

Fertilisers, Farming and Philanthropy – the Proctor Story

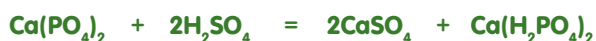
Raymond A Holland

Who is it that links these apparently diverse topics: the manufacture of glass bottles, a Bristol hotel, fertiliser manufacture, two farms in Stoke Gifford, Bristol Polytechnic, an American company making computer peripherals, 'The fairest, goodliest and most famous parish church in England', a drinking fountain, a house on the Downs and a recreation ground? Alderman Thomas Proctor of course. Raymond Holland tells the story of a man who was a fertiliser manufacturer, a tenant farmer and a great benefactor to the City of Bristol.

This story arises out of research into the Netham Chemical Company Works, Bristol, where Philip John Worsley became the manager, on six months' probation, in 1861.¹ In 1871 he was made a director. In 1890, when the Netham Works was absorbed into the United Alkali Company Limited, he became a director of that organisation. He retired in 1901. All the Worsley family papers are lodged in the Bristol University special section, under the care of Mr George Mabey. They are invaluable for their wide ranging detail, particularly the recollections of PJ Worsley, written when he retired. Referring to the Netham Works, Worsley says:

'About 1865 we decided to add another branch to our business making superphosphate of lime and bone manure. We found that several customers who bought our acid for making chemical manures had taken to making the acid themselves. It was especially the case when customers' trade had reached a large scale and was most valuable to us. Rather than lose trade in acid for manure, we decided to make it ourselves.'

The manufacture of chemical manure meant strictly the treatment of calcium phosphate with sulphuric acid to produce the more soluble calcium superphosphate, according to the method soluble by Liebig in 1840 and introduced into this country by John Bennett Lawes.

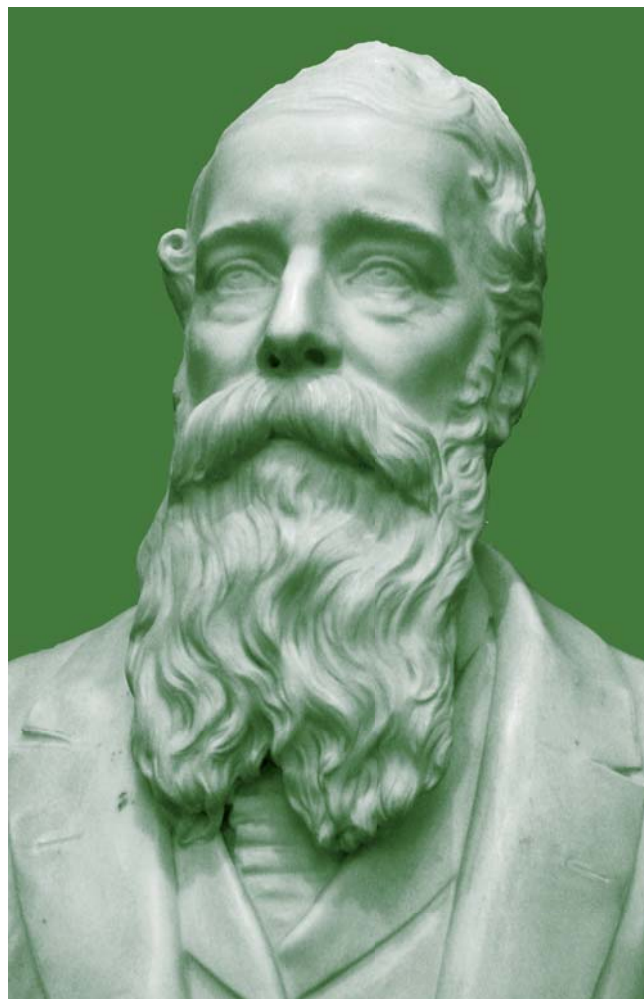


Calcium Phosphate	Sulphuric acid	Gypsum	Primary phosphate
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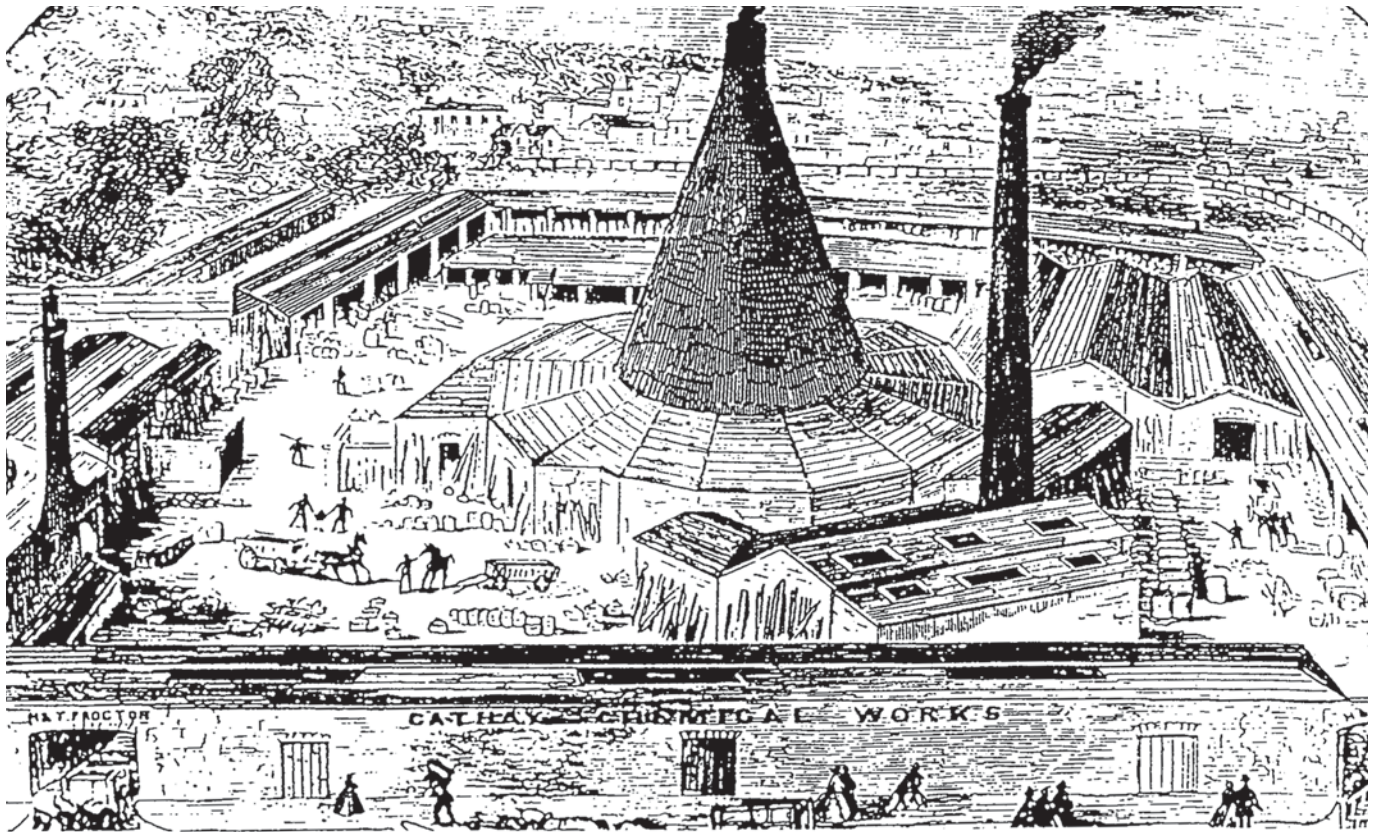
Lawes set up a works at Depford, which was to be the prototype of all superphosphate factories. He applied for a patent on 23 May 1842 for the process of decomposing phosphatic material.² He specified:

'To bones, bone ash, bone dust and other phosphoric substances, mix a quantity of sulphuric acid just sufficient to set free such phosphoric acid as will hold in solution the undecomposed phosphate of lime.'

On the very same day, James Murray, also applied for a patent, which has priority over Lawes' patent.² In it he defined the dry absorbent matter: 'such as bran, sawdust, sand, fine sifted cinders and the like' which needed to be mixed



Alderman Thomas Proctor
(In the Mansion House, Bristol).



Cathay Chemical Works of H & T Proctor. An engraving, about 1830.

with the pasty mass to make a 'dry and powdery compost'. Worsley continues:

'For some years, we did well making the manure and selling it to dealers, but it required agencies and a considerable staff of travellers. So we were pleased to receive a proposal from two young men, Norrington and Hingston, to build them a small factory on the site into which we could supply acid by a pipe and so save the expense of delivery.'

The United Alkali Company Ltd archives at Chester Record office have a contract signed by Norrington and Hingston in 1886 for 21 years and there are subsequent leases up to 1933, when they gave formal notice in June to terminate the tenancy on 21 December 1933, but when did they actually start? In some odd notes Worsley quotes: 'December 1870 Norrington at Netham', and again 'Norrington and Hingston before 1873.' In the Bristol directories their names appear from 1870. In the H&T Proctor Ltd 150th anniversary brochure, (1812-1962), it is stated that Norrington and Hingston leased the 'Great Western Chemical Works' in 1862. In another paper by Mrs A Hingston Quiggin, (EA Hingston's daughter), the starting date is given as 1864.³ There are unanswered questions. However, in 1892 the two firms amalgamated to form H&T Proctor Ltd, with William Proctor, Frederick Norrington and Ernest Alison Hingston as co-partners.

The alkali etc. Works Regulation Act 1881 took under its wing chemical manure works but only the mixing of bones or mineral phosphates with sulphuric acid. The inspectors had no control over some of the vile smelling ancillary processes. A look through the alkali inspector's report of 1882 requires a

strong stomach.⁴ There is a list of works inspected, entries like: 'this is manure and horse slaughtering work,' and the chief business here is horse boiling.'

Fertilisers

Fertilisers are not recent innovations; they go back beyond the production of superphosphates in the 1840s. Manures and composts were probably in use ever since man learnt to dig.

In the 18th century, a quantity of fine bone dust resulted from the manufacture of knife handles in the neighbourhood of Sheffield. This was found to have an exceptionally beneficial effect on arable land. Demand quickly exceeded supply and mills were erected to grind bones to powder and bone manure became a profitable industry.

So fertiliser manufacture was well established before Liebig's plant nutrition theory of 1840, or Lawes' success with superphosphate. By 1821 the national supply of bones was inadequate to meet the demand. Nitrate of soda and even ammoniacal liquor from gas works had been introduced as fertilisers before 1840.

Proctor's started as rag and bone men. Even in 1842, Matthews' 'Bristol directory' gives H&T Proctor as rag and bone merchants, preparers of bones for manure and glue manufacturers. A billhead, dated 14 December 1844, describes the Cathay Works, in Prewett Street, near St. Mary Redcliffe Church, as 'The West of England depot for bone, guano, nitrate of soda, and other portable manures'. The billhead carries two engravings:

on the left, a liquid manure cart and on the right, a cornfield in harvest. Underneath is the message: 'He who gives to the soil liberally will receive therefrom abundantly'. This was the Liebig theme: 'enriching the soil with that which is lost'. It also shows that as well as making and selling fertilisers. Proctors were also inventors and suppliers of agricultural machinery; 'drills, threshing machines, ploughs, turnip cutters, clod rollers, manure carts etc.'

When the first Thomas Proctor died in 1836, his son, another Thomas Proctor, took over. Born in 1811, he was 25 when he assumed control. He met Liebig at Oxford in the 1840s, after Liebig had outlined some proposals on the subject of mineral requirements of plants at the 1837 meeting of the British Association at Liverpool and after the publication in 1840 of Liebig's book 'Chemistry applied to agriculture and physiology'. One result of this meeting was that Baron von Liebig's son, Hermann, was sent to study at the Cathay Works. Another was the production of 'German compost' at Bristol.

In 1858, Proctors were advertising in a pamphlet on manures, their properties and application, 'that: 'We have the chemist to suggest, the merchant to procure, the manufacturer to prepare, and the intelligent farmer to apply: and if each fulfils his allotted part we may look forward to results advantageous alike to the individual and to the community.' Thomas Proctor had himself 'fulfilled his allotted part', when he carried out an experiment with fertilisers in the reclamation of Wallscourt Farm at Stoke Gifford between 1850 and 1861. By spending thousands of pounds on drainage and manuring with his 'composts', he transformed 'Starve-all Farm' into a model estate.

When the partnership between Thomas and William was dissolved, on 30 October 1869, William received £23,410.10s.0d in settlement and Thomas took over the whole of H&T Proctor at Cathay and elsewhere, (there were branches of the firm at Birmingham, Warwick and Saltney, near Chester). From that date the accounts were ruled off and new account books started. Two years later, from 1871, Thomas wrote his balance sheets in alphabetical code. (I am pleased to report that I have cracked it!)

When Thomas Proctor died in 1876, he had no son to succeed him, so his son in law, who took the family name, as CW Cope Proctor, together with FH Ryland and William Proctor (his Nephew) formed a partnership which lasted until 1887. When this was dissolved in 1887, William Proctor became the sole manager.

By the end of the 19th century the fertiliser trade was being affected by foreign competition and in 1892, William Proctor arranged an amalgamation with Norrington and Hingston, who were making superphosphates at the Great Western Chemical Works at the Netham. This was the combination of the Netham Works 'artificial' with the muck and magic' of the Cathay Works, beneficial to both parties.

Since then, various Proctors, Norringtons and Hingstons have been involved with the management. The last Proctor was Philip. He was the youngest son of William. (He too was involved in civic duties: a magistrate, 20 years on Bristol City Council and seven of those as an alderman). He was known

to many as 'PKP' and he held sway from 1935 to 1961. After that date he handed over the chairmanship to DP Hopkins, but remained as vice-chairman. CA Bailey, who was appointed general manager in 1960, became managing director in 1961, the position he held until 1985.

Cash flows were not always easy. Between the two great wars the fight for survival was intense. Many young horses were shipped from Ireland to settle fertiliser bills. Fertilisers supplied to the Channel Islands were often paid for with shipment of tomatoes to Bristol. Straw, too, was sometimes taken in payment from West Country farmers, which was then resold for banana packing at the Bristol Docks.

In 1958 H&T Proctor absorbed JH & A Cole Limited, of Feeder Road, Bristol.⁵ They had started in 1850 at Calne, Wiltshire, with 'organics' and moved to Bristol when they acquired Cottrell's Bristol Bone Manure Company and the Bristol Stone Manufacturing Company. (Perhaps this stone company was making grindstones to grind bones.) Was this a planned take-over? Well, eight years later, in 1966, the Cathay works closed down and the business was moved to the Feeder Road site.

In 1885 Coles gained much publicity by transporting a dead whale through the streets of Bristol to be processed at the works.⁶ More recently, when Rosie, the Bristol Zoo elephant died, her carcass was also disposed of by Proctor's, though without a lot of publicity! The meat and bone section of the works closed down around 1980.

By October/November 1985 H&T proctor Ltd was in real trouble. There was a major down turn in the use of fertilisers in agriculture and having made no real move to diversify, the business was unable to compete with the big fertiliser producers and so went into receivership. It went into liquidation in April 1987.⁷ However the name H&T Proctor still continues as a division of the animal feed merchants Willett & Son (Bristol) Ltd.

Willett & Son had its beginnings in 1870 as corn merchants, operating from a water mill at Banwell, Somerset.⁸ From 1896, when Thomas Willett died, his son, John became the entrepreneur of his day. In 1912 he opened a wholesale trading office at Weston-super-Mare. In 1921 the mill moved to Sandford. In 1923 his son Lance succeeded him and he moved the head office from Weston-super-Mare to Victoria Street, Bristol, only to move it again in 1926 to the present head office at 51 Queen Square. It is interesting to note that this building, called Phoenix House was rebuilt after the 1831 Bristol riots which also demolished the Mansion House. In 1955 a small grass drying plant was taken over at Bleadon, near Weston-Super-Mare; it gradually developed into a compound animal feeding stuffs mill and in 1976 a major extension was opened.⁹ Willetts were also operating as agricultural merchants in seeds and fertilisers, so the acquisition of Proctor's fertiliser works was a logical diversification.

The old Proctor Headquarters building in Feeder Road has been sold off to a satellite TV company but the works is still there. The main business now is compounding fertilisers in the form of mini-granules for sports grounds, together with garden

and amenity products. (Granulation of fertilisers started in the early post war years and the Cathay Plant at that time had a good reputation). Many of today's products contain a high proportion of 'organics', like 'blood, fish and bone', a response to the current vogue away from 'artificial' 'chemical fertilisers and a return to 'muck and magic'.

The Glass Cone

The glass cone, or glass kiln, in Prewett Street used for the manufacture of bottles, is thought to have been built in the 1780s. It was certainly out of use in 1812 as the site with the cone was leased to H&T Proctor for development as a bone manure works. The cone and its ancillary lean-to structures were used by Proctors for storage of the bulk ingredients and for mixing their compound fertilisers until 1966.

This was not a bottle kiln, as for pottery, but a central furnace to melt the glass, from which the glass blowers took a molten lump back to their workplace on the periphery of the conical building, returning to reheat the article at the central furnace as necessary. There were two large arches opposite one another and 13 smaller arches. Rather strangely, this meant that there were seven on one side and six on the other. In 1936 the 65 feet high cone was in a dangerous state, due to a crack, so it was truncated to 25 feet and fitted with a corrugated iron roof supported by an umbrella-like structure.

In 1966, when the Cathay works was closed and H&T Proctor Ltd moved to the Feeder Road site, a report to the City Museum committee meeting, 30 November 1966, enthused upon the kiln's great potential as a museum building; possibly a museum of glass and glass technology. That was not the way things went, for the Ladbroke Dragonara Hotel was opened in 1973 with the cone retained and featured as the 'Kiln Restaurant'.

The acoustics in the Kiln restaurant are very strange. The regular pianist told me that while he was playing, he can hear the waiter, diametrically opposite, telephoning orders to the kitchen. The building is like the 'whispering gallery' at St Pauls. The hotel is now the Bristol Hilton and the restaurant has been refurbished and is known as the 'Kiln Brasserie'.

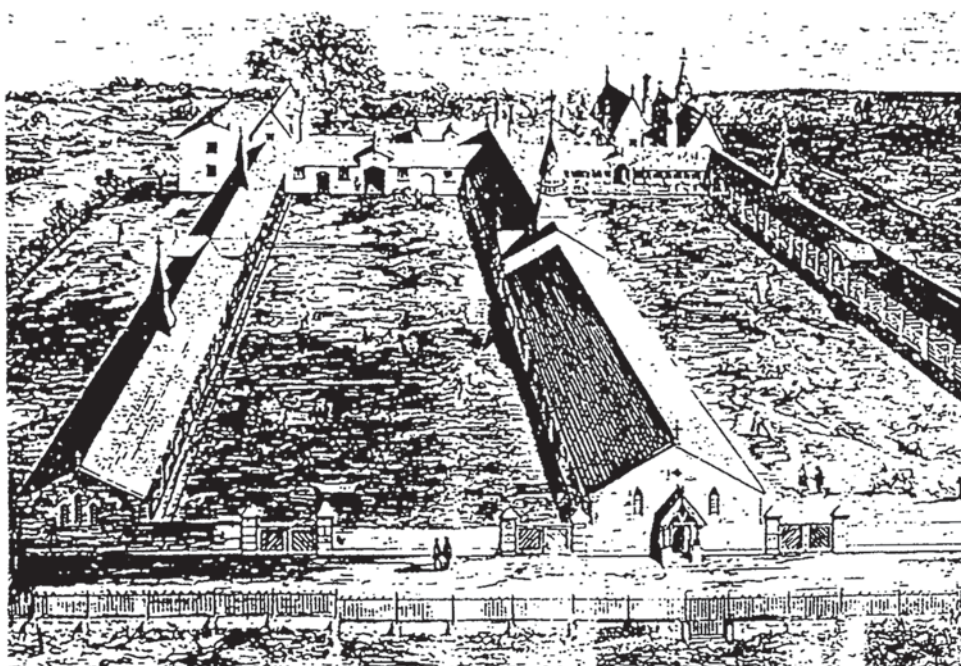
Farming

It is possible that Wallscourt Farm existed for many centuries before the first written records were compiled in the 14th century. The Manor of 'Walls' is recorded as being the third manor which makes up the parish of Stoke Gifford and was an area of considerable woodland which changed very little from the time John Gifford purchased a wooded area known as 'Le Walls' in 1327, until the 19th century.¹⁰ The whole of the parish of Stoke Gifford was owned by His Grace the Duke of Beaufort. Here Thomas Proctor leased 600 acres of land, mostly so poor that nothing would grow on it, thus earning the name of 'Starve-all Farm'.

Wallscourt farm was designed by George Godwin (1815-88) to be a model farm and was completed in 1855. It was eventually coupled with Stanley Farm, designed by George Godwin's son (EW Godwin 1833-66), completed in 1860. Then these two units formed one farm of about 600 acres.

By spending thousands of pounds on draining the land and manuring it with his 'composts' Proctor transformed the Wallscourt farm into a model estate: 'with rich herbage, dotted with cattle such as Sidney Cooper would delight to paint,' as a reporter noted in *The Builder* in July 1855. He was impressed not only with the excellence of the pasturage, the sleekness of the cattle, the magnificent 'E' shaped farm buildings, and the comfortable cottages for the workmen, but with two much more surprising features, a railway and a school. The railway carried fodder for the cattle. The reporter waxed lyrical: 'At morning and evening you may hear and see the train waggons thundering along through these handsome sheds. 'The schoolroom was an airy building fitted up with desks and forms, a clock, maps and pictures on the wall, and 'an intelligent mistress' who gave lessons to 16 younger children in the mornings and to ten of the boys working on the farm, who came voluntarily in the evenings. From 1861 the census, the 'intelligent' schoolmistress's name was Louise Bromley aged 43.

Thomas Proctor left Wallscourt in 1861. Almost 100 years later in 1960, part of the land was sold to build Bristol Polytechnic.



Wallscourt Farm buildings. Artist's impression from *The Builder*, July 1855.

An American firm, Hewlett Packard Ltd, making computer peripherals, acquired the remainder of the site in 1981.¹¹

Farming ended when Mr Campbell Hill left in autumn 1984 and Hewlett Packard Ltd started building on the site. They were faced with a dilemma: should they restore the farm and buildings to their original glory, or should they knock down the already dilapidated and crumbling buildings? As Americans, they appreciated that the site was of historic interest and so chose a classic compromise. They completely refurbished the farm house, putting in a damp course, and rewiring the electrics. There was only one small change inside of the building and that was to make an archway to provide a bar. The farmhouse was to be used as a staff amenity centre. They cleaned and restored the stonework making the building fit for another hundred years.

Regrettably, there is very little of the original farm buildings left; for they knocked down the majority which were unsafe, retaining only the tips of the three legs of the 'E' and the wagon arch. They then landscaped the area and made a feature of the wagon archway, converting it into an open museum of some of the artefacts from the original buildings. This is called 'The Northgate Museum'.

The Northgate Museum originally formed part of extensive 'E' shaped cattle sheds and outbuildings, throughout which the railway system was operated, using cast iron turntables at the intersections. One of these turntables is displayed in the grass; another is inside the museum building together with other reclaimed artefacts displayed in a manner similar to the way they would have been originally installed.

The large cast-iron pulley wheel, located in the centre of the building, was the original flywheel driven by a single cylinder stationary steam engine. Belts were used to transmit the power from one pulley wheel to another with 'dogtooth' clutches to engage the various machines. One such item of equipment was the grain conveyor, which is displayed on an angle of 45°. A similar piece of equipment was used in the farm to raise chaff to the cutting room to make cattle food.

There is a water pump displayed which is a single action lift pump, probably made about 1870. It is made of brass, lead, bronze and wrought iron; with a laminated leather washer acting inside the brass lift chamber. Such a pump was capable of lifting water from considerable depths and discharging about two pints of water with each action of the lever.

A single horse plough is displayed. It is finished in the colours traditionally employed on such equipment in this area but, Thomas must be turning in his grave, for the plough on show is made by 'Ransomes'.

The farmhouse, the remains of the farm buildings and the artefacts in this museum are all that remain of the original farm, which in its heyday had attracted great attention and must have had considerable publicity value for Proctor's fertilisers.

Stanley Farm consisted of about 84 acres and was the property of Alderman Thomas Proctor. It was worked in conjunction with the adjoining Wallscourt Farm. The farmhouse and buildings

were commissioned by Thomas Proctor and designed by Edward William Godwin, the son of George Godwin. From the proctor account books, work started on the farmhouse on 14 April 1855. Four days later the corner stone was laid. Work on the house must have progressed well for by 6 August 1855 they were buying slates and chimney pots. On 22 August 1855 there was a bill for 'iron work at the bailiff's house' for £4.5s.6d, presumably the decorative ironwork on the roof. The work on the whole project was probably completed by 31 December 1858, for that is the date of the last payment to carpenters and masons.

In *The Builder* in 1860, it was reported that the farmhouse was occupied by the bailiff. The buildings erected near it were used as stables and sheds for carts, waggons, and agricultural implements. There was also a piggery behind the house.

The cattle sheds at Wallscourt Farm were conveniently situated near to Wallscourt farmhouse, with the grasslands all around. Stanley Farm was about 700 yards away, conveniently situated for the arable land, and the proximity of the bailiff's residence gave the opportunity of proper supervision of the horses on the farm. There is a story that signalling by semaphore took place between the two farms from the towers but this is difficult to imagine, as Stanley farmhouse tower has only one quatrefoil window, unlike the large multiple windows in the Wallscourt farmhouse tower.

It is very sad to relate the rapid deterioration of this farm in the five years from 1984 to 1989. After becoming unoccupied and being allowed to fall into disrepair, it is now being demolished, as the site is to be developed.

Philanthropy

In 1842 Thomas Proctor was a churchwarden of St Mary Redcliffe Church: 'The fairest, goodliest & most famous parish church in England' said Queen Elizabeth I. In that year an appeal was made to restore the church to its ancient and pristine beauty at an estimated cost of £40,000.¹² After a slow start, the church was extensively restored between 1846 and 1877.

Thomas Proctor was chairman of the restoration committee for many years and there is a plaque to his memory erected on the north wall of the nave, near the back of the church, which was unveiled by the Duchess of Beaufort during the 'great service of thanksgiving' held on 3rd November 1933. (It is between two plaques which commemorate the restoration work carried out between July 1930 and September 1933, and the restoration of the stonework of the tower and the lead-work of the roof during the years 1961-65), the middle plaque reads:

Having mind of those who nobly restored this church 1846-1877 and herein especially of Thomas Proctor, who as "Nil Desperandum", repaired the North Porch and greatly encouraged the work.

In Thomas Proctor's account books it is recorded that he donated £2533.8s.8d between 25th September 1848 and 17 September 1853 to the porch. Then on 26 May 1860 he

gave a further £66 for the north porch doors. Between 1867 and 1874 he was giving annual donations of £100 to St Mary Redcliffe and between 1868 and 1872 similar donations to Emmanuel Church, in Guthrie Road. This church has now been demolished and flats built.

Thomas Proctor also secured the preservation of the Hogarth Triptych, which was in St Mary Redcliffe church, though in 1853 it was advertised that it was for sale. No one bought it and in 1858 it was given to the Fine Arts Academy for preservation. It is now in the St Nicholas Church Museum. George Godwin was the architect from 1845-1877 and maybe longer. He designed the reredos in caen stone which placed the triptych. He was also responsible for the design of the new spire, which was completed in 1872. On 10 May 1872, the capstone was laid by the mayor and mayoress, Mr and Mrs W Proctor Baker in the presence of Mr Rice, the clerk of works. They made the perilous ascent in a steam hoist basket.¹³

Proctor House, a block of flats, in Prewett Street, is a reminder of the Proctor connection in the Redcliffe area.

The next benefaction was Proctor's fountain. This drinking fountain was erected at the top of Bridge Valley Road, at the corner of Ladies Mile (not far from the zoo). It bears the inscription:

Erected by Alderman Thomas Proctor of Bristol, to record the liberal gift of certain rights over Clifton Down made to the citizens of Bristol by the Society of Merchant Venturers under the provision of the Clifton and Durdham Downs Acts of Parliament 1861 whereby the enjoyment of these Downs is preserved to the citizens of Bristol for ever.

It is a three-sided structure and it displays three Coats of Arms, namely, those of the Merchant Venturers, the City of Bristol and of Alderman Thomas Proctor.

This fountain was not built in 1861, but in 1872. The idea of providing drinking fountains was suggested in 1859 by a Mr Robert Lang, who started the ball rolling by offering a donation of £100 for that purpose. Soon several were erected in different parts of the city and by 1906, there were 40 different fountains.¹³

In 1987 it was decided that the fountain restricted the line of sight for traffic at the junction and so it was dismantled, cleaned, restored and resited on the opposite side of the road on the grass nearer to the Mansion House, with the additional bonus of the water supply being reconnected.

There is a plaque commemorating the reopening, which reads:

City of Bristol • Society of Merchant Venturers • County of Avon

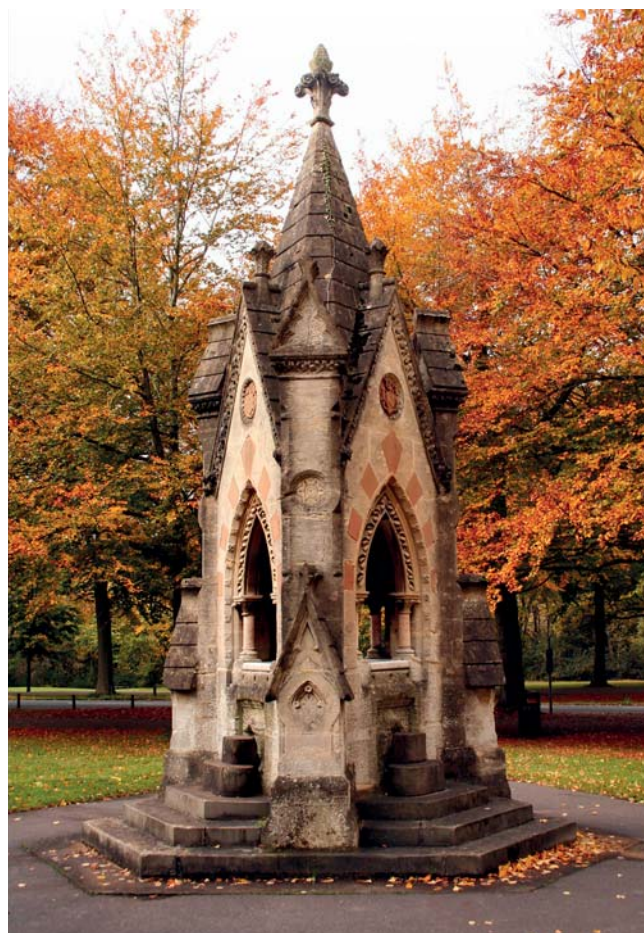
*Resiting and Refurbishment
of
Alderman Proctor's Drinking Fountain
To commemorate its opening
by
The Rt Hon The Lord Mayor of Bristol
Councillor C D M B Alderson*

*and
The Chairman of Avon County Council
1st May 1988*

*Engineer for the works NW Lee BSc CEng FICE
County Engineer and Surveyor
Contractor H Meeling and Son*

The account books indicate that the original idea dated from about 1869, for in 1869, 1870 and 1871 there were preliminary expenses. Men's wages were being paid from 16 March 1872 and by 27 July 1872 the expenditure had reached £514.1s.5d. There was a final payment of £4.13s.11d, making the grand total £522.15s.4d. Of this Godwin's fee as the architect was £26.5s.0d (i.e. 25 guineas) and 14s.0d was paid for a photograph of the fountain taken 4 July 1872. There is no doubt that the resiting cost much, much more than the original building price.

Another benefaction was Proctor's riverside walk. At the November meeting of council 1873, it was announced that Alderman Proctor would plant trees along the riverside footpath on the south side of the New Cut (alongside Coronation Road) from Bath Bridge to Vauxhall Ferry. The cost was estimated at £500. Thousands of trees were planted and seats provided at suitable intervals to make a beautiful riverside walk. Latimer's Annals of Bristol records: 'A foolish attempt was made to style this parade a "boulevarde", but the public have declined to



Steve Bevan Camis Major Photography

Proctor's Fountain in its new location.

adopt the misnomer'. Today, there is very little to see of this 'beautiful riverside walk'.

Thomas Proctor's most widely known act of philanthropy was the gift to the city of the Mansion House. Less widely known is that the transfer took place, at the request of Mrs Proctor, on 1st May 1874, their 39th wedding anniversary.

Thomas Proctor gave up his connection with Wallscourt Farm in 1861 to concentrate on his business and on his civic matters. He was already a magistrate and an alderman. In 1869/70 he was made sheriff of Bristol. In 1861 he moved from the farm to 'Elmdale House, Clifton Down' but 'Elmdale' on the Promenade, Clifton, the result of yet another co-operation with the architect, George Godwin and which he gave to the city as the Mansion House in 1874, was not built until 1867. This problem remains to be solved; perhaps the present house was built in the grounds of the earlier one?

The original Mansion House on the north side of Queens Square was destroyed by fire during the riots on 30 October 1831. Before the fire, the old corporation had resolved on establishing a new Mansion House in Great George Street. A house was purchased there in 1829 but in 1830, public indignation was strongly pronounced at the proposed cost of the transformation to a Mansion House, and when the reformed corporation came into being in 1836 it was given up. From then until 1874 the city was without an official residence for its mayors.

'Elmdale' was valued in 1876 at 'upwards of £16,000' and in accepting the property, the city attempted to honour Alderman Thomas Proctor by a proposal to make him chief magistrate, i.e. mayor, but he was too ill to accept. Thomas Proctor died in 1876. The 'Bristol directories' show that his widow continued to live at Elmdale until around 1883; there was no entry in 1884. According to Mary Williams, the first mayor occupied the Mansion House in 1875.¹⁴

In 1875 Thomas Proctor's final gift to the city was Fishponds Park, which he fitted up for the entertainment of schoolchildren, some thousands of whom were taken there yearly on summer excursions. This is clearly stated in Latimers Annals of Bristol but at the Fishponds Park, by St Mary's church, also known as Victoria Park, there is nothing to connect it with Proctor. The fountain bears the following inscription:

*This Fountain presented by
John Yalland Esqre JP
The first Chairman of the
Local Board
To commemorate
The laying out of this
Pleasure Ground
For Public Use in 1888
Erected in 1893*

Enquiries continue to find further evidence but so far without success. Perhaps there was another park in Fishponds?

Conclusion

This has been a fascinating research project: the story of probably the oldest fertiliser manufacturing business in the world, in operation since 1812, a Victorian model farm, the inspiration of a tenant farmer, who was a civic dignity and a great benefactor to the City of Bristol.

The writer acknowledges the help and information given by H&T Proctor, Willett and Son (Corn Merchants) Ltd and Hewlett Packard Ltd, in the preparation of this story.

Originally published in *Chemistry & Industry*, 3 July 1989

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