THE NORTHAMPTONIAN

SPRING ISSUE

WALTER TULL

Football and military star.

VICTORIANS

Learn about their legacy in Northampton.

JOAN WAKE

Hero of the Northamptonshire Record Society.

www.thenorthamptonian.co.uk

WELCOME

TO OUR FIRST ISSUE

Hello local history-lovers, and welcome to the very first issue of the Northamptonian! From the trendy decor of the Derngate to the Gothic intricacies of the Guildhall, the Northamptonian brings you some of the most interesting stories from the town's rich history. Learn about the Ancient Britons that lived eons ago in the heart of Hunsbury, or the echoes of Victorianism left in the town. All this and much more is at your fingertips. All that's left to do is to turn the page to find out for yourself.

Stay connected with us on Twitter: @Northamptonian_ and Instagram:@ thenorthamptonianmag, or you can drop us an email at: thenorthamptonian@gmail.com
We also have extra content on our website, so feel free to have a look! https://mypad.northampton.ac.uk/thenorthamptonian/

Happy reading!
Afsana Zaman, Editor of the Northamptonian

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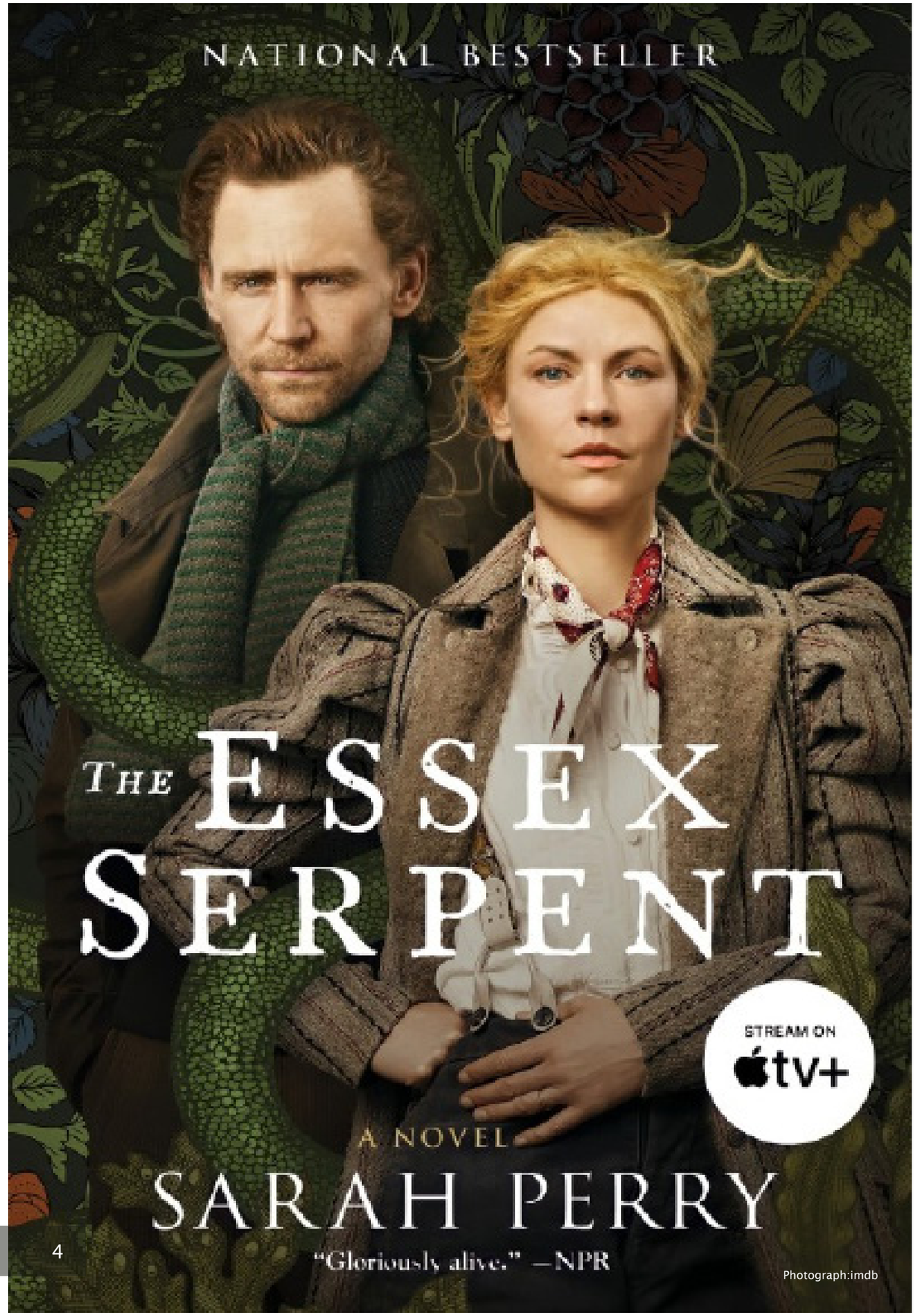

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'Taper All The Madness' by Nathan Smith (2021)

'The Terrace' by Sir Francis Ferdinand Maurice Cook (1936)

'Window in Palma' by Ben Mathews (c.1960)

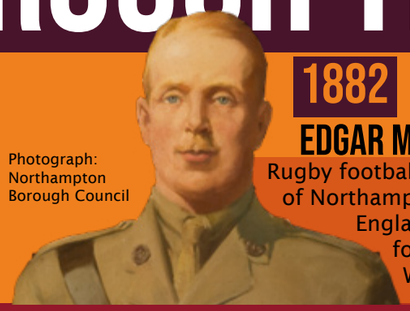
'Jubilee' by Constance Howard Parker (1977)

NORTHAMPTONIANS THROUGH TIME

1793
JOHN CLARE

18th century Romantic poet known for celebrating the countryside.

Photograph: Wikimedia Commons/wikimedia.org



Photograph: Northampton Borough Council

1882
EDGAR MOBBS

Rugby footballer and captain of Northampton R.F.C, and England team. He later fought in World War One.

1916
FRANCIS CRICK

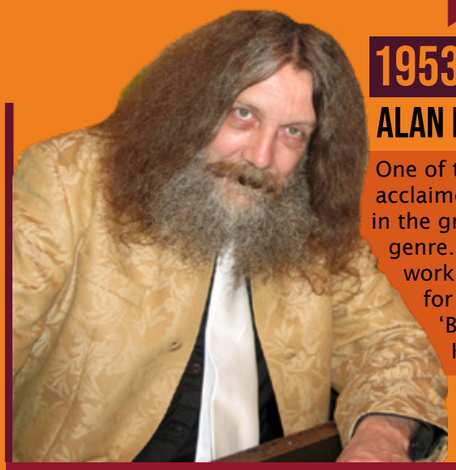
Discovered the structure of DNA with fellow scientist John Watson.

Photograph: MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology

1921
MALCOLM ARNOLD

Famous 20th century composer who worked on symphonies, ballets, film-scores and concertos.

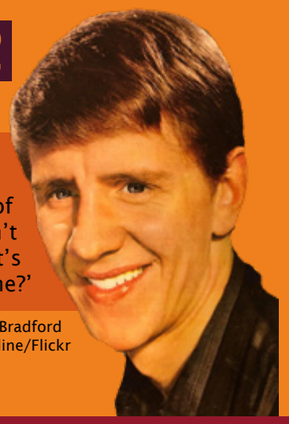
Photograph: Malcolm Arnold/ wisemusicclassical.com



1953
ALAN MOORE

One of the most acclaimed writers in the graphic novel genre. Some of his works include 'V for Vendetta' and 'Batman: The Killing Joke'.

Photograph: Fimb/Flickr



1942
MIKE BERRY

Singer and actor from the 60s to the 80s. One of his hits was 'Don't You Think It's Time?'

Photograph: Bradford Timeline/Flickr

1939
JUDY CARNE

Singer, actor and comedian who reached fame on the American sketch show, 'Laugh-In' throughout the 70s.

Photograph: rchappo2002/flickr

1935
JIM DALE

English pop singer from the 1950s and a regular in the 'Carry On' films.

Photograph: Bradford Timeline/ Flickr

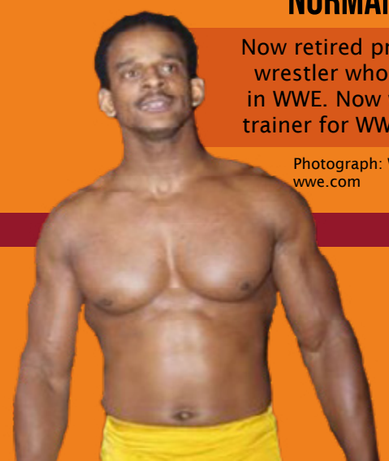
1962
RICHARD COLES

He (right) was part of the 80s hit pop duo, 'The Communards'. Still living in Northampton, he is now a reverend.

Photograph: Spotify

1965
NORMAN SMILEY

Now retired professional wrestler who competed in WWE. Now works as a trainer for WWE fighters.



Photograph: WWE/ wwe.com

1965
PAT MCGRATH

Dubbed the most influential makeup artist in the world by Vogue and owns a hugely successful makeup brand called 'Pat McGrath Labs'.

Photograph: Jen Atkin/ Instagram

1973
MISHAL HUSAIN

Famous newsreader and journalist for the BBC.

Photograph: World Economic Forum/ Flickr

TALK THE TALK

A BREAKDOWN OF THE NORTHAMPTON ACCENT

Afsana Zaman takes a look at what exactly forms the Northampton accent and dialect.

The Northampton accent is a varied one. It has neither the distinguishing drawl of the Liverpool accent nor the Cockney twang from London. Instead, it features a range of sounds and tones, making it harder to define under one distinct label.

This is put down by experts such as Jonnie Robinson, the lead curator of spoken English at the British Library, to the placement of the town. Spread across the East Midlands, Northampton residents collected aspects of northern, southern, and Midland dialects.

A good example of this is the word 'bath', which is either pronounced with a long or short 'a' depending on what part of the county people are in. Charlton residents, for instance, are likely to apply a southern style and use a long 'a', whereas Kettering residents often take up the northern accent and use a short 'a'.

Despite the varied nature of the Northampton accent, there are also areas of shared territory.

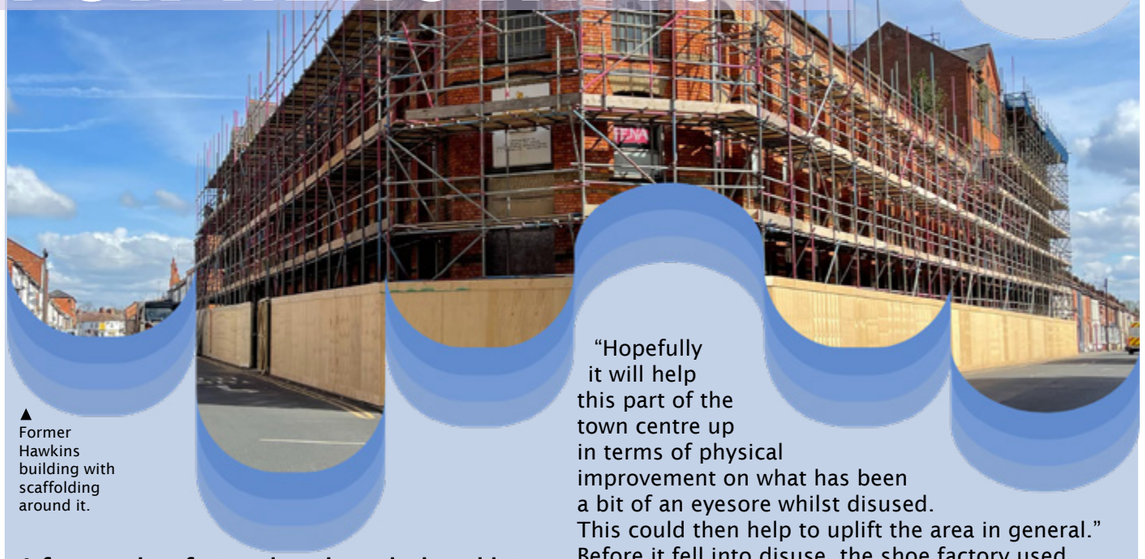
A common feature among Northampton residents is what linguists term the 'fudged vowel'. This is the result of mixing northern and southern English accents. Migration is a key reason such a mixture of sounds and dialects exists within the Northampton accent. Though originally northern, the Northampton accent evolved with the influx of people from London and southern England in the 20th century. These were places where vowels were changed from short to longer forms around 250 years ago and resulted in the estuarine accent trickling down into the local dialect.

There are also some keywords native to Northampton. For example, 'mullocking' means something dirty, whilst 'jitty' is used as a name for an alley. Features of non-standard English are also prominent in some areas of Northampton, where phrases such as 'we was' are used.

Another unique aspect of the wider Northamptonshire accent is the crossover into the Scottish accent. This is most likely due to the opening of a steel works in Corby, joined by a large Scottish workforce.

Therefore, whilst the Northampton accent has some defining features, it remains unique in its mixture of neighbouring dialects and sounds.

OLD HAWKINS BUILDING FOR RENOVATION



▲ Former Hawkins building with scaffolding around it.

A former shoe factory is to be redesigned into a new block of flats, as Afsana Zaman reports.

The former Hawkins shoe factory in Northampton will be redesigned into a new block of New York-style flats.

The building, which is over 140 years old, sits on the corner of Overstone Road and St Michaels Road and is set to be converted into a block of 46 one-bedroom apartments. The decision was made in the planning committee held by West Northamptonshire Council earlier this year.

The renovation project is currently headed by CC Town planning who submitted their application in March. Richard Colson, the co-founder of CC Town Planning, said: "We are a Northampton consultancy and as such take pride in local projects or ones where we would hope to aid the planning process and obtain consent. Everybody knows the Hawkins Building and to be part of something which was seeking to breathe new life into it was a very interesting proposition."

Currently, the builders and contractor have set to work and the renovation is ready to take place in the coming weeks.

Several plans were made to convert the building into flats in previous years, such as those in 1998 and 2016, but none of these were acted on. However, with the plans now confirmed, the former Hawkins building will soon be given a new purpose.

Richard Colson believes the renovation will have a positive impact on the surrounding area. He said: "Hopefully it will help this part of the town centre up in terms of physical improvement on what has been a bit of an eyesore whilst disused. This could then help to uplift the area in general."

Before it fell into disuse, the shoe factory used to be one of the biggest producers of military and climbing boots in the UK. Originally built in the 1880s, the factory was once central to the shoemaking industry in Northampton. Some famous examples of the shoes they made were those worn by Princess Anne, Queen Victoria, and the Mount Everest climbers, Hillary and Tenzing. However, for the past two decades, the building was left unused.

A notable time for the former Hawkins factory was during the First and Second World Wars when Northampton was heavily relied upon for producing and exporting footwear for the Allied Troops.

However, after the World Wars, Northampton's shoe industry shrunk dramatically, as many of Northampton's footwear brands were bought out and had their factories closed.

Rebecca Shawcross, the Senior Shoe Curator at Northampton Museum and Art Gallery, believes Northampton's shoe legacy continues even if the factories shut down. She said: "The philanthropic attitudes of many of the town's previous shoe manufacturers, means that Northampton's shoe making history lives on even if the firms don't. There are many references to the shoe making industry in the town. For example we have Campbell Square, Manfield Road, and Crockett Close all named after shoe manufacturers."

So despite its new interior, the legacy of the former Hawkins building will live on and remain a key part of the town's shoemaking history.

MUSIC FESTIVAL COMING THIS SUMMER

NN MUSIC FESTIVAL 2022

The Northampton Music Festival is set to take place on Sunday, June 19 this year, Afsana Zaman reports.

After a successful bout in 2021, the Northampton Music Festival has returned this year to liven up the summer. Featuring over 500 artists across five stages, the event will begin on June 19, from 12pm to 9pm.

The venues include a world music stage hosted in the courtyard of The Guildhall, a stage in the Northampton Museum and Art Gallery, and the courtyards of Element in George Row and the Guildhall Hotel.

The festival will end with a performance by the Northampton-based band Sarpa Salpa on the main stage in the market square. The band made their debut earlier this month on May 6 with their new single 'Dreaming', and have gained support from radio stations such as BBC Radio One and BBC Introducing.

This year's festival was launched earlier this month at the local wine bar, V and B, where several other acts were introduced. These included three from Northampton College, such as the girl group Plastic Visual, guitarist Matt Jones, and Vasile on the accordion. Students from the University of Northampton and local choir groups were also announced as taking to the stage this summer.

The festival was started in 2007 and is currently on its 15th year running. Local musician and businessman John Richardson founded the festival in hopes of showcasing local musical talent. As in previous years, the festival is expected to attract thousands of music lovers and festival-goers to its stands this June.

"IT HAS ESTABLISHED ITSELF AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE TOWN CENTRE'S FUTURE VISION FOR ARTS AND CULTURE."

As an annual event, the festival has become a central part of summer in Northampton.

Festival Music Director, Graham Roberts said: "The festival is essentially a love song to Northampton and comes from the heart of a group of dedicated volunteers involved in the local music scene. We can't wait to put Shoe Town on the music map with this year's line-up.

"I'm delighted that the festival continues to grow year on year with increased footfall."

The band Sarpa Salpa. Photograph: Northampton Music Festival Press Release

WHOSE SHOES?

Giant shoe-shaped stilts worn by Elton John in 'Tommy'.

?

These boots were worn by Sir Elton John in 1975 for his role in the musical film, 'Tommy: A Rock Opera'. These oversized Doc Martens, or stilts made of fibre glass, were created by the Northamptonshire based chemical firm Scott Brader. It stands over four feet high and were modelled after the 'cherry red' Dr Martens. They also have metal callipers and leather straps to attach to the actor's legs. Elton John agreed to take the role in the film on the condition that he got to keep the shoes afterwards. He later sold them in 1988 to R Griggs Group Ltd who still own them today. The shoes are currently on display at the shoe exhibition in the Northampton Museum and Art Gallery.

WINDRUSH 2022

Windrush scandal protester. Photograph: Tim Dennell/Flickr

Hostile environment protesters. Photographs: Global Justice Now/Flickr

HMT Empire Windrush. Photograph: PA Media

Windrush Day is coming up later this month on June 22. Afsana Zaman investigates the effects legacy of the Windrush community.

74 years ago, on June 21, HMT Empire Windrush finished its 8,000-mile journey and anchored on British shores. A day later, its 1,027 passengers were released. Onlookers watched as thousands of Caribbean migrants stepped onto the docks at Tilbury. Britain's lifeline had come and would save the country from the labour shortage left in the wake of World War Two. The Windrush generation had arrived.

Their arrival would mark the first of a series of journeys from the Caribbean from 1948 to 1971, in which swathes of people came to England, taking up Britain's invitation and encouragement for a new start. Many passengers were job-seekers, whilst others looked to finish their education or trades. In total, there were 684 men, 247 women and 86 children aged 12 and under.

The situation was looking bleak in Britain after World War Two, with more jobs than workers, but the Windrush passengers brought a wide range of skills and trades with them. For example, some of the occupations listed by the passengers were tailoring, carpentering, engineering, welding and mechanics.

However, work would have to wait, as most people had a more pressing matter at hand. Where would they stay? When they arrived, Essex was the first stop for some Caribbean migrants before London. Those without residence stayed at the deep-level air-raid shelter in Clapham Common. There was also an employment exchange in Brixton, where many Caribbeans later found accommodation. Living conditions were low, and costs were high. Many families were living paycheque to paycheque and bundled into one-room slum housing where they would have to share beds and cook on the landings. Conditions outside were no better, as racial injustice and derogatory treatment became commonplace. The Windrush generation had come to help the 'Mother Country' from the brink of despair, but it was soon made clear that their help was often unappreciated.

Looking back, the sacrifices of the Windrush community are immeasurable. From living in the Caribbean, surrounded by friends and family, they moved to the dreary streets of London, only to be greeted with racial slurs from strangers. Despite this, they persevered and formed a new life in England, past the five years they had intended.

Not only was this a new life for Caribbean families, but for Britain itself. As the Windrush generation cemented the foundation of their children's futures, they also planted the seeds of cosmopolitanism in London, making way for social change on an unprecedented level.

They also helped build Britain up again. In Northampton, this was in the form of nurses at the Northampton General Hospital and train drivers for British Rail. Shereen Ingram, the founder of Norfamton and Jamaican street food company, BoxFood, is one of the granddaughters of the Windrush generation. Her grandfather, Vincent Ingram, was one of the first black train drivers in the UK. She said: "There were some great stories about when he used to come back into the station and he used to get a round of applause because the people were so glad he came back with everybody alive on the train."

Tre Ventour, a local poet and public historian, also commented on the valuable contributions of the Windrush community in terms of health provisions. He said: "My great Aunt Rosy was an auxiliary nurse at Northampton General Hospital. And many of that generation during the sixties and the seventies came from the Caribbean and worked at the local general - and their descendants did as well. My dad also trained at Northampton as a nurse in the nineties. And like today, immigrants, black and brown people - the NHS would be lost without them."

Another way the Caribbean community made its mark on the town was through social groups. For example, in 1975, the first black self-help centre in the UK was launched in Northampton, called the Matta Fancanta Youth Movement. A group of Caribbeans who played cricket on the racecourse also formed the United Social club. However, neither of these buildings exist now as the council knocked them down. Shereen said: "It's an ongoing onslaught of oppression which eventually breaks down a certain section of the community. Constantly being oppressed, your family being oppressed - it does have a negative effect on what you think you can achieve."

Shereen believes the lack of a community centre is stopping progression. She said: "We don't have businesses, we don't have churches, we don't have things that are ours, because where do we gather to speak and to make these decisions? They have purposely taken all of those hubs away under all these different cuts, but it does happen to be black areas that suffer. We used to have our buildings and our own churches and everything, it's just all gone, which seems to be managed out by the council."

Shereen has started projects across Northampton to celebrate Caribbean culture and talent. For example, she leads projects with black female artists to create graffiti art on walls around Northampton, depicting the beauty of Jamaican culture. Another project she also started up was the Windrush Generation Doorstep Befriending Team to help people disproportionately affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Her teams distribute hampers and care packages along with much needed social interaction to people who were isolating away from their families.

Shereen also hopes to recognise the contributions and sacrifices made by the Windrush generation on the week beginning June 20 through 'famfest'. This event celebrates food, art, and music by people of black origin. She believes it is important to remember the black influence on modern culture. She said: "Without our contribution to England it would be a very different place because parts of black culture are infused within all of us."

> "IT'S THAT IDEA OF BRITISHNESS AND COMMONWEALTH CITIZENS, AND BEING ABLE TO TAKE SOMEONE'S BRITISHNESS AWAY WITHOUT MUCH STOPPING THAT."

DID YOU KNOW?

The Windrush Generation spent what was equivalent to £1,000 today to buy a ticket for the HMT Empire Windrush. They only planned on staying five years, but many settled and started new lives in England. Others who wanted to go back to their homelands were unable to because they could not afford the ticket back with the poor pay they received.

Shereen's grandfather, Vincent Ingram. Photograph: Norfamton/Instagram

WALTER TULL'S

WINNING LEGACY

Walter Tull, a football and military legend, spent a long part of his life in Northamptonshire. Afsana Zaman takes a look at his legacy.

The year is 1888 in Edwardian Britain. The imperialist agenda is in full swing, and racism is rife. Somewhere in Folkestone on April 28, a little boy is born, Walter Tull, to Alice Palmer and Daniel Tull. It is troublesome for a mixed-race family during this period, but little did Walter's parents know that one day, their son would grow up to shatter racial prejudices and make football and military history.

Walter Tull is a figure who only recently received the recognition he deserved. He was the first black officer to serve in the British army and one of the first professional black footballers on the pitch.

Despite his successful future, Walter's early life was riddled with struggle. Death, in particular, was a frequent visitor at the Tulls, rendering the children parentless in the space of two years. They were left with their stepmother, Clara Tull, but with six children to feed and no maternal grandparents or rich relatives at hand, the Tull's financial situation soon became dire. It was suggested that since Walter and his twin brother Edward had reached schooling age, they should move to a children's home.

Bonner Street Children's Home, an orphanage in Bethnal Green, offered the Tull brothers a place. Though they were relocated to somewhere new and unfamiliar, Edward and Walter had each other for comfort. However, this solace was short-lived. Two years after they arrived, Edward Tull was adopted by a family in Glasgow. Now, with his brother over 400 miles away, Walter would continue his time in the orphanage alone.

During his time in school, Walter became an apprentice at the children's home print shop and decided to look for work in the printing industry, hoping for a job in a newspaper company. However, his interest in printing was soon overtaken by his passion for football which was fed by his commitment to the orphanage football team. By the time Walter was 20 years old, he had been signed up by the east London amateur club, Clapton Orient, where he played inside-left. Having gained considerable skill by this time, Walter was easily noticed for his talent, and was soon scouted by Tottenham Hotspur.

Walter was aged 21 when he made history by becoming one of the very first black players for a major British club. Making 20 appearances, and scoring four goals, Walter became a football star and regularly appeared on the pitch at White Hart Lane. Despite earning praise, not all of the attention Walter received was positive. Torrents of racist abuse were hurled his way until the situation got so severe that the team eventually benched him.

Nevertheless, this was far from the end of Walter Tull's football career. From 1911 to 1914, Walter enjoyed success at Northampton Town, scoring goals and making over 100 appearances amidst racist abuse from opposition supporters and opponents. By the time the First World War began, Walter had imprinted himself in Northampton history, having excelled as an established member of the local football club.

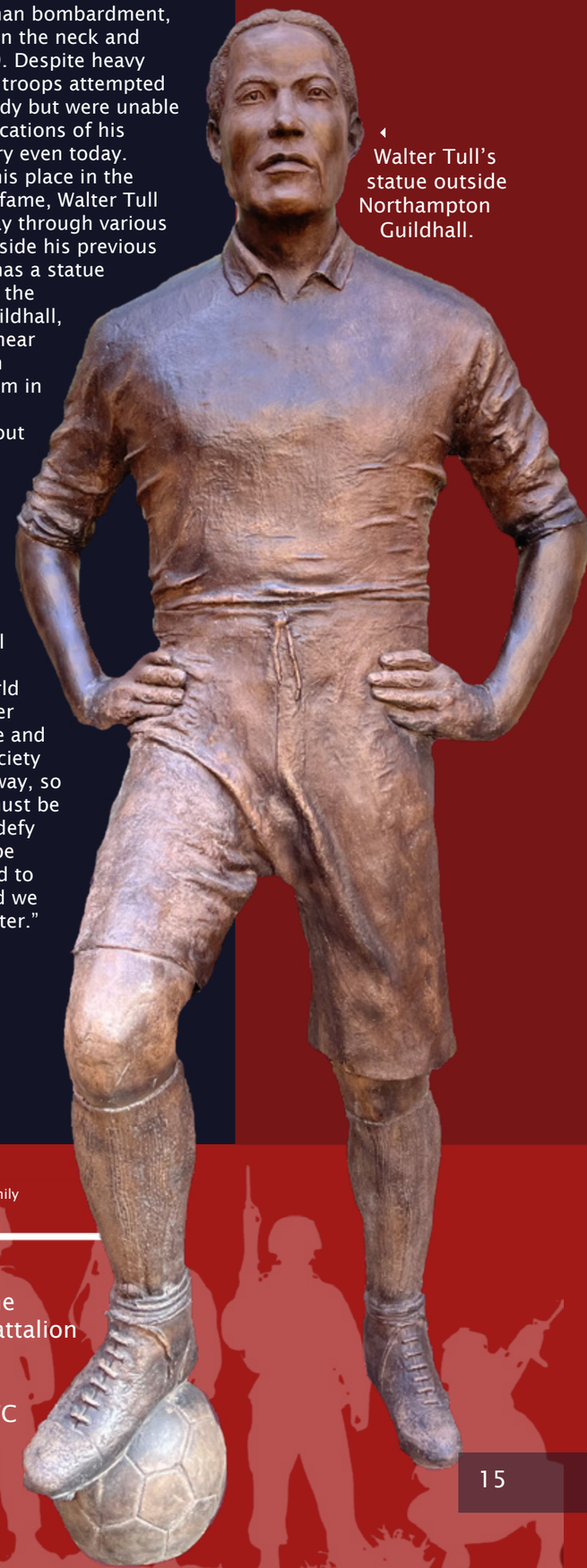
During the First World War, Walter defied the odds, just as he had five years ago. He earned his name in the military through extensive fighting, well respected by his peers for both his skill and bravery. He fought as part of the Middlesex Regiment, in a 'Footballer's Battalion' among other football stars from across the country. Even after going home due to shell shock after fighting in the Battle of the Somme, Walter returned, only to make his second claim to fame and become the first black commissioned officer in the British army in 1917. Nairobi Thompson, a local poet, believes that his character was a key reason for his achievements.

She said: "In terms of Walter's character I think he was genuine, caring and determined. I don't see him as an active outspoken campaigner for change; he wasn't a movement – he was a man refusing to walk away from the things he believed he could do even though others were quite resolute in their determining that he couldn't do those things as a Black man."

Walter continued fighting until 1918, when the German spring offensive began at 4:40am on March 21. As he courageously led his troops into battle against the German bombardment, Walter was shot in the neck and killed. He was 29. Despite heavy gunfire, Walter's troops attempted to recover his body but were unable to, leaving the locations of his remains a mystery even today.

Doubly earning his place in the historical hall of fame, Walter Tull is honoured today through various blue plaques outside his previous homes. He also has a statue standing outside the Northampton Guildhall, and a memorial near the Northampton Town FC's stadium in Sixfields.

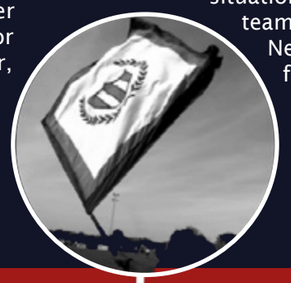
Nairobi pointed out how Walter's life is still relevant today. She said: "The struggles Walter faced and is still facing even in death are unacceptably still being faced by others in the world of sport and wider society. Prejudice and bias in British society have not gone away, so like Walter, we must be our best selves, defy convention and be wholly committed to making the world we live in better."



Walter Tull's statue outside Northampton Guildhall.

1898
Walter and Edward move to Bonner Street Children's Home

Photograph: Peter Higginbotham/childrenhomes.org



Walter played for the orphanage football team

Photograph: Phil Vasili/ Finlayson Family Archive

1908
Walter is signed up for Clapton FC

Photograph: Kevin Blowe/Flickr

Photograph: Tull Family Archive

1911
Walter joins Northampton Town FC

Photograph: Diego Sideburns/ Flickr

1914
Walter joins the Footballer's Battalion

NORTHAMPTONIAN

BLACK FIGURES

JOHN ANDERSON

Escaped from slavery in America and came to Corby in 1861. He had previously escaped from the USA to Canada. When in Northampton, he joined a nonconformist Christian British school.

Photograph: Community Archives and Heritage Group/ https://www.communityarchives.org.uk

ASHLEY INGRAM

A former member of the band, 'Imagination', with hits across 28 different countries. After their world tour, he went on to produce music for other artists such as Des'ree and now lives in Los Angeles.

Photograph: BBC/Twitter

JAMES CHAPPELLE

A free black man in the 17th century who became a legend for saving the life of Sir Christopher Hatton from a lightning explosion. On the left is a painting of him in regal wear, done by artist, Glory Samjolly.

Photograph: Glory Samjolly/glorysamjollyart.com

TREVOR HALL

Also known as Ras Jabulani, he was one of the founders of Matta Fancanta Youth Movement, the first black self-help centre in the UK.
He has now gone off to South Africa and written speeches for people such as Desmond Tutu.

Photograph: BBC/bbc.co.uk

Photographs: Frank Braverstock and Peter Narramore/Facebook

SQUARE REVAMP CREATES A RUCKUS

Northampton market square is set for a revamp this summer, causing an outcry amongst traders and members of the public.

Work will soon begin to modernise the square and introduce a range of new features such as permanent stalls, seating and a fountain. If all goes to plan, by late March 2024, the market square will have undergone the first major change it has seen in its lifetime.

The Council plan on bringing market specialists to interact with those who will be affected by the renovation, including nearby businesses and traders. However, the revamp still received a negative reaction from many traders and members of the public.

For example, John Howson, Northampton resident of 35 years, has collected local support against the renovation over the past weeks through petitions. He said: “If they take this market away, then it’s finished. It’s finished forever.”

He also pointed out that this is the second time the Council has tried to improve things with renovation projects. He said: “I’ve seen the decline of the town, and this all stems from pulling down the bus station ten years ago, costing millions and millions. The last one (project) is the market, they’re going to move it away - a twenty minutes walk away. It’ll be the end of the market square completely.”

The plans date back to 2018, when Northampton Forward, a group of different businesses and members of the public, put in a bid into the Government’s High Street Fund, an £850 million government grant to renovate English towns.

The bid proved successful, and the board was given £8.45 million to revamp the square. A bid was also put in for money to renovate Waterloo House, but this project was postponed.

In recent years, footfall in the market square has decreased, and vacancy rates of the stalls rose to 11% since January 2019. Councillor Lizzy Bowen, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Town Centre Regeneration and Growth, believes this is why the renovation plans are long overdue. She said: “The market square is looking tired, the stallholders are declining in numbers, and the quality of the stalls isn’t perhaps the level they should be.”

Other concerns were raised about the cost of maintaining the square in its current form. Before the pandemic, the taxpayer paid £120,000 per year for the upkeep of the market.

The council are also taking note of the historic value of the 700-year-old square. Councillor Lizzy Bowen said: “We want to respect the heritage but make it fit for purpose for where we are now. We want people to be proud of their market square.”

Since its debut in 1235, after King Henry III forbade people from trading in the churchyard near All Saints, the market has been running as a trading centre in the heart of the town. Despite the changes the market square has experienced in its lifetime, it remains a central part of Northampton town centre. The new renovation plans could either make this reputation or break it.

So, with the plans in place and opposition growing, the future of the market is far from certain.

The market square.

Northampton Museum & Art Gallery

May The Toys Be With You

Saturday 30 April – Tuesday 4 September

From a galaxy far, far away comes the UK's finest collection of vintage Star Wars toys and original cinema posters from 1977 – 1985. May The Toys Be With You is both a celebration of the now highly collectible vintage toy line and also of iconic design work and art of the Star Wars movies. Includes toys never exhibited before and is the biggest version of the exhibition ever opened to the public.

Free Admission

Photograph: Northampton Museum & Art Gallery

DID YOU KNOW?

The square has also seen its fair share of odd occurrences such as the failed balloon ascent in 1828, which led to the female aeronaut having to escape via an attic window.

MARKET TRADER OPINIONS

DOREEN TIMMS

"I think it would be a good idea. I think it is a great idea, and I think when it's completed, it'll look fabulous."

EAMONN FITZPATRICK

"The future's not looking good. I've been here 58 years, and they're wiping me out with the stroke of a pen."

MARK JOSLIN

"What they're doing down there is nuts. People here will end up losing their livings over it. It was always on the cards. It'll finish us."

NEW MARKET DESIGNS

Images of the new designs for the market square renovation.
Photographs: West Northamptonshire Council/ westnorthants.gov.uk

CHARLES RENNIE MACKINTOSH & HIS NORTHAMPTON LEGACY

78 Derngate is a local, cultural trademark in Northampton. Afsana Zaman takes a look at its history and what developments it is going through now.

Inside 78 Derngate, you can see the unique designs and decor made by Charles and Margaret.

78 Derngate lobby. Photograph: 78 Derngate/ https://www.78derngate.org.uk

The iconic front door of 78 Derngate was also a part of Charles' designs.

82 Derngate is currently under construction at the rear for a new atrium.

Despite 78 Derngate's many changes, it has been consistently known for one thing; it stands as the only house in England designed by Scottish architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh.

Charles posthumously rose to fame in England for his architectural flair and contribution to the distinct decorative art style known as The Glasgow School. He was part of a representative group called 'The Four', including his wife Margaret MacDonald, a skilled glass artist and painter, his sister-in-law Frances, and Herbert MacNair. Together, they created the distinctive Glasgow art style that drew from a number of artistic movements spreading across Europe, such as Japonisme, the Celtic Revival, and the Arts and Crafts Movement.

Charles' career as an architect was short-lived but long desired. At the age of 14, he left school and went into training, and by the age of 21, he was taking evening classes at the Glasgow School of Art whilst working for the Honeyman and Keppie firm in the daytime. Eight years later, Charles started taking commissions on projects such as The Hill House, The Glasgow School of Art, and Scotland Street School.

After leaving Honeyman and Keppie in 1914, Charles moved with his wife Margaret to England, where he began to dabble in the arts of textiles and watercolour. Two years later, a friend of WJ Bassett-Lowke recommended Charles as an architect to renovate his house. Northampton architect Alexander Ellis Anderson also took part in the renovation, though Charles took the lead.

Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Photograph: James Craig Annan/ National Portrait Gallery

At this point in Charles' life, recognition was scarce. Rob Kendall, trustee and chair of the Friends of 78 Derngate, said: "Mackintosh had left Glasgow at the end of 1914 very much out of favour with his partners and was also described as 'old fashioned' after his move to London."

The process took nine months, and from a traditional, old-fashioned terraced house, 78 Derngate transformed into a modern masterpiece. Several new features were added, including a rear extension which provided a larger kitchen and dining area, and balconies for a couple of bedrooms.

One of the key features added by Charles was the striking interior decor of 78 Derngate which was added to the lounge hall and the dining room. Most of Margaret's textile designs were also used throughout the house.

From being the first marital home of WJ Bassett-Lowke, 78 Derngate was bought and used by a string of people. For example, in 1964, Northampton High School for Girls bought the house and used it until the 1990s. However, afterwards, concerns were raised about the preservation of the building. After the school sold the property, the Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society and some Northampton residents proposed that it should be restored and opened to the public.

Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh. Photograph: T R Annan & Son/gsaarchive-sandcollections

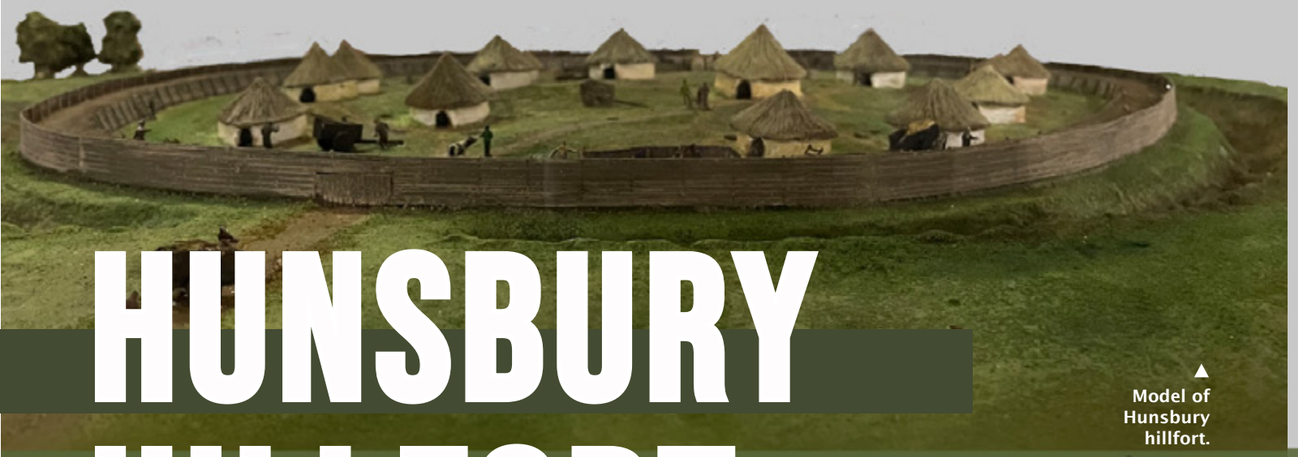
After a series of campaigns and a generous donation from Maggie Barwell, the Borough Council bought a 999-year lease on both 78 and 80 Derngate. Some of the groups that supported the restoration of the house included 78 Derngate Northampton Trust, The Horne Foundation, Northampton Borough Council and Northamptonshire County Council. The architect firm John McAslan & Partners, received a grant of £999,000 in 2001 from the Heritage Lottery fund. The restoration of 78 and 80 Derngate cost £1.4 million in total.

John McAslan & Partners headed the project and restored 78 Derngate to its early 1900s design and layout. Replicas of the interior such as beds, cabinets, mirrors and cupboards, were created by Jake Kerner from the Buckinghamshire New University. 80 Derngate, on the other hand, was changed into a visitor centre. Inside, there are several exhibitions on Charles Mackintosh and Bassett-Lowke.

Currently, there is construction work at the rear of 82 Derngate. Rob Kendall said: "It is part of the ongoing development of the visitor experience and will create a more user friendly and flexible open space for exhibitions and retail."

78 Derngate is an architectural marvel created by Charles and Margaret Mackintosh, and has stood for over a century. It is likely that it will remain standing for years to come, keeping its legacy intact without ever falling out of style.

Outside 78 and 80 Derngate



Model of Hunsbury hillfort.

HUNSBURY HILLFORT

A JOURNEY THROUGH MILLENNIA

Hunsbury hillfort in Northamptonshire is a remnant of the Ancient Britons. Afsana Zaman takes a look at what it can reveal about the way they used to live.

The year is 4 BC. Ancient Britons are mulling around their hillfort in Hunsbury, producing metalwork and pottery whilst enjoying the fine arts of poetry and music. Life is simple; defend the hillfort and trade goods. Fast forward 2,500 years and find a country park surrounded by a housing estate. Trees and shrubs grow where the defensive ditch once was, and the banks have eroded; now mere whispers of their former glory.
Hunsbury hillfort was one of the thousands of defended enclosures across Britain. With the dispersion of Celtic people across Europe, many tribes eventually settled in Britain and remained there until the Roman conquest. Tribal tensions meant that allied clans grouped and built hillforts to defend themselves from attacks.
There are at least six hillforts in Northamptonshire, with Hunsbury as one of the most well-known.

Models of a couple of Ancient Britons.

Despite the eroding effect of time and the damage from ironstone quarrying, multiple archaeological digs and surveys have revealed what living in the local hillfort was like.
People likely occupied the hillfort from 4 BC to 1 BC, and it would have taken the form of a standard hillfort with several one-roomed roundhouses. It was also most likely surrounded by a ditch and a timber-laced rampart. Historians estimate that the site was abandoned near the end of the first millennium, before the Roman conquest. However, traces of Anglo-Saxon pottery suggest that the hillfort may have been occupied during this era.
The fort now takes up around 1.6 hectares, and its ditch is estimated to have originally been eight metres deep. Northampton Museum and Art Gallery currently hold a vast array of objects found in previous digs that form one of the largest collections of Iron Age artefacts in the country.
One of the most popular finds was rotary querns, an item comprised of two flat stones placed on top of each other used to grind grain to flour. A dig in the 19th century, conducted by local historian and antiquarian Sir Henry Dryden, found 159 of them. Andy Chapman, honorary secretary of the Northampton Archaeological Society, said: "The rotary querns are far more than what would have been required for daily use, indicating that the hillfort served as a collection and distribution centre for rotary querns. These were manufactured at several production centres, all at some considerable distance from Northamptonshire, making them a valuable trade item."

"HUNSBURY HILL IS THEREFORE IMPORTANT AS THE LARGEST EARTHWORK SITE IN THE TOWN."

As well as functioning as a trade centre, Andy Chapman suggests that Hunsbury hillfort was also the home of a notable figure. He said: "The site may also have contained a chariot burial, which indicates the presence of a high-status individual, a local tribal chieftain perhaps."
Other items recovered include bronze brooches, pottery, glass, iron weapons, tools, and domestic items made from bone, antler, iron and bronze. The 'Hunsbury Scabbard' was also discovered, assumed to be the first of its kind, and later replicated in other parts of the country.
In terms of excavations, the hillfort has seen many archaeologists come and go. The first proper excavation was carried out in 1952 by Professor Atkinson when sections were cut across the bank and ditch to the east and north-east. Later, in 1988, local archaeologist Dennis Jackson examined an area of the bank to the north and calculated radiocarbon dates. However, 19th-century ironstone quarrying damaged much of the hillfort's interior, limiting further archaeological inspection. The hillfort's eventual transformation into public parkland occurred in the early 1970s with the introduction of footpaths and vegetation. This accelerated the rate of erosion and damaged the site further.
Future plans for the hillfort are still uncertain. Andy Chapman said: "It is likely that many pits and other features survived. There is, therefore, a small part of the interior that is relatively undisturbed and which could be excavated to provide further finds and an understanding of the interior."
Since the site is classified as a scheduled monument, Historic England would have to grant permission before any work could begin.
A local group called 'The Friends of Hunsbury Hill' are also interested in preserving the hillfort and raising awareness of its uses. They particularly encourage community excavations and using the site as a venue for public events such as historic re-enactment. However, with the arrival of Covid-19, plans have been postponed for the time being.
Currently, the site is in a state of disrepair. Trees and shrubs surround the ditch and banks, with roots and woodland creatures damaging the site.
Andy Chapman said: "Active control of scrub growth is needed, in particular, such things as fast-spreading blackthorn and brambles cover parts of the banks and in some places are encroaching onto the interior."
Hunsbury Hillfort, though far from its prime, is arguably timeless. Despite having worn down over centuries, there are parts of it that remain, carrying the secrets from its past. Artefacts are another way the residents of the Iron Age Hillfort live on. From the way they lived, to what they made, the remnants of the ancient Britons provide us with valuable insight into the history of the Iron Age hillfort that stands in the heart of Northamptonshire.

"NORTHAMPTON IS A TOWN WITH A LOT OF VICTORIAN HERITAGE AND ARTISTRY"

- PHILLIPPA BENNETT

The top of St Giles Street. ▲

◀ Top of the Guildhall building.

V FOR VICTORIANS IN NORTHAMPTON

Victorians remain in Northampton in the form of the architecture they left behind, Afsana Zaman reports.

Though famously known as England's shoemaking capital, Northampton also boasts a fine record of Victorian architecture.

In the 18th century, Northampton was famed for being well-built and attractive. Over 200 years on, parts of the town stand just as they had in their glory days, and much of this is owed to the late Victorians.

The most famous example of the late Victorian legacy in Northampton is the Guildhall. Standing at the heart of the town, the building has survived one and a half centuries since its completion in the 1860s. It sits two storeys high, studded with 14 statues of famous Northampton figures along its walls. Some of the figures among them include Saint Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Northamptonshire poet John Dryden, Queen Victoria who visited in 1844, and King Henry VII who established the town council. There are also two gargoyles depicting the architects' faces who won the opportunity to head an extension project between 1889 and 1892. Matthew Holding designed the exterior, and Albert Jeffrey focused on the interior of the building. The distinct Gothic style of the building was a combination of their best designs and remains a focal aesthetic trademark of Northampton town centre. There is also a sculptured tableau of historical events in Northampton such as the trial of Saint Thomas Becket in 1164, the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, the Great Fire of Northampton in 1675, and the Battle of Naseby in 1645.

There are also other remnants of the late Victorian legacy in Northampton. Surrounding the building, for example, are structures around the town centre decorated with intricate, Gothic carvings, such as those in the Market Square and around the Drapery.

Phillippa Bennett, senior lecturer in English & Creative Writing and winner of the Peter Floud Memorial Prize, said: "The Victorians were very proud of their developments in art and culture. The spectacles of Victorian showmanship helped showcase Britain as artful and creative".

Abington is another area of the town spotted with Victorian architecture. The terraced houses, for example, are a familiar architectural presence and were most likely popularised during the Industrial Revolution. Phillippa said: "They act as evidence of the town's historical, manufacturing identity."

This is most likely due to the rapid urbanisation during the Victorian era, where millions of people moved from the countryside to urban areas for work. As the population of towns and cities boomed, the need for housing for the lower socio-economic classes reached unprecedented levels. As a result, the Victorian terrace was popularised and erected all over Britain to house the growing workforce.

Another key area of Northampton's architectural history is the industrial buildings themselves. These were built during the Victorian era as part of the Industrial Revolution.

In Northampton, most of these took the form of shoe factories. Local businesswoman, Kardi Somerfield, owner of Fridgestreet, a business that sells hand-designed magnets, found inspiration from the local architecture. She said: "I like the industrial buildings – like the shoe factories or places like the Latimer and Crick grain merchants."

The buildings were a key factor in developing her designs. She said: "I had been on a weekend to Brno in the Czech Republic and had been drawing the rooftops in the city - I never liked drawing buildings before. When I came back, I carried on drawing rooftops in Northampton. A friend at work suggested I draw the places individually and make them collectable – so I did.

I discovered a technique for drawing the buildings in a bright distinctive style and I draw them because it is my home and I like to celebrate and support the places of our town, especially small businesses. I think they are not appreciated enough and wanted to promote more pride in the town."

Northampton's buildings serve a double purpose. They act as both a reminder of the late Victorian legacy whilst inspiring others to create their own.

NORTHAMPTONIAN

PUPPET MASTER OF THE GUNPOWDER PLOT

Afsana Zaman takes a look at Northamptonshire's Robert Catesby, and his involvement in the Gunpowder plot. Find out what happens when a Catholic cabal wanted to blow up Parliament in 1605.

Guy Fawkes is usually the name that comes to mind when thinking of the infamous Gunpowder plot, but one of the main conspirators was a man from Northamptonshire. Robert Catesby, born in 1573, was a high-status figure from Daventry, Northamptonshire, and was one of the key thinkers behind the plot. He was known as a fashionable, charismatic, and popular man with a talent for sword fighting. However, one of his stronger passions was practising religion. His family were devout Catholics, something which could lead to trouble in a Protestant ruled country such as England.

Having taken part in previous acts of dissent against Protestant rule, Catesby's involvement in the plot would hardly have come as a surprise. In 1601, for example, he took part in the Essex rebellion against Queen Elizabeth I. This was most likely fuelled by his father's imprisonment for harbouring a Catholic priest and refusing to conform to the Church of England. After receiving a heavy fine, equivalent to over £6 million today, Catesby was released. However, this did nothing to quell his hostility against the Protestant government, and when James I became king, Catesby's primary goal was to kill the ruler and end Roman Catholic persecution in England.

Chair of the Northamptonshire Battlefields Society, Graham Evans, links Catesby's personality to his actions. He said: "He was also known as a bit of a hothead, which may have caused some more senior Catholics to back off from him when approached."

Another Northamptonshire-based conspirator was Francis Tresham, Catesby's cousin. He lived in Rushton and like Catesby, wanted revenge for his father's persecution and imprisonment for his Catholic faith. Tresham was also known for his temper and his contemporaries viewed him as an impulsive thug with extravagant spending habits. Nonetheless, on October 14, 1605, he was invited into the plot and joined the other conspirators to plan the king's assassination.

In total, there were 13 plotters, and most of them were connections of Catesby. They met in Daventry and London and also in Catesby's Ashby St Ledgers estate, where they stored arms, ammunition and gunpowder.

Graham Evans believes Northampton was an ideal place for Catesby's plans. He said: "The county had a small but strong Catholic community on which he could draw in from what was otherwise a strongly Protestant county."

By the latter half of October, the plot was finalised. The cellar beneath the House of Lords was booked, and a mercenary named Guy Fawkes was hired to fill it with 36 barrels of gunpowder. He would light the fuse on the State Opening of Parliament, unleashing a Catholic revolt that was supposed to reinstate Roman Catholicism in England.

Everything was set, but doubts were forming under the surface. A few of the conspirators were worried for their fellow Catholics who would sit in Parliament, such as Lord Monteagle, Lord Stourton, and Lord Montague. However, Catesby continued, suggesting that some of their peers could stay at home that day.

For one of the plotters, this reassurance was insufficient. On October 26, Tresham's brother-in-law, Lord Monteagle, was sent an anonymous letter urging him not to attend Parliament's opening. News of this travelled to the Secretary of State, Earl of Salisbury, the Earl of Worcester, and the Earl of Northampton, before getting back to Catesby.

It was assumed that Tresham was the traitor. After fervently denying this, Tresham urged his fellow plotters to abandon the plan, but Catesby ploughed on. Despite his best efforts, the plan was fated to fail once the letter reached the hands of the king.

On November 4, only hours before the attack was scheduled, the cellars were searched, and the explosives and Fawkes were found. The conspirators fled, whilst Fawkes was tortured until he gave up the names of his fellow plotters.

The hunt was now on to capture and kill the band of would-be assassins. Six conspirators met at Ashby St Ledgers where Catesby insisted that an armed struggle was still a viable option. However, with their posse of plotters slowly diminishing, they decided to flee. Travelling to Warwick and Staffordshire, the fugitives were eventually found at Holbeche House, and surrounded by 200 men on November 8, in the late hours of the morning. Catesby and Percy were shot and their heads were displayed in Northampton as an example to others.

The other conspirators, Robert Wintour, Robert Keyes, Sir Everard Digby, Thomas Bates, Ambrose Rokewood and John Grant, were captured, tried and executed. However, Tresham was treated differently from the others. He was arrested and thrown into the Tower of London where he died of illness on December 23. Rumours say that Tresham avoided execution because of the warning he presumably sent to Lord Monteagle, or that he was a double agent all along. However, despite the slight delay in his death, his head was also pitched next to Catesby and Percy for all to see.

The following year, November 5 was established as a public thanksgiving day. For every year since, the name of Guy Fawkes has rung in people's ears, whilst the real puppet master from Northamptonshire stays in the shadows. Graham Evans said: "Catesby was the prime mover, and it is his circle of acquaintances and friends that were at the heart of it all."

Illustration of the Gunpowder plot.

"WHETHER SOMEONE ELSE WOULD HAVE DONE SOMETHING SIMILAR WITHOUT HIM WE WILL NEVER KNOW."

‘THE SHOEMAKER’

BY HENRY WALTON C. 18TH CENTURY

On view for visitors to Northampton's Museum and Art Gallery, Guildhall Road, Northampton

JOAN WAKE

THE BEST BURGLAR IN THE COUNTY

Joan Wake. Photograph: Cosgrove & Furtho/ cosgrovehistory.co.uk

“IF SHE HAD KNOWN ME, SHE WOULD HAVE EATEN ME FOR BREAKFAST”

Dubbed by local historian, Neil Lyon, as 'the best burglar in the county’, Joan Wake, honorary secretary of the Northamptonshire Record Society, stands as a figurehead in preserving the town’s history, Afsana Zaman reports.

Joan Wake was a formidable woman - a lone lady in a man’s world, bullying her way to success. If there were no Joan Wake, there would be no Delapré Abbey, and most of Northampton’s historical records would be left untouched and scattered across the county.

Born to Sir Herewald Wake and his wife Catherine in 1884, Joan grew up in Courteenhall, Northamptonshire. Education and the desire for knowledge were a large part of her childhood and would ultimately have a key role in her life.

By the time she was a teenager, Joan had already honed her role as a collector. Local historian, Neil Lyon, said: “She was like a magpie, collecting any photograph she could find.”

Her habit of keeping every diary entry, letter, and photo ensued even after she received one of the biggest shocks of the century in 1914; Britain was going to war. Joan contributed to the national war effort by volunteering at a military hospital in Aldershot for a few months. She later trained as a midwife under the Northamptonshire District Nursing Association at the age of 32.

However, it was on December 10, 1920, when she founded the magnum opus of her career, the Northamptonshire Record Society. Suggested to her by leading academics, Joan assumed the role of honorary secretary and spent the next 43 years voluntarily charging up and down the county in search of Northamptonshire’s lost history.

In her 43 year-long term as honorary secretary for the society, Joan collected centuries’ worth of records which needed constant re-housing due to their rapid accumulation. Playing the role of the archaeologist, Joan uncovered and analysed documents that were dusty and yellow with antiquity before hauling them back to their home in Abington Street Library.

In May 1935, for example, she was tasked with clearing out a solicitor’s attic in Daventry. In her diary entry, she said: “After much persuasion, I was allowed to go up into the attic in Daventry. I found the whole floor two to three feet deep in a promiscuous heap of documents - two centuries of them I would say, smothered in dust and dirt...It was like an archaeological dig. I have summoned two hefty lads to help me put the lot in sacks.” On this day alone, Joan retrieved 76 manuscripts and deeds back to Northamptonshire.

Her determination was only one factor that she used to her advantage. Her parents provided several high-profile contacts that she used to gain access to unique and rare artefacts. In September 1930, for instance, she persuaded Lord Winchelsea to deposit 20 boxes of papers at Kirby Hall. She even managed to loan a 17th-century dress from Queen Mary and an antique shawl from the Duchess of York.

In the years leading up to World War Two, Joan was already thinking of the safety of her records. Eventually, she decided on Brixworth Hall and Overstone as the best places to keep them. The

As their 40th wedding anniversary approaches, Alice and Edgar are locked in a bitter struggle. They've driven away their children and their friends. Their relationship is sustained by taunts and recriminations. When a newcomer breaks into the midst of the fray, their insular lives threaten to spin out of control. Laced with biting humour, The Dance of Death is August Strindberg's landmark drama about a marriage pushed to its limits.

Tue 21 Jun - Thu 23 Jun
Royal & Derngate

The Dance of Death. Photograph: Royal & Derngate/ https://www.royalandderngate.co.uk/

accumulation of 20 years' worth of collections, weighing over thirteen tonnes, took six days to relocate.

Knowing that history was in the making, Joan continued to make personal records throughout the war. Her entries eloquently capture the national anxieties of the time. On June 14, 1940, she wrote: "My roses are out, and Paris has fallen. I am waiting for the Queen to speak to the French…I have just heard her and daresay you were listening too. Marvellous fellow Hitler – always keeps to his timetable…When we hear the church bells, we shall know the parachutists have arrived. Imagine the feelings of the men who made those towers simply to know they would be used to give warnings of enemies dropping from the skies."

Throughout the period of national struggle, Joan was on her very own mission to protect Northamptonshire's history. In May 1941, she wrote about two important collections. She said: "I forced an idolatry duke and a reluctant earl to let me get away with them."

However, Joan Wake did not stop at personal intimidation. She was willing to climb to the very top of the pecking order to fulfil her mission.

In June 1941, Joan wrote to Winston Churchill, demanding that he help save local records. Unfortunately, this was an unsuccessful attempt. Although, she did manage to snatch four and a half minutes from the BBC to raise awareness of her cause.

By the end of the war, her records were yet again in need of relocation. Joan eventually settled on the Langhorst ancestral home, where the records stayed for ten years before moving to Delapré Abbey. The collection at Brixworth Hall was moved to the County Council, which had also set up a record office around this time.

In her later life, Joan was involved in several local campaigns, including one against iron ore works in the county, and another battling for the ownership of Delapré Abbey.

On January 29, 1954, the Northampton Chronicle and Echo released the story that the council would soon

Joan Wake. Photograph: Northampton Museum & Art Gallery/ Facebook

November 22, 1945

"I got a puncture on the way home off Watkins street. I stopped a gang of Italian prisoners coming along the road and got them to change my wheel – which they did gabbling Italian all the while. Gave them half a crown."

demolish Delapré Abbey, as the building had no 'aesthetic merit'. However, unbeknownst to them, Joan Wake had already set her sights on the abbey as the resting place for her records. As it was within walking distance of the town centre and the railway station, Joan believed that it was the ideal place for her collection.

With her mind made up, she embarked on a five-year-long battle against the council to protect Delapré Abbey. With local papers calling for its demolition, and country houses being knocked down one per fortnight, most assumed that Delapré would be another mere casualty. However, after hardy persistence and the help of John Bedsham, the council eventually gave in. They agreed that if she could raise the money to restore the abbey, it was all hers.

Against all odds, Joan Wake won. At midnight on December 3, 1956, she had raised £20,000, securing the deed to the beloved home of the county records for the next 30 years.

After borrowing money from various people, including Northampton's leading shoe firms and the Cripps Foundation, Delapré was formally opened on May 9, 1959, in the presence of a crowd of 1,100 people.

Thus, after 43 years of holding the post of honorary secretary, Joan retired to Oxford and spent the rest of her days there. Despite her retirement, Joan continued to make entries about her life. On November 14, 1973, she wrote: "I'm getting very old. I'm practically an invalid now as my legs are of very little use, but my head still works a little."

Joan Wake died on January 15, 1974, aged 89 – only weeks away from her 90th birthday. However, Neil Lyon said: "If she had been born on a leap year then she would insist to the very end that she was only 21."

It is thanks to this remarkable woman that Northampton can look back and reflect on its past, which would otherwise have been left buried and fragmented across the county. This is best summarised by Joan Wake herself. She said: "A place with no knowledge of, or interest in its own history is a poor, pitiful thing, much as a man who has lost his memory."

Northampton Museum & Art Gallery

Japan: A Floating World in Print

Saturday 23 April – Sunday 9 June

A captivating display of Japanese prints from the Edo and Meiji masters. The prints encompass the genres of beautiful women and dramatic landscapes.

A touring exhibition organised by Maidstone Museum for Maidstone Borough Council.

Free Admission

Photograph: Northampton Museum & Art Gallery