

GILBERT SMITH DOUGHTY (1861-1909)

This article by Ken Brand appeared in its original form in Nottingham Civic Society Newsletter No. 81 of January 1990. It was followed by a note stating that for the sake of brevity a number of small works had been omitted from the account, but that a full list had been deposited in the County Archives. The final paragraph referring to Doughty's death was added after research in 2016 led to the discovery of the newspaper obituary quoted. Research has continued with the aim of uncovering further information about Doughty's work both within and outside the city of Nottingham and about events leading up to his death. An article written with the intention of filling the gaps will be published in 2018.



Illustration 1: Thurland Hall Public House

Gilbert Smith Doughty is one of a number of relatively unknown Victorian and Edwardian architects whose work graces the streets of Nottingham. In some cases it is possible by diligent searching to compile a thumbnail biography. However, so far very little has been found out about him other than a record of his work within Nottingham. The second edition of the Nottinghamshire volume of *The Buildings of England* by Nikolaus Pevsner and Elizabeth Williamson has one entry: the sale shop and offices of January 1895 for Smart and Brown, Bridlesmith Gate (housing on its upper floors at various times the NAAFI Club, the Wilton Sporting Club and, most recently, some sections of Waterstones). From time to time his name has appeared in the Newsletter, particularly as the architect of the Thurland Hall public house (Newsletter 75, January 1988).

Information from the 1881 Census returns suggests that Gilbert Doughty was born in Lenton about 1862. His father, Edwin, Nottingham born and aged 50 in 1881, was a lace manufacturer and machine holder employing 550 people at his factory on Heskey Street off Huntingdon Street. Gilbert at 19 years was the second child of four. The eldest, Edwin, aged 21 was an under-manager for a lace manufacturer, no doubt his father. Leonard, aged 17, was a lace designer and Millicent at 13 was the youngest and still a scholar. The family home was Cavendish House, Cavendish Hill, Sherwood. Gilbert was not listed in Wright's Directory of Nottingham 1881 but he is in the 1885 edition as an Architect and Surveyor with an office in Tavistock Chambers, Beastmarket Hill. He was still living at the family home in Sherwood.

By 1887 he had moved his practice to 14 Fletcher Gate and was living at Foxhall Lodge, Gregory Boulevard. Unlike Hine and Fothergill, who lived for most of their adult lives in houses of their own design (in Regent Street and Mapperley respectively), Doughty changed business and home addresses regularly. His working life in Nottingham spans the years 1879-1907 although his name remained in Wright's Directory until 1910. His office moved from Fletcher Gate to Pelham Street to Bridlesmith Gate to Victoria Street and finally to Prudential Buildings, Queen Street. Meanwhile his home address changed: Villa Road; Melton Road, West Bridgford; Manor Park, Ruddington; and finally 3 Private Road, Sherwood. From c. 1900 he had an office in Matlock Bridge.

Doughty's first three planning applications were for work for his father's company: carriage house and stables, addition to factory (disapproved) and new drafting room. He soon started designing houses. His first was for J Billyeald on Gregory Boulevard, February 1884. In August 1884 he produced a pair of villas for Thomas Warwick near his parents' house on Cavendish Hill. Before the

year ended he submitted plans for a villa residence for his father on Gregory Boulevard; this is the Foxhall Lodge already noted.

Work was not exactly plentiful; only two assignments came in 1885 and both were initially disapproved. None came in 1886. Late in 1887 Doughty had his one job of the year, another villa residence on Gregory Boulevard, this time for Alderman G Blackburn. Blackburn was a good client, for he commissioned Doughty to provide two semi-detached villa residences on Gregory Boulevard (December 1888), two more on Foxhall Road and Gregory Boulevard (August 1889) and another six on Foxhall Road (December 1892). Another house of interest was a villa residence for J T Grover on Lucknow Avenue (June and December 1891).

Doughty's first public work was additions to St Paul's Church, Hyson Green, August 1889. It was not until December 1893 that his talents were to reach the centre of Nottingham. In that month his designs for a new club house for the Borough Club Company on King Street were approved with the minor observation that the oriel window projected three feet. This building was demolished many years ago. This job and the preparation of the next kept him busy, for the next assignment, that already noted for the furnishers Smart and Brown, was not sent for approval until January 1895. Initially it was rejected on the following grounds: 'No fireproof floor above the heating chamber, a question as to the thickness of the walls, and no front elevation deposited.' Within a week the revised plans were submitted and approved.

The office and two dwelling houses that Doughty designed for H and M Lewis on Leen Side in June 1895 (the office plans being later amended in July 1896) were an interesting project, rather in the style of Watson Fothergill. This building, like the Borough Club, has been demolished. A much smaller job several years later was also long attributed to the hand or mind of Fothergill. This is the 'alteration of shop and dwelling house' for C W Judge, baker and confectioner of 59 Mansfield Road, in April 1899. The main visible alteration here was the creation of an elegant tea room at the rear of the shop.



Illustration 2: Redmayne & Todd, Carrington Street

A year after his work for H and M Lewis, Doughty prepared plans for builders J Wright & Son for a long terrace of eleven shops with warehouses over on Carrington Street Bridge, turning into Canal Street. This is the group that included for long Redmayne and Todd's Sports Shop, with its pyramidal clock tower (never housing a clock) on the corner. In the spring of 1898 designs for eight dwelling houses for J Truman on Ebury Road, Claremont Road and Fern Avenue were approved. He had earlier worked on alterations for Truman's warehouse on St Mary's Place.

In July 1898 J Wright and Son were again clients for another block of shops, this time ten shops with dwelling houses at the top of Derby Road towards the corner with Wollaton Street. The first submission was disapproved due to the thickness of the walls and some doubt about the ventilation. In September the amended plans were passed, although they were subsequently slightly altered. On 23 June 1899, Doughty was back with another commission from the same client for more shops on Derby Road. This time seven sale shops with dwelling house, a bakehouse etc were to be erected nearer to town, facing in part Upper College Street. There was an initial objection from the Health Committee but the plans were quickly revised and passed a

week later. Once again there was a 'Deviation from Approved Plans' submission some four months later..

In November 1898 plans were put forward on behalf of Levy and Franks for the rebuilding of the Thurland Hall public house on the corner of Thurland Street and Pelham Street. Once again the initial version was rejected; this time the Licensing Justices were involved and the position of the urinals was questioned. The revised plans were not submitted until June 1900 when they were accepted. This is still claimed to be Nottingham's only London-style pub. The date of the building and the name of the architect can be seen to the right of the entrance on Pelham Street. There is a three tier cellar system beneath the premises which might relate to the foundations of the original Thurland Hall on the adjoining site. About this time, just over the hill on Carlton Street, a sale shop, offices and a dwelling house were being altered for G Wigley.

In June 1901 the first of several projects for J Jardine was undertaken. This firm, besides being jacquard and lace machinery builders, manufactured bobbins and carriages and made cycles at their Raleigh Works in Gamble Street. Dynamo, engine and boiler houses were designed for the Deering Street works, North Gate, New Basford. More work was completed for J Truman: further additions for his warehouse on Potters Yard and St Mary's Place and four dwelling houses on Ebury Road and Alexandra Street. Fire regulations must have been tightened c. 1901-2 for at this time Doughty received several commissions for fire exits, fire escapes (including one from the family firm), staircases and gangways.

Two new clients for whom several assignments were undertaken first came in 1902. E Cope and Co Ltd, lace manufacturers of Chelsea Street and Rye Street, North Gate, New Basford, and Mills and Gibb, later Philo L Mills of Stoney Street and Plumpton Street in the Lace Market.

For Cope, Doughty altered the boiler house (1902), designed a shed and boundary wall (1902) and provided additions to the factory (1903). For Mills he first modestly produced alterations to a warehouse (1902), but in May 1903 came the grand scheme: four new warehouses on Stoney Street between Plumpton Place and Plumpton Street. The first version was rejected because of the thickness of the walls and the line of the street, the second was turned down because of the nature of the fire exit. Almost two years passed before the resubmission in March 1905. This time the number of warehouses had increased to five and an existing warehouse was to be altered to fit into the new layout. Once again there followed a modification to the approved plans. This was as built and today the Mills warehouses are perhaps Nottingham's most distinctive art nouveau buildings. The metal work is a delight; the advantage here of using white glazed bricks is more apparent than real. The Stoney Street-Plumpton Street corner facade of this warehouse complex is very similar to the warehouse on the opposite corner of Plumpton Street, which was designed by Richard Charles Sutton for Mills and Gibb in 1883.

In the time span between the original and the enlarged project Mills asked Doughty to prepare additions to the Barker Gate School, Duke's Place. His gesture was probably an attempt to provide some compensation, for the new works would tend to overpower the older school buildings.

Lesser work during this period (1903) included a warehouse for S C Howitt on Woolpack Lane, a conversion of three dwelling houses into sale shops at 106-110 Arkwright Street for the Trustees of the late Alderman Blackburn, and a house for an old client, J Wright and Son, on Albert Road.

Early in 1905 Doughty submitted plans on behalf of J Truman for three houses on Private Road, Sherwood, with two more for the same client following separately in 1906. For J Jardine, another

old client, he designed a new factory on Rawson Street and prepared several alterations and additions for an existing factory on Deering Street and Chelsea Street (1905-6). Late in 1906 another new factory for E Jardine on Chelsea Street was eventually approved after its almost inevitable rejection over the thickness of the walls, and also the closet accommodation. Earlier in January 1906 Doughty had one of his rare assignments in the centre of the city, a sale shop at 12 The Poultry for Mr Henson.

Only two other entries occur in the books of planning applications, both in 1907. In January there is a late change in the approved proposals for the Mills warehouses, now for the executors of the late P L Mills, and a store shed for Priestley and Swann on Plumtre Street. Thus ends the career, apparently, of Gilbert Smith Doughty, architect, of Nottingham and Matlock Bridge.

There is no entry for Doughty in Pevsner's Buildings of Derbyshire and in the absence of accessible records for Derbyshire this brief account will be for the moment incomplete. There are also reports of a few buildings in Nottinghamshire by Doughty but these remain unclassified.

Gilbert Smith Doughty MSA died on December 18th 1909 'suddenly, of syncope' aged 47. A notice of his death appeared in the Exeter and Plymouth Gazette on 7 January 1910. The death was registered in Brentford, Middlesex, in December 1909. His wife's family lived there; the 1911 census shows May Edgecumbe Doughty with physician stepfather at 17 Windmill Road.

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