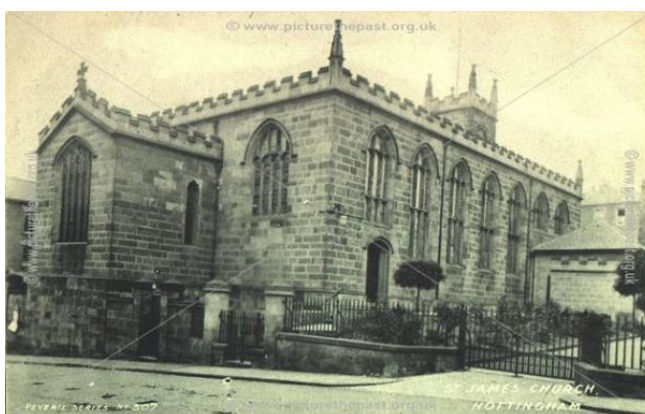


## SAMUEL DUTTON WALKER 1833-85

*The original article by Pauline F Heathcote appeared in Newsletter 74 (September 1987). This version, updated and with additions by Ken Brand, dates from January 2009, though it was not published then or subsequently. Editor's notes were added November 2018 before inclusion in the archive.*

From time to time, occasional references are noted which relate to the work of a number of lesser-known architects who practised in the Nottingham area during the nineteenth century, and natural curiosity impels one to wonder whether it would be worthwhile to find out more details about their careers. There are problems associated with such a project, however, for in many instances, their buildings have long since been demolished as a result of widespread clearance schemes. A further limitation which inhibits the compilation of a comprehensive study is the fact that the existing Borough Building Plan Registers only relate to premises erected from September 1874 onwards. Despite these drawbacks, it can still be a rewarding experience to try and glean an outline of information about certain individuals, and it is hoped therefore that the following brief notes on Samuel Dutton Walker will be of general interest and may perhaps also stimulate research into the careers of some of his professional contemporaries.

He was born in Nottingham in 1833, the son of George Frederick and Eliza Walker. By early 1842, his father, together with his uncle, Samuel John, had succeeded to a well-known and flourishing business concern which was based at Toll Street, the street linking Wollaton Street with Chapel Bar. This was an enterprise which consisted of an architectural and surveying practice as well as a large-scale building works, and had previously been under the direction of his grandfather, Samuel. The Walkers also traded as monumental masons and owned the Nottingham Marble Works



*Figure 1: St James's Church*

at Sion Hill near the General Cemetery. Samuel Dutton Walker was initially employed by the family firm in a clerical capacity, and it is a reasonable assumption that he subsequently received his architectural training under the supervision of his father and uncle. On 23 January 1862 he married Elizabeth Rebecca Oldershaw, daughter of the late John Oldershaw and granddaughter of Alderman Carver, at St James's Church, Standard Hill (Fig 1). Some years later in 1879 he undertook the restoration work at this fashionable place of worship, at which time he also designed the casing for the new Grindley & Foster organ and presented a lectern in memory of his parents. (*See note 1*)

At the time of his marriage he was working independently as an architect and surveyor at the family business premises, but about three months later he entered into a brief association with Arthur Wilson, who had previously had his offices in the town at Castle Gate and on Angel Row. In the second edition (1979) of Pevsner's *Nottinghamshire*, Elizabeth Williamson notes

the partnership was responsible for ‘the sumptuous Victorian Terrace Royal’ in Clarendon Street. Undoubtedly, this row of villa residences, built in 1863, has a great deal of charm and character and merits more than a passing glance. Some finely executed exterior details are still visible, including sculptured portraits, ornate lintels, grotesque rainwater heads and stone carvings which depict seasonal rural activities such as harvesting and hunting. The sculptor is said to be William Philip Smith, who had worked on the Martyrs’ Memorial at Oxford and who was now living in Peas Hill Road. The terrace, now within the Nottingham Trent University complex, provides a welcome and refreshing contrast to many of its more recently erected neighbours. It was described in *The Builder* of 3 October 1863 (p 706 with illustration p 707). Walker’s own house, where he spent the whole of his married life, was incidentally close by at 38 Hampden Street. (See note 2)

In 1863 Walker was solely responsible for designing the Curate’s House at Gotham, and must have been very encouraged when his plans and a description of the building were later published in the volume *Villa and Cottage Architecture: select examples of country and suburban residences recently erected* (Blackie & Son, 1868). His experience with another out-of-town undertaking was not so fortunate, however, when in 1865 he was commissioned to prepare plans in connection with urgent restoration work at St Mary’s Church in Arnold. On this occasion, only part of his proposed work was actually carried out after the vicar’s intervention caused a number of deviations to be made to the plans. As a result of this action, other specifications were prepared, and the contractor’s work came to a halt. This was an unfortunate and controversial episode which culminated in a lawsuit, and the Church had to remain closed for two years.

By the beginning of 1870, Walker had moved his offices to Albert Chambers, Victoria Street; ten years later, in January 1880, he finally transferred to Severn Chambers, Middle Pavement. A large proportion of his time was occupied with routine work such as small shops and modest domestic dwellings - both individual and speculative. This work was mainly concentrated in the immediate Nottingham district, including the Peas Hill Road and Woodborough Road areas, although one instance has been noted where he worked outside the county: at Kegworth, where he designed a villa residence in 1874. The following year, he was asked by the lace manufacturer Samuel Butler to add an extension comprising ‘a boudoir, fernery and winter garden or conservatory’ at his house in Russell Street. Amongst other drawings prepared by him about this time were those for a three-storied factory at Aberdeen Street/Handel Street (1875), alterations to the Napier Inn, Union Road (1876), St Mark’s Vicarage on Mapperley Road (1877) and extensions to the British Schools at New Basford (1877). From time to time he also undertook valuation assessments, and in this connection worked for, amongst others, the Licensing Committee of the Borough of Nottingham and the Starr-Bowkett Building Society. Fortunately, documentary records of this aspect of his work have survived and are deposited in the Nottinghamshire Record Office (Reference: M24, 476).

Early in 1879 he was commissioned by the wine and spirit merchant Henry Gibson Jalland to prepare plans for the erection of two buildings in the Heathcote Street area. The first set of drawings referred to a house at the rear of the People’s Hall, and the second related to shops and warehouses at the junction of the street with Goose Gate (Heathcote Buildings.) (See note 3) An attractive feature of this property was the inclusion of a row of Victorian Gothic stained glass windows which were incorporated in the corner facade, but which regrettably at a later date became hidden from view by the erection of a fascia board. They were rediscovered when the premises were renovated by the owner of the fashion shop Boogaloo

(now Ice Nine), and their restoration was suitably recognised in April 1983 by the award of the Civic Society's first monthly Commendation.



Figure 2: Regent Court

Plumb's departmental furniture store. Now the block (Regent Court (Fig 2)) has been converted into apartments.

In 1881 they were asked by the wine and spirit merchant William Albert Brown to design warehouses, shops, stores etc on a prominent triangular site bordered by Broad Street, Heathcote Street and Goose Gate. This property, known today as Carlton Buildings (Fig 3), may well have been erected by Brown as a direct challenge to his competitor, Jalland, who was already established in the Walker-designed premises on the opposite corner. Other work carried out by Walker & Howitt in 1881 included extensions to the Castle Inn on Wilford Road and shop premises etc., for Frederick Henry. Henry was a general dealer and ironmonger, and his new shop at 9 Derby Road soon became well-known to local shoppers under its trade name of The Little Dustpan.



Figure 3: Carlton Buildings

In the *Pevsner Architectural Guide to Nottingham*, Elaine Harwood has drawn attention to several of Walker's buildings in the city centre. Turning into Market Street from Parliament Street on the left hand side, No 34, dated 1879, and No 32, Gothic auction rooms



Figure 4: Hide, Fat & Skin Warehouse

of 1878, are both by him. The Walker & Howitt practice produced designs for 15-17 and 34 Broad Street in 1883-4. The present author has tracked down the partnership's proposals for King John's Chambers, now Bridlesmith Walk, as 1882, not 1888 as formerly accepted. (See note 4)

Two other widely differing buildings from the versatile Samuel Dutton Walker are Ashley House, Park Drive, his only venture into the Park Estate, and the Hide, Fat and Skin warehouse on the Eastcroft depot site (1878-9).(Fig 4) (See note 5)

Walker was a highly respected authority on antiquarian matters and also on ecclesiastical architecture. He wrote a number of articles and pamphlets including *Nottinghamshire Villages and Churches: Edwalton, Plumtree and Keyworth* (1863), whose text readily confirms his deep, intuitive understanding of his subject. He was in addition an accomplished lecturer who from time to time spoke to local learned societies; one such occasion being in November 1866 when he addressed the Nottingham Literary and Philosophical Society on the theme ‘Ancient Churches, their construction and the symbolism displayed therein’. It may be observed that as well as Walker, who was a founder member, Society members included several prominent architects including T C Hine, R C Sutton and Robert Evans.

From a prestigious viewpoint, Walker was probably most proud of the fact that he was a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London and acted in the capacity of their Local Secretary; he was also the Corresponding Secretary for the County of Nottingham to the Lincoln Diocesan Architectural Association.

In February 1870, in his Local Secretary role, he wrote to the Council offering detailed drawings of the western side of old Trent Bridge for the corporation archives, drawings which he had prepared with the co-operation of M O Tarbotton, the Corporation Surveyor, and Thomas Close FSA in 1869. The Council gratefully accepted the offer. Subsequently Walker presented a detailed report on the history of Trent Bridge to the Society of Antiquaries, abstracts of which were printed in the Society’s Proceedings for 1870. Much of this material was incorporated into Tarbotton’s *History of Old Trent Bridge and a descriptive account of the new Bridge*, published in Nottingham in 1871. Tarbotton of course was the architect/designer of the new Trent Bridge and its approaches (1868-71), the bridge being formally opened on 25 July 1871.



Figure 5: Terrace Royal

For many years, Walker was closely involved with the management of the Nottingham School of Art, and founded two scholarships in connection with the School, the funds of one of them being specifically designed to enable the holder to study church architecture abroad. He was responsible for two minor structural works at the School (designed by Frederick Bakewell 1863-65). In the first instance, he was concerned that such an important building presented an ‘incomplete’ appearance due to the capitals of the pillars having been left in an unfinished state.

This deficiency had arisen due to lack of finance. Walker, however, energetically took the matter in hand and raised the necessary funds to employ craftsmen to complete the work. The craftsmen were in fact ‘Mr Birchenough, assisted by Mr W P Smith’ (School of Art Annual Report 1877-8). Smith was the sculptor Walker had engaged for Terrace Royal (Fig 5) and was then on the staff of the School of Art. In 1881 Walker & Howitt designed the conservatory which was added to the School premises.

Samuel Dutton Walker died on June 15 1885, at the early age of 52 years, and was buried at the Church Cemetery. The practice was maintained by his partner, John Howitt, who five years later was elected a Fellow of RIBA, and subsequently became president of the Nottingham Architectural Society (1894-95). The practice later became John Howitt & Son and was located for many years in Bentinck Buildings, Wheeler Gate, earlier erected to Howitt Senior's designs in 1894-5. This building is now known as Premier House.

### ***Editor's Notes***

1. *St James's Church on Standard Hill was built 1808-9 by William Stretton and demolished in 1936.*
2. *W P Smith was the subject of an article by Stephen Best in Newsletter 157 (April 2015), entitled 'W P Smith, the Waverley Building and Beyond'. This article refers especially to his work on the first purpose-built School of Art in Nottingham, opened in 1865, but also tells the story of Smith's controversial statue of Sir Robert Clifton, apparently wearing The Wrong Trousers. This was originally placed at the junction of Queen's Walk and Arkwright Street, but later moved to Victoria Embankment near Wilford Bridge. Smith, his wife and four others died in a boating accident off Mablethorpe in 1885. Stephen Best's article will be added to the archive in due course. The website [picturethepast.org.uk](http://picturethepast.org.uk) has many photographs by Stephen Best of the Terrace Royal carvings.*
3. *As Elaine Harwood points out, the street name was spelt HEATHCOTE before 1930, hence the same spelling carved over a doorway of Walker's HEATHCOTE BUILDINGS. In 1930 the spelling HEATHCOAT was adopted for the street, doubtless as a tribute by the City of Lace to John Heathcoat (1783-1861), inventor of the bobbin net machine, who early in his working life was a framesmith in Nottingham. He established a mill in Loughborough, but when this was vandalised by Luddites in 1816, he moved his business to Tiverton in Devon, where it still flourishes.*
4. *Of the Broad Street buildings, No 34 has gone. Nos 15-17, opposite Broadway cinema, until mid-2018 housing Edin's restaurant and Lee Rosy Tea, now have a single occupant on the ground floor: Italian restaurant Botti. Elaine Harwood also identifies as works by Walker and Howitt the following: a warehouse of 1880 on the corner of Stanford Street, and the curved block (1883-4) at the end of Broad Street, opposite the New Market pub.*
5. *According to Elaine Harwood, the 'grandiose' Ashley House is of 1877. She describes the warehouse at Eastcroft, now used for other purposes, as 'admired for its ease of cleaning and clad in his favourite Leicestershire terracotta.'*

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