



Bawtry Heritage Group

Preserving our Past for the Future

Registered Charity No. 1188945

The Origins of Ida's View, Bawtry

The Origin of Ida's View Bawtry.

Today "Ida's View" in Bawtry is hidden, virtually unknown, within the confines of modern day School Walk. Only a central stone plaque displayed at the midpoint along the terrace cottages numbered 2 to 12, constructed early in the twentieth century, testifies that a spot dedicated to someone called Ida ever existed.

The relevant section of School Walk runs north-south, parallel with the modern railway line, in the eastern half of Bawtry. The cottages are sited on the eastern side of the road (SK 653931), backing on to the park. An aerial photograph taken over the town in 1925 confirms the cottages were constructed before that date and clearly illustrates that the landscape, in this part of town, back in the first quarter of the twentieth century, pre the designation of School Walk as a road, was very different from today.

Exploring the genesis of "Ida's View" leads us to the sale of property by the 1st Earl of Crewe, Robert Offley Ashburton (1858-1945). He was a Liberal Politician between 1895 and 1911. The Earl had many properties in Bawtry, most notably Bawtry Hall. Less well known is that he also owned The Poplars, a property midway along the northern side of Wharf Street, which also included the land immediately adjacent to it on its eastern side.

As his title hints, the Earl of Crewe's presence in Bawtry was more about the business of estate holdings rather than being a resident. During the latter half of the 19th Century land/property holders commonly managed their estates via a combination of tenant farming and sporting rights, earning

lucrative incomes to support the possession and maintenance of their properties. It is likely that the Earl's interests followed this pattern. However, crop failures during the mid 1870's plunged many estates, countrywide, into financial hardship and coupled with a changing economic landscape nationwide owners were forced to sell up, in order to balance their books. In 1904 the Earl put up his Bawtry properties up for auction, The Poplars included.

The Poplars is a substantial town house and with the land described is central to the "Ida's View" story. The land adjacent to the property ran for the remaining northern side of Wharf Street, eastward from the house to the corner of Church Street and was described as a "paddock".

Abstracts of Title Deeds, reveal that in 1904 Mr Thomas Frost acquired The Poplars and the adjacent land. Thomas, a saddler, had married Sarah Elizabeth Slater in 1888 and had begun married life living on the High Street in Doncaster before moving to Bawtry. Interestingly, the Frost's moved to Bawtry between 1891 and 1901 prior to their purchase of The Poplars. We do know that they lived on Wharf Street in 1901 and we might speculate that they lived in The Poplars as tenants of the Earl before purchasing it*¹. The presence of a residing servant in both the 1901 and 1911 census leaves the impression that the family were doing well during this time and likely to require a large house. Importantly, we know that they were still resident in The Poplars in 1939 as this is where Thomas died in January of that year. This places the Frost family at the heart of the Ida's View mystery, given that deed abstracts reveal the cottages were not built in the area, later to become School Walk, at the time of Thomas' acquisition of The Poplars in 1904, but they were in situ in 1925 when the aerial photograph was taken above Bawtry Hall.

Common belief is that the cottages were constructed around 1910. Plans with the deeds for The Poplars indicate that the cottages had a worthy "view" on their western side by the presence of the paddock, a space of almost 2 acres, directly between them and the eastern side of The Poplars. The 1925 aerial photograph further supports this written evidence. However, it does not give the impression that the view was spectacular. What we can say is, it was open and one might imagine pleasant.

With a fair degree of confidence we can conclude from all of this that the cottages, when built, certainly had a view on their western side and that this was the area referred to as "Ida's View". However, why the dedication and who was Ida?

Plans accompanying the abstracts from relevant Title Deeds indicate that the cottages were constructed on land owned by the Frost family adjacent to The Poplars located midway along the eastern boundary of the paddock. That being the case it seems reasonable to assume the Frost's had something to do with the construction of the terrace. This is bolstered somewhat when exploring current local recollections, that do remember Frost's being the initiators of the project rather than side liners.

Title deeds show that on Thomas' death in 1939 he died intestate and the administration of his holdings in respect of The Poplars and the paddock making up Ida's View passed to his wife Sarah and son Thomas who had been born in 1893. Interestingly, there was a mortgage liability associated with these holdings for the sum of £4000, plus interest. This had been entered into by Thomas Frost senior with a Mr Robert Charles Clark from Retford in 1935.

From these Title Deeds we also know that Thomas Frost senior had a daughter. Further inquiry indicated she had been born in

1891, whilst the Frosts' lived in Doncaster town. Her name, Ida.

Ida Frost became an administrative trustee along with her mother and brother of Thomas senior's estates and liabilities on the 15th July 1942, 18 months prior to the mortgage liability being discharged in December 1943. It seems implausible that the Ida associated with the view from the cottages is not Ida Frost.

Ida's mother Sarah died in 1947 followed by her brother Thomas in 1953. Ida retained a vested interest in the property on Wharf Street until 20th March 1959 when conveyancing for the Wharf Street properties was completed and Title passed to the Woods Family.

If we believe that the mystery of to whom the "view" had been dedicated is resolved, it cannot be claimed that the reason for the dedication is. Given that well over one hundred years has passed since the dedication was made and that it is almost 60 years since "Ida's View", as place name of common knowledge, began to slip from any public consciousness, there is perhaps minimal chance of any current Bawtry resident with definitive knowledge as to the reason why the dedication was made. There are childhood memories I have explored recalling Ida as an adult remembering, "Ida from the big house riding her horse in the field". This alone presents an image of the area being important to Ida herself, with her being actively engaged with the space during her adult life. However, this does not provide any definitive reason for the dedication. Until such time that any illusive, unequivocal answer to that question emerges we are left with the fun of speculation, mindful of course that care should be taken not to allow speculation to become improperly cemented as proven fact.

Examining the evidence we currently have allows us to muse on the following. Ida was born in 1891, not only the first daughter of Thomas and Sarah Frost but also their first child, who grew to be keen on equestrian activity which requires not only a horse, but space for it. Coupling this knowledge with common folklore that presents the cottages being constructed around 1910 and given that the project, likely to be led by the Frost's, was the dedication associated with Ida's coming of age? This seems reasonable as she would have celebrated her 21st birthday in 1911. Was it a fitting tribute to a first child and eldest daughter? Who knows differently?

The physical presence of "Ida's View" did not disappear with the passing of Titles to others in 1959. The abstracts from Title Deeds relating to the paddock for that time declare that a number of intriguing conditions remained in place for this plot of land. Some of those conditions dated back to 1904 and the rights retained by the Earldom of Crewe, some of which reserved rights to "minerals lying at a greater depth than 300 yards from the surface" and all appropriate rights of access and egress required to exploit such treasure should the opportunity arise.

Whilst the deeds for 1959 permitted the erection of dwelling houses on Ida's View and plans linked to the deeds indicated that School Walk had come into existence as a designated road by 1959, the view changed little over the next few years. There was clearly legal provision to ensure that a pleasant outlook was maintained for those occupying the cottages. The 1959 deeds refer to specific requirements being associated with the use of the land, in particular, what could not be stored on it, or practised thereon by way of any business venture. There was a legal undertaking by the purchaser of the land at that time, to plant trees specifically spaced, of selected species, and with prescriptive dimensions along the western boundary of the

Ida's View land. The purchaser was also required to ensure that the Ida's View land was not utilised for "anything which would be a nuisance or annoyance to theproperties known as Ida's View". We might conclude here that the legal documentation communicates the value to which those residing in the cottages attributed to their dedicated "view" back then.

On 21st December 1960 the paddock that was "Ida's View" passed from the Woods family to Charles Edward Flanagan for £1700. The option to build dwelling houses on this land, as permitted in the 1959 exchange, was further legally scrutinised in August 1963 and the "view", as originally dedicated to Ida, disappeared forever. A row of 1960's style houses numbered 1 to 17 replaced it and this is the view from the cottages that remains today.

**₁ The 1901 census date for Wharf Street, Bawtry does not indicate the dwellings in which individuals lived, only that at the time of the census they were living in that street.*

Questions/Outstanding issues or lines of inquiry:

1. The motive for the dedication? The speculation made in this piece seems reasonable and has some tangible credence. But, it remains speculation to what is essentially the heart of the tale. We could of course speculate that the dedication was just for a loyal daughter, or that the dedication came sometime after the building of the cottages, or that the Ida referred to here was not the one for whom the dedication was made. I would submit that none of these options have the same weight as the one made. However, to be more certain additional evidence relating to the plans and personal knowledge of the

cottage's construction might help. To date these details remain elusive.

2. Census records covering 1921, show that Ida was still resident in the Poplars, Wharf Street, Bawtry. The 1921 census shows 8 households in residence in Ida's view, including one Ida Lay who was 11 years old having been born in Durham.
3. There is no clear indication to the fact that Thomas Frost's mortgaging of his Wharf Street holdings had anything to do with the Ida's View project and seems unlikely given that the cottages had clearly been in situ for some time before he entered into the arrangement. The Frost family during the first half of the twentieth century held interests in other properties in Bawtry including the "Bawtry Picture House", it seems likely they had business beyond saddle making that may have been the prompt for the mortgage requirement.
4. Thomas Frost is recorded as having a land dispute with The Great Northern Railway between 1910-1914. At this time the details are not available for research digitally. This does however support the conclusion that the Frost family were involved in land acquisition and management in the early twentieth century. There is no indication at this time that this dispute had any relevance to a project that led to the existence or maintenance of "Ida's View".
5. What became of Ida Frost? There is reference to Ida Frost still living in The Poplars in 1939. Given that there are no records of her marrying it is likely she lived there at the time of her fathers death and given that memories of her exercising her horse emanate from the early 1950's makes her residency up to 1959 when the property

passed on a strong possibility. Death records with the most accurate match indicate that she may have died in 1962 in Worksop, Nottinghamshire.

M P Maguire

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Appendices

Photograph showing the stone plaque to Ida in situ.

Aerial photograph taken over Bawtry in 1925.

Plan of the area 1904/1935.

Plan of the area 1959.

Appendix One

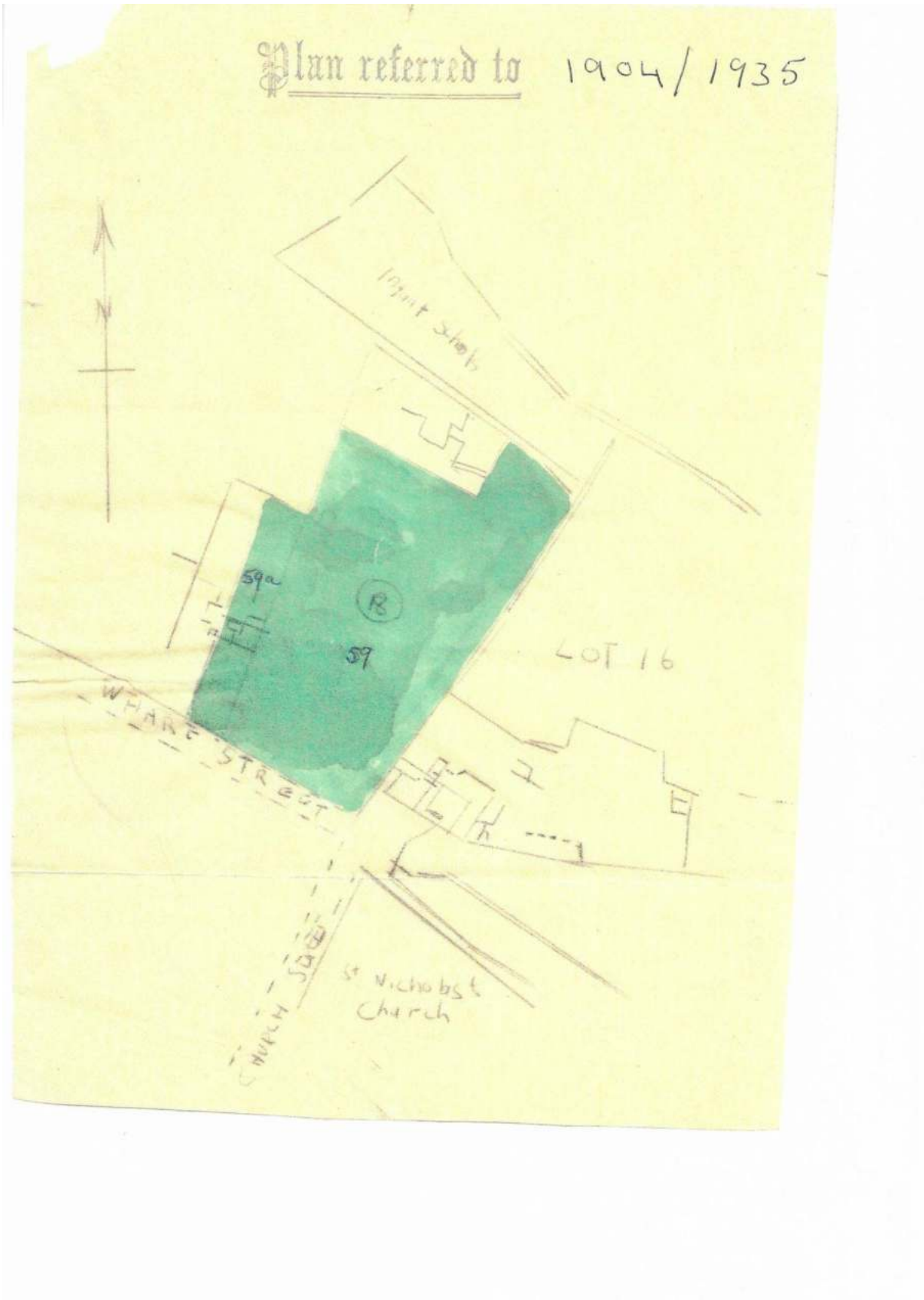


Appendix Two

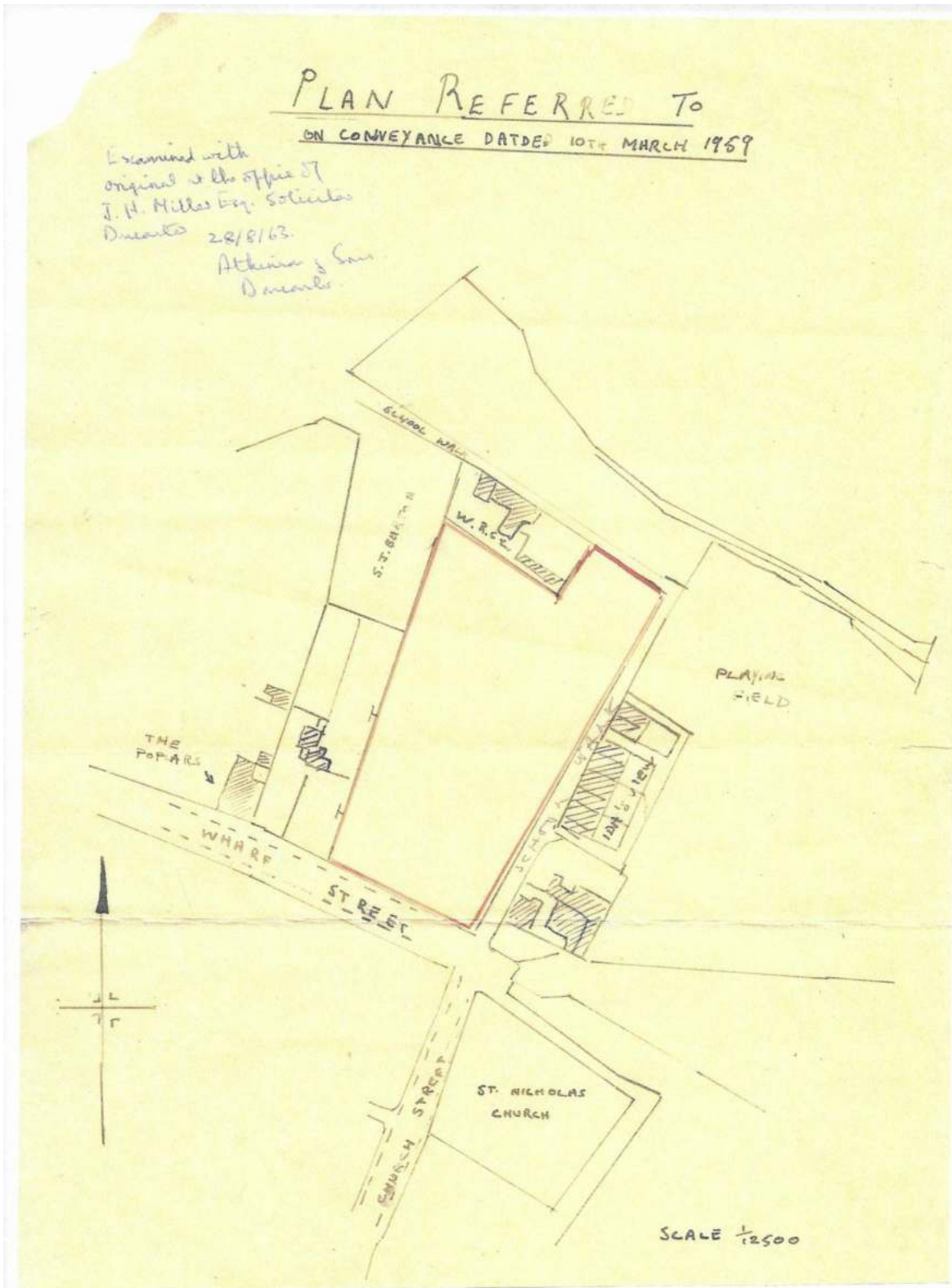


Historic England Archive: EPW054544

Appendix Three



Appendix Four



Source Materials

UK Census records for 1891, 1900, 1911 and 1921.

UK Births, Deaths and Marriage records.

Heritage Statement relating to Bawtry Hall by David Hornsby
B.Sc., FRICS, BCAS. 2015

The National Archives Rail Records ref. 1189/1842

Abstracts from:

Title of the Trustees of Thomas Frost (The Elder) Deceased. To
premises adjoining Wharf Street Bawtry 1935-1959.

Title of Charles Edward Flanagan ESQ of land situated in Wharf
Street Bawtry 1961.

Thanks for support to:

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