

JOHN ASTLE 1863-1938

John Astle, who was always known as Jack, lived in Spondon from the 1890s until his death in July 1938. He was born in Little Eaton in 1863 and was the youngest of six children. He served his apprenticeship at Merrylees Brickyard, Ibstock, Leicestershire before becoming a master builder and bricklayer. He married Sarah Ann Wall of Thulston in 1889 and after their marriage lived in Derby before moving to Locko Road, Spondon. Jack and Sarah had five children.

Jack built and owned houses in Coxon Street, Moor Street, Royal Hill Road and Brockley. He was a successful builder and contractor and he also became the landlord of the 'Station Inn' Spondon from 1906 to 1919.

Outside the Station Inn, Spondon in 1920's

Jack is on the right hand side of the picture below wearing his trade mark three piece suit, watch chain, trilby hat and sporting a large moustache.



An article in the Derby Daily Telegraph 10th July 1907 describes one incident that occurred while Jack was licensee of 'The Station Inn'. Two labourers employed by him hired a boat out on the canal. When they tried to change places they ended up overturning the boat and both of them were thrown into the water. It was some time before they got out and one of them was in a poor state. He was carried into 'The Station Inn' where he was giving artificial respiration until the doctor arrived. He was eventually revived and considered himself very lucky that he hadn't drowned.

The 1911 census shows Jack as a builder, bricklayer and Inn Keeper. He remained at the 'Station Inn' throughout the war years and finally retired as a landlord in 1919, but continued working as the local builder. One of Jack's employees was William Coxon known locally as 'Old Bill' It may have been Bill's son who married Jack's youngest daughter Norah. In 1919 Jack and his wife Sarah handed the licence of the 'Station Inn' over to Jack's good friend, Will Porter from Sawley. Will had spent his life in the licence trade and met Jack during the early 1900's at the 'Nags Head', Sawley where Will's parents were the licensees.

Before the war Jack would call in at the 'Nags Head' Sawley early in the morning for a whisky or two with his friend Will Porter before they went shooting. It was here he met Will's widowed sister Mary Elizabeth Camp known as Lizzie who would become Jack's second wife.

Jack was a colourful character in Spondon and belonged to many clubs and societies during his lifetime, including a position on the Parish Council and was a founder member of The Village Rifle Club as we can see from the two reports below.

Village Rifle Club for Spondon- Derby Daily Telegraph 17 April 1907.

(a brief account from the newspaper)

A meeting was held in the Church Room Spondon to discuss the possibility of forming a Rifle Club in the village. A sub-committee under the direction of Rev. E. Priestland M.A. had the idea of starting such a club and find a suitable indoor range. A large number of people attended this meeting and the difficulty had been to find a suitable place for the range. However Mr W Drury-Lowe had agreed to place The Old Malt House in Potter Street at their disposal free of charge. Several alterations would have to be made to the premises. It was proposed fees for members over the age of 18 yrs would be 1s 6d and under 18 yrs 1s.

On the motion of Mr J S Lewty seconded by Mr Edward Thompsen it was resolved to form a Village Rifle Club. The officers elected were -President Mr W Drury-Lowe, Vice-Presidents Messrs O M Lilly, C H T Hayman, J Bostock, A E Priestland, A T Davis, T P Osborne, R A Cooper, H Ranby, B M Sims, Dr Barron, McKie jun, H Staples, J A Lewty, & J Lander-Lowe.

The committee elected Messrs E Thompson, G Thompson, W Oxley, W Burgess, F L Ward, S Ordish, J Astle, F S Rose, W. Boole, A Hackman, J S Lewty, & Rev Priestland as Chairman.

Mr T Creighton was elected as Secretary on account of the sound work he had done for the formation of the club.

A full report of this meeting can be found in Derby Daily Telegraph 17 April 1907

SPONDON PARISH COUNCIL -Derby Daily Telegraph Monday 18th April 1910
The first meeting of the new council was held on Tuesday evening. All members were present. Messrs W. Armatage, J Astle, W barton, J Clewes, J Coxon, C Coxon, W Peat & M Stone.

Each member signed the declaration of acceptance of office., and sub committees formed for the coming year.

Mr Peat was elected chairman. Messrs Barton & C Coxon were appointed overseers to the poor.

Mr J Astle was appointed Vice Chairman . Mr J E ThirlbyHonorary Treasurer. Messrs J Coxon, J Astle, C Coxon & J Clewes for the Burial Committee. See the full report in Derby Daily Telegraph.

As Landlord of 'The Station Inn' Jack would organise the annual Cabbage Competition, reports of which can also be found in the local newspapers.

The opening hours for public houses, inns and taverns were from 5am until 10pm daily with the exception of Sunday, Good Friday and Christmas Day. His wife Sarah would have worked in the pub on a daily basis with the help of her daughters, as soon as they were old enough, whilst Jack continued as a builder.

Jack bought a piece of land at Brockley, Spondon and during the early 1920's he built three bungalows on it. His wife Sarah died in July 1923 aged 62 years.

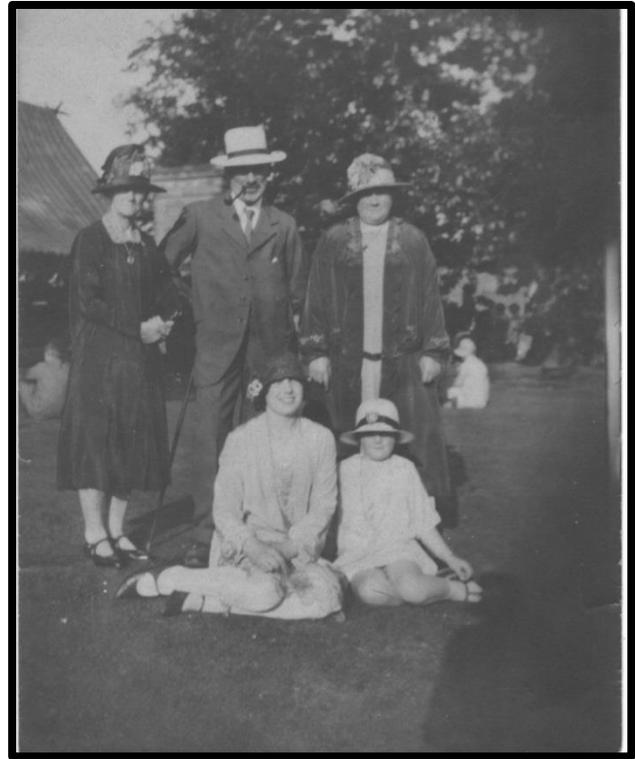


Jacks Bungalow Brockley circa 1920's/1930's

Jack moved into his bungalow after it was built and was joined soon after by his second wife Lizzie Camp from Sawley.

Jack and Lizzie still remained friends with Lizzie's brother Will who kept the 'Station Inn'. We know from Will's daughter Mabel (Ward) that Jack and her Aunt Lizzie spent many an evening having a drink and telling their stories.

Lizzie & Jack in Locko Park with Kate Porter and daughters Mabel & Grace



Like Jack, Lizzie took a keen interest in Spondon village life. She took part in many fund raising events and belonged to the WI and the Ladies Conservative Group.

SPONDON FETE

At the garden fete held by the Spondon branch of the South Derbyshire Conservative Association, at West House, the residence of Mr. G. Elliott, on Saturday, the following were the side shows:—

Houp-la, Mrs. Astle, Mrs. Cole, and Mrs. Hawtin; Denby pottery, Mrs. W. T. Walters, Mrs. S. Winfield, and Miss E. I. Moulton; wheel of fortune, Mr. Aston; amusement park, Spondon Scouts; fortune-teller, Madam Dona Luitana; bean boards, Mr. and Mrs. Short; flowers and plants, Mr. G. Elliott and Mr. Hussey.

Ices were served by Mrs. Simpson and refreshments by Mrs. Walker-Smith, Mrs. Cooper, Mrs. Line, Mrs. D. Thompson and Mrs. A. Bolt.

Mr. A. Bolt was M.C. for a whist drive, the winners at which were Mrs. Short and Mrs. Astle.

The arrangements for the fete were in the hands of Mr. G. Elliott and Mrs. W. T. Walters, hon. secretary of the Women's Branch.

Derby Daily Telegraph 22nd July 1935



A picture of Lizzie sitting on the left at a fund raising event, can anyone identify the lady on the right?

In November 1937 Jack's eldest daughter Emma was rescued from the River Derwent by Mr Horace Gregory a greengrocer from Victoria Avenue, Borrowash, but died later in hospital. She left a note saying she intended to take her life and the coroner recorded a verdict that 'she killed herself while the balance of her mind was disturbed.' She was 46 years old. Emma lived at 9 Borrowash Rd near to her sister Norah Coxen and was a retired nurse who had worked in America for eleven years.

Jack was now in poor health and on 6th July 1938, just a year after his daughter's death, he died at his home in Brockley aged 75 years. The funeral took place at Spondon Church on Saturday 9th July. His three sons Edwin, Charles & Thomas and daughter Norah were amongst the mourners,

The year after Jack's death, Lizzie went to live with her daughter and son in law Jack and Kate Burton at the Royal Oak Quorn in 1939. In his will Jack had left Lizzie several houses and in 1944 she decided to auction them.

Starkie and Louis of Long Eaton acted for Lizzie in the sale of the properties. 42A Moor Street was sold to Mr B F Walker-Smith, the bungalows on Brockley were sold to a Mr Jackson, 10 & 12 Coxon Street and 16 & 18 Royal Hill Road were sold to Jack Burton, Lizzie's son in law from 'The Royal Oak' Quorn.

SPONDON, Near Derby

JNO. P. NEWTON & SONS

are favoured with instructions from Mrs. M. E. Astle to offer for Sale by Public Auction at

"THE WHITE SWAN INN," SPONDON

On **THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28th, 1944**

at 7 o'clock in the evening prompt, subject to Conditions of Sale to be then declared, the following

VALUABLE

FREEHOLD PROPERTIES

LOT 1

A DETACHED

BRICK BUILT AND SLATED DWELLINGHOUSE

situate and being No. 42, MOOR STREET.

The accommodation comprises:—Porch Entrance, Entrance Hall, Living Room with cooking range and fixture cupboard. Pantry. Kitchen with sink, brick copper. W.C. Store Room with bath. Upstairs are two Bedrooms. Outside Coalhouse and lean-to Store.

All services are connected to the property which is in the occupation of Mr. Frederick Shaw on a Weekly Tenancy producing a **Gross Annual Rental of £26. 0s. 0d.**, Tenant paying Water Rate.

Assessment for Rates £15 Gross and £9 Rateable Value.

LOT 2

A WELL BUILT

MODERN SEMI-DETACHED DWELLINGHOUSE

situate and being No. 10, COXON STREET.

Brick built and slated, the accommodation comprises:—Porch Entrance, Entrance Hall, with Pantry under stairs. Front Room with bay window, combination cooking range and fixture cupboard. Large Kitchen with sink (h. & c.), and gas copper. Bathroom with bath, lavatory basin (h. & c.) and W.C. Coalhouse. Upstairs are two medium and one single Bedrooms. Fitted Wardrobe on the landing.

Outside is a small front garden with garage drive entrance, and extensive rear garden.

All services are connected to the property, which is in an excellent state of repair, and is in the occupation of Mr. Holmes on a Weekly Tenancy producing a **Gross Annual Rental of £33. 3s. 0d.**, Tenant paying Water Rate.

Assessment for Rates £22 Gross and £15 Rateable Value.

I.P.T.O.

This is one of many sales documents which survive from the sale.

Lizzie continued to visit Spondon for many years after she had moved to Quorn, to see her friends and family. Her granddaughter Dorothy Simmons (nee Camp) and husband Harry lived at 18 Royal Hill Rd, her niece Mabel Ward (nee Porter) lived at 26 Vancouver Avenue, and her nephew Garnett Oakes lived on Dale Rd.

Lizzie died on 22 February 1960 at 'The Royal Oak' Quorn where she had lived for the last 21 years.

The last house to be sold was 12 Coxon Street after the occupier Mrs Silkston left in 1985/1986. Mrs Silkston had lived there with her husband all her married life.

Our last family connection with Spondon was in 2011 when Mabel Ward died.



Jack and Lizzie Astle

Jack Astle –written and edited by Susan Sharpe and Mal Smith

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