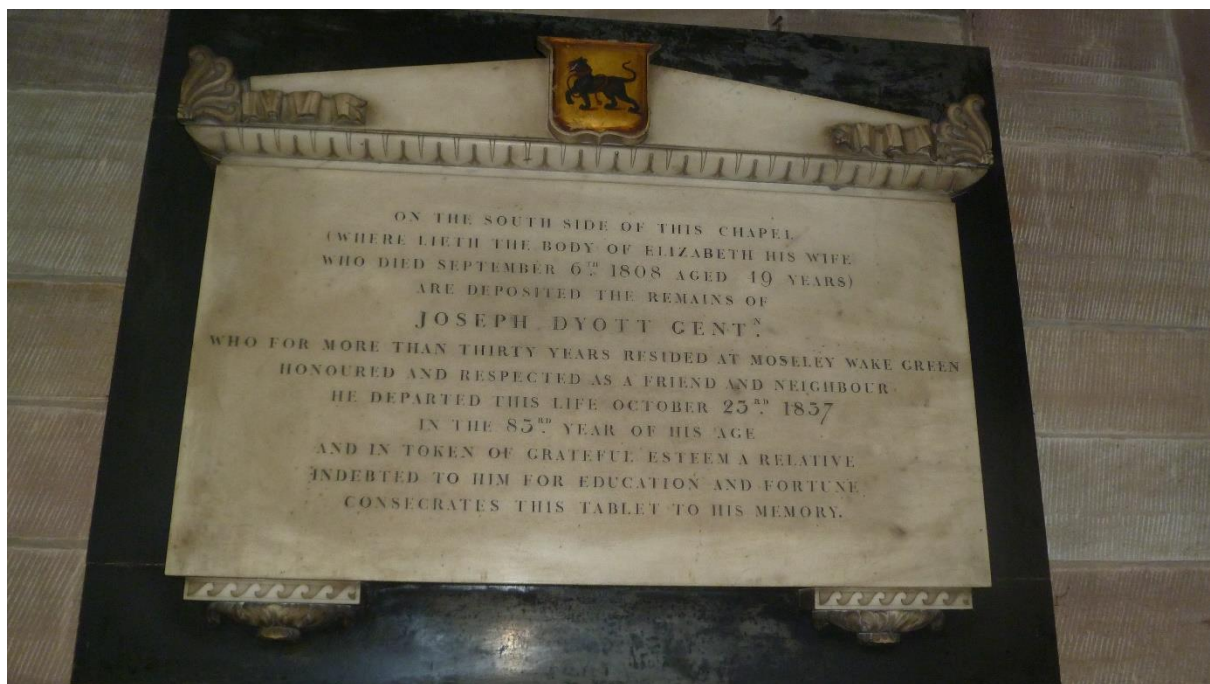
<sup>3</sup> William Sands Cox (1802-1875) was a famous surgeon. He was born in Birmingham and educated at King Edward's School. He began his medical career at Birmingham General Hospital in 1820. He helped found the new Queen's Hospital which opened in 1841.

<sup>4</sup> James Dowell built the almshouses, Dowell's Retreat, and by deed of 1831, endowed by his widow Elizabeth with property in Bordesley and elsewhere. Dowell's Retreat, Alcester Road, Moseley. A Mr Thomas Salmon was a committee member of the Moseley National School in 1827. John Gibson Reeves lived at Elmhurst, a large house where Marks & Spencer is located. Mr Simcox was a solicitor of Camp Hill.

coffin. The underbearers were J. Ratcliffe, J. Ashmore, J. Knowles, J. Graythornes, William Dowds and J. Goodall.



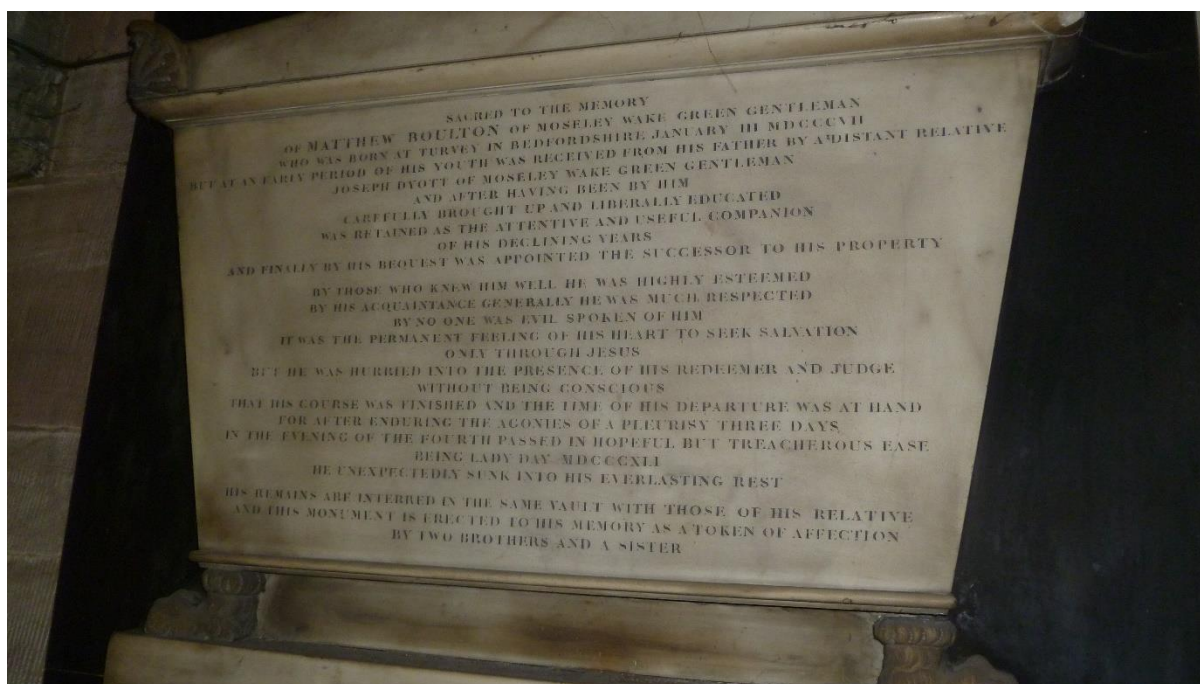
**William Sands Cox and the Blue Plaque, Birmingham.<sup>5</sup>**



**Memorial Joseph Dyott, St Mary's Church, Moseley.<sup>6</sup>**

<sup>5</sup> <https://openplaques.org/plaques/1555>. The blue plaque is on The House of Fraser Store.

<sup>6</sup> Courtesy of Rob Brown, Voluntary Archivist, St Mary's Church.



**Memorial to Moseley's Matthew Boulton.<sup>7</sup>**

Mr Dyott left a number of legacies, £1,550 to Catherine Rogers, widow of Skempton near Bedford, £1,000 to Elizabeth Lee, and £500 each to Mr Marchant, Rounds, Northamptonshire, Mr W. Marchant of Carlton, Northampton, Mary Dunt of Tooting, Edward Bridgman of Caldcot, Northampton, and Catherine Smallwood of Snowhill, Birmingham, all to be paid by Matthew Boulton, his executor, within 12 months.<sup>8</sup> On 31 October Matthew Boulton met Mr Chesshire at Bradford Street who came to take a valuation of goods and premises. On 4 November he gave a mourning ring to Mr Cox and a similar one to Mr Reeves. Mourning jewellery was a tribute or memento to remind the wearer of the person they had lost. On 12 November he paid Mr Dadley, the undertaker £95 16s 0d for the costs of the funeral. On 14 November he visited Mr Simcox's office concerning Mr Dyott's will and 'swore the personalty under £16,000'. Between 15 October and 2 November 1838, he 'went to Bedfordshire and London to pay off legacies by Mr Dyott'. On 30 April 1839 Mr Hollins put up a tablet to the memory of Mr Dyott which commemorates him as 'Honoured and respected as a friend and neighbour' 'in token of grateful esteem, a relative, indebted to him for education and fortune, consecrates this tablet in his memory'.

Matthew Boulton commenced his diary in 1836 when he was twenty-nine years old, while living with Mr Dyott at Wake Green. On 8 March 1841 Matthew Boulton was on a visit to his

<sup>7</sup> Courtesy of Rob Brown, Voluntary Archivist, St Mary's Church.

<sup>8</sup> Catherine Rogers, Mary Dunt, the Marchants and Edward Bridgman were his first cousins. Catherine Smallwood was his second cousin.

brother in Turvey.<sup>9</sup> The next day he attended an exhibition of hedging and ditching at his brother's farm. It was 'a fine day' and 'many persons' were present. After dinner he was 'taken unwell with a pain in my left side'. The following day he reported in his diary 'pain in my side no better. Left Turvey at '11 o'clock by coach to Weedon, then got on Rails and to Birmingham by 4'.<sup>10</sup> He called on W.S. Cox on 12 March, who 'ordered me a sparse diet and some physic'.<sup>11</sup> On 15 March he rode to Birmingham and called on Cox 'who ordered me some more physic'.<sup>12</sup> On 17 May he was feeling 'very Queer and unwell'. On 20 March he writes that he has 'been troubled with a sad cough the last three days but hope I am now getting better'. He died on 25 March 1841, aged thirty-four. The Mural Tablet in Moseley Parish Church erected by 'two brothers and a sister', states that 'By those who knew him well, he was highly esteemed, by his acquaintance, generally, he was much respected'. He was interred in the Dyott vault and died intestate. The estate went to Matthew Boulton's brother, Henry, and sister, Kate.

The diary provides some insights into his relationship with his immediate family: they exchanged letters and visits. He received a letter from Catherine, his sister (Kate, born 1809), on 16 February 1837, to say that she 'remains still at Hitchin' and he wrote one to Harry (Henry) (c.1805-1874), his brother, on 10 April the same year 'requesting him to send me £10', suggesting at this time, before Mr Dyott died and left him an inheritance, he was short of money. He received £10 from Harry on 20 June, the day King William 'expired'. He had a letter from Kate on 7 July 1837 saying 'she is going to leave Hitchin, her health, poor girl, is bad'. On 5 October 1837, 'My brother Henry and his wife, Mary (formerly Whitworth), whom he married in 1831, came to Wake Green'. The next day: 'Henry went by Railroad to Liverpool this morning, and I took Mrs Boulton to Birmingham – dined with Mrs Gill and came home by coach'. On 17 October 'My aunt, Mrs Rogers of Kemston in Bedfordshire, came to see Mr Dyott'. On Sunday 5 November 1837, he 'started at 2 o'clock with Samuel in his gig for Bedfordshire'. On 13 November 1837, he 'left Tovey this morning and returned by the Eagle Coach to Moseley'. On 26 December 1837, he 'drove my horse and gig to Leamington on my road to Bedfordshire'. He 'left Leamington about 9 and got to Turvey about 5. Surprised and pleased to find my sister Agnes Boulton there – she is quite a woman'. On 9 April 1838, he went 'To Dunstable by coach to take sister Kate to London'. On 24 May 1838, 'My brother Henry and Mr Whitworth came in a gig to see me'. The next day he took his visitors 'to Birmingham and shewed them the Eagle Foundry, Mr Gammon's glassworks, the Proof House and rail road stations'.<sup>13</sup> On 31 January 1839 he received 'a

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<sup>9</sup> Turvey is a village and civil parish on the River Great Ouse in Bedfordshire about six miles west of Bedford between there and Northampton.

<sup>10</sup> Weedon is a village and parish in West Northamptonshire.

<sup>11</sup> William Sands (1802-1875) Cox was born in Birmingham and educated at King Edward's School. He began his medical career at Birmingham General Hospital in 1820. He helped found the new Queen's Hospital which opened in 1841.

<sup>12</sup> William Sands Cox lived in Temple Row, Birmingham.

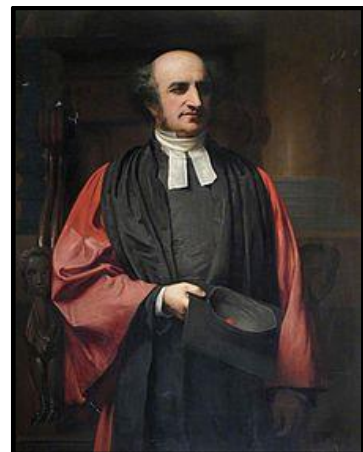
<sup>13</sup> The Eagle Foundry was in Broad Street. Mr Whitworth was an engineer and he manufactured produced all kinds of rolling and flatting mills engines etc. Mr Gammon's Glassworks is probably William Gammon & Son, Belmont Glassworks, Great Brook Street, Birmingham, which appears in various 1830s gazetteers. The Birmingham Gun Barrel Proof House is a weapons proofing establishment in Banbury Street, Birmingham, established in 1813 by an Act of Parliament at the request and expense of the then prosperous Birmingham Gun Trade. Curzon Street Station opened in 1838.



letter from Mrs Boulton my mother-in-law' (*'mother-in-law' was used at this time to mean step mother*). On 13 February, 1839, he 'went by Railway to Wolverton, hired a horse and gig to Turvey. Henry's wife, is exceeding ill, and no hope of her life. Slept at the Tinker'. On 18 March he received 'a letter from Brother Henry telling me of the death of his wife' in 1839 shortly after she had given birth to another son, George James Boulton, (1838-1838) who died soon after birth. On 20 June 1839, he went 'with Kate, his sister, to the Botanical Gardens to the Flower Show – a fine day and numerous company.'<sup>14</sup> On 11 June, 1840, he went 'with Kate to the Flower Show at the Town Hall'. On 12 July 1840, he 'went by railway to Wolverton. My brother Harry met me there with his gig and drove me to Turvey'. On Sunday 19 July he went with Henry to Turvey Church in the morning. Agnes and Lucy came over from Olney to pass the day. On 17 September 'Harry arrived here (from Turvey) with his daughter Mary'. Matthew 'arrived at Wolverton and found Kate at Turvey' on 13 December. In the afternoon of 17 December he 'went with Henry to Chillington and took tea with Grandpa Whitworth'. On 21 December Matthew 'returned home – putting myself and the gig on the railway at Weedon'. On 8 March 1841, he 'went to Turvey to see Henry. He has recently lost his two youngest children, and I thought a visit of condolence would be agreeable to him'. These children were Henry Boulton (1836-1841) and Anne Maria Boulton (1836-1841). Death was an ever-present threat at this time. Henry remarried to Anne Susan Browne (1810-1886) on 23 March, 1843, and went to live in Godlington. He had two more sons, Henry Maurice Matthew Boulton (1846-1917) and Joseph Arthur Browne Boulton (1847-1852) who died aged five years. Matthew Boulton's next diary entry, 9 March, 1841, is when he first mentions feeling unwell with a pain in his side that ends in his death.



**St Mary's Church, Moseley, 1812.**<sup>15</sup>



**Dr Jeune**

The Diary shows Matthew Boulton was a regular attender at St Mary's, Moseley, a Chapel of Ease at the time, sometimes attending twice on Sundays. On Sunday 25 September 1836, a Dr Jeune gave a charity sermon on the National School which drew a collection of £20 0s 4d.<sup>16</sup> Reverend Walter Farquhar Hook, the curate-in-charge of St Mary's Chapel, formed a

<sup>14</sup> The Birmingham Botanical Gardens at Edgbaston opened in 1832.

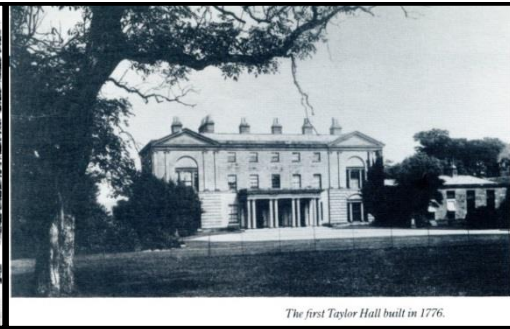
<sup>15</sup> Baxter, M., & Drake, P., *Moseley, Balsall Heath and Highgate*, The Archive Photographs Series, (Chalford: The Chalford Publishing Company, 1996), p.66.

<sup>16</sup> Dr Jeune was probably Francis Jeune (1806-1868) an academic and churchman, Dean of Jersey (1838-1844), Master of Pembroke College, Oxford (1844-1864) and Bishop of Peterborough (1864-1868). He was Chief

committee of local influential men in 1827 to build a school for the education of the poor.<sup>17</sup> A public meeting was called which proposed a general subscription of donations and annual subscriptions. The committee comprised Rev. Walter Farquhar Hook (Secretary), James Taylor (Treasurer), Isaac Anderton, Thomas Salmon and William C. Russell. Subscribers included Joseph Dyott along with the Hook, Farquar and Taylor families, the Andertons, Samuel Ryland, J. Sansome and the Misses Thrupp, proprietors of local schools, and Edward Holmes, the architect of School Road. Moseley National School was the first of its kind in Birmingham.



**Moseley Hall, 1791 prior to riots**



**Moseley Hall after rebuilding.**



**Moseley Hall,  
George Waring Ormerod, 1829.<sup>19</sup>**



**Mansion House, Moseley.<sup>18</sup>**

James Taylor was the second son of John Taylor II, a banker who founded Taylors and Lloyds Bank.<sup>20</sup> His father, John Taylor I, a wealthy Birmingham manufacturer of metal products such as buttons and small gilded or japanned objects such as snuff boxes, bought Moseley Hall in 1764 for £9,000. John Taylor II rebuilt the hall in brick and stone for £6,000 in 1776, and then rebuilt it again in 1792 -1796 after it was burned out in 'the memorable and

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Master of King Edward's School, Birmingham, from 1835 to 1838, rebuilding the school buildings and reforming the curriculum.

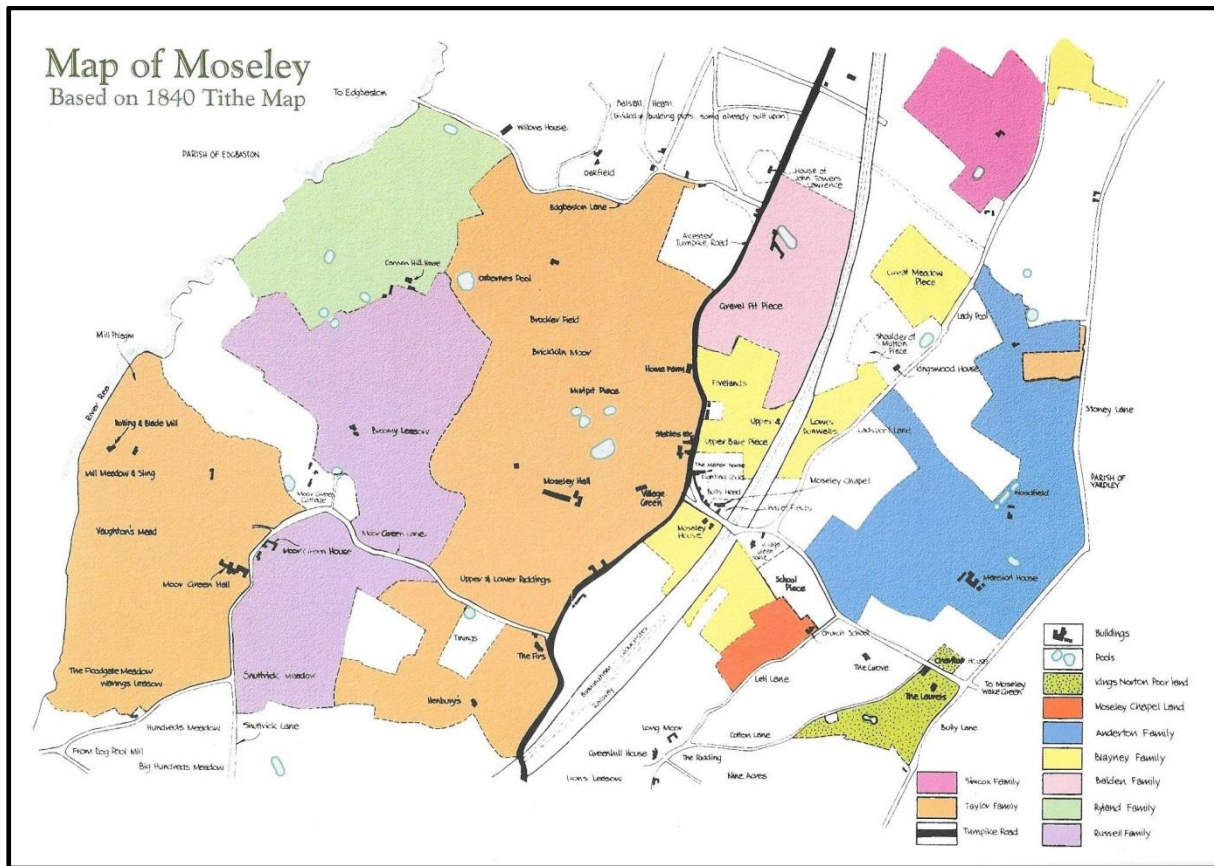
<sup>17</sup> Price, Fred, *Moseley Church of England National School: A History, 1828-1969* (Birmingham: Wordcraft Print and Design Ltd., 1998), pp.4-6.

<sup>18</sup> MSHGC, (MC/D1/11/7).

<sup>19</sup> MS10/1, Special Collections, University of Birmingham, pp. 13 & 17.

<sup>20</sup> Fairn, *A History of Moseley*, p.41 (1973 edition) and p.19 (2004 edition).

disgraceful riots which took place at Birmingham in the year 1791', the Priestley Riots.<sup>21</sup> John Taylor II died in 1814, his widow remained at the Hall and James succeeded him. According to the 1843 Tithe Apportionment for the Moseley Yield James Taylor was the largest landowner in Moseley with 938 acres.<sup>22</sup>



**Moseley Tithe Map, 1840.<sup>23</sup>**

Other subscribers to the Moseley National School were also important members of Moseley society. Isaac Anderton, a city ironmonger and slum landlord, inherited the 596-acre Wake Green Estate and Mansion House from his father in 1833. In 1841 when he was aged sixty, he had his sisters Sarah aged fifty-five, Rebecca aged fifty, and Anne aged forty-five living with him. He died in 1852. Thomas Salmon ... William Congreve Russell (1778-1850) was the son of Thomas Russell of Moor Green, Moseley. He was commissioned a captain when the North Worcester Volunteers were formed in 1803. He was a Whig politician elected in the 1832 general election as one of the two Members of Parliament for East Worcestershire. He stood down in 1835. He was the High Sherriff of Worcestershire in 1839 and a major landowner in Moseley. The family fortune of Samuel Ryland of *The Laurels*, Hagley Road,

<sup>21</sup> Robson's Birmingham and Sheffield Directory, 1839; History and General Directory of the Borough of Birmingham (Francis White & Co), 1849; History, Gazetteer and Directory of Warwickshire (Francis White & Co), 1850.

<sup>22</sup> Fairn, *A History of Moseley*, p.29 & 41 (1973 edition) and pp.12 & 19 (2004 edition).

<sup>23</sup> Fairn A, *A History of Moseley*, Preface (2004 edition).



Edgbaston, was made in the wire drawing industry and land investment by his father, John Ryland. Louisa Anne Ryland, Samuel's daughter, inherited his fortune in 1843 and was a great benefactress. Mr and Mrs G. Sansome inherited and continued Moseley Classical and Commercial School following the death in 1837 of Mr J.T. Sansome who moved the school in 1825 to Alcester Road.<sup>24</sup> The Misses Charlotte and Ann Maria had a boarding school on the south side of School Road, Moseley, which opened in 1824 and continued until 1847, despite Anna's death in 1839.<sup>25</sup>

Matthew Boulton remarks on other sermons: on Sunday 27 November 1836, Mr Lawson preached a charity sermon in accordance with the King's Letter in aid of the Church Building Society: 'He powerfully advocated the cause in eloquent and forceful language'.<sup>26</sup> The Rev. William Morrell Lawson MA was curate of Moseley Chapel from 1831 until 1852. Sometime after his appointment in 1831 to the living, Mrs Underhill, who then lived at Hayfield, Moseley Wake Green, built The Vale opposite her house as a parsonage for him. On January 1, 1837, 'an impressive' sermon was given by Mr Adderly on the text 'This year thou shalt die, Jeremiah 28, verse 16'. In the same year 'a long dull sermon' was given by Mr Craven against cruelty to dumb animals on 5 March. On March 12 he went to church twice and heard the two sermons preached by Mr Considine for Mr Lawson who 'acquitted himself uncommonly well'. On Sunday April 2 he was 'pleased' by a choir, 'late of Edgbaston', which chanted part of the service for the first time on a trial basis to see if the congregation liked them. The following week he considered that the choir was 'quite an acquisition; it increases the devotional feeling and I hope the congregation will continue it'. He attended a Vestry meeting at St Mary's Chapel on 21 April 1837 which was 'for the purpose of deciding about the choir – some few persons belonging to the congregation being much opposed to them. It was thought better not to engage them'.

Matthew Boulton went to church twice on Sunday 14 March 1837, but states that 'I wish I could increase my devotional feeling during divine service, but I find my thoughts sometimes sadly wandering'. Attending church was a social as well as religious experience. He notes here that 'Mr and Mrs Tombs our new neighbours were at church for the first time'. He not only attended church on Sundays but was also involved in Church activities. He was there on Wednesday 21 December 1836, St Thomas' Day, when 'a great quantity of poor came this day to receive their customary gifts'. He 'gave the aged poor 50 sixpenny loaves' on the same occasion the following year. On Sunday 23 April 1837 he reports that 'Mr Taylor has committed to my charge a petition against abolishing Church rates – in order that I may get as many signatures as possible around Wake Green'.<sup>27</sup> On 16 November 1840

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<sup>24</sup> MSHGC, (C2/D1/F10/26).

<sup>25</sup> <https://andyunderscore.com/2018/20/moseley-1838>.

<sup>26</sup> George IV (1820-1830) and William IV (1830-1837) were supporters of the Church Building Society formed in 1818 and incorporated in 1828. The Duke of York was its first patron. King's Letters were originally known as Church Briefs. They were Royal injunctions and were a way parishes raised money /stored funds from wealthier parishioners after Sunday service.

<sup>27</sup> The church rate was levied in each parish for the benefit of the parish church to meet the costs of divine service, repairs to church buildings and salaries of officials. It was imposed on the occupier of land or a house in the parish. Resolutions were passed protesting against the rate, and societies to abolish the rate were formed all over the country. In 1836 at a public meeting in London, a central committee, the Church Rate

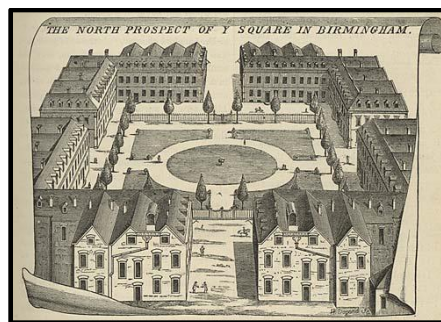


he 'attended a vestry meeting at Moseley Chapel respecting the repairs to be done to the Tower'.

Death was ever present at the time. Matthew Boulton noted in his diary on 31 December 1836, the death of Mr Sansome, the schoolmaster of Moseley who died of 'apoplexy while on a visit to Solihull' and on 14 March, 1837, the death of John Simcox, esq. of Camp Hill who 'departed this life early this morning. He was in his 66<sup>th</sup> year – and will be lamented by all who had the good fortune to know him'. He reported on Mrs Parker's death at the age of seventy-three on Sunday 18 March, 1838, writing: 'This afternoon my next door neighbour breathed her last'. A few days later, on 22 March, he noted the death of Mrs Taylor of Moseley Hall 'the day before yesterday'. On 1 April Mr Lawson preached 'a very fine sermon on death –exceedingly impressive in consequence of the decease of Mrs Taylor'. In the evening he went 'to Christ Church to hear Mr Bray preach a sermon on account of the death of Mrs Parker. Death is a fearful subject'.<sup>28</sup> The only other reference to health apart from those in relation to his family, is on 11 October 1839 when he 'went to Mr Robinson in the Old Square to shew him my teeth'.<sup>29</sup> He stopped one, and advised me to have it removed'.



**Christchurch, Birmingham**



**Old Square, Birmingham**

Matthew Boulton notes key national and local events in his diary too. He lived through a change of monarch. On 10 June 1837, 'it is reported that the king is dead'. The next day he notes that 'the king is not dead, but very ill'. On Sunday 18 June he went with Mrs Reeves in the evening to 'drink the Duke's health in a glass of madeira'. On 20 June he states that 'King William IV expired this morning at 12 minutes past 2'. On Sunday 25 June 'the new Queen Victoria was prayed for, for the first time' at Moseley Chapel and on 28 June 1838 'This day Her Majesty the Queen was crowned'. He notes on 10 February 1840, that 'The Queen was married this day to Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha'. In his entry on Sunday 12 January 1840, he noted that on the previous Friday, 'the penny post' had come into operation. The 1840 Penny Post and the Penny Black made the post cheaper and post doubled to 347 million letters by 1850. Stage coaches carried mail and in 1849 omnibuses

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Abolition Society, was formed to co-ordinate the efforts of local abolitionist Societies. The parish rate remained compulsory until 1868.

<sup>28</sup> Christchurch was a parish church in Colmore Row, Birmingham established in 1805 and demolished in 1899.

<sup>29</sup> The square dates from 1713 and was designed by William Westley. In 1832 stones there were used as missiles by the crowd during a public demonstration during the parliamentary elections of that year.

brought postal services to Moseley, including parcels.<sup>30</sup> Parcels by omnibus under 14 lbs cost 2d; above 14 lbs and under 28lbs cost 3d which must be prepaid. On Friday 10 January he mentions that 'the trial of John Frost at Monmouth is ended. He is found guilty of high treason'. John Frost was a prominent Chartist who, on 3-4 November 1839 led a march of some 3,000 on the Westgate Inn, Newport, where some of the Newport establishment and sixty armed soldiers were ensconced. The soldiers started firing and twenty-five minutes later twenty-two people were dead and about fifty wounded. Frost was arrested, charged with High Treason, tried at Monmouth's Shire Hall, found guilty and sentenced to be hanged. A huge public outcry followed and the sentence was commuted to transportation for life. In Van Dieman's Land (modern Tasmania) Frost did two years' hard labour, was indentured to a local storekeeper, worked three years as a clerk and then eight years as a school teacher, finally earning his ticket of leave. On 18 June 1840, Matthew Boulton 'attended the ceremony of laying the first stone of the Queen's Hospital by Earl Howe'. The Queen's Hospital was probably England's first purpose-built teaching hospital and opened with seventy beds.<sup>31</sup> The hospital's foundation stone was laid with great fanfare, including a breakfast for 300 and a parade. Earl Howe is a title that has been created twice in British history, for members of the Howe and Curzon-Howe family respectively. The second creation was in 1821 for Richard Curzon.



**The Queen's Hospital, Birmingham, c.1910.<sup>32</sup>**

Matthew Boulton remarked frequently on the weather in his diary: Sunday 25 September 1836 was 'a fine day'; on 28 December the same year 'the drifted snow has blocked the roads and the coaches that left London on Sunday, Christmas day, did not arrive in Birmingham until 5 o'clock this evening', Wednesday. The frost continued on 1 January 1837, but Sunday 28 May was a 'fine day' and Sunday 25 June was 'very hot', whilst 2

<sup>30</sup> *History and General Directory of the Borough of Birmingham* (Francis White & Co), 1849; *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Warwickshire* (White, F.), 1850; *PO Directory of Birmingham with Staffs and Worcestershire*, 1850.

<sup>31</sup> Reinartz, J., *Health Care in Birmingham: The Birmingham Teaching Hospitals, 1779-1939*, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009), pp.5 and 56-59.

<sup>32</sup> Cockel, R., (PCRC).

August was a 'very wet morning'. In 1838 he went to a meeting at Alcester Lanes End on behalf of the poor who, 'in consequence of the long continued frost are in great distress'. It was still 'very cold' on 27 April of that year.

He spent a great deal of time socialising. He associated with the Andertons, Mr G. Anderton and his 'old master Mr. J. Anderton and Miss Rebecca'. On 30 May 1837 he 'called at the Andertons to see Mr John Anderton who is staying there for a few days'. He spent a good deal of time with the Reeves family of Moor Street, Mr and Mrs Reeves, Miss Home and Fanny. On 19 May 1837 he dined 'with Mr Reeves' mother, and at night to sleep at Mr Lawson's cot. Never felt so tired and weary with walking'. The next day he 'slept nearly all day'. On 22 May 1837 he 'called in Moor Street this morning and stopped for dinner. The young ladies are going to Devonport next week; mocked Miss Fanny's handkerchiefs, stockings and two nightcaps. Spent a pleasant day with them. They brought me home in the carriage in the afternoon'. He 'dined at Mr Richard Reeves on the occasion of the christening of his first born child' on 1 June, 1837 and the next day breakfasted at Mr Reeves with Miss Home and Fanny. Fanny made me a dear little present of a very pretty book called 'The Sentiments of Flowers' – a parting gift before her departure for Devonport. She is a dear graceful little girl and I sent her the following lines:

Though art going, dear Fanny away  
Far away to a different scene and wilt leave us to sorrow, a prey  
Who lately so happy have been  
But ere fairest maid you depart  
And leave us with sorrow to dwell  
I'll write a few thoughts of my heart  
And wish you a gentle farewell'

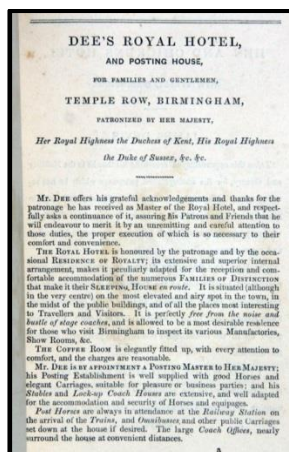
The poem goes on in this way for six further verses.

Mr Lawson with whom he sometimes stayed was often there too. He had a number of 'delightful' walks on the common with Mr Lawson and the Reeves family. He went drinking with Mr Reeves: in the afternoon of 15 August, 1837, to Cold Bath where they had 'a bottle or two of wine beside the side of the pool'. Coldbath Pool dates from at least 1750 and is thought to have been constructed as a fish pond.<sup>33</sup> He went drinking again with Mr Reeves despite the falling out after the concert (below) on 27 November 1837, to taste some port wine at Mr Smallwood's and chose two ¼ pipes of port.<sup>34</sup> The Arnolds were another of his acquaintances. He called on them on 14 June 1837 in the evening and 'stayed an hour or two'. Mr Arnold was a well-known solicitor living at Wake Green and is buried in St Mary's graveyard. 'Young John Arnold called this evening and had some of my pansies' he writes of 16 June 1837. He went there to a large evening party on 18 July 1837 and again on 18 September 1839 when it was 'young John's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday'.

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<sup>33</sup> Acocks Green History Society (2018). *Standing waters (millpools and fishponds)*. [www]  
<https://aghs.jimdo.com/waters-of-yardley/standing-waters/>

<sup>34</sup> 1 pipe of port is 550 litres.



He 'went to the Assembly at Dee's Hotel' with the Arnolds on 31 December 1839.



He mentions Mr Bekenns – going there on 28 July 1837, to a rural party and when ‘inspired by champagne’ he ‘contrived to spout after dinner the following ...’ (fifty lines of original verse on the new young Queen). This poem was published in *The Advertiser* on 25 January 1838. On 20 March 1838, though, Matthew attended ‘Bekenn’s sale at Showell Green, who, poor man has been unlucky in trade’.

He celebrated birthdays with friends: on Sunday 4 June 1837 it was Mr Dyott’s birthday. He was eighty-two years old. Mr Reeves, Mr Beddington and Mr Lawson dined with him and Mrs Reeves, Miss Home and Mr Rawlins came in the evening and stayed for supper. For Matthew’s birthday on 3 January 1839 they had ‘a few friends round to dinner, Mr Lawson, Mr Eccles, Mr Cox, Mr Simcox, Rev. Mr Smith of Lichfield, Captain Crawley, Mr W. Beddington jnr, and Mr R. Underhill – very merry together’. He also mentions ‘young Tombs’ (11 August, 1837), dining with Mr Underhill at the Fighting Cocks (18 August, 1837), Barnaby Cheshire (12 February, 1838), Mr S. Rawlins, Steelhouse Lane (19 July, 1838), Mr Docker, Ladypool Lane (28 December 1838), Mrs Underhill and her visitors from Wales (22 January 1839), a large evening party at Mr Palmer’s, Cannon Hill (7 February 1839), the Crocketts at Bowling Green (9 August, 1839), a small party of ladies at Mr Bramahs’ (6 May, 1840), tea in the evening at Miss Bramah’s (11 June, 1840) and dining with Mr E. Barker (18 June, 1840). The Fighting Cocks was originally a ‘sporting venue’ for cock fighting, but by the mid-1840’s it was a genteel place to stop. On 19 June, 1840 he had a dinner party. His guests were ‘Mr and Miss Lawson, Mr and Mrs Bramah, Mrs Sandle, Miss Cochrane, Miss Roby, William Beddington and E. Docker. On 3 August 1840, ‘Mr Lawson, Edward and Charles Male, Dr Corne, Charles Amphlett dined with me and played Bowles’.

Matthew Boulton seems to have enjoyed the company of young ladies as his ‘flirtation’ with Fanny above suggests. On 5 June 1837, he gave some pansies to Miss Howe, a young lady on a visit to the Jervises and the next day ‘got up at five o’clock to take some flowers for Miss Home and Fanny and see them start in the coach to Davenport. Miss Home went by the Hero, a Bristol coach, but poor Fanny is too ill to travel’. He mentions ‘Emily’ several times. On 21 November 1839 he ‘called at Dr Males and again saw Emily. Amor crescit’.<sup>35</sup> On 2 December the same year he called there again and ‘saw Emily’. He sent her a valentine on

<sup>35</sup> ‘Armor crescit’ means ‘love grows’.



13 February 1840. The original diary included here 'a poetical enigma'. Called at Dr Male's on 25 April, 1840 and 'saw Emily. Thermometer amoris at zero!'. He went in the evening of 30 June 1840, 'to Hall Green and saw Emily Male'. On 28 September 1840, he 'went again to the bazaar in the Shakespearian Rooms – not many there, but Emily was there, and that was all in all to me'. Going to a ball was a high point. On 5 October 1838, 'between 10 and 11 escorted Mrs Johnstone and two Miss Myddletons to the Ball at the County Hall, certainly the most splendid Ball I was ever at. No expense spared, about 600 present. I was most attentive to my party – danced alternatively with the two young ladies and took them home before 5 in the morning'. He reports on local marriages: On 9 July 1839, 'My neighbour Miss E. Palmer was married this morning at Kings Norton to Rev. Mr H.G. Cooper'. On 10 February 1840 Mr Lawson, the curate of Moseley Chapel, 'started into Yorkshire on purpose to get married'. On Monday 17 February he heard that Mr Lawson was married on Saturday to Miss Lindley.

He had a wide range of other interests. He went to Flower Shows: on the 18 May 1837 he went 'to the Flower Show of the Society of Arts and afterwards dined with Mrs Reeves, Miss Home and Fanny in Moor Street. Mr Lawson called for me in the evening. I came home with him and slept at his cot'. The Royal Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) was founded in 1754 as the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce and was granted a Royal Charter in 1847. On 7 June 1837 he called on Mr Bank's nursery, Cheapside, and bought several flower roots. On February 28, 1837, he 'went with Mr Lawson to The Fox Hollies, the residence of the late Rev. J. Kennedy to the sale of books'. Fox Hollies Hall, Acocks Green, is remembered in Fox Hollies Road. On 23 June, 1837 he went to the 'Moseley Book Club Dinner at Mrs Todd's. Bought *The Seven Ages of England* and *The Life of Ali Pasha*'. On 5 July 1839 he 'dined at the Book Club Dinner at Moseley and bought lots of books'. The Book Club Dinner on 7 July 1840, took place at the Fighting Cocks and twenty members were present. He attended sales; on 19 June 1837 he went to the sale of the effects of Mr Theophilus Richards of Handsworth Hall who was, according to Sidney Raine, a jeweller in High Street and the father of the original Westley Richards, gun smith. There is a monument to him and his wife, Mary, in St Philip's, Birmingham Cathedral. Matthew Boulton joined societies. On 11 May 1838, he went 'afterwards to a Committee Meeting of the Natural History Society'. On 10 August he 'dined at Mr J. Taylor's where a plan was proposed to establish a Friendly Society in this neighbourhood' and on 25 August went to 'a meeting at the National School respecting the Friendly Society'. Friendly Societies were mutual associations for the purpose of insurance, pensions, savings or cooperative banking – benefit societies. They provided financial and social services to individuals. On 30 October 1839, he 'attended a meeting of the trustees of the Bromsgrove turnpike. Let the tolls for £2,960'.

Matthew Boulton was enthusiastic about the Birmingham Musical Festival. On 19 September 1837 he went to the opening morning performance at the Town Hall, which was three parts full. Afterwards he dined with Mr Reeves, but something went amiss: he writes 'What there occurred I shall never forget. Mr Reeves showed himself to me as being what I did not before suppose – both avaricious and exceedingly covetous'. On 20 September he was at a very full Town Hall 'for a new oratorio by Mr Mendelssohn called St Paul, to the delight and gratification of all present'. The next day the Town Hall was again crowded, this time to hear the Messiah. He was at the Town Hall again the morning of 22 September. 'The

performance commenced with an organ prelude by Mr Mendelsohn. The hall was well filled. The evening performances have gone off equally well, and the ball tonight will be crammed'. The total receipts for the Festival were £11,224 7s 8d. The first half of the nineteenth century saw the profile of Birmingham's musical culture, and particularly that of the Birmingham Music Festival, gradually establish first a national and then an international importance. The Birmingham Triennial Music Festival took place from 1874, the first in 1868 was to help raise funds for the new General Hospital, Summer Lane. Birmingham Town Hall was built in 1834 to house the Festival which was delayed for 1832 during its erection. In 1837 Felix Mendelsohn conducted a performance of his St Paul oratorio, played the organ and played the piano part in the premiere of his second Piano Concerto, specially commissioned by the Festival. In the following Festival he played his first Piano Concerto. For the 1846 Festival he composed and conducted the premiere of his oratorio Elijah, another new work commissioned by the Festival. Matthew Boulton was clearly fond of music: On 13 August 1838 he 'went to a concert at Dee's Royal Hotel in the evening'. He went there again on 31 December 1838 with Mr J Rawlins, Steelhouse Lane, 'and in the evening danced the Old Year out', but 'felt rather seedy after the ball, did not get home till 3 o'clock in the morning'. He showed an interest in art too. On 28 October 1839, he attended a lecture by Messrs St Croix on a new method of taking landscapes by Daguerrotype, a photograph taken by an early photographic process employing an iodine-sensitized silvered plate and mercury vapour.

He took to horses. On 6 March 1838, he 'rode to Tamworth to see a steeple chase – the first I ever saw. A very numerous company of people assembled to witness that very cruel diversion'. On 14 March he went hunting and 'met the Atherstone hounds at Sutton Park. This is the first days hunting I have had with those hounds. I have partaken of the sport once or twice in Bedfordshire but am rather an inexperienced rider, though, I trust, a hopeful learner'. On 18 December 1838 he 'met Mr Chandler's hounds at Bromsgrove Lickey. On 4 January 1839 he went 'hunting. Hounds met at Hockley House'. On 1 March 1839, the hounds met at the White Lion, Portway 'a capital run'. He went to the Solihull races on 28 March 1839. On 8 February 1840 he 'went hunting with Hilliers Hounds – they met at Hampton village'. Two days later on 10 February he 'went hunting with Mr Wicksteed's harriers – they are come to Mr Taylor's kennels for a week'. On 14 February he 'went hunting again with Mr Wicksteed's harriers – they met at Andertons Mill – capital sport'.

Matthew Boulton also got involved in the Yeomanry. Volunteer regiments were raised from yeomen, small farmers who owned land, following the French Revolution and the rise of Napoleon because of the perceived threat of invasion. During the first half of the nineteenth century Yeomanry Regiments were used extensively in support of the civil authority to quell riots and civil disturbances. As police forces were created, the Yeomanry concentrated on local defence. Later the number of regiments was reduced and the yeomanry establishment was a fixed at twenty-two regiments receiving allowances and sixteen serving without pay. On 19 July, 1837, he reports that 'Mr Taylor has his Waterloo Day this day. Dined his troop at Moor Green. Mr St Paul and Mr Barnaby dined with them'. On 27 April, 1838, he had 'an

equestrian lesson at the barracks'. On 6 June 1838, he 'received a note from Mr Taylor offering me a cornet in his troop of yeomanry, so I am now to play at soldiering'. 'Cornet' came to refer to the fifth commissioned officer in a cavalry troop who carried the colours. The subaltern rank of cornet was the equivalent of the contemporary infantry rank of ensign, today, second lieutenant. On 18 July 1838, 'attended a horse drill on the Common'. On the 28 June 1838, on the day the Queen was crowned, 'I put on my military uniform for the first time. Our Squadron met upon the common in Review Order and went through the exercise, then drank to the Queen in a glass of wine. Afterwards they sat down to a substantial lunch provided by the lieutenants of the cornet. In Birmingham 4,000 people dined in the Market Hall'. The construction of the Market Hall in front of St Martin's Church began in 1833 and opened in 1835. It was a grand building and contained 600 market stalls.



**A Drawing of the Entrance to the Market Hall, Birmingham, from William Hutton's *The History of Birmingham*, published in 1836**

On 30 August 1838, he 'went to Hewell at the invitation of Colonel the Honorable Mr Clive who invited all the officers of the Q O (Queen's Own) Worcestershire Y.C. to go through a drill. We were drilled for more than three hours in the Park. We then sat down to a most sumptuous lunch. Drove Mr J. Simcox there in my gig and back again in the evening'. On 21 September 1838, 'Drove Mr J. Simcox in my gig to Worcester to seek out lodgings for the week after next, when the yeomanry go there for permanent duty'. On 29 September that year he wrote, 'This morning I found myself a soldier with the yeomanry. Dressed myself in my regimentals and drove Mr J. Simcox to Bromsgrove, marched from thence with our Squadron to Worcester, arriving about 2'. Two days later they were 'mustered at half past eight and marched to Kempsey Ham, where we had a long drill'. It was not all drilling though: on 7 November 'Our squadron had their Annual Dinner at the Bull's Head, Hall Green. All passed off well'.

Matthew Boulton's diary extracts give a picture of the Bull Ring Riots in Birmingham in 1839. These occurred following the rejection of a petition by Chartists presented to Parliament by

Thomas Attwood on 14 June, which greatly angered the Chartists. A National Convention of all interested Chartists moved from London to Birmingham in May 1839 and large Chartists meetings were held in the Bull Ring. Local Birmingham magistrates tried to ban the meetings and enrolled special constables, some 2,000 to 3,000, as well as readying troops. Meetings in the Bull Ring restarted in July and London police were used to disperse the crowd and arrest speakers. The crowd fought back and drove out the police. Rioting followed the rejection of the petition in July in Birmingham and elsewhere and the Riot Act was read. Troops moved in with the cavalry and artillery on standby in the streets. Houses were attacked and burned. Claims for property damage totalled £20,000 and arrests, imprisonment and transportation followed. Matthew Boulton's reports began on May 7, 1839, when 'News arrived in Birmingham of the resignation of her Majesty's Ministers. The Queen sent for Sir R. Peel'. Two days later 'the Chartists in Birmingham assume a threatening attitude, the magistrates meet daily'. On 5 July, 1839, he received a note from Mr Taylor 'calling out the yeomanry to assemble at Moor Green, in consequence of the disturbances at Birmingham. Prepared as soon as possible and marched out to Moor Green, remained there all night'. On 9 July he 'went in procession to the church in regimentals, and rode off at once to Moor Green where the yeomanry paraded. They were then thanked by Captain Taylor for their attendance (since July 5) and dismissed from active service'. On 16 July, 1839, though, there was 'a dreadful riot in Birmingham last night by the Chartists, several houses burned down and much property destroyed. The Worcestershire Yeomanry called out today. I went to Moor Green at 2 o'clock. Captain Bennett arrived with the Dudley squadron at 5 and Captain Thickman with the Stourbridge at 6 o'clock. Three squadrons quartered in this neighbourhood, Galtons at Kings Norton and Packington's at Northfield'. He wrote on 30 July having paraded every day since July 16, that he 'was relieved from active service today. The Evesham Troop and part of the Hewell superseded those on duty'. On 23 August 'a review on Wake Green. Dragoons, riflemen and artillery inspected by Colonel Thorne'. Between 28 September and 5 October 1839 he was on 'Military manoeuvres at Worcester'. 17 June, 1840 was 'Waterloo Day'. 'Kept by the yeomanry, drilled on the Common then marched to Moor Green for dinner'. Waterloo Day is 18 June, the date of the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. On 12 August 'The Carbonniers of our Squadron shot for Mr Taylor's prize of 5 guineas on Wake Green, Gunner Reppington was the winner, -dined with them at Moor Green'. On 3 October he 'marched with yeomanry to Worcester' and between 4 October and 10 October was part of 'manoeuvres and drills at Worcester and Kempsey'. The Annual Dinner of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Squadron of Yeomanry was held at Mr Brookes' 'Wagon and Horses', Balsall Heath'.

He was also interested in politics. On 18 December 1838 he 'went to the Conservative Dinner at the Town Hall, Sir Frederick Burdett was present. Mr Dugdale presided, about 400 sat down to dinner'. William Stratford Dugdale (1800-1871) was a British Tory then Conservative party politician who was elected M.P. for Shaftesbury, Dorset, in 1830, for Bamber, Sussex, in 1831 and for North Warwickshire in 1832. On 24 June 1837, 'Mr R. Underhill came late to take me with him to assist in forwarding the return of Mr H. St Paul for East Worcestershire'. Two days later he 'Attended an election committee at Kings Heath' and the next day he went 'canvassing in the morning. Dined with Mr Lawson at his cot in company with Rev, R. Kennedy, Dr Eccles, Mr Baldwin'. 25 July, 1837, was 'Birmingham Election. Attwood and Scholefield returned. A Riot took place in the evening at Dee's Royal



Hotel – all the windows in the Hotel were broken - the soldiers called out and the Riot Act read'. Attwood and Scholefield were Radicals and together they took 70% of the vote. The riot might be connected to his report on 10 June 1837, that 'trade in Birmingham is so very bad that numbers of workmen have nothing to live on. Groups of thirty and forty are going about the neighbourhood begging'. The fear appears to have lived on: 'on 28 November Mr Nutt has fortified the cellar windows with iron bars so as I think will make them impregnable' and on 8 December he 'ordered an iron chest at the Eagle Foundry'. On 1 August 'Polling commenced for East Worcestershire. I went early in the morning to Kings Norton and was occupied giving refreshment tickets to persons coming to vote for St Paul and Barneby. At the close of the poll, the first day at Kings Norton, St Paul had a majority of 32 and Barnaby had a majority of 35. The polling in other parts of the country equally favourable. St Paul had a majority of 357 and Barnaby 301'. 2 August was 'a very wet morning - at Kings Norton all day; our voters have come up well. St Paul and Barneby increased their majority today; at the close of poll in the division, figures were St Paul, 2,365, Barneby 2,568, Holland, 2,220, Folley, 2,209'. Horace St Paul and John Barneby were Conservatives and they took 54% of the votes, a gain from the Whigs. Matthew Boulton reported that on 9 August 'The County Elections are going on favourably for the Conservatives. Dugdale and Wilmot on this day returned for Warwickshire by a very large majority'. William Stratford Dugdale and John Eardley-Wilmot took 70% of the votes and this was a Conservative hold.

Matthew Boulton had other responsibilities. On 14 February 1837 and 13 February 1838, he 'went to the Bull's Head at Hall Green to pay the Great Tythe'. Tithes were originally a tax which required one tenth of all agricultural produce to be paid annually to support the local church and clergy. The great tithes, also known as the 'rectorial tithes', were payable to the rector and generally comprised the predial tithes of corn, grain, hay and wood while the small tithes, also known as the 'vicarial tithes', were payable to the vicar and comprised all other tithes and were raised from labour and minor produce. Joseph Dyott paid Yardley Vicarial Tithes of £4 in 1821/1822.<sup>36</sup> On 17 August 1840, he 'called on George Whately respecting the Great Tythes of Yardley Inclosure – He is to answer these questions ...'. The questions followed in the diary, but Sidney Raine did not copy these out. On 3 June 1837, 'Mr Bullock the painter is going to paint the front of Mr Dyott's house and has now commenced operations'. The Bullocks were a long established family building business. On 11 May 1838, he 'attended a meeting of the proprietors of the Old Canal in Paradise Street'. Between 15 October and 2 November 1838, he sold twelve shares in the Old Birmingham canal at £148 each'. On 19 December that month he attended a meeting of the Old Canal Proprietors at Paradise Street to consider a petition to Parliament as to making a Canal from West Bromwich to the Fazeley Canal at the Aston Junction. It was agreed to adopt the petition'. On 24 January 1839, Mr Chattock of Solihull called and bought 'six of my Birmingham canal shares at £149. On 24 January Mathew Boulton 'removed his banking a/c from Attwood and Spooner to the Birmingham and District Company'. This was the year Thomas Attwood presented the Chartist Petition to Parliament which was defeated. He resigned from Parliament and retired from political life. Matthew Boulton had property that

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<sup>36</sup> <https://aghs.jimdofree.com/yardely-vicarial-tithes-1821-to-1822/> Information from an extract from the diaries and letters of the Rev. Henry Gwyther, 1813-1836.

required monitoring: on 29 May 1838, he accompanied Mr Cheshire to inspect my house in Cherry Street. The shopping is in a shocking state of repair’.



37

The head office building of the Birmingham Canal Navigations was built opposite the western end of Paradise Street.

Given how much time Matthew Boulton spent socialising, hunting and with the Yeomanry, it is surprising he found time to farm. On 6 May, 1837, he states that ‘this is certainly the most backward season I can ever remember. There is no grass for cattle, hay very scarce and dear. We have finished planting today an acre of potatoes’. On 7 May, ‘Mr Dyott sold a fat cow for £21 - to Ludlow – considerably too cheap. On 23 May ‘Thomas sowed turnip seed today - five pounds of seed upon two acres’. On 9 June ‘the men this morning washed the sheep’. On 28 June they ‘began to mow the clover – or rather rag-grass today’. On 1 July they ‘began mowing grass’, on 3 July ‘carried the clover’ and on 4 July it was ‘haymaking’. On 7 August they ‘commenced corn harvest today by mowing a few oats and a few vetches for seed’, on 8 August they ‘mowed the barley in front of the house’ and on 18 August they ‘began reaping the wheat’. On 19 November 1839, he ‘sent a wagon load of potatoes to Birmingham at 5/6 per bag’. On 22 February 1839, he bought a young cow for £11 15s 0d. On 1 March they ‘drilled 4 bushels of beans’, on 12 September he ‘carried all my barley’ and on 23 September ‘finished carrying my wheat’. On 15 October 1839, he sent Mr Cox a sucking pig and the next day called on the Misses Wilkes and gave them a sucking pig too. On 6 February 1840, he ‘went to market and bought two cows in calf for £29 – too dear unless they turn out well’. Two days later Joe Arnold came and dressed my sheep for scab’. Sheep-scab is a condition in sheep caused by infestation with a particular type of mite. On 22 June they ‘began mowing’, on 29 June ‘carried hay all day’, on 28 August they ‘finished carrying my barley’ and the next day ‘carried my wheat’.

Many of his activities involved the private and public transport of the time as has been suggested above. On 17 July 1837, he ‘went to see the trains come in on the railway to Liverpool. They are 4 ½ hours coming from Liverpool to Birmingham – the railway was opened the first time on 4<sup>th</sup> of this month. It is an animating sight to see the trains moving so easily and swiftly along’. The Grand Junction Railway (GJR) was established in 1832 by the consolidation of two rival Companies, Birmingham and Liverpool Railway Company and the Liverpool and Birmingham Railway Company. In 1846 it was amalgamated with other

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<sup>37</sup> Elliott Brown @ Flickr.

railways to form the London and North Western Railway. It began operation at a temporary Birmingham terminus at Vauxhall.



**Station, Grand Junction Railway,  
Vauxhall, Birmingham,  
Engraving by H. Harris, 1841.**

Matthew Boulton does not comment on the key transport development for Moseley – the building of the railway through Moseley – that would have attracted attention for several reasons. The Moseley cutting was amongst the first and greatest railway works in the Birmingham area and the Gothic-arched tunnel portals were unique.<sup>38</sup> The railway company pressed ahead with a cutting rather than the proposed tunnel to save £1,500, which angered local people who took the case to the Court of Chancery.<sup>39</sup> The company was compelled to make a tunnel, a move they described as ‘forced’ on them by ‘local opponents in parliament’ and by ‘objectors’.<sup>40</sup> He makes no reference either to the four men who died working on the track in the parish.<sup>41</sup> He travelled by various means.



On 23 December 1837, he ‘bought a horse, gig and harness of Mr Collis for £57 10s 0d, the gig, which is a Tilbury, is very handsome’. A tilbury is a light, open, two-wheeled carriage, with or without a top, developed in the early 19th century by the London firm of Tilbury, coachbuilders. On 13 February he ‘drove over to Weatheroak Hill to call on Mr Mynors’.

On 10 April, 1838, he ‘went by railway to London. The Imperial Hotel at Covent Garden was our house in town – a very snug little place’. He ‘returned from London by rail road – it is not open the whole of the way: from Denbigh Hall to Rugby we go by coach. We left London by half past 7 o’clock and arrived in Birmingham by half past 4’. Between 3 and 10 September he had a week’s holiday in Liverpool – Menai Bridge, Isle of Man’. On 18 April, 1839, he ‘bought a grey mare from Mr Avery for £52 10s 0d’. On 20 April he ‘mounted my new horse and rode as far as Mrs Underhill’s when she reared, fell backwards and so injured

<sup>38</sup> Baxter, M., & Drake, P., *Moseley, Balsall Heath and Highgate*, The Archive Photographs Series (Chalford: The Chalford Publishing Company, 1996), p.74; Long & Audrey, *The Birmingham and Gloucester Railway*, p.118.

<sup>39</sup> Hazlewood, J., *Moseley Railway* (Birmingham: Jericho Promotions and Publications, 2013), pp.27 & 118. [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currencyconverter](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currencyconverter): £1,500 in 1890 was c., £123,100 in 2017. Accessed 2012-2020.

<sup>40</sup> Hazlewood, *Moseley Railway*, p.28; Turner, K., *The Lost Railways of Birmingham* (Studley: K.A.F. Brewin Books, 1991), pp.27 & 118; Long & Audrey, *The Birmingham and Gloucester Railway*, pp.14 & 118.

<sup>41</sup> Library of Birmingham Archives (LBA), EP 77/2/4/1, St. Mary’s Church Burials, 1813-1850.

herself that there was no chance of life'. Two days later he 'sold Symmons the dead mare for 14/-'. On 28 August 1839, he 'left Birmingham by the evening train for London, went to Old Hummums, Covent Garden accompanied by Mr Bedington'. The next day he 'embarked on the Red Rover Steamer at London Bridge with Mr Bedington and his uncle, had a pleasant sail to Herne Bay. Lord Brougham and Lord Lyndhurst were on board, on the same intent as ourselves to dine with the Duke at the great Dover Festival. Landed at Herne Bay and proceeded through Canterbury to Dover the same evening'. On 30 August 'Dover all alive this morning ... The dinner to the Duke took place at 5 o'clock and was one of the most magnificent sights I ever beheld. Lord Brougham proposed the Duke's health. About 1,600 people at dinner'. He 'returned home by railway' on 4 September. Lord Brougham (1778-1868) was a British statesman who became Lord High Chancellor and played an important part in the 1832 Reform Act and the 1833 Slavery Abolition Act. Lord Lyndhurst (1772-1863) was a Lawyer and politician who was three times Lord High Chancellor. To celebrate ten years as Lord Warden on Friday 30 August 1839, the town of Dover held a large banquet in honour of the Duke of Wellington. A pavilion was built in the Priory meadow, its entrance decorated with '*Military Insignia, Painting, Tapestry and Banners and with the arms and armour from the Tower of London*'. The banquet, which cost over £3,000 and served 2,250 people at a charge of 1 ½ guineas each, began at 5.30 p.m. and the garrison celebrated Wellington's arrival with a salute of guns. Six days later there was a grand ball

On 24 March 1840, he 'went this morning with Mr Bedington to his uncle at Great Hampton near Evesham – drove my mare, left home at 12 and got there at 4'. On 30 March he 'took a boat and went up the river Avon as far as Cleeve Terrace, we landed and walked along the terrace from whence we had a magnificent view; we got back about 6 o'clock, much tired but delighted'. On 6 May he 'went with Mr Bramah in his carriage to Smethwick to see his extensive works for making railway carriages'. One of the most important engineering and metal working firms in Smethwick in the 1840s was Bramah, Fox & Co., of the London Works in Cranford Street, established in 1839. They specialised in railway equipment, including wheels, bridges, roofs, cranes, tanks and permanent way materials and their works were erected in 1840 on the Moilliets' Smethwick Grove Estate. John Joseph Bramah was one of a notable family of engineers and iron-founders. He retired from the business in 1845. From May 22 to June 1, 1840, Matthew Boulton was sightseeing in London.

The extracts from Matthew Boulton's diary are invaluable: they reveal the economic, religious, political, social, cultural and sporting lives of the well-to-do middle class of Moseley in the first half of the nineteenth century.

### **Janet Berry (2021)**

With thanks to **Mike Berry** for typing up the handwritten diary extracts and helping with census research. If you would like a copy of the diary text please contact the Moseley Society History Group at [moseleyhistory@gmail.com](mailto:moseleyhistory@gmail.com)