

Harrogate Heritage

Looking back at history of Raworth and when it celebrated 125 years

Malcolm Neesam

news@harrogateadvertiser.co.uk
@HgateAdvertiser

Tomorrow, Friday, will see the celebration of an important anniversary for one of the Harrogate district's most successful and prestigious firms: the solicitors Raworth and Company, whose story is inextricably tied in with the development of Harrogate over the last 125 years.

The Raworth family appear to have arrived in Harrogate by about 1830, when they lived in the vicinity of Bilton, and it was Richard Raworth who went into the building trade.

By 1863, Richard was living at 23 York Place, which then, as now, was a substantial property in a highly favoured position overlooking a Stray that barely two years earlier had suffered the violation of its sanctity when a railway cutting was driven across its surface.

1863 also saw the birth of Richard's son, Edwin, who grew up to found the solicitor's firm of Raworth.

Richard Raworth seems to have been most active as a builder in Harrogate during the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s, and after his death in 1888 the *Advertiser* obituary described him as a joiner, builder, undertaker, cabinet maker and owner of the Regent Saw Mills behind Regent Parade.

He had done the joinery at the New Victoria Baths of 1871 [now the council offices] and the first Harrogate market of 1874, and

For almost twenty years from 1995, the eminent local historian Malcolm Neesam contributed a series of remarkable articles to the Advertiser, initially under the headline 'Bygone Harrogate' and later using the title 'Our Heritage'. In association with Harrogate Civic Society, we are proud to republish a selection from the series. The views expressed were those of the late Mr Neesam at the time of writing and do not necessarily reflect the current view of the Advertiser or Harrogate Civic Society.

worked with Richard Ellis on the development of the Victoria Park company's lands in central Harrogate, including Magdala House, the large detached villa at the south eastern corner of the junction of Victoria Avenue and Station Parade, that today is known as Eton House, the home of Raworths.

Richard Raworth also worked on the Victoria Park Methodist Church, built by Richard Ellis on the site that is today occupied by Beale's department store.

Another chapter opened in the life of the future firm of Raworth in 1883, when Constable William Butterworth was transferred from the Morley Constabulary to Harrogate.

A feeling for the law appears to have run strongly through the Butterworth family

rogate.

The new central Harrogate Police Station had been built in 1865-6 by Ellis in Raglan Street, just behind the Methodist Church, and this was where Constable Butterworth - who was promoted to Sergeant in 1885 and Inspector in 1894 - was baptised.

Richard Raworth died in 1888 at his East Parade home, Epperston Villa, by which time his son Edwin was working as a solicitor, having been admitted in June 1885.

Edwin also became clerk to the newly established Claro Magistrates, and would thereby have had regular meetings with Sergeant Butterworth, with whom he appears to have developed a good working relationship.

Meanwhile, Edwin Raworth's two uncles, William and Henry had gone into business with a Mr James Allen, to form a building partnership very much in the same style as that of the late Richard Raworth.

Their building work included the Cold Bath Road Board School, the Knaresborough Laundry, Bartram's Villa at Harlow Carr and houses in Dragon Road.

A feeling for the law ap-



Christopher Butterworth, grandson of Jabez Butterworth.

pears to have run strongly through the Butterworth family. As the census records that of the sons, Jabez was a "law clerk to a solicitor", Willie was a "law clerk", and James a "solicitor's clerk". Jabez Butterworth, who had been articled to solicitor Edwin Raworth in the 1890s, himself became a solicitor in November 1905, no doubt to the delight of his father, who on January 1 had retired from the police force after 25 years of service.

Jabez Butterworth joined with a very influential Harrogate family in 1902, when he married Edith Alice Chippindale.

The Chippindale brothers were highly successful builders, on a scale far greater than anything

done by the Raworths and Allen.

Amos Chippindale, a councillor from 1897 to 1906, built up the land between Devonshire Place and the railway line, crowding on to it some 425 cottages, all built in modest scale and terrace form.

The great difference between the Chippindale brothers and such as George Dawson, Richard Ellis, and David Simpson was that the brothers specialised in modest sized houses, whereas the others built magnificent mansions.

The Chippindale's building concerns meant that Edwin Raworth had joined with a family that had regular need of a good solicitor, as had his uncles William and Henry, who

became involved with the development of the Whitehouse estate on Leeds Road, including Carlton and Norfolk Roads.

William Raworth served as a councillor, and was Mayor of Harrogate from 1921-2.

His nephew, Jabez Butterworth was admitted as a solicitor in November 1905, and after the death of Edwin Raworth in 1925 it was he who carried on the business so successfully.

It was probably a mixture of reticence and pride at the fame of the Raworth name that made the firm continue it, rather than switching to that of Butterworth, despite the fact that the Butterworths were to have a far longer association with the firm.

Within months of Edwin Raworth's death, his business partner Jabez Butterworth joined the practice of Lomas-Walker and Wilkinson, whose office was round the corner from Station Bridge, in Westminster Chambers, located at the north-eastern corner of Victoria Avenue and Station Parade.

The practice was known as Raworth, Lomas-Walker, Butterworth and Wilkinson, but by the Second World War it was generally known as "Raworth".

The firm undertook an important move in 1933 when they moved their office across Victoria Avenue from Westminster Chambers into Eton House, a splendid detached mansion that had been built by Richard Ellis by 1871.

Fears were expressed that the business was moving too far from the town centre!



Above: The private client team at Raworths, from left are Laura Leach, Kate Maybury, William Kinread, Maureen Gilroy Thomas, Stephanie Pennington and Selena Hinds. Below: Edwin Raworth, founder of Raworths of Harrogate.

I am grateful to Raworths for supplying much of the above information, and for the portrait of Edwin Raworth.

It was known as Raworth, Lomas-Walker, Butterworth and Wilkinson, but by WWII it was known as "Raworth"

This article was originally published on June 14, 2012.

It is now more than two years since Malcolm's death.

He left behind an astonishing body of work that we at the Harrogate Civic Society are determined should be preserved and enhanced for the benefit of future historians and, indeed, for the benefit of anyone who cares about Harrogate.

Not long before his passing, we discussed with Malcolm and the Advertiser republishing at least some of his articles.

Many of Malcolm's articles dealt with the history of the town, exploring the people, places and events that helped

to form the Harrogate we know today.

At other times Malcolm concentrated more on contemporary issues.

While acknowledging that Harrogate could not stand still, he was convinced that change should always be tested.

In September, the first re-publication of Mr Neesam's articles appeared and today sees the second of what we hope will develop into a regular column.

We are grateful to Malcolm's family for their approval, to Simon Kent (closely involved with securing Malcolm's legacy) for his work researching and preparing the articles for reprint, for the advice of historian Paul Jennings and to Graham Chalmers and his team at the Advertiser for their support and encouragement.

We hope you will enjoy reading (or in some cases re-reading) these irreplaceable snapshots of history.

If you are able to add to our knowledge, or just wish to know more about our work, please do contact us at: history@harrogatecivicsociety.org.

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