The Nottingham Party

A 600+ page online book has been written and self-published in PDF format by *Rob Smith (2019): NOTTINGHAMSHIRE SETTLERS & LOCATIONS IN THE EASTERN CAPE OF GOOD HOPE, 1820 Bicentennial Edition, 2020, Fiskerton, Southwell, Nottinghamshire. The background to this project, as told by Rob Smith:

"During research into the former County House of Correction in Southwell, Nottinghamshire, I learnt by chance about the British emigration scheme to South Africa. Fascinated, I made enquiries, obtained my first copy of Southwell Settlers by Doris Stirk and over the next months acquired the classic Settler books, copies of an extensive collection of records in the Nottinghamshire Archives, and a mass of online and other information. The Southwell Local History Society helped publish the book about the prison then a reprint was run of Doris's book, with a foreword by me for the UK.
I discovered that descendants of the Hartley Settlers operated a travel business not far from Southwell UK and had SA links. Their CEO and I travelled to the Eastern Cape in March 2016. There I met the Stirks and several other Settler descendants. I also met Sue Gordon, Margaret Snodgrass and Joc Guest and back in England met descendants Ralph Goldswain and Mike Wright."

If you would like to access a free copy of this, please contact the Editor or Chairman for it to be emailed to you.

The following comprises extracts from a talk given in the Clumber Church in 2019 by Courteney Bradfield, a sixth generation descendant of the Bradfield family of the Nottingham Party of 1820 Settlers.
Acknowledgements to Rob Smith for the three photos used in the article

I consider this talk a great honour and one which I approach with some trepidation. My ancestors' faith in God gave them the courage to surmount the troubles of each day. I continue to be absorbed by the tale of the 1820 Settlers which was recently described by a historian as *"probably the most callous act of mass settlement in the entire history of empire."*

I have been privileged to be given access to the diary of Elijah Pike, son of William Pike, a local preacher and the third and final leader of the Party. I have been struck by the entries in his diary of the great depth of their faith - the prayer meetings they attended, the analysis of the sermons which were preached on a Sunday, their absolute faith in God, by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the prayer meetings on these people.

In my youth I went to Sunday School in the Clumber Hall which was located at the foot of Mount Mercy and went to School in this building behind us and naturally went to Church here, in this building.

The Nottingham Party of 1820 Settlers made Clumber their new home. All the content of this talk is derived from what I have read in numerous historical volumes, letters and books and programmes of events which celebrated the arrival of the Settlers. But I am also deeply indebted to Rob Smith, an historian from Nottingham for digging up actual letters from the archives which I have woven into my story here this morning.

I have one Bradfield story to recount and it concerns elephants. On the farm Bradville, the farm allocated to Settler Joseph Bradfield, my father Granville Bradfield, pointed out to me the indentations in the ground which were apparently used by the elephants as mud wallows. Yes, elephants roamed this area: there is a record of some 40 elephants moving past the Church in April 1826. According to my Granny Grace, her mother-in-law, Julia, my great grandmother, saw the last of the elephants as they moved through the farm and carried away her washing that was hanging on the line! I have no further stories handed down over the generations which could be included as they cannot be verified. My grandmother, Grace Bradfield (nee Tarr) talked a great deal about Grandfather Bradfield, Jonathan Bradfield - he was called Chachu. To think that if I had paid attention I could have learnt a great deal, as Chachu was a son of an 1820 Settler, Joseph, who came out as a 19 year old with his parents, John and Mary.

Interestingly enough, every single one of those, my direct forbears over five generations, is buried here at Clumber.

In those early years of establishing themselves here, Clumber would have looked very different. The farms were based on recreating what they knew - on English lines. Most probably they wanted Clumber to evolve into a village and the Nottingham Market here was one such step. Farms were small, growing vegetables; the Bradfields were renowned for their floury potatoes. Lots of fruit trees were planted - oranges and apples and vines and of course they had cows and goats for milk and sheep for the table. Grain crops too, but, unlike today, not a pineapple in sight!

There are background events which all led up to the fact that some 3800 people, the British Settlers of 1820, left Britain for the Cape of Good Hope. Why? Why did they come here? Why did they come to an empty stretch of land, devoid of any infrastructure except for a few cart tracks and a series of forts which were scattered along the Eastern boundary, as well as elsewhere in the Cape? Remember, the seat of Government of the Cape of Good Hope was in Cape Town and access from there to this Eastern Border was tenuous to say the least. The Governor, Lord Charles Somerset, had his offices in Cape Town - far removed from this hotspot.

Somerset had recommended to his Government in England over a number years that the only way to promote stability along this border was to populate it and work the land thus forming a buffer zone. This was also a cheaper option than trying to increase the military presence to patrol the border.

Following the Peterloo Massacre in Manchester the authorities held an inquiry and absolved the military of any blame. But the populace was livid. This event was swept under the carpet for 200 years and only recently, in 2019, has a monument been raised to the fallen in Manchester. In Nottingham in 1819 there were protest marches every day. Women carried banners "Pity our Distress" "We ask for Bread" " Pity our Children." In November 1819, there was a protest march by about 5000 men. The authorities, fearing another Manchester uprising, called in the military who occupied Brompton House in readiness.

Against this background, and in Nottingham in particular, where cottage industries once flourished, the Duke of Newcastle advocated that the unemployed of the country be encouraged to emigrate and approached wealthy patrons to sponsor a party from Nottinghamshire; they raised some £3,000 to this end. The Nottingham Party as a result was one of only four of 61 emigrating parties that consisted of the poor. The entire Nottingham Party, except one person, was reliant on the their patron, the Duke of Newcastle, the driving force behind the establishment of the Party. Only one man, Thomas Webster, paid his own deposit. Over 700 persons applied to join this party - only 164 emigrated.

Above: The 4th Duke of Newcastle, Henry Pelham Clinton

Let us pause and consider this group from Nottinghamshire. Firstly, I think we can safely say that they were fed up with the government of the day. Secondly, and more importantly, they were literally starving. Thirdly, there was little hope of their circumstances improving in their immediate future. Most who applied for emigration were linked to a specific cottage industry - one which had totally collapsed – namely, the framework knitters. Hosiery was knitted on a frame supplied by a distributor of the finished product. Houses of the framework knitters generally had a standard appearance. The frames were located on the top floor where many windows let in the light. The whole family was involved in the production process, with the males working the frames and the wives and daughters applying the finishing stitches. Maybe it was because of the experience of this collective family effort that ultimately led to perseverance and final success of their new venture here in Clumber - a venture which was totally foreign to them: farming.

The Duke of Newcastle was almost the last to apply to Earl Bathurst for permission to send a party to the Cape. Because of his standing, his request was approved but there were still delays. In the first week of Dcember 1819, when the Nottingham Party list was nowhere near being

finalised, two ships, The *Chapman* and *Nautilus*, had already started on their voyages to the Cape. A ship for the Nottingham Party was requisitioned to sail from Liverpool and arrangements had to be made to transfer the emigrants there from a central point in Nottingham. This transfer was eventually done with wagons for the luggage and provisions, as well as four-in-hand coaches which could complete the journey in a day. The procurement of goods to support this group swung into overdrive. Wooden Boxes were requisitioned to hold personal belongings and agricultural and gardening implements (sickles and spades, reapers, scythes, bull hooks etc) were ordered. A vice, anvil and iron were sourced for blacksmiths, clothes were gathered, as were slates, rulers and pencils, inkstands, quills, spelling and grammar books. Even the Dowager Duchess of Newcastle pitched in and ordered a box of baby linen. Most of these were delivered directly to the docks in Liverpool.

At the time of departure from Nottingham, the list was still in a state of flux, so the entire party could not travel together as a group. Regular departures by coach were scheduled and on arrival in Liverpool they were accommodated by grocer William Whittaker of 2 Crossbow Lane, who had rooms at 19 pence per night. Women and children travelled by coach with four inside and nine outside. Imagine how cold it must have been outside - we know that at this time the River Thames had frozen over, locking all shipping in ice. The men had a more arduous form of travel: they had to walk to Liverpool, some 110 miles (180 km), accompanying the convoy of wagons carrying 16 tons of luggage and goods under supervision of Sergeant Dennison. The men left Nottingham first, on 10 January 1820. The wagon route involved three nights on the road and traversed the Pennines. The first four-in-hand coach with women and children left Nottingham on 12 January 1820; the last on 21 January. There is an account of young Elijah Pike, aged 6 , son of William and Mary Pike, being in awe of the forest of masts and spars of the ships he saw as the coach drew in to Liverpool Harbour.

I have often wondered at this journey. Knowing now that these people were not well off, had they been on a long distance coach before? Had they ever travelled to the seaside? I think we can state with certainty that they had never boarded a ship before. What an adventure for them! Perhaps terrifying - perhaps so overwhelming that not much thought had been given to what awaited them at journey's end. Possibly just excitement and a hope that they were leaving grinding poverty behind - that flame of hope of new beginnings.

Their vessel, The *Albury*, was anchored in the River Mersey and not in the dock; presumably to save money (and let us not exclude the possibility of preventing those who had lost heart in the venture, of jumping ship). It was a vessel of 343 tons and had one deck only which was so low in height that one could not walk upright. The bottom was sheathed in copper to prevent leaks. The vessel was 96 feet long and 24 feet wide.

To save costs, those who were staying at the Inn were transferred to The *Albury* as soon as possible. Every day new Settlers arrived: on 16 January, Surgeon Thomas Calton, the leader of the Party, took 30 people to The *Albury* and almost had a fatal accident when the rigging of the transfer craft was swept away (he was severely rapped over the knuckles by the authorities for putting the lives of his passengers at risk). Then, on board, he found 15 people who were not registered. So, back to the wharf the 15 went and presumably they returned from whence they came.

This incident gives an idea of the organised chaos that beset the Nottingham Party. It was not an orderly transition of an entire group of people from the central point of departure, Nottingham, to the docks at Liverpool. People appeared to be arriving on an ad hoc basis. Be this as it may, eventually, by 26 January 1820, ALL 164 members of the Nottingham Party were aboard: 58 men, 27 women and 79 children. On 27 January, Calton with his family left his lodgings and boarded with all luggage and equipment of the Nottingham Party. For the first time, the emigrants had access to their personal belongings. Everything was now set for departure: there could be no turning back. On Friday 28 January the Liverpool Auxiliary Bible Society came aboard, found that there were "pious" people aboard - an unusual word in today's vocabulary but which reinforces my earlier remarks about this deeply religious group - and having ascertained that all could read, they returned on Monday 31 January with bibles.

That was an important passage for me "after ascertaining that all could read." it gave me another clue as to the makeup of this group. Poor they may have been, but schooling must have filled their younger years as they all could read.

The final composition of the Party makes for interesting reading. Of the 164 persons, 58 were males, the breadwinners: 25% were labourers, another 25% were framework knitters, there were a few carpenters, blacksmiths, gardeners, tailors and grocers and the rest represented other occupations and trades. The authorities who vetted the

applications obviously considered it unnecessary to possess knowledge of farming. In fact the sole farmer on this list died on The *Albury's* journey to the Cape. It is nothing short of astonishing that those few who remained on the land at Clumber, made a success of their lives.

From 26 January the master of the Albury, Captain Cunningham, waited for favourable weather; however, a series of cold fronts moved in and it was only on 13 February that it was safe to sail away on the long journey to the Cape of Good Hope.And this was the pattern of their journey: delays. Here, on the River Mersey they had waited for 18 days before sailing. The day of departure saw the death of two infants - Susannah Hartley and John Cross. These deaths were attributed to having been anchored for so long on what was deemed to be an unhealthy river. Thereafter the womenfolk washed their children daily as a deterrent to disease.

What were conditions like on board? We know that the Albury was not a clean vessel and that one could not walk upright below decks. Single men were given a blanket and had to lie where they could. Married folk were sometimes lying four to a bed; Singles were up to six to a bed. To get a perspective of how much room these 164 people had, consider this. The square footage of the deck they occupied was 2304 and a tennis court is 2808 - so the Albury deck was smaller than a tennis court by some 504 square feet. Naturally throwing together so many people in a confined space resulted in arguments and unpleasantness. Dr Calton in his correspondence attacks the framework knitters saying they were 'better talkers than workers'; Calton and Sergeant Dennison were at loggerheads with Calton over distribution of stores and also took issue with William Pike, a local Methodist preacher, who despite threats, continued ministering to the folk on board.

The journey to the Cape followed a route via Madeira where The *Albury* anchored on 27 February 1820. On 1 March they passed the Canary Islands and on 15 March they crossed the equator; having been almost becalmed for 10 days. Sailing southwards they finally picked up the trade winds on 27 March. Between 8th and 17th April they encountered gales and strong headwinds before swinging due east to Simon's Bay where they anchored at midnight on 1 May. They had by then spent 77 days under sail from Liverpool and 95 nights since Liverpool.

Much to the disappointment of the Nottingham Party they were not allowed on shore. Elizabeth Sykes, widow of John who had died at sea, disembarked here to return to England. To add to the already cramped conditions on The *Albury*, a further 142 passengers from The *Zoroaster*

were transferred to the *Albury*: Dyason's party from London (67), Wait's party from Middlesex, (40) and Thornhill's party (35).

The *Albury* sailed on to Algoa Bay which was reached on 15 May 1820. Three other ships also anchored here on this date - *Aurora* carrying 344, *Brilliant* carrying 144 and The *Weymouth* carrying 478. Heavy seas prevented disembarkation until 28 May. With no pier or wharf to step ashore on, Captain Evatt handled landing operations. Settlers were transferred to flat bottomed boats and pulled ashore. From there women and children were carried to land whilst the men had to step into the shallows or wade ashore. What a liberating experience that must have been to be on land after spending all of three months in cramped conditions on board!

The landing at Fort Frederick however must have given the Party some food for thought. There was no town here, only a few houses and the Fort. Accommodation was in tents neatly placed in rows on the sand dunes, some 2000 of them. Dubbed Tent Town by the Settlers, it was to be their home for many weeks before the wagons would take them away to their location at Clumber. On the principle of first come first served, the convoys of wagons provided by Dutch farmers, some from as far away as Graaff Reinet, were insufficient to cater for the sudden influx of Settlers. So they had to make themselves at home there, knowing that the tents they occupied were also to be loaded onto the wagons when they left and would be their new homes until permanent structures could be built.

It was here, on the dunes at Tent Town, that we get a glimpse of the character of William Pike, who had provided spiritual guidance to the Nottingham Party on the voyage. He continued his regular preaching in Tent Town.

John Ayliff, another Methodist preacher, describes his first encounter with William Pike on the dunes: "a small, thin man in a long blue gown. This surprised me for I have never seen any minister in a blue gown before." My personal observation is that, despite being on the receiving end Calton's wrath for ministering to the Party, and almost losing the source of his future livelihood (his land) Pike was trying to be as conspicuous as possible, in a blue gown against the white backdrop of the dunes. He seemed to be defying Calton.

The Rev William Pike

Calton died suddenly on 8 July. Elijah Pike in his Reminiscences says the Party regarded Calton as a stingy man, whereas they were God-fearing and the mood in the Party was that Calton had been removed in a case of divine retribution, as it were. On 10 July the Party nominated Thomas Draper as their new head but this had to be ratified by the Foreign Office in England.

The British Govt in setting up the scheme had agreed to giving rations to the settlers for the first three years, or until they became self-sufficient in providing their own, whichever came first. Rations meant 3/4 of a pound of ground wheat or corn per man per day and two pounds of meat per man per day. Women received half a man's ration, and children a third of a man's ration. Other vegetables, fruit etc, were expected to be purchased by the settlers or grown by them. Donkin, the acting Governor, in his wisdom organised for 60,000 'starter' ration packs to be available (2000 people x 30 days) from mid-April at Algoa Bay, and a further 40,000 to be available at Grahamstown.

On 15 July, 48 days after landing, about 30 wagons, hired at a cost of £8 each, were finally loaded and the last stage of their incredible journey began. Their route took them from Algoa Bay north then east, crossing the Zwartkops and Couga Rivers, then inland over

Grass Ridge to Addo Drift across the Sunday's River about 20 miles upstream. Thereafter they travelled over Addo Heights where the route forked: theirs followed a coastal route. Turning south east they passed Congo's Kraal and Jagers Drift on the Bushmans River. After the Mission Station at Theopolis they then crossed the Kowie River close to the mouth then turned inland to Bathurst and their final destination in a valley they called Clumber, after the seat of their patron, the Duke of Newcastle, Clumber Park.

Once their possessions were offloaded the wagons immediately turned around to head back to Algoa Bay. The Nottingham Party was finally on its own - in a wilderness of scrub, thorn and trees. It was now up to them to make a go of it - there was no possibility of a return to England; their financial situation did not allow for that.

Young Rosa Pike remembered after running down to investigate the small stream nearby, the Torrens River, finding her mother, Mary, seated on a box and crying, frightened that ‘wolves and tigers’ would come that night to devour them. One of the first things this Party did on that day, 24 July, was to ascend the small hill at the bottom of which their possessions were now strewn and give thanks to God for safe deliverance. They named the knoll Mount Mercy, and it was here that future places of worship were built.

Tents were raised until they could build temporary wattle and daub structures on their allotments. Thomas Draper, the new leader, left shortly after arriving and William Pike was then elected as the third and final leader. The first priority was the clearing of the bush to plough fields for crops of wheat and vegetables. William Pike wrote a letter reflecting ope and appreciation for a positive change in their lives and the countryside.

Those that watched the wheat grow at the end of 1820 were disappointed when the crop failed due to rust. They tried again in 1821 with the same result and the pattern repeated itself in 1822. The situation was now dire: rations were at an end. The government, seeing their precarious situation, supplied rice to alleviate hunger. Then in October of 1823 a disastrous great flood wreaked havoc on the district over three weeks: it began to rain steadily, then torrential downpours were followed by more gentle showers. The lands which had been laboriously cleared were washed away, the wattle and daub houses with it. So they had to start all over again.

Visitors to the region in 1823 were appalled at the state the Settlers were in. They were still in the same clothes they had arrived in. Hats of plaited palm fronds were now the norm. Many were barefoot with animal skins as jackets. From these disasters arose a determination to adapt to their new-found occupations as farmers. Others left these scenes of hardship to ply their skills in Grahamstown, Port Elizabeth and further afield. Further realisations were that bigger farms were needed and a change of farming direction: soil and climate were different from those of England, so plants and animals more suited to the new environment were put on trial.

Clumber was the one region where most of the Party who initially settled here, took root and adapted. Donkin as Acting Governor wanted Bathurst to become the main town of the region but this was contrary to what Governor Somerset wanted: Grahamstown was to be the chief town of the region. With the demise of Bathurst, Clumber became the centre of numerous parties establishing themselves in the region, so Clumber advanced to become a focal point for worship and schooling.

With William Pike as lay preacher, Church services were held at his home in inclement weather and otherwise under the trees at John Bradfield's home. Sometimes their services were held on Mount Mercy. The first service by an ordained minister occurred on 11 January 1821 when Rev William Shaw visited Clumber. A preaching plan with Salem was drawn up. Jeremiah Goldswain encouraged Pike to continue holding services at Clumber. The rest, as they say, is history. In 1825 the first Church was built on Mount Mercy only 5 years after the arrival of an impoverished Party - a remarkable achievement. Towns like Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth were benefitting from the influx of Settlers who had left the land. Success was in the air: times were still tough but people were adapting.

Optimism would soon be replaced by despair and dismay after the December 1834 surprise of some 10,000 Xhosa who swept across the border of the Great Fish River on a broad front, burning and pillaging along their way. The Nottingham Party abandoned their homes and farms and gathered in Bathurst for protection, then were relocated to Grahamstown under guard where they took refuge in St. Patrick's

Church. Returning in 1835 they discovered many houses had been destroyed, stock carried away and fields laid to waste.

Elijah Pike listed their losses. We all talk so glibly about the effects of war, but can we really grasp the devastation and immense losses of the following? 5715 horses, 111, 930 cattle, 161,930 sheep and goats, 436 houses and 58 wagons consumed by fire, 300 houses pillaged and standing crops and gardens were entirely destroyed.

They built another Church to provide protection in case of another War and a day school (1837) where Thomas Peel became schoolmaster, a position he held to 1848. Plans were made for the erection of a schoolmaster's house next to the Church.

There were good rains in 1842 and 1843, but peace was short lived because war broke out again in 1846. This time, rather than evacuating the area, defence stations were planned. Clumber Church became the Clumber command station with Thomas Cockcroft the Commandant. Women and children had the relative safety of the Church when the men were out on reconnaissance duties. War erupted again in October 1850; this time the base camp was established on Edward Timm's farm, Prospect, where Settlers set up their wagons and huts until the end of hostilities in 1853.

The Cape of Good Hope, meanwhile, was maturing. In 1854 the first Parliament met in Cape Town. But in 1856/1857 the great Xhosa Cattle Killing unfolded, which contributed to destroying the might of the Xhosa nation. Historians estimate that some 300,000 or 400,000 head of cattle were killed, resulting in a famine with 40,000 to 50,000 deaths from starvation.
During this time, Grahamstown was growing too, and its importance was recognized when the second Parliament met here in 1864.

The second Church here at Clumber was now in a dilapidated state so a third Church was planned and was completed in 1867. The building of the second church continued being used as a School.

As for the narrative on the Nottingham Party: descendants of the Party (like Pikes and Bradfields) still populate the vale of Clumber and beyond. The Nottingham Party had fragmented as new descendants of other parties populated Clumber. Their legacy, however, lives on in this beautiful but simple Church. Many of the original features are still with us: out of sight, sneezewood floor joists; still viewable, the yellowwood floor and yellowwood pews, the windows and doors of teak and the glass in many 1867 windows. The ceiling, too, is original with the oregon pine trusses above and not a nail in sight. The ceiling vent is magnificent, the pulpit bought in Grahamstown and made by an 1820

Settler. All the walls are of stone and plastered. The vestry, however, was added on later to commemorate the centenary of the 1820 Settlers and is constructed of brick on a stone foundation.

These people deserve our admiration for standing firm and not abandoning that which they had painstakingly built up. We will continue to honour their incredible tenacity, strength of will, their faith in building a future, full of promise and hope for their descendants. We will never know the depths of the lows which they experienced , but they rose above those and left us, their descendants, an incredible story of which we can be immensely proud. We will remember them.

Clumber Church and Hall

References:

Smith, Rob. *Nottinghamshire 1820 Settlers*.pdf.