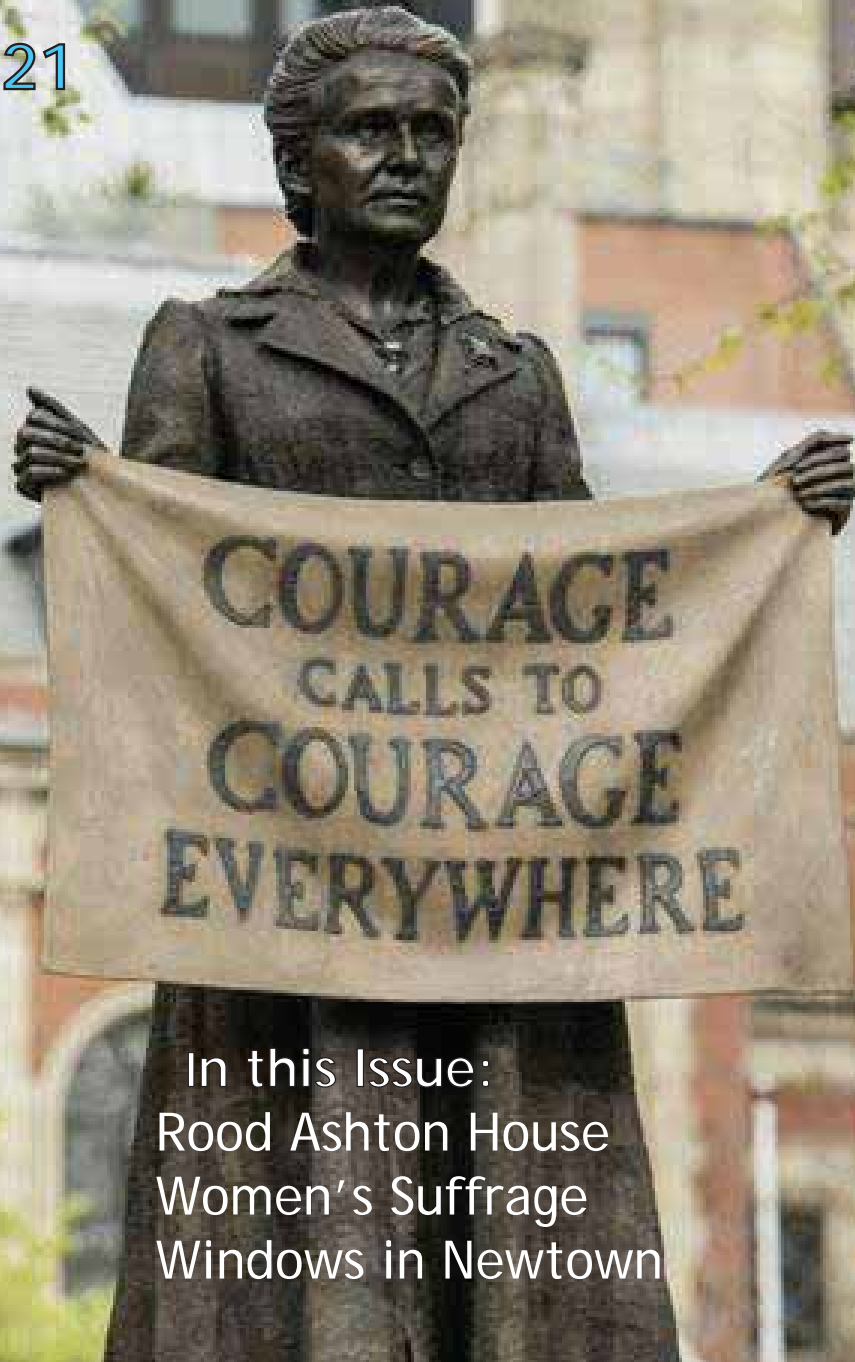


# Trowbridge Civic Society NEWSLETTER



Summer 2021



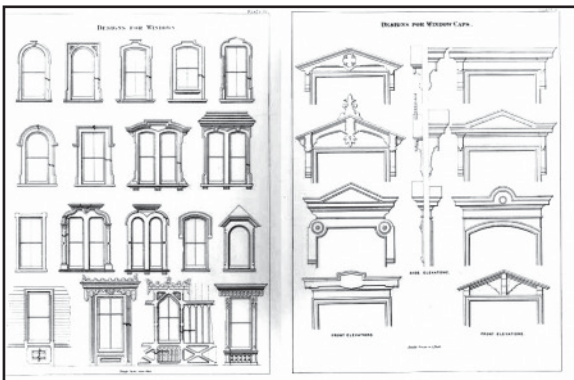
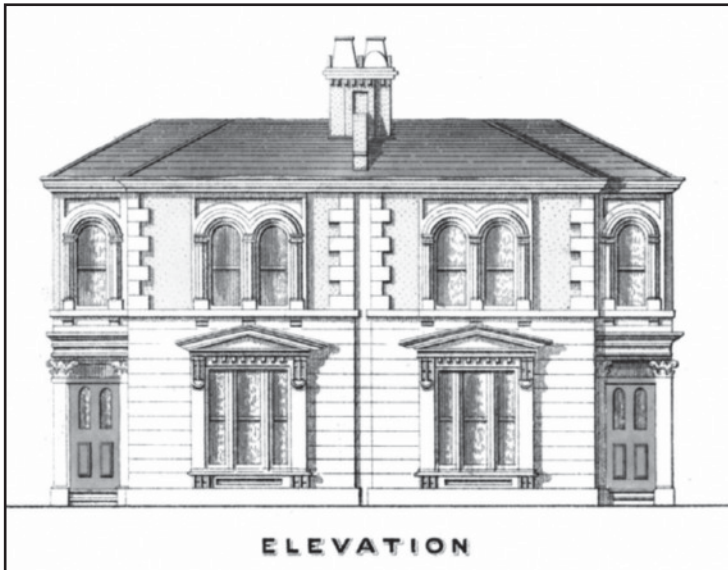
In this Issue:  
Rood Ashton House  
Women's Suffrage  
Windows in Newtown

**Future Event**  
**Cream Tea Afternoon by kind invitation of Sally Taylor**  
**at her home 2 Victoria Gardens BA14 7HJ**  
**Saturday 24 July 2.30 - 5 pm.**

Member of Wiltshire Building Record, ASHTAV and BALH  
Registered Charity Number 276765 Website: [www.trowbridgecivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.trowbridgecivicsociety.org.uk)

## Victorian Pattern Books - More on page 10

PLAN AND ELEVATION OF TWO 3<sup>RD</sup> RATE SEMI-DETACHED SEVEN ROOMED COTTAGES ADAPTED FOR TWO OR MORE SMALL ALLOTMENTS



Two examples of pages from a Victorian pattern Book. Above, the house in Gloucester Road is remarkably similar to the design to the left. Below, is a striking example of how the builder or architect made his "upper class" house in Wingfield Road more individual. Note the 3 different types of rose carving and also the different capitals on the pillars either side of the Italianate windows.



Cover photo: Statue of Dame Millicent Garrett Fawcett GBE (11 June 1847 - 5 August 1929) in Westminster Square. She campaigned for women's suffrage and from 1897 to 1919 led Britain's largest women's rights association, the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS). One of the women listed on the plinth is Jessie Craigen who spoke at Trowbridge.

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## EDITORIAL COMMENT

Before lockdown imprisoned us all, Rosemary Hawkes gave a fascinating talk on Women's Suffrage in Trowbridge. For the benefit of those who were unable to hear the talk she has prepared an article on the subject for the newsletter. Part 1 is in this issue and Part 2 will follow in the autumn.

You may remember that in the last issue I asked for help in identifying the two gate posts I had noticed in Dursley Road. I also asked for help on the always interesting Facebook site, *Historic Trowbridge*. Very quickly I was directed to an article on the Steeple Ashton website which answers my question. I have reprinted, with permission of the author, much of the original piece which has lots of other interesting historic details.

I have become fascinated by the variety of architectural styles in the housing of Newtown. I would welcome comments and observations about my piece as I intend to do another piece about Newtown in a future issue.

As promised, there is also a scanned image of a map that Roger Newman produced many years ago, for a railway society, that shows the railways and canals that once existed in the Midford area.

## TROWBRIDGE CIVIC SOCIETY INFORMATION

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## **Chairman's Notes**

**Glyn Bridges**

We are still waiting to see what will happen to the vast Innox Mills site and especially the vandalized houses on Stallard Street, a key area for development. There are other sites within the town, the United Church, Manvers Street office block, the Halve clinic, the former Stepping Stones site and Rosefield House both in Polebarn Road. The Ashton Street Centre is no more as the site has been cleared for more housing while at Courtfield House because of the campaign to save the 'ancient' orchard, which used to be allotments, the new houses are to be built much nearer the Grade 11\* listed house and that to me is a great pity.

On a much more positive note it was good to see our excellent Town Museum reopen on Saturday 22nd May now occupying two floors of the former Salters Mill Building and well worth a visit.

## **Planning Matters**

**Sue and Kevin Eames**

Although there are not very many planning decisions of general interest this time, the report took a lot longer to write because Wilts County Council now has a new system for accessing information. Previously we were sent a weekly email with attachments giving us a list of new planning applications and decisions categorised by place name, so we just had to look through the list for Trowbridge and select the ones of general interest. So far so straightforward. Now however we have to use a link to the WCC website to access a list of planning decisions (averaging about 200) in, as far as we can tell, random order, which means looking at all 200 to see which relate to Trowbridge. Previously, the numbering system indicated the category of application for example TCP (tree conservation) or LBC (listed building consent) but it seems that this system is being phased out and being replaced by a numerical system starting with the year plus a number. Full details can be obtained by an in depth look at an application, but it is difficult to know from the list which applications merit this scrutiny. Basically, we are having to do the work previously done by WCC employees which presumably saves the council money but makes our task more onerous.

After all that there are only 5 planning decisions that are of general interest! Two of them relate to Fore Street. Permission has been granted for the conversion of the upper floors of number 32 (British Heart Foundation) and the erection of a second storey infill extension to form eight apartments, and associated works. (20/11327/FUL) Permission has also been granted to remove the ATM from number 64 (The Lloyd' Bank) and the aperture to be infilled with Bath stone to match the rest of the existing building. (21/01712/LBC)

The decision to permit the demolition of Elm Grove Farmhouse, Drynham Road has been issued (Prior approval had been granted). (PL/2021/04087)

Permission has been granted for the enlargement and reconfiguration of the existing carpark area at Manvers House, Manvers Street to provide 27 car spaces plus external bin enclosures and covered external cycle storage. This is to discharge a condition set down in the granting of planning permission. (20/09061/FUL)

Approval with conditions has been granted for an outline application relating to principle and access for a development on land west of Elizabeth Way (in the Hilperton Gap). The development will comprise up to 165 new home with access from the newly constructed relief road, new open space and associated infrastructure. The status of the application was "losed" and there does not seem to be a way on the new system to access the conditions imposed. Democratic participation in the planning process seems to have become a tricky obstacle course.

## **Future Event**

**Cream Tea Afternoon by kind invitation of Sally Taylor at her home 2  
Victoria Gardens BA14 7HJ  
Saturday 24 July 2.30 - 5 pm.**

## VOTES FOR WOMEN: Women's Suffrage Activity in Trowbridge (Part one) Rosemary Hawkes

The first women's suffrage event in Trowbridge I have found recorded took place in August 1869, when Daniel Lucas, book-keeper in a woollen cloth mill and president of the Trowbridge Co-operative Society, invited Jessie Craigen (c1835-1899) to one of their meetings. Jessie Craigen was a working-class women's suffrage speaker in a movement which was predominately middle class. She gave an address on Co-operation, and the occasion was recorded in *The Co-operator* magazine on 27<sup>th</sup> November 1869. It was probably during this visit to Trowbridge that she gave her lecture on Women's Suffrage, which resulted in a petition, presented on 24<sup>th</sup> March 1870.

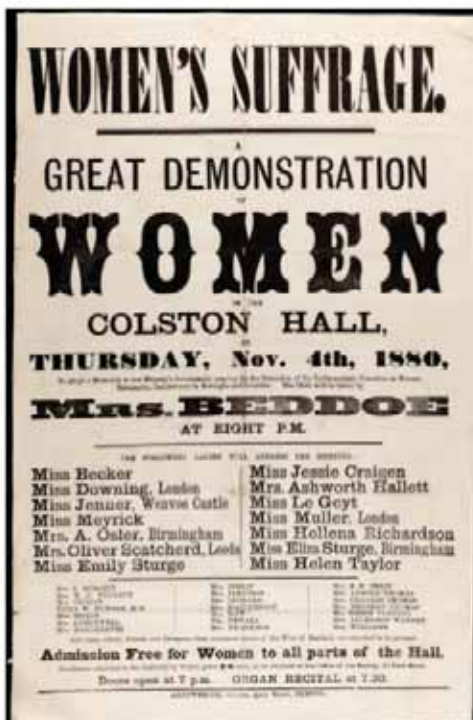
The subject of women's suffrage was not forgotten in Trowbridge. On 12<sup>th</sup> March 1883, Mr Ledbury presented a paper on 'Women's Rights' to members of the Trowbridge Church Debating Society, of which he was secretary. In June 1909, a branch of the Bath NUWSS (National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies) was established at Trowbridge, of which the secretary in 1913 was Mrs Harris of 28 Innox Road. The Wiltshire branch of the WSPU (the Women's Social and Political Union, also known as the Suffragettes) was established at a meeting in the Town Hall, Trowbridge, on September 10<sup>th</sup> 1910, at which Annie Kenney presided. Annie Kenney had been a mill girl from Oldham in Lancashire. She joined the WSPU and became a regular visitor at the house of Emmeline Pankhurst, WSPU founder, and a firm friend of her daughter Christabel. Annie was sent to London in 1906 where she established the WSPU headquarters. In 1907 she was sent into the West of England and set up her regional HQ in Bristol.

An early meeting of the Wilts WSPU was held at Trowbridge Town Hall, on October 12<sup>th</sup> 1910, with Annie Kenney as speaker and Mildred Mansel, organiser in Bath, in the chair. Annie Kenney reported in *Votes for Women* that "the audience showed itself entirely in sympathy with the speakers by passing the resolution unanimously" It was agreed that local members would carry on a campaign in Trowbridge, Devizes, Melksham, Calne, Chippenham, Box and

Westbury, and hope to arouse public interest by holding meetings, canvassing, chalking on pavements, and regular sales of *Votes for Women*. Speakers would be sent weekly to hold meetings in these places in turn. The Wilts WSPU became based in Devizes in 1911, with its secretary Miss Katherine Abraham of Estcourt Street.

In Spring 1911, things were about to hot up in West Wiltshire. A by-election was on the way in the Westbury constituency, and the WSPU were going to be out in force. Not only Annie Kenney and Lillian Dove Willcox from Bristol were in attendance, but also Mildred Mansel from Bath, and Christabel Pankhurst herself came down from London. The WSPU motor car, just recently acquired, had arrived in the division with chauffeur Vera Holme, to ferry the speakers around the villages.

The Liberal incumbent, John Fuller, was stepping down to become the Governor of Victoria, and the new candidate was Geoffrey Howard, who was a well-known supporter of women's suffrage, but the WSPU were not campaigning for his election. *Votes for Women* explained the situation: "They are in the field opposing Mr Howard, but have offered to withdraw from the contest provided Mr Howard can obtain a pledge from the Prime Minister...that he will not block the Woman Suffrage Bill this year as he did last...but will allow the House of Commons to decide



A poster of 1880 for a demonstration in Bristol which lists Jessie Craigen

Annie Kenney had based herself in Trowbridge, along with Lillian Dove Willcox and Mildred Mansel, in a house called Ivanhoe, in Bradford Road. The Bath Chronicle reported the scene in Trowbridge: "Today was market day in Trowbridge, and this afternoon a very large crowd assembled in the Market Hall to hear Miss Christabel Pankhurst speak on the subject of Votes for Women. There was some little interruption, but on the whole, the meeting was exceedingly orderly. Miss Pankhurst's address was quite brilliant, and her replies to numerous questions drew forth the admiration of the audience." A by-election of this sort provided an excellent platform for suffragettes to speak in public and attract new members. In the next issue of *Votes for Women*, Annie Kenney reported that the campaign had gone splendidly, with many new members coming forward and 2,000 copies of the paper being sold.

Annie Kenney wrote a letter published in the Wiltshire Times, to say that Lillian Dove Willcox of Bristol would be staying on to arrange a reception for all women interested in the Suffrage movement, to be held at the Town Hall, Trowbridge. The following week, the paper published a letter from Lillian Dove Willcox herself, saying that a meeting would be held at the Town Hall on Tuesday March 14<sup>th</sup>, which would include a speech on Votes for Women by Mrs Brailsford, and a recital by Mrs Cuthbert Hicks. Tickets, to include tea at one shilling, could be obtained not only from Mrs Dove Willcox herself, at Ivanhoe, Bradford Road, but also from leading stationers in Trowbridge, Melksham, Westbury, Warminster and Bradford.

In the weeks leading up to the big event, Lillian Dove Willcox was busy canvassing for the reception throughout West Wiltshire. "Sales of *Votes for Women* were up from over 60 last week to the encouraging figure of over 90". The following week, Lillian Dove Willcox reported that the Town Hall reception had been a great success. A new West Wilts branch of the WSPU had been established. Thanks were due, not only to Mrs Brailsford and Mrs Cuthbert Hicks, but also to Mrs Haden, who lent the beautiful palms which graced the platform.

The reception at Trowbridge Town Hall provided the ideal opportunity to introduce the subject of the latest WSPU campaign. The Liberal government was about to carry out a census, and the WSPU was planning a mass census evasion under the banner heading - *No Vote No Census*. In Trowbridge, Lillian Dove-Willcox had sent a letter dealing with the Census protest to all the municipal women in Trowbridge, and was following it up with a house-to-house canvass.



The municipal women were those who owned property and, since the Local Government Act of 1894, were entitled to vote in local elections.

All over the country, groups of WSPU supporters were organising census parties, so that they would be away from home and thus evade the census. Lillian Dove Willcox was able to report that arrangements for evasion had been made in Trowbridge, "but owing to the smallness of the town it has been thought wiser to keep these a secret" After the event, *The Wiltshire Times* gave a short report about census resistance in Trowbridge: "On Sunday night the work of the census was both passively and actively resisted in Trowbridge. Several ladies who are staunch

supporters of the Votes for Women movement left their homes and spent the night out - who they were and where they spent the silent watches of the night, we refrain from mentioning."

Just at this time, Lillian Dove Willcox mentioned "a recent new member" in her weekly report in *Votes for Women*, who "gave a nice drawing room meeting last week" but "at present prefers to remain anonymous" A few weeks later, a Miss B Gramlick had kindly consented to become joint secretary alongside Mrs Dove Willcox. This was Bessie Gramlick of Springfield House on Hilperton Road, who had received a written invitation to the Town Hall Reception from Lillian Dove Willcox. Perhaps Springfield was the venue for the 'drawing room meeting' but Bessie Gramlick did not join the census evasion, as she appears on the census return for Springfield in 1911.



park through the gates. After the 2nd World War when I was 8 years old, we moved away and visits to the farm were then in school holidays. In 1953, eight years later, my first job was to be working on the Home Farm.

The estate of the House, Farm and its parkland was approximately 300 acres. The Lodge on the West Ashton crossroads was a tied farm cottage, now very much enlarged, and at that time this was the entrance to the estate. There were gates but I cannot recall their design. Moving towards Melksham, the right side was the boundary. There were no buildings within this stretch of woodland. Castle Lodge was another tied cottage. This was the earlier entrance to the estate and the gates were operable to drive through in my time. [See pic no. 2]. I have been told that the Biss Wood [in my memory very much larger than now] had a drive from Castle Lodge through



it, with the first gatehouse to the estate being the lodge to the caravan park close to today's petrol station near to Trowbridge. Immediately after Castle Lodge the boundary of the estate leaves the roadside at right angles to cut across the N.E. side of what was the ornamental lake to join the Eastown Lane on the sharp bend by the lake. The boundary continued southwards on the lane towards Eastown. At Brickells Lodge, another tied cottage, again vastly enlarged,

was the entrance to the Home Farm side of the Estate, and still is. Nominally the boundary then followed the right side of the road back to West Ashton and down to the crossroads again, behind the houses.

The only fencing of the formal park was of the metal parkland type, one or two gates of a like sort and the occasional similar tree surround. The original gravel drive from the Castle Lodge did not go directly to Rood Ashton House but swung back to almost the church before joining the later tarmac road. This was very obvious at the time. Before the war ended I was probably too young to remember the interior of the big House, but I do remember swill, from the kitchen area of the house being collected regularly by horse and cart to feed to the pigs on the farm! This was collected from the only part of the House that survived. After the dismembering of the House and before it completely imploded I vividly recall the drive up to the Grand Entrance, the Hall and the stairs, the main Living Rooms, looking to the S.W., with their enormous windows, and what was left of plasterwork etc. Moving on past the house eastwards, were the stables, unused by this time, but the cobbles still covered the yard and there were still some grand Victorian fittings in the actual stables. At this point the road became a track that purely serviced the house from the farm. The land drops quite steeply, and was wooded, and at the bottom was a brook. Here was situated the pump for the water supply. I cannot remember where the electric was generated. There was a Deer Pen, of some 5 acres, with more metal parkland fencing, on the Eastown side, of the Stables. There were ornamental walks from the South side of Rood Ashton House around the back of the stables, and in front of the deer pen, these followed the

brook through the woods with at least two ornamental ponds. This walk, all very clearly seen, could be followed towards the ornamental lake through the woodland and eventually exiting the wood via a pedestrian gate to cross the field, on a path, again quite visible, and end up at the boathouse on the lake. There were I believe two islands. I recall "child boating", and in 1947, when there was a very hard winter, ice skating! Standing at the entrance to Rood Ashton House and looking across the valley there is a wood rising on the far side and beyond that the ground drops away again to the aforementioned lake. Towards the top of this wood was the icehouse. In shape it was rather like a large rugby ball, I guess 20 feet high and 10 feet in diameter. made of brick and sunk two thirds into the ground. In my memory it was a good lair for foxes, but originally would have been packed with ice from the lake to be used as a fridge. A hazy and early memory was of MOD huts still remaining from WW2 in the parkland on the West Ashton side. One of these was sold by my Uncle to a Mr Harry West to demolish and re-erect at West Ashton to live in.

*The boundary of the formal garden was in stone and there was some form of balustraded trellis. In 1959 my Uncle gave me two octagonal stone pillars, about 30 inches diameter and 60 inches high, with castellated tops which I rescued from deep undergrowth, somewhere near the entrance to the garden. I wonder if these were the entrance posts of this path. I took them to my own house, of at that time, and used them as my gate posts. They can still be seen today, in Trowbridge, down Dursley Road, past the pub, 75 yards on the right, in the hedge!*

The Home Farm House faces towards Steeple Ashton with its brick and tile buildings, including dairy, cheese rooms, apple store and its own stabling. There are still many of the original buildings to be seen with the farm house's faux brick arches being repeated on the buildings, ending with a two storey cart shed, now a cottage, with the same arch design. The design can be seen on the double storey mill building behind these buildings. I imagine this was all conceived, maybe in 1836, at the time of building. The approach to the farm house is alongside and in front of this period architectural facade. The only building on the North side of the service track to Rood Ashton House was Kennel Cottage, another tied cottage property. Yes, it was the kennels as its name suggests. I know, as this, in later years, was my first home and one could see the outlines of the actual kennels within its own small walled garden.

Close by the south east corner of the farmhouse, was the market garden that supplied Rood Ashton House. This vegetable and fruit garden was an acre or more in size and completely enclosed by a high brick wall. It had its own house and a cottage within this brick wall. In my

memory this was owned by a Mr V.Holland. He never serviced the big house in my time, but I remember he owned an Austin 16 and loaded this with stock each day to go to his retail shop in Trowbridge, which was at the end of Bythesea Road, on the opposite corner to the railway station entrance. (2012)



## Welcome to New Members

George & Julia Bunting and Steven & Denise Harvey

# An exploration of varieties of window design in the Newtown Area

## Peter Collier

During lockdown, as part of my exercise regime, I walked round the area of Newtown frequently and was intrigued by the variety of architectural design styles in the houses. I resolved to study the area more closely and began by looking at the varieties of windows.

The Newtown area of Trowbridge was built from about 1800 to 1900, but mostly from 1860 onwards. Small speculative builders built for a wide mix of social and economic classes, from mill workers to mill managers, from clerks and shop assistants to doctors and solicitors. The builders usually had limited resources. They had often started out as joiners or bricklayers and they had to borrow enough money to be able to build a few houses. They could then sell them or rent them and then start building on another site further along the road.

You can see this clearly in the area, where two or three houses are next to another group which have slightly different proportions or completely different styles. The builders tended to play safe with style and design and chose well-established forms and proven popular fashions. Before and during the Victorian era many so-called "pattern books" were published illustrating varieties of villas, cottages and farms as well as more humble houses. (See page 2) By the mid 19th century builders had access to many such books or catalogues which could help them decide what to incorporate in their own buildings.

In Newtown there is a mix of terraced, semi-detached and detached houses. Some of the larger houses would be described by the Victorians as "villas" though some of these are terraced and some semi-detached.

The oldest existing houses are those along Newtown and are older than



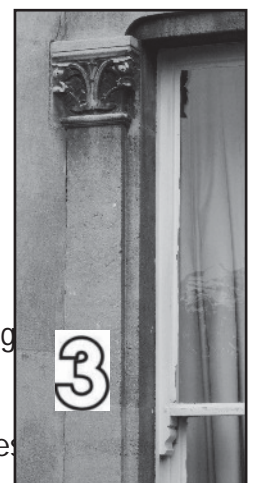
"Victorian" The terraced three story ones were designed for weavers, The original building lease dates from 1789 and the first four houses were built by 1791. There are 3 ranges of windows with plain stone surrounds. (Fig 1)

Just along the road is Pilewell Terrace built about 1830. These houses are 2 storey and the windows have raised surrounds with rustic voussoirs. (Fig 2) A voussoir, a term I had not come across before, is "wedge-shaped stone, which is used in building an arch or vault. (Voussoirs can also be found in other streets in Newtown, in West Street, Frome Road and Wingfield Road).

At the beginning of the Victorian period (Queen Victoria became queen in 1837, though the period is often thought of as beginning in the 1820') large sheets of glass were becoming available and four pane windows were beginning to be introduced. The rectangular surround was usually plain, though, as time went on, there was a move to emphasise individual features, such as simple moulding's.

During the 1850's the removal of tax on the number of windows and duty on glass made bay windows suddenly more popular - it became a must-have feature for aspiring middle-class householders! These bays can be straight sided or angled (canted), on the whole house or just the ground floor and can be capped by a sloping roof, a flat parapet or even a blind dormer roof. Some tops are impressively castellated as in Avenue road. (See examples opposite) In some terraces the houses at the end of the row have bay windows. Again there are variations, with some houses having just the ground floor windows in a bay while others have both floors with bay windows. There are at least three houses in Wingfield Road with bay windows over three floors.

Sash windows were the most common type of window and it is worth exploring the area to see if any have the original style with their "horns" (Fig 3) Window horns were originally used in timber sash windows to strengthen the window' structure. They supported the mortise and tenon joints and prevented the sashes from opening too far and becoming jammed. Nowadays, many, if



not most, sash widows have been replaced by plastic replacement ones.

The style of houses, whether a villa, semi, or terrace, was generally in one of three principal styles - Gothic, Classical or Italianate - although in our area, as elsewhere, you can find any combination of the three on the same building.

Plain windows are found in many of the terraced houses built in Wingfield Road, Park Street, Waterworks Road and Bond Street, but there are variations of "plain" .

Apart from voussoirs, many of the lintels are plain and undecorated but some have motifs above them, eg in West Street and Avenue Road.

Many of the larger houses in Wingfield Road are Italianate in style, rather like styles one might see in Venice.

Gloucester Road also has houses with pediments over the windows. A pediment, in architecture, is generally a triangular gable forming the end of the roof slope over a portico or, in this case, a similar form used decoratively over a doorway or window.



Swagged.

Toothed.

Lintel decoration  
Pediment.

Key stone.

Italianate arch



Another surprise is the appearance of carved heads above some windows as in Gloucester Road. These are similar to those heads above doorways in Wingfield road. (Right) Window sills are usually plain. Some have noticeable corbels supporting them, while others have none. (Left)



Types of Bay Window on ground floor, two floors and three.

The majority of windows are rectangular, but some houses have Italianate arched windows and arched frames, eg in Waterworks Road, Wingfield Road, Avenue Road.



Other interesting features are the pilasters and columns on each side of some windows, especially those which have pilasters or engaged columns either side. A pilaster is "rectangular, vertical wall protrusion that resembles a flat column or half pier" They are "engaged," meaning they stick out slightly from the wall and have "base, a shaft, and a capital like a column" Various examples of these are particularly evident in Westbourne, Avenue and Wingfield Roads and there are also some in Gloucester Road.

There are two buildings which I think deserve extra attention. One is Abney House in Avenue Road, and the other is Belmont Villas, a listed building in Waterworks Road which is worth considering in a little more detail.

Belmont Villas (*Right*) is dated 1869. It is described in the listing as an "unusual Italianate pair" of 3 storeys with 4 ranges of windows. There are slab surrounds to the windows which have a variety of designs; on the 2nd floor -there are 2 serrated and 2 "swagged" lintels. Swagged means "decorated with swags of fabric. On the 1st floor are 2 round headed windows and 2 with incised Tudor arches. The ground floor windows have shallow pilasters and ogee, or s-shaped, arches on the lintels.

Abney House, on the corner of Avenue road and Wingfield Road, (*Below*) is also remarkable for its eclectic mix of styles. It appears to be a mix of Gothic and, perhaps, Arts and Crafts design, which was popular when it was built at the end of the 19th century.

In a future issue I hope to look at roofs, facades and doorway varieties.

