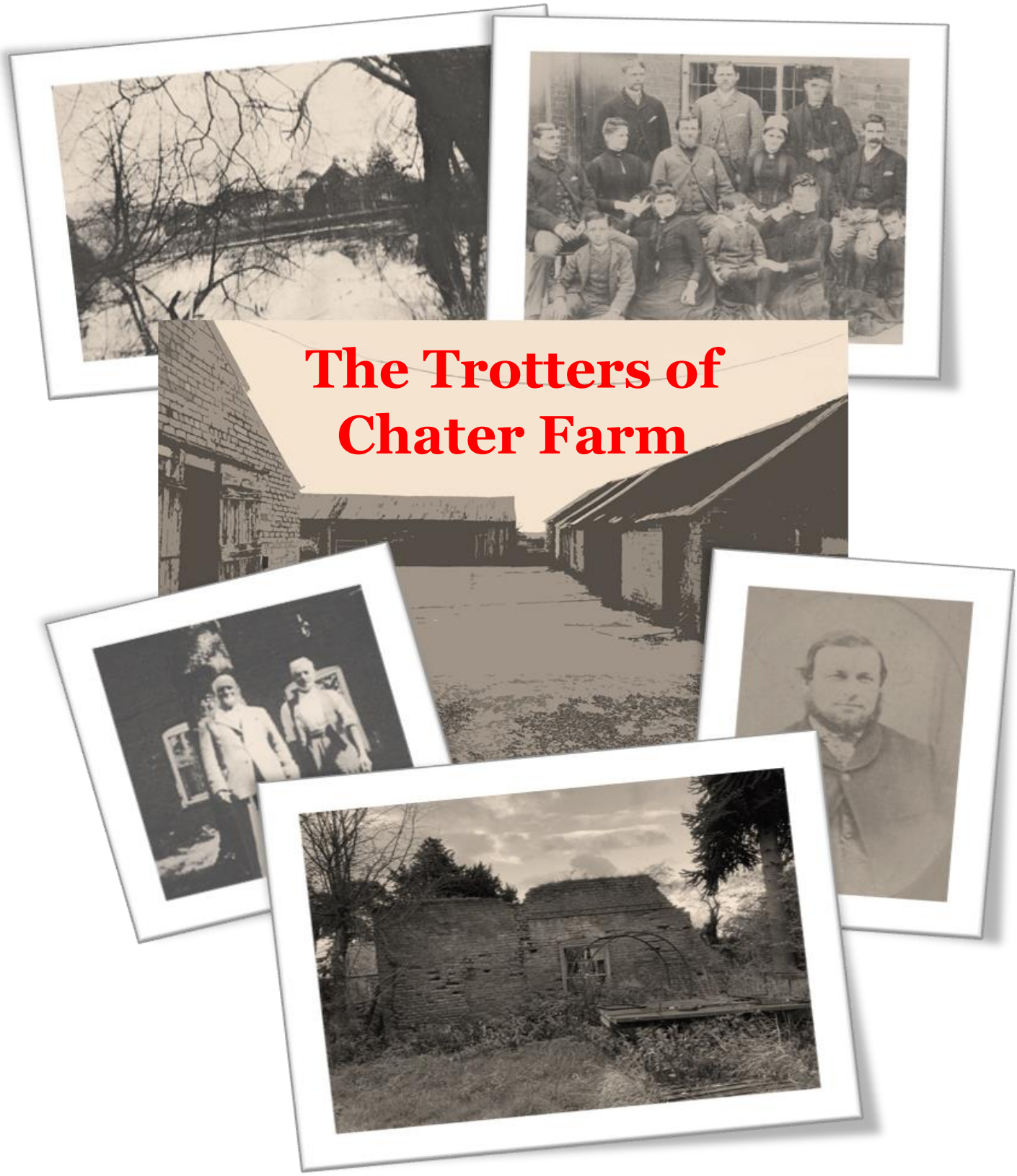


The Trotters of Chater Farm

One Family One Farm

243 Years of History

Preface

I came to be writing this piece about the Trotters of Chater Farm because of two conversations I have had that are almost ten years apart.

The first conversation took place in 2011 when I, along with friends from the village, was putting together a book describing walks in and around the parish of Newbold Verdon. I was checking out one of these walks which follows an old bridleway north of the village up toward Newbold Heath, eventually coming out at Chater Farm. On this day I got chatting to Mr Bates the farmer.

Our conversation was mainly about the footpaths that crossed his land, but Mr Bates then began telling me about the old tumbled-down house close to where we were standing. He explained that his father had purchased the farm off the Trotter family who had owned it for many years, and it was they that had built hat was now a sorry ruin – caused, he explained, by subsidence as a result of mining undertaken from the once nearby Merry Lees Colliery. In its time, Mr Bates told me, the house had been quite an impressive building, with a total of 12 rooms. He said that his parents had moved the family out when he was very young and since that time it had gradually deteriorated. Around the ruins were the remnants of out buildings, a small orchard and a garden with a tall monkey puzzle tree. With that, we finished our chat, and I went on my way.

The farm and the farmland are an intriguing part of the parish. Most of its landscape has a much older field system compared to the lands to the north and south. The fields are generally smaller and their hedges more likely to bend and wriggle as they follow the contours of the hillside or a natural water course, than to set off in arrow-straight lines typical of the larger, rectangular fields created in the early 1800s.



Chater House and the Monkey Puzzle Tree

The name Chater is also interesting. Farm names are often associated with their geographical setting or ownership. In our parish, for example, we have Wrask Farm, named after the owners; Church Farm, named because of its close proximity to the St James' Church; and Poole Farm, once associated with Gabrielle's Pool a, now drained, fish pond lying in close proximity to the farm. Chater Farm did not appear to fit into these categories.

My second conversation, and the one that really set the ball rolling, was one conducted across 6,000 miles and by email.

By chance, when undertaking another project on the village, an old family photograph came into my possession. It was of a generation of Trotters at Chater Farm (see page 13), dated to the late 19th century. I posted it on the Newbold Verdon Heritage Facebook page and subsequently Mike Trotter from Ontario, Canada got in touch. He and his wife Kathy had researched the family tree and found Mike's 2nd great-grandfather, Edwin Trotter, was recorded in the 1841 census as living at Chater Farm. He asked if there was any more information available about Chater's Trotter family. From that point onward, we have been conversing by email to see what we can share about the family and the farm: this document is the fruits of that dialogue.

It would not have been possible without the co-operation of Ellen Bates, who very kindly allowed me to visit the farm and to have site of a number of documents that helped fill in the pieces of the jigsaw – The Trotters of Chater Farm.

Introduction

The Trotter family connection with Chater Farm and Newbold Verdon began in 1712 and ended in 1955. The first Trotter, Ralph, (there will be a lot of Ralphs in this report) was not local, he was from County Durham. The reason why someone from the north-east of England, over 170 miles distant from the parish, came to be buying a piece of land in Newbold Verdon was due to his connection with Lord Nathaniel Crewe, Bishop of Durham and who was then the Lord of the Manor.

In 1722 Ralph married a local girl, Ann Bevane (Bevins), and they had seven children, setting a trend of large families at Chater Farm for the next 200 years or so. The historic footprint they and those Trotters who followed left behind in the form of census reports, trade directories, wills, newspaper articles, letters and memoirs, has provide a rich source of information allowing the opportunity to piece together fragments of their life stories over five generations.

We discover how Ralph came to be at Chater Farm and of his working relationship with Lord Crewe. And how a few years later one of his sons, Ralph, moves to Durham to take up an apprenticeship as an upholsterer; marries, starts a family and resides there the rest of his life. And how one of his sons (another Ralph) moves from Durham to Chatsworth House in Derbyshire; and how, eventually, his son, Nathaniel, comes to inherit Chater House Farm.

For most of the 19th century the occupiers of the farm produced quite a few children: so many that such a small farm (no bigger than 65 acres) would not be able to provide a livelihood for all. Understandably, as they grew into adulthood, the children moved away: sometimes just into the village of Newbold or to villages nearby, but others were more adventurous and left the shores of Britain for lives in the New World. By the end of the 19th century the exodus of most Trotter offspring was into the city of Leicester. Farming was left behind and new trades and subsequent commercial enterprises entered into, leading to significant wealth creation by members of the family. Just one Trotter, Ralph, remained at the farm until about 1935, after which Nathaniel his brother rented it out prior to selling up in 1955.

The Trotters of Chater House Farm were part of the farming community of Newbold Verdon for 243 years. This document sets out to piece together what is currently known of their story and, by doing so it will hopefully enrich, just a little, the heritage our parish. No doubt in years to come there will be more to say about the Trotters and The Chater.

The document is in six parts:

Part 1: Chater House Farm – origins and character

Part 2: 1712 – 1816: The First Trotters - Ralph, Elizabeth and Anne

Part 3: 1816 – 1869: Troubles and Travels - Nathaniel Trotter and Family

Part 4: 1869 - 1901: Off the Land and into the City - Thomas and Sarah Trotter and Family.

Part 5: 1901 – 1955: The Last Trotters - Ralph and Nathaniel

Part 6: The Monkey Puzzle Tree (Araucaria araucana)

It is then followed by a number of appendices intended to provide the reader with more background knowledge on aspects of the report they may find of interest.

The Name

Throughout the document the name of the farm changes. The intention is to reflect its name as it was known during a specific time period or by particular members of the Trotter Family. They themselves referred to it as The Chater; Chater House; Chater House Farm and in one instant a local paper describes it as Charterhouse. Being associated with the farm, or the house, seems to be a preoccupation for generations of Trotters – something of which they were proud.

Part 1: Chater House Farm: Origins and Geography

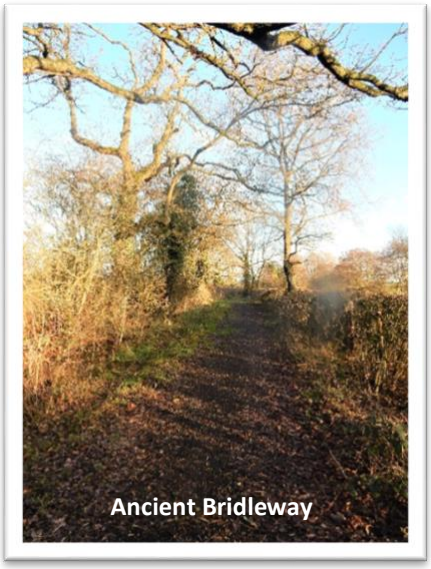
As the crow flies, Chater Farm is 1.5km (close to 1 mile) north of the centre of the village of Newbold Verdon and a few fields east of the hamlet of Newbold Heath. It sits on slightly elevated, southward sloping ground approximately 140m (450ft) above sea level. Though only a relatively short distance from the village and accessible by road and tracks, Chater's location still feels somewhat isolated.

The owners of the land prior to Ralph Trotters purchase, the Mountney family, sold it to Ralph Trotter in 1712. Before then the farm had been in the Mountney family for just over 100 years and was referred to as The Chaters, an acknowledgement of the Mountney-Chater branch of the family.

A small farm then and a small farm now, it has, over the past 300 years, ranged in size from 40 acres to approximately 65. The only time it went beyond this was in the early 1800s when it was about 100 acres. Prior to its purchase by Ralph Trotter, the Chaters was part of the larger Mounteney (old spelling) estate within the parish boundaries.

This aerial photograph of the farm and most of its land probably mirrors much of the original farmland. Just two fields to the north of the farm may have been added after the act of enclosure in 1811, at one time whimsically named Prairie 1 and Prairie 2 by the Trotters. Most of the other fields are irregular in shape and small in size, indicating a much older, enclosed farmed landscape than most of the parish.




Ancient Bridleway

Small, hedged fields were ideal for the husbandry of sheep and cattle and are a sign of earlier enclosure, possibly dating back to the late 15th century, but more likely the 16th or 17th.

Walking north from the village along the old bridleway, where the lane twists and turns, narrowing to a cart-tracks width before entering the fields leading to Chater Farm, the walker is experiencing the closest to a medieval landscape the parish can offer, apart from that at Brascote.

Remarkably, the type of farm it has been in the late 20thand early 21st century – predominantly dairy cattle, with a few pigs and hens – is what it was for the whole of the 300 years. Whilst not unique to the parish, Chater Farm retains a character long gone in most of the surrounding farmland; where large fields, dedicated predominantly to arable farming, dominate.


Small, hedged fields ideal for animal husbandry

Part 2: 1712 – 1816 The first Chater House owners: Ralph, Elizabeth and Anne

> "In 1712, William Mountney, descendent of the above-named William, sold to Ralph Trotter, gent. Part of the said land, which is a little farm, upon which he built a small house called Chaterhouse, in the parish of Newbold Verdun, now in the possession of his family."

Nichol's, History and Antiquities of Leicestershire (published in 1811)

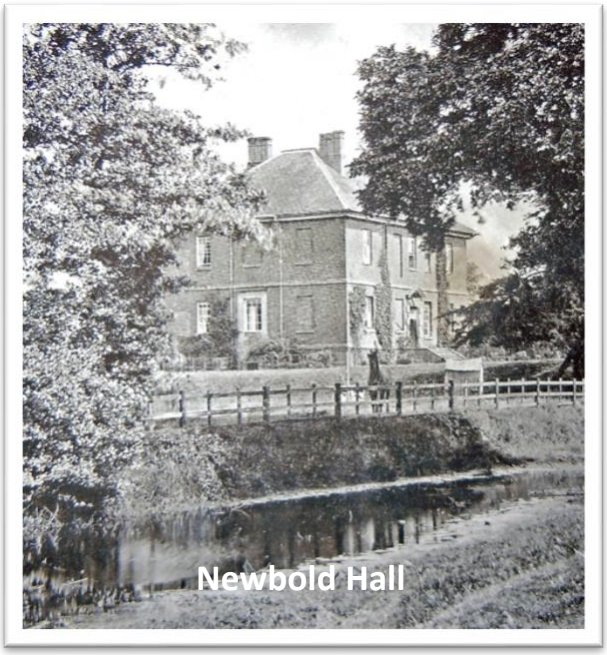
Ralph Trotter (c.1689 -1769)

Ralph was born in Durham and brought up in a wealthy merchant family. When his father Ralph died in 1691, he left £200 to his son - which equates to about £50,000 in today's money – to be given to him on his 21st birthday in 1710. This may well explain how a young man aged only 23 could afford to purchase Chater Farm and commission a house to be built on the land (see opposite page).

Before this came to pass, Ralph, at some point in his teen years, was in service as a page to Lady Dorothy Crewe, second wife of Lord Nathaniel Crewe, Bishop of Durham. By the age of 20, he was employed by the bishop who appointed him Registrar for life, an extremely important and prestigious role for such a young person; a position he held for the next 61 years.

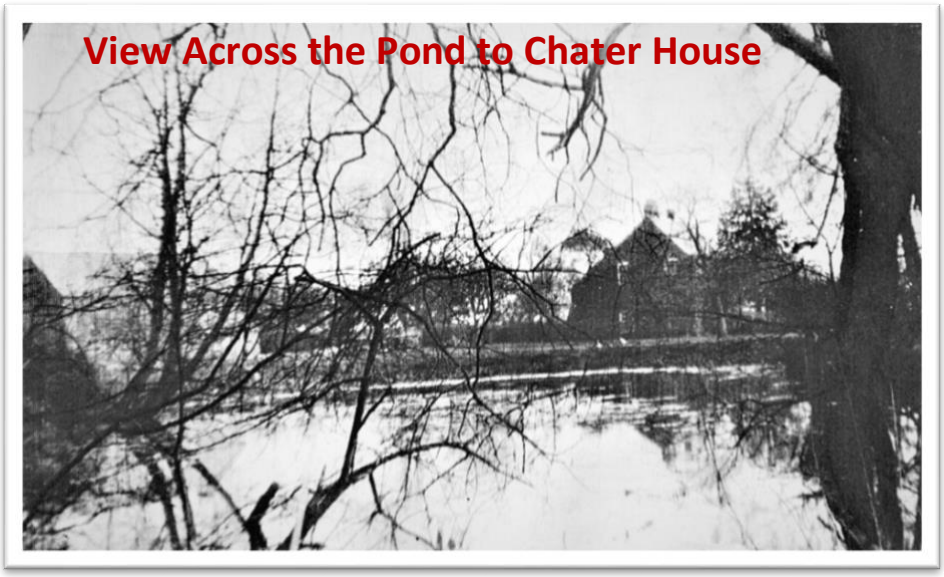
Ralph at Newbold-de-Verdun 1712 -1722

As well as his ecclesiastical duties, Ralph was also responsible for overseeing the running of some of Lord Crewe's landed interest, one of these being the manor of Newbold Verdon, inherited by Lord Crewe when his brother died. The purchase of the Manor of Newbold-de-Verdun, as it was then known, and the building of a large house, may have been because of the manor's geographical position in the country; offering respite during the long, eight-day journey from Durham to London where Lord Crewe would be expected to attend parliament. He also had a large estate at Steane in Northamptonshire, approximately two days' ride away, which he would also have needed to visit from time to time.


Newbold Hall

Newbold manor was not just a stopping off point, providing Lord Crewe and his entourage with respite during the long journeys north and south, the manor estate provided him with income from those renting his land and houses. Someone had over-see this and the rent book of 1712 to 1722 tells us that it was Ralph Trotter who undertook this role.

Spending so much time in Newbold Verdon during those ten years, it was not a surprise to find Ralph marrying a local girl, Ann Bevins. They soon had a child (also named Ralph) and in the next 10 years Ann would give birth to six more children: four girls and two boys – Chart 1 opposite provides further information.



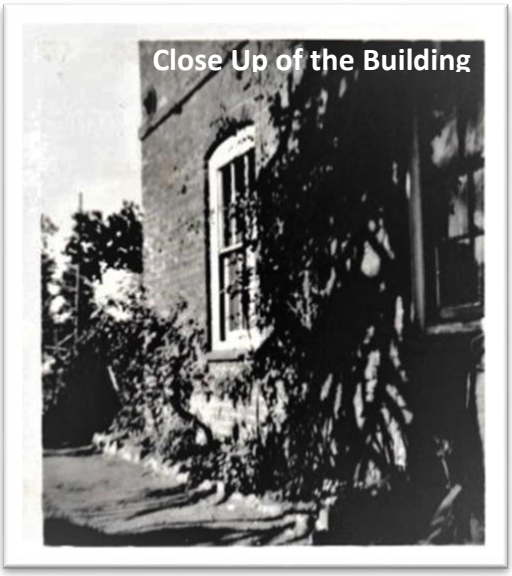


Chart 1: Timeline 1608 – 1816

Important Events at Chater House Farm, Newbold Verdon Manor and within the Trotter Family

NB: The colour for each relevant name is intended to help distinguish between members of the family

The Farm and Manor		The Trotter Family
Mountney family own manor and name farm 'Chaters'	1608	
Crewe family purchase manor but not the Chater's	1625	
Lord Crewe Bishop of Durham inherits the manor	1681	
	1689	**Ralph Trotter** born Durham
Ralph purchases Chater Farm and builds a house	1712	
Ralph collects rents from tenants in NV for Lord Crewe	1721	
Lord Crewe dies leaving money and gift to **Ralph**	1722	
	1723	**Ralph** marries Ann Bevan of NV
	1723	**Ralph's** son **Ralph** born
	1726	**Ralph's** daughter **Anne** born
	1734	**Ralph's** daughter **Elizabeth** born

Other Children
Nathaniel 1724
Dorothy 1725
Margaret 1727
Clement 1728

	1754	**Ralph** living in Durham: Upholsterer
	1758	**Ralph** has a son, **Ralph:** he also becomes an upholsterer
	1766	**Ralph's** wife Ann dies
Anne (43) and **Elizabeth** (35) inherit Chater House	1769	
	1769	**Ralph** dies
Anne and **Elizabeth** owning Chater, but not farming	1776	
	1784	**Ralph** working at Chatsworth House upholstering
Anne and **Elizabeth** owning Chater, but not farming	1798	
	1798	**Ralph** has a son, **Nathaniel**
Anne and **Elizabeth** (?) owning Chater but not farming	1811	
	1816	**Anne** dies leaving the farm to **Nathaniel**

1723-1769: Newbold or Durham?

For a long time whilst researching this document it did not seem possible that Ralph Trotter, Registrar to the Diocese of Durham, could also be Ralph Trotter of Chater Farm, Newbold Verdon. The demands of the role of Registrar, the travel time between Durham and Leicestershire and the regularity by which Ann had her children, all pointed to there being two Ralph Trotters, though possibly related. Evidence has since emerged to dispel any doubts and to confirm there was only one Ralph Trotter.

Ralph the Registrar

In 1975 Durham University Ph.D. student, Jon Schuler, wrote his Ph.D. dissertation describing the pastoral and ecclesiastical administration of the Diocese of Durham 1721 – 1771, where he explained how the diocese was run and who the people were who ran it, and it is from this source that so much can be gathered about Ralph and what his role entailed and how that impacted upon his married life.

From 1708 to his death in 1769 Ralph was one of just two Registrars for the Diocese. His job was to oversee the smooth running of the Registry, the administrative branch of the diocese. He was to all intense and purposes an office manager: handling correspondence; indexing and filing documents; recording any church court cases and storing probate records. It was, in Jon Schuler's words, " …critical to the efficient running of the diocese of the period." – and Ralph Trotter was overseeing it for 61 years. Schuler goes on to write, 'His long tenure meant it was very rare not to find documents in the registry which do not bare some note, correction, or other evidence of the tightly scrawled handwriting of Ralph Trotter."

The critical nature of this role and the obvious hands-on attitude of Ralph point to a man not able to spend very much time away from his office – working from home not really being an option in those days! Neither could he commute on a weekly or perhaps even monthly basis; the round journey from Durham to Newbold Verdon taking no less than six days, and probably more in the winter.

There is no evidence of Ann his wife living up in Durham. In fact, Schuler reports that very little was known about Ralph's domestic life except that he was married, but his wife's name was unknown. All of the seven children were recorded has having been born in Newbold Verdon, further strengthening the proposition that, apart from some limited time at Chater House, Ralph remained in Durham. He was certainly living in the South Bailey of Durham in 1761: his daughter Dorothy was living there with him just prior to her marriage. Records also show that he died in the same place 8 years later.

Ralph of Chater Farm

What confirms Ralph as being Ralph Trotter of Chater Farm are his children. In his will of 17, he leaves all of his worldly goods to his two daughters, Elizabeth and Anne, but invites his son, Nathaniel and his other daughter Dorothy to take three or four books from his collection, and for Dorothy to take some items from his silver plate.

Also, Schuler, quoting from registry papers about Trotter's own personal financial accounts, points to a direct link with Leicestershire '..he kept no regular Accounts and, such as he did keep, are with his Daur [sic] in Leicestershire. Schuler also quotes from another document, "It is said that he was buried at Newbold Co. Leicester, where his wife was buried some years before him.'

What, then, of life at Chater Farm during this period?

Durham Cathedral

Pastoral and Ecclesiastical centre of Durham Diocese



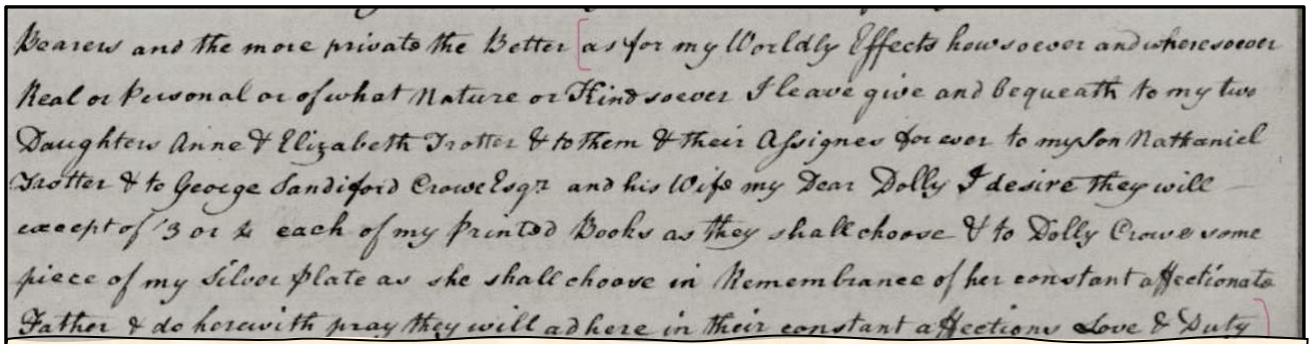


South Bailey

One of these houses was home to Ralph Trotter when in Durham

Ralph Trotter's Will: 1768

(beneath is more readable version)



……as for my Worldly Effects howsoever and wheresoever Real or Personal or of what Nature or Hindsoever I leave give and bequeath to my two Daughters Anne & Elizabeth Trotter & to them and their Assignes for ever/ to my son Nathaniel Trotter & to George Sandiford Crowe and his Wife my Dear Daughter Dolly I desire they will except of 3 or 4 each of my Printed Books as they shall choose & to Dolly Crowe some pieces of my Silver plate as she shall choose in Remembrance of her constant and affectionate Father & do herewith pray they will adhere in their constant affectionate Love and Duty

Chater Farm: 1723 - 1769

There are no contemporary records of who was living at Chater House during the 52 years up to 1775, but it is possible to make some reasonable assumptions. Even before 1723, Ralph does not appear on any records, including the 1719 register of those qualified to vote. Parish birth registrations do record the birth and christening of the children, and it would be reasonable to assume that, certainly in their early years, they would have been at Chater House with their mother.

Ralph and Ann's Children

Ralph	1723
Nathaniel	1724
Dorothy	1725
Anne	1726
Margaret	1727
Clement	1728
Elizabeth	1734

Tragedy struck the family in 1728 when Margaret died in December, aged only one. Clement was born a few days earlier, but he does not appear to survived for very long. As common as infant mortality was during these times, it must have been a great blow to Ann and Ralph. Elizabeth's birth after a six-year gap may have been something to do with the loss of Margaret and Clement.

Gradually, the maturing children moved away. First Nathaniel in 1742, off to study at Oxford University in preparation for becoming a Church of England minister. In 1749 Ralph, aged 26, was living in Durham and marrying Ann Wyld. Dorothy married George Sandiford Crow in 1761. She was living with at her father's house at the South Bailey in Durham.

Elizabeth and Anne: 1769 - 1816

Ann, their mother, died in 1766 and was buried in Newbold Verdon: Ralph followed three years later, still living in Durham, though believed to have been buried in Newbold Verdon. Elizabeth and Anne together inherited the house and lands of Chater Farm for the next 28 years, until Elizabeth's death in 1797. Ann survived her sister for a further 19 years, dying in 1816. In those years when they were sole proprietors, they oversaw the estate when it was at its largest and probably most profitable, but whether they actually farmed the land during that time is debateable.

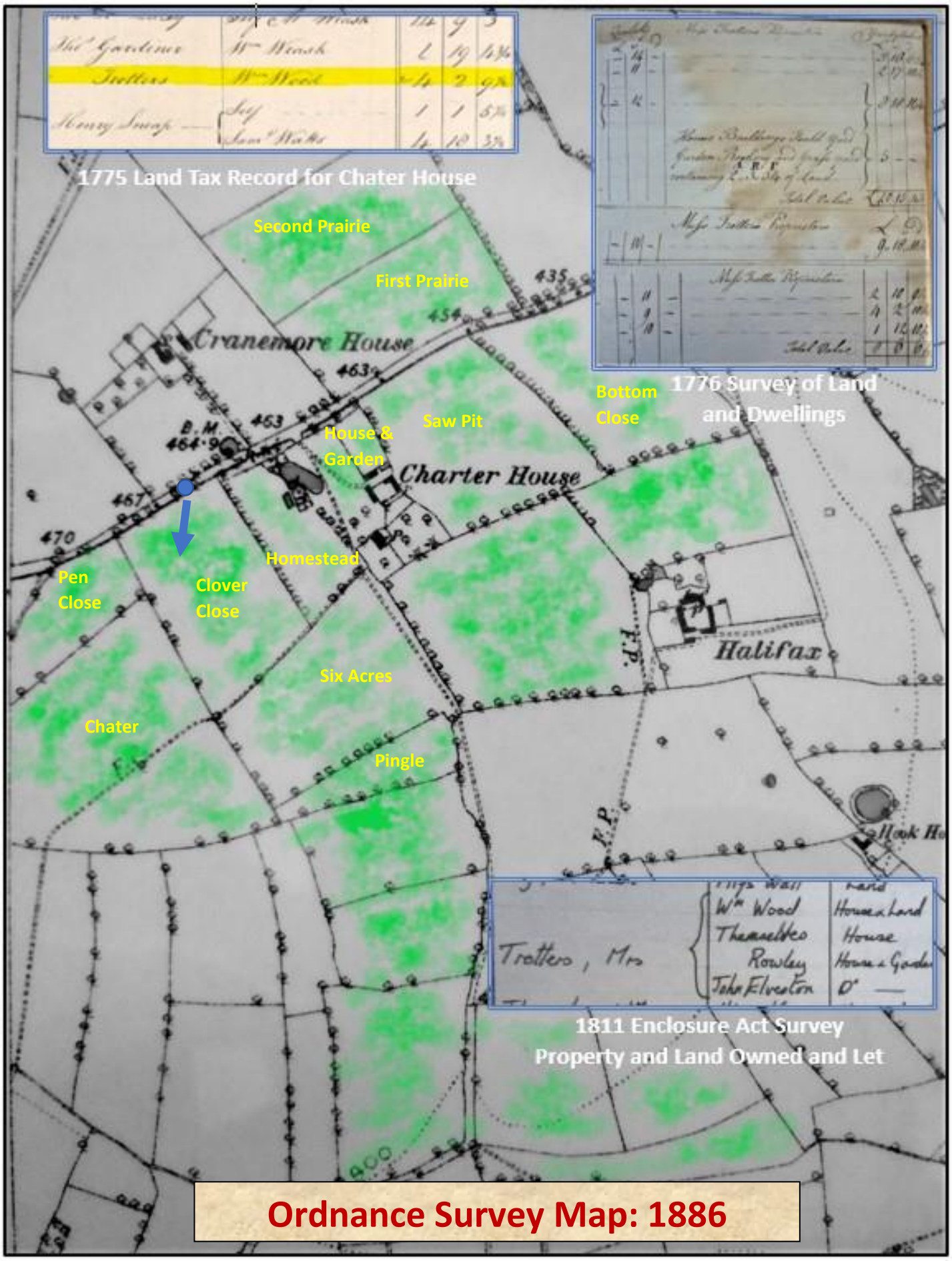
On the page opposite are extracts from the 1776 Land Survey and Evaluation, undertaken prior to the sale of the manor of Newbold Verdon. In full, the survey details who owned what land and property in the manor, its value, and the names of any tenants to whom proprietors may be renting. It tells us that *Miss Trotters* owned a total of just over 106 acres of land and three properties, as well as buildings, fould yard, garden, rookery and grass yard: a 60 per cent increase in land since the purchase in 1712 and with three additional properties. The Yearly Value was calculated at £72 8s 6¾d, which would equate to £12,000 today. Most of the land was rented out, with only 25 acres deemed to be part of the Chater House. In 1775 the Land Tax Redemption Record had a Mr William Wood as the tenant and he, or possibly his son, was still renting the farm in 1811.

The farmland was, and still is, dedicated to dairy farming. This photograph, taken from the road running past the farm, captures a scene repeated many, many times over the 243 years of Trotter occupation: cattle grazing the rich grasses of Clover Close.



The blue arrow on the map shows the viewpoint of the photographer, looking across the field toward the hedge in the distance, where several of the trees indicated on the map can still be seen.

The map also names the fields listed on the tenant agreement of 1936 between Nathaniel Trotter family and Mr Bates. Fields shaded in green but not named are believed to have been part of, or still belong to, Chater Farm.

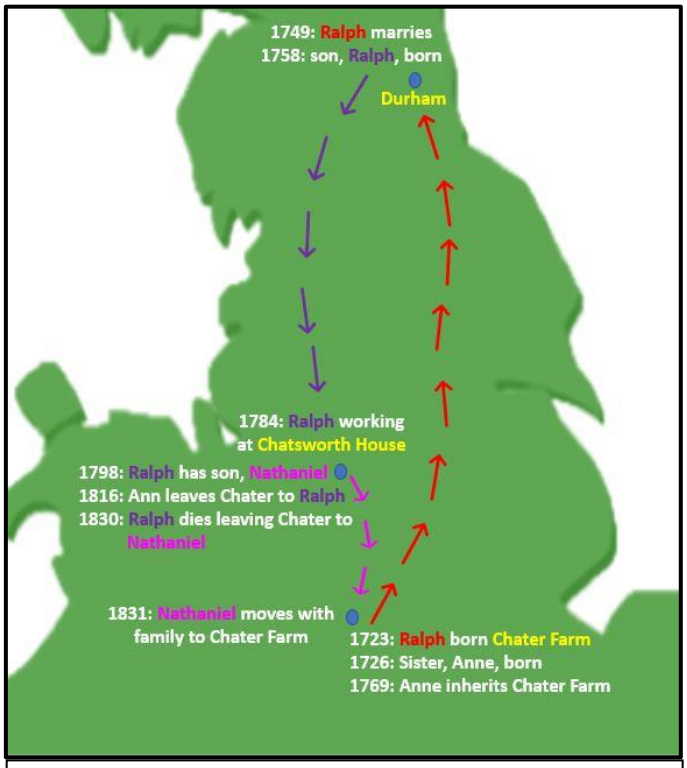

1775 Land Tax Record for Chater House
1776 Survey of Land and Dwellings
1811 Enclosure Act Survey
Property and Land Owned and Let
Second Prairie
First Prairie
Cranemore House
Charter House
Saw Pit
House & Garden
Homestead
Bottom Close
Pen Close
Clover Close
Six Acres
Chater
Pingle
Halifax
435
454
463
463
B.M. 464·9
467
470
Trotters, Mrs
Wm Wood
Thomas Hes
Rowley
John Elverston
House & Land
House
House & Garden
Ordnance Survey Map: 1886

1816 – 1830: Chater House from Anne to Ralph to Nathaniel

Anne Trotter died at Chater House on the 11th December 1816. She had lived all her 90 years at the house and as far as is known no other member of the Trotter family was living there at the time of her death. In 1814 Anne had completed her will and in it she had bequeathed the house and farm to her nephew Ralph Trotter, who was living in Derbyshire working as an upholsterer at Chatsworth House. He, as instructed by Anne in her will, left it to his son Nathaniel on his death.

On Anne' death Ralph did not move to Chater House. Coincidentally, or possibly as a consequence of inheriting the farm and its rentable income (approximately £110 per annum - £11,000 today), Ralph moved to Brampton not far from Chatsworth to farm; being joined at some point by Nathaniel and his family.

Nathaniel had been employed in a number of occupations over the years in and around north-east Derbyshire and south-Yorkshire before he joined his father on the farm. At one time he was recorded as being an innkeeper in Chesterfield. Later in his life there is evidence to show Nathaniel and alcohol were not always on the best of terms.



Events leading to Nathaniel Trotter inheriting Chater House Farm: begin at '1723: Ralph born Chater Farm'

Chater House Abandoned?

Though no member of the Trotter family lived at the house for 15 years, it was not empty. William Wood was still living there in 1830. The houses that the family owned were also being occupied. Anne had made provisions in her will that Widow Ann Rowley (mentioned in the 1811 Enclosure Survey, see page 10) would be allowed to stay as occupier of her house, free of Rent, until her death; and that she also be given £20 a year from Ann's estate – equivalent to £2,000 in 2020.

Anne's Burial

Though the records show that Anne was buried in St James' graveyard in the village, it has not been possible to locate her grave. There does appear to be a plot where members of the Trotter family are buried, but time and the natural undermining of gravestones has meant custodians of the church having to remove and make safe the ground. The position of the plot, next to the church wall and adjacent to the Mounteney family, indicates a family held in high regard by the Church. It is known, for example, that Anne and Elizabeth gave generously to St James' and its causes. Later church records also show family members making up a substantial number of the communicants over the years.

The four graves in the foreground of this photograph mark the existing Trotter family plot. Just behind them, close to the church wall, is the Mounteney family plot. The two families between them were responsible for over 300 years of ownership and occupancy of Chater Farm: fitting, then, that they occupy adjacent plots in the graveyard.

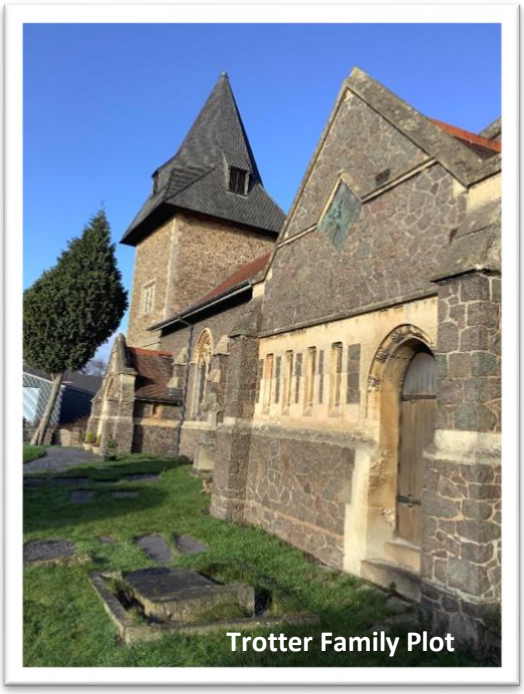
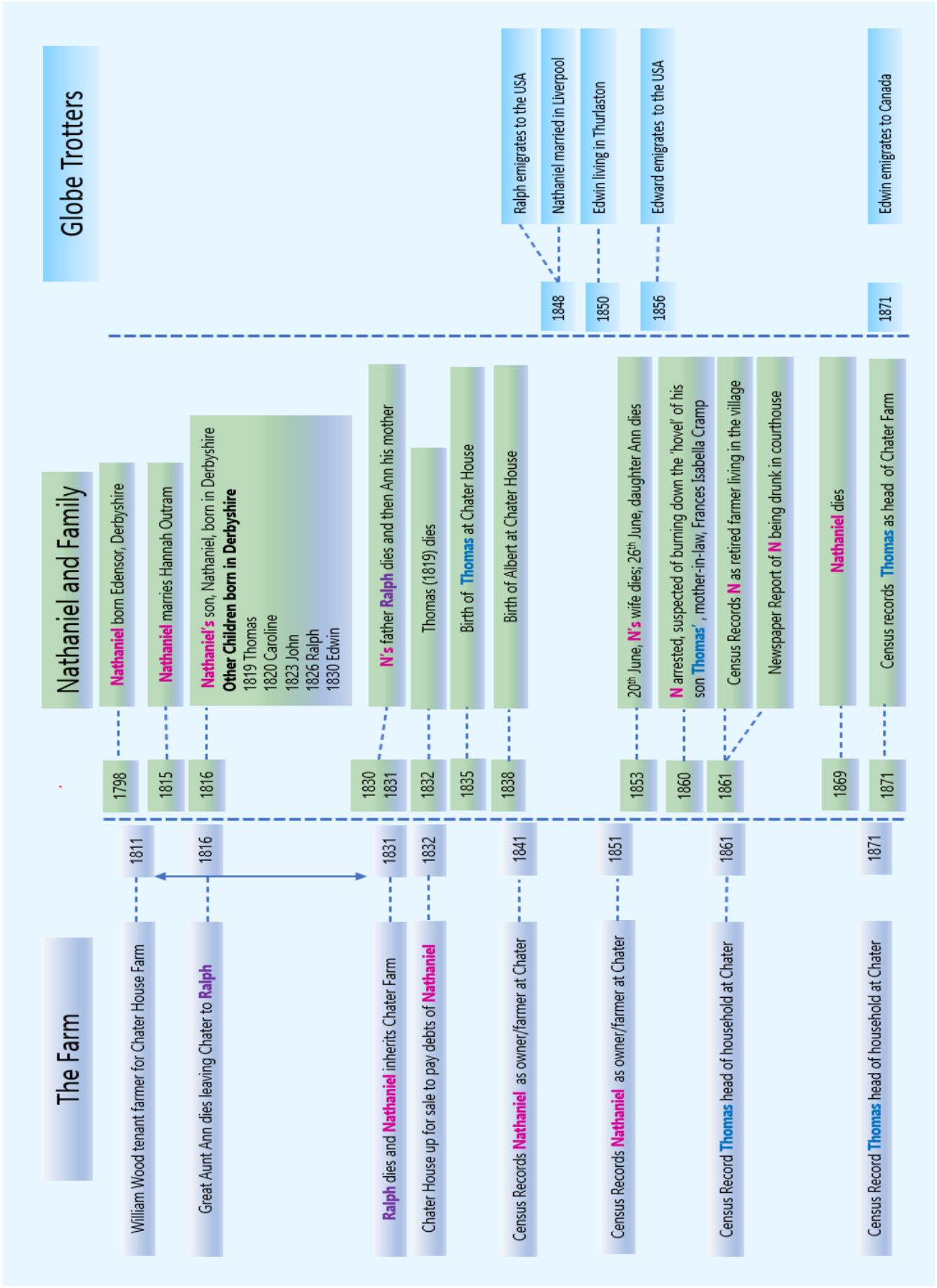

Trotter Family Plot

Chart 2: Timeline 1798 – 1871

Important Events for Chater Farm, Nathaniel and Family



Part 3: 1816 – 1869: Troubles and Travels - Nathaniel Trotter and Family

To Chater and Debt

At the time of his father's death Nathaniel was working on the family farm in Brampton not far from Chatsworth. Records for Newbold Verdon parish during the period 1816 to 1830 record William Wood as tenant farmer for Chater Farm. He was still farming the land when Nathaniel, Hannah his wife and their eight children arrived in 1831, but the family's arrival was not in the happiest of circumstances judging from this newspaper notification placed in the Leicester Journal in September 1832.

Life Interest

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,

BY ARCHER & SON

On Monday, September 24th 1832, at the George and Dragon Inn, in Newbold Verdon at o'clock in the Afternoon, under such conditions as shall then be produced.

THE life Interest of Mr Nathaniel Trotter, now a prisoner for debt in the county Gaol of Leicester, of all that FARM HOUSE, Outbuildings and all those several CLOSES of LAND, containing about 70 acres lying and being at Newbold Verdon, in the occupation of Mr. Wm. Wood, the elder, the lease being unexpired of 7 years of Lady day last, at the yearly rent of £107.

Soon after Nathaniel arrived at the farm he was imprisoned for debt and his house and lands were put up for sale. What led up to this situation is not known, and neither is it known how he managed to extricate himself from the indebtedness, but he did.

By the time of the national census of 1841 Nathaniel is recorded as head of Chater House living there with his wife and four of his children one of whom, Thomas, was born at the farm. Nathaniel continued living at Chater for some years, but by 1861 the census recorded him as a widowed, retired farmer living in Newbold village, whilst his youngest son Thomas was occupying and farming at Chater House.

It could have been as early as 1853 that Nathaniel was no longer living at Chater House. The Melville Trade Directory of that year recorded him as a cottager not a farmer. Two tragic events of 1853 may well have driven him off the farm, when, within the space of six days, Nathaniel's wife Hannah died, followed by their 25-year-old daughter Ann. To what degree his wife and daughter's deaths affected him can only be imagined, but the Melville Directory entry shows him to have left Chater House presumably leaving it to an 18-year-old Thomas to farm.

There are indications that Nathaniel's life from this point may have been affected by alcohol. A memoir of one of his relatives writes of him drinking away the family fortune. He was also known to have been involved in two serious incidents, one proven to be alcohol related the other possibly so.

MARKET BOSWORTH

AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD

Market Bosworth Petty Session, September 4

Before Sir A.B.C. Dixie, Bart, the Rev. W.W. Greenway, and T. Cope, Esq.

Joseph Statham was charged by Superintendent Moore with being drunk and riotous at Newbold Verdon on the 29th Aug. Mr Bramah appeared for the defendant, who was dismissed n the charge of drunkenness, but convicted of riotous conduct, such conduct being unfit for publication, and was bound over in his own recognizance in £10 and one surety in £5, to keep the peace for six calendar months.

Nathaniel Trotter of Newbold Verdon who attended to give evidence on the above case and was intoxicated and misbehaved himself before the bench was fined 5s, and a distress warrant was ordered to issue. Defendant was removed from the room by force.

This newspaper cutting describes a badly inebriated Nathaniel Trotter, aged 63, misbehaving before the Magistrates Bench at Market Bosworth Petty Sessions in 1861. Nathaniel had been involved in an even more serious case a few months earlier.

Thomas Hargrave, a village neighbour of Nathaniel's, and likely drinking partner, kept a diary from April 1858 to July 1860. The diary

could be described as mainly a record of Thomas's drinking and ways in which he sought to obtain drink, despite him being destitute and living off his father.

Thomas Hargrave mentioned Nathaniel in his diary on a number of occasions, and his son Thomas and wife Sarah, especially after the birth and christening of their first son, George Cramp Trotter. The child's middle name, Cramp, is in recognition of Sarah's maiden name. George was born on the 9th December 1859 and Thomas records this in his diary, and the 'churching' of his mother (churching is a religious ceremony wherein a blessing is given to mothers after recovery from childbirth) he also noted the christening .

Sunday May 27th . Fine Day. Tom and Sarah Trotter's baby christened.

The christening of a first child would no doubt have been a happy occasion, something of a contrast to what had happened to the family, especially Sarah's mother Frances Ann Cramp, only a few weeks earlier. Thomas made the following entries in his diary.

May 5th . Mrs Cramp's hovel burnt down

May 10th: The police took Nataniel Trotter off on suspician of firing Cramps hovel.

May 11th . Jo's Henton went to Bosworth bench to hear Trotter's case.

The hovel was likely to have been one of the smaller out-buildings at the Bricklayers Arms. The fact that Nathaniel was arrested may suggest a possible tension between him and Frances, it being common practice for those who had been wronged identifying those they believed to be the most likely to have perpetrated the crime.

Arson was a very serious crime and one, if proven, likely to lead to a harsh punishment: forty years earlier in Newbold Verdon a man was hanged for burning down a hay and a clover rick. Nathaniel was not subjected to that fate and by the 6th June Thomas Hargrave recorded the following:

Wednesday 6th June. Rain. Trotter enebrated (sic) and sang

Nathaniel died in 1869, aged 71, and was buried alongside his wife Sarah.

In a nearby grave, but commemorated on their parents' gravestone, lay three of their children: Ann, John Ripley and Alfred.

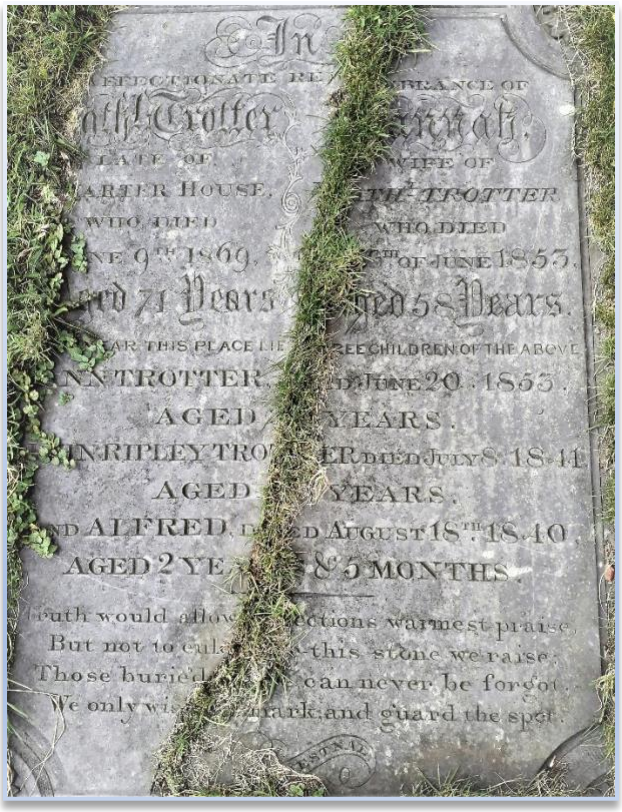
At the foot of the stone is a short epithet:

Truth would allow resurrections warmest praise,

But not to eulogise – this stone we raise:

Those buried here can never be forgot,

We only wish to mark and guard the spot.



Nathaniel and Hannah's Children

The number of children born to Nathaniel and Hannah numbered ten, eight boys and two girls, but only seven of those survived beyond the age of eighteen, and a fourth child, Ann, died at the age of twenty-five. Large families were not uncommon in the 19th century for what seemed to people at the time as perfectly logical reasons. Parents needed children to help them overcome the challenges they faced, and children could soon (as early as eight years of age) be contributing to the finances of the family, whether it be in some form of cottage industry such as hosiery or in the factories of the towns and cities. On the farm, children could do many of the jobs a paid agricultural worker might do. The mortality rate for young children was high as is demonstrated with Nathaniel and Hannah's family; so, producing a large family acted as an insurance policy to assure bread winners and, importantly, to have someone to look after the parents in their old age.

Nathaniel and Hannah's Children

1816 Nathaniel	(Coachman)	
1819 Thomas	(Died aged 12)	
1820 Caroline	(?)	
1823 John Ripley	(Died aged 18)	
1824 Edward	(Blacksmith)	E.
1826 Ralph	(Soldier)	E.
1828 Ann	(Died aged 25)	
1830 Edwin	(Wheelwright)	E.
1835 Thomas	(Chater Farm)	
1838 Alfred	(Died aged 2)	

E = emigrated

By the time of the 1841 national survey, when all of the children had been born, only four were left living at the farm: 18-year-old John and his three younger siblings, Ann, Edwin and Thomas, who were all at school. The first Thomas had died aged 13 whilst apprenticed on a farm in Derbyshire. The elder brothers had all left the farm and were working in the surrounding area except Nathaniel who had gone to work in Liverpool as a coachman.

The farm was not sufficiently large enough to provide for all of the children and, naturally, as they got older, some were keen to make their own way in the world. In the 1851 census Edwin was a wheelwright in nearby Thurlaston and Edward an apprentice smithy in Leicester. It is not yet clear what happened to Caroline. She may have gone into service or married, there were few options for a young woman in the mid-19th century.

Emigration

By the time of the 1871 national census only Thomas was living in Leicestershire. Nathaniel was married and living in Liverpool, whilst the other three surviving brothers had emigrated. Ralph was the first, sailing from Liverpool to the United States in 1848, aged only 22. Two years after landing in New York, he was stationed at Fort Lincoln, Medina, Texas having joined the US army serving as a farrier.

In 1856 Edward left Leicester, where he was living and working as a journeyman blacksmith, and sailed to the United States, settling first in Pennsylvania before moving to New Jersey in 1860. Here he spent the rest of his life, but not before he was drafted into the Union Army to fight in the Civil War of 1861-1865.

When Edwin had moved to Thurlaston to pursue his trade of wheelwright, he married Hannah Pinfold from the village and during the next twenty years they raised a family of eleven. After the birth of their last child, they decided to emigrate to Toronto, Canada in 1871. Sadly, Edwin died three years later of smallpox aged only 44.



Edwin Trotter (1830-1874)

Why Emigrate?

It is understandable that as they grew into adulthood members of the family would want, indeed need, to leave the farm and find a life beyond its 65 acres. But why would three choose to emigrate? What might have been the factors pushing them away from Britain and pulling them toward the New World.

Ralph at 22 may have been attracted by the adventure. His choice of occupation when he arrived in the United States would suggest something of an adventurous spirit. Whilst Edward's decision looks to have been more to do with what would be best for the family. He certainly was not alone in seeing the United States as a land of opportunity. In a 30-year period between 1850 and 1880, over 1.5 million British citizens emigrated to the United States. Men with blacksmith and farrier skills would likely be much in demand, as vast numbers of people moved around the continent by waggon or on horseback.

Perhaps the most surprising decision was that of Edwin. He was well established in the Leicestershire village of Thurlaston as the wheelwright. What prompted him to take the family 3,500 miles to a new life in Canada, a country that, whilst attractive to emigration, was not seeing the rise in numbers comparable with those below the 59th parallel. In fact, over a similar 30-year period (1850-80) emigration to Canada per year for all nationalities, not just British, was in the low tens of thousands.

For Edwin it may have been about the future prospects for his children. The rise in industrialisation in 19th century Britain, coupled with technological advances in farming that meant fewer people needed to be employed, led to an exodus from the countryside. In 1851, 50 per cent of the total population lived in rural settings and by 1911 this had decreased to just 30 per cent. Whilst there was still work around for wheelwrights and blacksmiths, the prospect for Edwin's children in 1871 was more likely to lead to an urban rather than rural life.

Whatever the reason for their leaving, Canada seemed to provide many opportunities for Edwin's children, with occupations for the men as varied as mechanical engineering, commerce, and the church ministry. One son returned for a time to serve in the British army, returning to Canada aged 32.

Letters from one Thomas, a nephew of Edwin, who was honeymooning in Britain in 1887, offer a number of insights into the extended family and possibly a hint into another reason the family left. The letters suggest a family strongly wedded to their faith and to the Baptist church, something of a disappointing contrast to what they found in England. Edwin and all of his brothers and sisters had been brought up in the Anglican faith, but this seemed to have been abandoned by some of the family. Whether this was before they left for Canada or not it is not clear. Thomas' disapproving tone regarding Anglican churches and their ministers, and his constant references to alcoholic consumption of his relatives, does feel as though the family is somewhat set apart from their British aunts, uncles and cousins when it comes to faith and temperance. Whether Edwin and his wife's religious convictions played a part in their decision to move to Canada it is not possible to say but it may.

Thomas Remains

By 1881, Thomas had been responsible for Chater Farm for over twenty years and he and Sarah had brought 10 children into the world, with just Clement to be born two years later. His family story is quite different to the family of Nathaniel Trotter. Thomas' family story is predominantly one of a departure from the land to the city of Leicester.

Part 4: 1869 - 1901 Off the Land and into the City - Thomas and Sarah Trotter and Family.

	Harry ? (30) George? (32) Tom Edwin? (25)			
Ralph?(16)	Ann Elizabeth? (27)	Thomas (56)	Sarah (49)	Frederick?(23)
Nathaniel? (13)	Sarah Louisa? (17)	Clement? (8)	Isabella? (19)	Thomas? (10)



The Trotter Family at Chater Farm (circa 1890)

The photograph above was taken outside Chater House Farm probably in the early 1890's and it is likely to be the whole of the family of Thomas and Sarah Trotter, both seen here sitting in the centre of the picture, third and fourth from the left.

Around them sit their children. If they are all in the picture, it looks as though the eldest sons are standing behind their mother and father (George, the oldest, in the middle) and the youngest daughters and sons sitting at the front. Based on these assumptions, an attempt has been made to name each person, though, apart from Thomas and Sarah, the attempt is somewhat speculative.

Like Nathaniel Trotter's family before them, there does not appear to be a time when all of the children were under the same roof. This is not surprising given the twenty-two-year gap between the birth of George and his brother Clement. But unlike Nathaniel's family, Thomas and Sarah's off-spring did not move far away geographically but they did by choice of occupation.

Chart 3: 1881-1911 – From Chater House Farm to Leicester

The chart below looks at where Thomas, Sarah and members of their family were living and, if old enough, working at each of the census records from 1881 until 1911 and the 1916 Trade Directory of Leicester.

Key

( )	Age at the time of the 1881 Census	?	This information not currently available
	Agricultural Occupations		Not yet born or had died since the last census
	Service, Commercial of Industrial Occupation	✸	Kelly's Directory (Leicester and Leicestershire) 1916

	1881		1891		1901		1911 1916 Trade Directory*	
Family Member	**Place**	**Occupation**	**Place**	**Occupation**	**Place**	**Occupation**	**Place**	**Occupation**
Thomas (46)	Chater	Farmer	Chater	Farmer				
Sarah (39)	"	Wife	"	Wife	Chater	Widow	Field Farm	Retired
Georg C. (21)	"	Assist Farmer	"	Farmer's Son	"	Farmer's Son		
Harry (19)	?	?	Leicester	Joiner	Leicester	Joiner	Leicester	Publican
Ann E. (17)	?	?	?	?	Houghton-on-Hill(Leic)	Married to a Baker	Houghton-on-Hill (Leic)	Married to a Baker
John Edwin (14)	Chater	Assist Farmer	Chater	Farmer's Son	Desford	Shepherd		
Frederick (12)	"	Scholar	?	?	?	?	Leicester*	Shopfitter*
Isabella F. (9)	"	Scholar	?	?	Leicester	Shopkeeper	Leicester	Shopkeeper
Sarah L. (7)	"	Scholar	London	Housemaid	Leicester	Shop assistant	Leicester	Housewife
Ralph (5)	"	Infant	London	Servant	Newbold Verdon	Farm Labourer	Chater	Farm Bailiff
Nathaniel (3)	"	Infant	Chater	Scholar	Leicester	Journeyman Baker	Leicester	Master Baker
Thomas (3 months)	"	Infant	Chater	Scholar	Chater	Farmer's Son	Leicester	Baker/ Confectioner
Clement (b. 1883)			Chater	Scholar	Leicester	Joiner	Leicester*	Shopfitter*

The chart overleaf maps out how the majority of Thomas and Sarah's children migrated away from working on the land to undertake, or marrying into, more commercial trades such as shopkeeping, bakery, victualling and shopfitting. As with the earlier Trotter generation on the farm, there was never going to be enough work for all the siblings, especially as they reached maturity and wanted to start families of their own, but there were occupations that could have kept them on the land had they so wished.

John Edwin, for example, had by 1901 moved to live in Desford and was working as a shepherd. In the same 1901 census, Newbold Verdon recorded 3 blacksmiths, 4 carpenters, 3 wheelwrights, 4 waggoners, and 52 agricultural workers, not to mention 15 farmers. The occupations of wheelwright and blacksmith had been taken up by their uncles thirty years earlier, prior to them emigrating, it would not have been a surprise if some of the brothers had followed in their uncles' occupational footsteps if not their new world escapades.

Work in agriculture was declining and it had meant in some parts of the county that people were leaving the countryside to live in Leicester or larger towns of the county, though many men in Newbold Verdon chose to stay put - the reason, coal. By 1901 there were 137 men from Newbold Verdon (48 percent of the working population, compared to 18 percent in agricultural employment) working in the mines a few miles north of the village : forty years earlier there had been just a handful. Mining was far more financially rewarding than labouring in the fields, and the census records from 1861 onwards showed the switch from the land to the mines by the men of the parish. Despite the proximity of the pits and the pay being twice that of an agricultural worker, no Trotter children chose mining or even the less dangerous work in the hosiery and boot and shoe factories of nearby Hinckley, Earl Shilton and Barwell. Instead, eight of the eleven siblings moved to Leicester most living there for all of their adult lives.

Bread, Shop Fitters and Beer:

Bread: Nathaniel, Thomas and Ann Elizabeth

A few years ago, on one of my walks past the farm, I got talking to Mr Bates about the old house and the farm buildings. He told me his family had moved out of the house when he was a baby and that he had no recollection of living there. He did, however, have something of a puzzle to share about one of the old farm buildings. The oldest barn had been erected by the Trotters and one day, when he and his father were clearing out a neglected part of the building, they had discovered two baking ovens set into the wall. They were too large for purely domestic use and yet Mr Bates and his father had no knowledge of there being any baking at the farm on a commercial basis.

Scrutiny of census records, trade directories and other parish materials such as newspaper reports and advertisements, provides no evidence of a baking business at Chater Farm. That does not mean it did not happen but perhaps that it was relatively low key. The census of 1901 does record both Nathaniel (23) and Thomas (20) as bakers in Leicester, and later trade directories like the 1903 Wright Trade Directory for Leicester, the two brothers are in a business partnership. Sadly, the partnership was not to last much beyond 1918 due to circumstances beyond their control.

Their sister, Ann Elizabeth, may have also played a part in helping the two brothers become bakers. She was 14 years older than Nathaniel and 17 years older than Thomas and had married Harry J. Herrick in 1897. Harry was originally from Newbold Verdon and learnt his trade as a baker apprenticed to his uncle, Joseph Shepherd of Market Bosworth. But by 1897 he was living at Houghton-on-the-Hill and earning his living as a baker and flour and corn dealer. He had been a baker for at least eight years, the 1891 census recording this fact. It is possible that both brothers learnt their trade courtesy of Harry Herrick. It was certainly impressive that they had their own business at such a relatively young age.

Chater House Coal: A Near Miss

Though none of the Trotter family members would appear to have chosen to work down the nearby mines, there was at least one opportunity, if not two, during the 19th century when they could possibly have become coalmine owners.

As early as 1838, it was known that coal lay beneath Newbold Heath and Chater House land was part of the suspected coalfield. So confident were certain landowners that the following notice appeared in the 8th June Leicester Journal.

For a minimum stake of £10, investors could become shareholders, and £5,000 in capital would be need to be raised for the venture to go ahead.

The notice goes on to state how confident they are in the venture and of the 'enormous' profits to be made, but nothing came of it.

NEWBOLD HEATH COAL COMPANY

At a meeting of Landowners and Proprietors in the undertaking held at the Swann Inn, in Newbold Verdon, on Tuesday, the 22nd May.

That a Company shall be formed for the purpose of ascertaining the depth of Coal at Newbold Verdon and undertaking such steps as maybe hereafter agreed upon for getting the same. The Company to be called the Newbold Heath Company.

Leicester Journal June 1838

1901: The Reverend Cole Nearly Strikes Coal

Next door to Chater House Farm (one field away) is Halifax Farm. For most of the 19th century it belonged to St James' Church; the 300 acres of land being given by landowners in leu of tithe payments following the final enclosure of parish land in 1811. In 1901 the Reverend Cole, rector at St James' as approached by two mining companies making lucrative offers for permission to establish a coal mine on the land.

These two extracts from letters written by the reverend - one to a fellow cleric and the second to his superiors at the Ecclesiastical Commission in London - illustrate what he felt about his predicament.

It will convert Desford and Newbold Verdon into a colliery district and entirely alter the character of the villages

I would prefer it if I had the power to put a stop to both of the collieries, but as this is impossible it only remains to make the best of it.



The Desford Merry Lees Pit Head

In the end none of this came to pass because the coal deposits were found not to be of a high enough quality, or were already naturally burnt out, to be able to make a profit.

Forty years later, when mining technology had advanced sufficently to make the seams profitable to mine, the Desford Merry Lees Drift Mine came under both Halifax and Chater Farms, leading eventually to the ruin of the Trotter family home.

Shop Fitters: Frederick Joseph and Clement

Also, in the 1903 and 1916 directories was Nathaniel and Thomas' older brother, Frederick Joseph. He described himself as a builder in the 1903 director, but by 1916 his trade was shopfitter. He was originally in business partnership with a Harry Warburton, but a notice in the Leicester Daily Post, dated 30th September 1912, announced the dissolving of the partnership by mutual consent and that Frederick Joseph Trotter would pay all debts owing and continue to run the business under the 'style' of Warburton and Trotter. Clement, had joined the firm sometime in the early 1900's, certainly by 1912, and he was the signwriter .

Frederick and Clement would appear to have created a successful business judging from the size of their estates at their death. Frederick died in 1924 leaving to his wife, Florence May, £11,058; a small fortune and the equivalent to £677,332 today. Clement died only two years later, aged 43, leaving £5,476 (equivalent to £337,232 today) to his wife.

Beer: **Harry**

Harry Trotter had left Chater Farm by 1901 a was working as a joiner in Leicester at the time of the census. A newspaper article in the Leicester Mercury in 2003 featured Harry but not as joiner instead a landlord of the Salmon Inn, Butt Close, Leicester. The contributor to the article was the granddaughter of Harry and his wife, Eliza. She thought they had taken over the pub around 1910, her grandfather giving up his trade of cabinet maker. He ran the pub for a further 16 years, dying in 1926, aged 64 and leaving £409 to Eliza – equivalent to £25,000 today.


Landlord Harry Trotter

Of the eight males born to Thomas and Sarah, only two, George Cramp and Ralph, lived at Chater Farm: five brothers moving to Leicester and one, Tom Edwin, living in Lutterworth.

Sisters: Ann Elizabeth, Isabella and Sarah

The three sisters all married and left the farm. Ann Elizabeth became a baker's wife on the eastern side of Leicester; Isabella owned her own shop in Knighton Fields in the city, whilst Sarah married and settled with her husband a lithographic printer. All three sisters could be described as having done well for themselves, maintaining a lifestyle equal to if not surpassing that experienced at Chater Farm. Sarah and her husband were wealthy enough to travel to Canada for a holiday and to visit relatives. Isabella was invited back to Newbold Verdon in the 1930's to open St James' bazaar as a distinguished guest. Ann Elizabeth continued to live at Houghton-on-the-Hill enjoying a very comfortable lifestyle.

Why Leicester?

When Ralph Trotter purchased Chater House in 1712, Leicester had a population of 6,000. By the time Edwin Trotter was leaving for Canada in 1872 the number of residents totalled 92,000, a significant increase over the 160 years. But when Nathaniel and Thomas were setting up their baking business in 1901 the city population had grown to 210,000, doubling in less than 30 years. The speed of growth and magnitude would have provided many opportunities for individuals to offer services and goods to workers and commercial and industrial enterprises. Bread would be a high priority, followed closely by alcohol; with corner shops, larger stores and public houses springing up, making it convenient for these and many other goods to be purchased.

The Trotter family members seemed to see themselves as being occupied in self-employed trade and commercial enterprises, today they could be described as aspirational. This was not confined to just the males of the family, all three sisters married to men in skilled occupations. Was there an entrepreneurial trait running through the generations of Trotters? Was there money that could be accessed or 'connections' that could be tapped? Did the children receive an education above and beyond what the limited public education system offered? Answers to these questions can only be speculated upon, but they did seem to wish to better themselves, and that meant for most of them leaving not only the farm but the land and any associated occupations

Part 5: 1901 – 1955: The last Trotters - Ralph and Nathaniel

Ralph

As the 19th century ended, Chater Farm had said farewell to most of the Trotter family members, the majority settling in and round Leicester. Only Sarah and her sons, George and Thomas, were living there at the 1901 census – Thomas having died in 1894. Ralph, now 26, was married and living in the village, his occupation, farm labourer, possibly on Chater Farm.

Ten years later, the census report of 1911 shows Ralph living at the farm with his wife Gertrude Edensor Wilkinson and their two children. Gertrude had an intriguing middle name: Edensor. An unusual name for any person, but coincidentally the name of the village in Derbyshire where Ralph Trotter (1758-1830) had lived. Was this connection more than a coincidence?

Ralph would have appeared to have taken over the running of Chater Farm on the death of his brother George in 1910. He was possibly working at the farm prior to this, but we cannot be sure, for in the 1911 census he describes himself as a farm bailiff. He could have been doing both, but with his primary income derived from working for local landowners, collecting tenant farmer rents and making sure they were looking after the land.

Visitor

In 1916 the farm had a visitor: Bernard Freeman Trotter, the grandson of Edwin Trotter who had migrated to Canada in 1870 with his wife and twelve children. Bernard had attempted to join the Canadian armed forces fighting in WW1 but had been rejected on the grounds of poor health. Undeterred, he applied to the British Army and was accepted, joining a Leicestershire regiment.

Following on from his training, and prior to his company being sent to France, Bernard went to stay with his Aunt Sarah Louise (whom he refers to as Louie) in Leicester. One of his letters home describes a rather sad visit to Chater Farm.

75 Bismarck Street,

Leicester

……Today was unfortunately raining; but we kept to our schedule in spite of it and went to the Chater. I am sorry to say that it is in a very dilapidated state and in an ill-kept condition. Louie feels terrible about it, but she can do nothing. Aunt Sarah lives in a cosy little house a quarter of a mile away.

The management of the Chater is too involved to explain in a letter, even if I fully understood it. We had a little look around and then went to Aunt Sarah's for tea.



His great-aunt Sarah had moved out of the house to Field Farm, presumably leaving the Chater to Ralph and family to upkeep. The house would have been over two-hundred years old and consequently needing much maintenance, something it seemed to be lacking.

After the War

Ralph's occupation of the farm immediately after the war is brought into question by the following piece in the Leicestershire and Rutland Family History Society's Journal of September 2008, where a photograph of Thomas Trotter (who set up the bakery with his brother Nathaniel) appears. The contributor, David Trotter, was his grandson.

David explained how his grandfather was co-founder and co-owner of Trotter Brothers Bakers of York Street, Leicester. He then goes on to explain the demise of the business due, he was told, to his great Uncle Ralph of Chater Farm.

'After the 1st World War, Ralph, a partner in the business, left for abroad taking much of the business capital with him.

Thomas became a master baker with Frears and Blacks until he retired. It is understood that Frears and Blacks took over the small Trotters Brothers bakery business.'

If true, this account makes for sad reading, especially for Thomas and Nathaniel Trotter and their business. It also asks the question; who was looking after the farm? Unfortunately, there are currently no documents available that may shed light on this.

Ralph does appear to be back in charge of the farm in 1928, when a local trade directory includes the following submission under the heading, TRADE. There is no mention of farmer or farm bailiff

> Trotter, Ralph, Chaterhouse, Newbold-de-Verdun
>
> Kelly's Trade Directory of Leicester and Leicestershire 1928

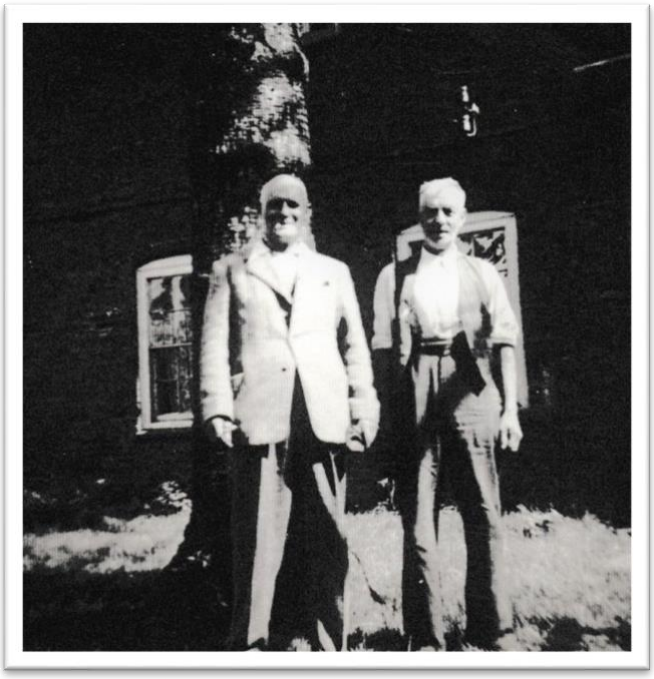
Nathaniel – the final Trotter of Chater Farm

Ralph died in 1940 in Melton Mowbray. A year earlier in the National Register of 1939 he was living in what may have been some type of retirement or nursing home in Melton where his status was described as 'incapacitated'. Probably sometime around 1936 he had given up the farm and his brother Nathaniel had taken it on.

1936 was the year when Nathaniel Bertram Trotter of Chater House, Honey Hill, Blean, near Canterbury had, as landlord, signed a tenancy agreement with Mr John Henry Bates of Newbold Verdon. Nathaniel, the baker, was now living in Kent with his second wife and their daughter, and he would be living there until his death aged 93 in 1971.

Nathaniel had left Chater Farm as early as 1901 to begin his trade as baker in Leicester before going into business with his brother Thomas, with the financial backing of Ralph. At the start of WW1, he was 36 years-old but this did not stop him in 1915 from volunteering to join the army as a baker. The army took a man in 'good health' according to his war record and he served the next three years at Aldershot Barracks Hampshire as a Lead Hand baker. His discharge papers of 1918 record him returning to Leicester.

Fifteen years later, a newspaper court report in the 25th July 1933 copy of the Leicester Evening Mail reports that Nathaniel Trotter owed his first wife £390 in divorce arrears, and that he had hardly paid her anything since the breakup of their marriage in 1925. Nathaniel pleaded that he only earned £3 a week as a baker and that £1 a week to his ex-wife would be too much. He was told his failure to pay before the next hearing would result in him being imprisoned. How this was resolved is not known, and the next record of Nathaniel is when he is living in Whitstable, Kent.



From 1936 until 1955, Nathaniel corresponds with Mr Bates about the farm and issues arising. He occasionally comes to Leicester to check in on the farm and this photograph is of him, cigarette in mouth, and Mr Bates standing in front of the giant monkey puzzle tree near to the house, the date is unknown.

Eventually Nathaniel decides to sell the farm and he offers it to Mr Bates who takes it on some time in 1955. On the 29th December 1955, Nathaniel writes thanking Mr and Mrs bates for the 'beautiful chicken' they received on the Dec. 24th. He tells them of his purchasing an old pub, The Four Horse Shoes in Whitstable. Mr Bates had earlier written to him regarding subsidence at the farm due to coal mining: Nathaniel replied, below is the relevant section.

Four Horseshoes,
Borstal Hill,
Whitstable,
Kent
December 29,th 1955

Dear Mr and Mrs Bates,

…..I am very sorry to hear you are having trouble, but the Coal Board should see you alright. We came up to Leicester in August, but I did not feel like coming over after having to part with the place after it being in the family 200 years. You mentioned in your letter thanking me for giving you the first chance. Well both my wife and I have known you both for a long time and I should not have been much of a sportsman not to have let you have it as you have both worked very hard on the place. ……

Yours sincerely,

Mrs and Mr Trotter

How poignant that Nathaniel could not bring himself to visit the farm of his birth where he had grown up with his sisters and brothers and where there was '200 years' of Trotter family history. Selling the farm was more than shedding himself and the family of property they no longer wished to own. It was saying goodbye to a family heirloom; a place where five generations of Trotters had lived, and some had died.

Foot Note

The following piece placed in the Leicester Evening Mail on Wednesday 26th September 1956 suggests some confusion in the Trotter family about who was the longest surviving member. Isabella Frances was claiming that distinction, and obviously proud of the fact, despite Nathaniel being alive and well.

Perhaps she and her brother, Nathaniel, were estranged in some way or the newspaper had been provided with inaccurate information. Regardless of how and why Isabella believed this was the case, she, just like Nathaniel after her, wanted it to be known that she was a Trotter of Chaterhouse, an old Leicestershire family.

Wigston Widow

Dies aged 86

Following injuries received in a road accident last week, 86-year-old Mrs Isabella Frances Downton of The Orchards, Milverton Drive, Wigston Fields, died at her home yesterday.

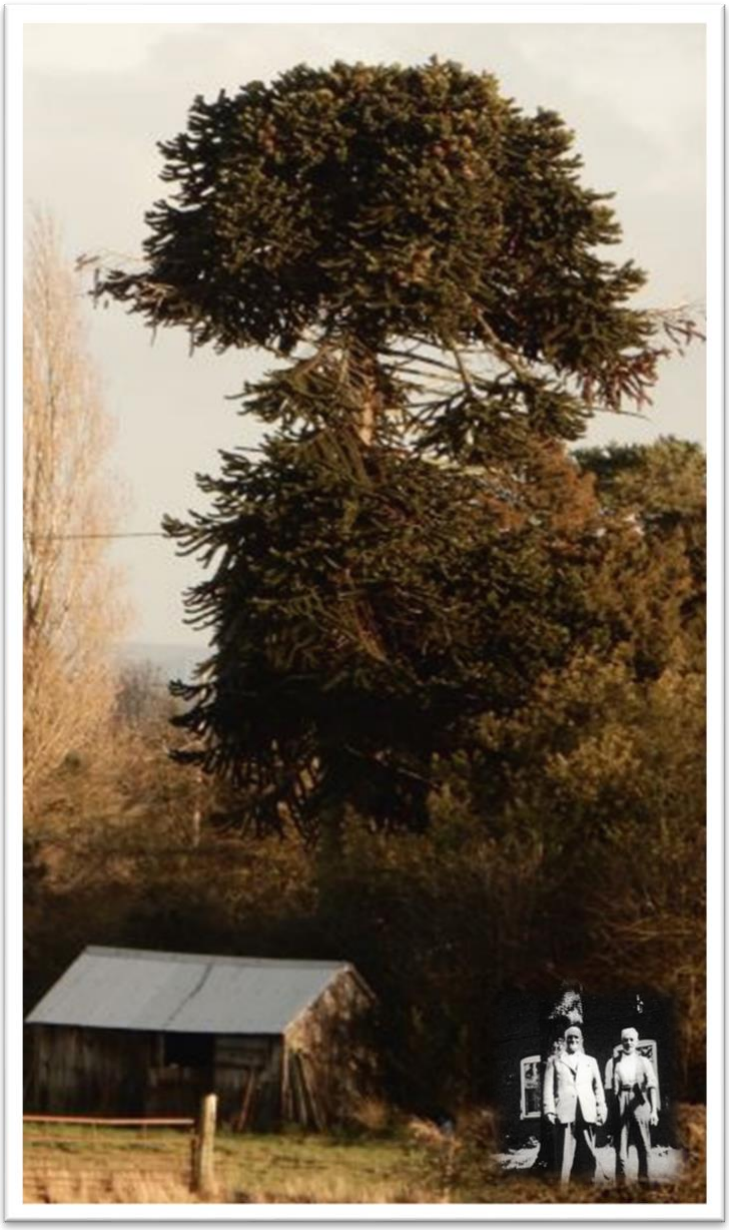
Wife of the late Mr James Owen Downton, she was widely known in the Wigston Fields and Knighton districts.

Mrs Downton was proud of the fact that she was the only surviving member of the Trotters of Chaterhouse, Newbold Verdon – an old Leicestershire family.

Part 6: The Monkey Puzzle Tree (araucaria araucana)

The rather grainy photograph on page 18 of Nathaniel Trotter and Mr Bates, shows them standing in the garden with the house in the background, and behind Nathaniel is the armour-like trunk of a monkey puzzle tree. The more recent photograph below shows the tree dwarfing all other trees nearby, its bulbous crown and wide girth hinting at a tree well into its mature years.

Native to Chile, Araucarias, known to us as the monkey puzzle trees, were brought to Britain as tiny saplings in 1795 on the scientific expeditionary ship, the Discovery. It was not until the mid to late 19th century however that they became commercially viable. They reached the height of their popularity from 1900, when a small araucaria could be bought for 10 guineas - approximately £1300 if purchased today. Such was their popularity that they were planted to form tree-lined avenues in municipal parks and private country estates, whilst single trees were often to be found in the gardens of the newly built detached and semi-detached suburban houses of the 1920s and 1930s.



Nathaniel standing before the tree for his photograph to be taken could have been of no particular importance to him; it being just a convenient place in the garden. But, if that was the last photograph to be taken prior to the sale of the farm then the choice of location may well have been significant, it being a memento, a reminder, to him of the house in better times and of the people who once lived there and the children who played around the tree.

Even if this is fanciful speculation, it does feel like it is an appropriately symbolic tree for the Trotter family. It is a little different from all around and it is not indigenous to the Leicestershire countryside, just like the first Ralph Trotter of Durham, registrar of the Durham Diocese and long-serving retainer to its bishop, Lord Nathaniel Crewe. One might even see the tree as aspirational, growing taller than its local counterparts and spreading its canopy wide like the globe-trotting and city-dwelling children of Nathaniel and Ann, and Thomas and Sarah.

Whatever it is or is not, unless felled by the chainsaw, diseased or uprooted by nature, the tree could stand for hundreds of years yet; a reminder to those who are interested in the history and heritage of the three families: the Mounteney, Trotter and Bates, who called Chater Farm their home.

1841- 1911 Census Records for Chater Farm

Below are the national census records for Chater Farm from 1841 to 1911. Each member of the Trotter family has received their own unique colour to ease tracking.

A = Age

Occ = Occupation FW = farm worker Sch= scholar

Born = Place of birth. In 1841 the census only required people to state Yes or No to whether they had been born where they were now living or not. Only Thomas was born in Newbold Verdon, the rest of the family in Edensor, Derbyshire.

1841				1851				1861				1871			
Name	**A**	**Occ**	**Born**	**Name**	**A**	**Occ**	**Born**	**Name**	**A**	**Occ**	**Born**	**Name**	**A**	**Occ**	**Born**
Nathaniel	40	Farmer	N	Nathaniel	52	Farmer	Edensor	Thomas	26	Farmer	NV	Thomas	36	Farmer	NV
Hannah	40	wife	N	Hannah	55	wife	Dronfield	Sarah	20	Wife	NV	Sarah	29	wife	"
John	18	FW	N					George Cramp	1		NV	George Cramp	11	Sch	"
Ann	12	Sch	N	Ann	22	dghter		Geo Elverson	25	Carter	Barl.	Harry	9	Sch	"
Edwin	11	Sch	N					Sarah Cave	11	Servant	NV	Ann Elizabeth	7	Sch	"
Thomas	6	Sch	Y					Caroline T -ni	10	Sch	NV	John E.	2		"

1881				1891				1901				1911			
Name	**A**	**Occ**	**Born**	**Name**	**A**	**Occ**	**Born**	**Name**	**A**	**Occ**	**Born**	**Name**	**A**	**Occ**	**Born**
Thomas	46	Farmer	NV	Thomas	56	Farmer	NV					Ralph	36	Farm Bailiff	
Sarah	39	wife	"	Sarah	49	wife	"	Sarah	59	Head	NV	Gertrude	39	wife	
George C	21	Ass Far	"	George C	31	F. son	"	George C	41	Farm son	"	Lillian	10	Sch	
John Edwin	14	"	"	John Edwin	24	"	"					Sarah	7	sch	
Frederick J	12	Sch	"		22							Wm Talbott	26		
Isabella Fran	9	"	"		19										
Sarah Louisa	7														
Ralph	5		"		15										
Nathaniel	3		"	Nathaniel	13		"								
Thomas	3m		"	Thomas	10		"	Thomas	20	Farm Son	"				
				Clement	8			Francis Hopwell	20	Visitor					

Ancestry Person

Additional

History, gazetteer, and directory of Leicestershire, and the small county of Rutland : together with the adjacent towns of Grantham & Stamford ...

by

White, William, of Sheffield

P77 Description of Gaol 1848

The COUNTY HOUSE OF CORRECTION, which stands within a short distance of the Gaol, on the opposite side of Infirmary square, was built about thirty years ago, and its lofty boundary wall encloses a large octangular space, occupied by the various wings and yards of the prison, and the governor's house. Its wards are so con- structed, that culprits of various degrees of delinquency can be kept se- parate, and for hard labour there are five tread-wheels employed in grinding corn, &c. The number of male prisoners on October 13th, 1845, was 92, of whom 21 were convicted felons, 52 misdemeanants, and 18 vagrants. Some are employed in teazing oakum, weaving door-mats, &c., and others, who are so disposed, are learnt the trades of shoemakers, tailors, or carpenters. This establishment will be con- fined to females after the completion of the new House of Correction, within the walls of the County Gaol, which will be on the plan of the Government model prison at Pentonville, and on the separate system^ each prisoner having a small room to himself, and not being allowed to see any of the others, either in the airing yards or in the chapel. Mr. John Allen is the governor.

THE CASTLE. The building