

Scissors Paper Stone

Blog 17:

Pew 19: The Favell Brothers

On March 22nd Mary Grover and I will be introducing you to the huge range of people who sat in the pews of Ranmoor's second church, built in 1889. The Scissor Makers and Bookmakers in the title of our talk will all make their appearance in these pages but the brothers in Pew 19 who rented four sittings between them were neither scissor makers nor bookies. The family had connections with many different Sheffield trades and professions.

The place of the Favells in the pew hierarchy is interesting. The wealthy Colver family had nine sittings at the very front of church in a central aisle. Robert Colver also paid for nine sittings in a side aisle in Pew 20, most likely for servants and dependents. It was behind the Colver B team that the two Favells sat, with two sittings each. Yet the Favells were an illustrious Sheffield family: several were medical men and there was an archdeacon in their ranks. Thomas was born in 1831, and Charles in 1833. Their father was William Favell, a surgeon and general practitioner, and their mother was Elizabeth Priest from Huddersfield.

Initially Charles and Thomas Favell led similar lives but their circumstances at death were very different. Neither Thomas nor Charles followed their father's profession. They and their relatives seem to have been well integrated into the social life of Sheffield's middle classes. In 1859, they were both members of the Sheffield Football Club along with their cousin John Ness Dransfield. In addition, they were both long serving members of the Sheffield Book Society: Thomas from 1863 to 1896 and Charles from 1862-1901. This was a circulating book group established in 1806. Their grandfather John Favell, also a surgeon, was an early member, joining in 1817. Since that time there had always been a member of the Favell family in the Society, no fewer than five between 1870 and 1890.

Thomas attended first Sheffield Collegiate School, and then Sheffield School of Art. He wanted to be an artist but went into trade and took over a wine and spirit business from T. Danby in George St. However, he maintained his interest in art - frequently contributing paintings to the exhibitions of the Sheffield School of

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Sheffield Daily Telegraph: 29th September 1894 p.1

Art, displaying his paintings at home and in his offices, and sitting on the Council of the School of Art.

Thomas was an active philanthropist and member of many Sheffield societies. He served on the Ecclesall Board of Guardians and was made senior overseer of the poor in 1894. He was also a longstanding member of the Sheffield Club which had played a huge part in the rebuilding of St John's. Curiously, he was appointed Spanish Vice-Consul in Sheffield, though that was probably linked to his import of Spanish wines and sherries.

Initially he and his wife Eliza Caroline lived at Woodburn House, 7 Brocco Bank but in 1887 he sold it, and moved to Sunnyside 248 Fulwood Rd.

Thomas's wife died shortly before him. They had no surviving children; a son, Thomas Aubrey, was born in 1864 but sadly died in 1867.

Charles' early career looked as though it might develop in the same direction as that of many of his pew neighbours, for example W H Brittain in Pew 33. Brittain and Charles Favell were both silver smiths and silver plate manufacturers. Initially in partnership with Nathaniel Irving, Favell and Irving traded as Creswick and Co. Charles then went into business with another brother, Rupert. In the 1871 Census he is recorded as living at 247 Glossop Road, employing 28 men, 5 boys and 5 women in his business. This partnership was dissolved in 1879 and in 1887 he established Charles Favell and Co.



248 Fulwood Road

In 1860 Charles had married Ellen Swift. They had four children: Gertrude, William, Isabel and Charles Edward. In 1900 Charles Edward, working for the British South Africa Company, married Evelyn Ada Birrell, twin daughter of James Birrell of Scotland, in Cape Town by special licence.

However, by then Charles seems to have fallen on hard times. He was recorded as taking out a Deed of Arrangement in 1900 - a way to avoid bankruptcy. He was owing money with liabilities of £1,278 11s 8d but his estimated net assets were only £520. In the 1901 Census he was living with his unmarried daughter Isabel, in three rooms at 4 Park Place Worksop which was also a boarding house, a far cry from 35 Elmore Road, Broomhill where he lived in 1881.



4 Park Place Worksop

Charles seemed to have been living in Park Place since at least 1896 when his brother Thomas died. On the probate record Charles' address was in Worksop. His wife Ellen died in 1899 and was buried in Worksop Priory. Interestingly, his occupation is recorded as "wine agent on own account" – perhaps he was trying his hand at the business which had served his brother well!

It is interesting to speculate what forced such a change in fortune: bad investments, an economic downturn, a change in personal circumstances or those of his children?

Also why move to Worksop? One link could be deduced from the fortunes of his daughter Isabel after her father's death. She was unmarried and the options for a middle-class single woman of meagre fortunes were limited. In the 1911 Census, Isabel was recorded as working as a lady's companion to Dora Norris, wife of Arthur James Norris, wine and spirit merchant of Banstead, Surrey. Dora Norris was the daughter of Thomas J. Flockton of Sheffield and Woodleigh, Worksop. Thomas Flockton was the partner in the architect firm of Flockton and Gibbs; he was also a stalwart member of the Sheffield Book Society from 1855 to 1899. He and Charles were regular members of the Committee which met in their homes, including Thomas Flockton's house at Worksop. Perhaps he was able to help Charles in his time of need.

The different fortunes of these two brothers can be seen in their wills: when he died in 1896, Thomas left £4481 12s 4d, the equivalent of £416,785 in 2025. Charles, on the other hand, left only £30, equivalent to £2,578.

The fortunes of the Favell brothers illustrate just how important social networks were to survival when a family fell on hard times. We would love to find a portrait or photograph of any members of this fascinating family. Do contact us if you have anything to share.

Susan Roe

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