

## Partners and their Times: the Smith Firm in History

Albert Schmidt

The B. Smith and Company Solicitor's firm in Donington and Horbling, a fixture in southern Lincolnshire for nearly 250 years, reached a turning point when its only senior partner, Christopher Mew, died on 16 October 2001. Since that date the Smith business has been acquired by another respected solicitors' establishment of the region, Chatterton's of Horncastle and Boston. The nominal as well as legal disappearance of Smith leaves a gap in the history of Kesteven and the fen country to which this brief account speaks. The present intent is to touch upon dominant personalities who shaped the firm's history and relate them to their times.

Although B. Smith carried the name of its founder, in reality the firm was named for a great grandson, Benjamin Smith III (1853-1914). Surprisingly, we know a great deal more about the founding generations than some of the later partners, for the early Smiths were inveterate record keepers. The first Benjamin Smith (1732-1807), who began doing attorney work around Horbling about 1758, was steward and eventually lord of numerous copyhold manors.<sup>1</sup> Responding to his patrons and clients - gentry and affluent farmers - he was very much involved with enclosures, local charities, turnpike trusts, fen drainage and self-help citizens groups to combat crime in addition to routine lawyering. Probably, he also offered banking and money lending services to his clients, although he was not so much involved in finance as his son would be. The first Smith's origins were humble; nor did he marry advantageously.<sup>2</sup> He did, however, see to the well being of his children: one son followed him in the law, another became a grazier; the third entered the church, and an only daughter married a physician.<sup>3</sup>

The elder Smith was variously engaged in business and local affairs which mirrored critical changes in late eighteenth-century English society. His earliest mention was as assistant steward of Meres Manor in 1758. His enclosure work began as early as 1764 when he clerked on the Horbling Enclosure Commission and, perhaps, the Bicker one as well. Three years later he served similarly in Newton and in 1769 on those for the parishes of Thurlby and Threkingham. He clerked for the Helpringham Commission in 1772 and about 1775 for those charged with enclosing Wilsford and Surfleet. Further, he was appointed to the Quadring Commission in 1777, to the ones for Baston and Langtoft in 1779, Stow in 1786 and Pointon in 1789.

Beyond accumulating copyholds and facilitating enclosures, Smith ventured into another typically late eighteenth-century rural venture, transportation. In the professional lifetime of the Smiths, father and son, transport underwent profound change: the coaching network was established during the lifetime of the former and rail service appeared at the end of the career of the latter. Improved

coaching put a premium on better roads, notably turnpikes. As with enclosures turnpike authorization required an Act of Parliament; construction, in turn, was fostered by trusts comprised of local landholders who stood to gain from the new thoroughfares. Having responsibility for maintaining sections of road and levying user tolls to pay for upkeep, the trusts focused on roads under constant use for both local and long-distance travel as well as those which best served trustee interests. Although turnpikes appeared in Lincolnshire late in the seventeenth century, the late 1750s marked the beginning of the greatest progress in that county. Efforts to build in the so-called South-East District, principally the road from Peterborough to the east side of Lincoln Heath, began as early as 1756. While there is no evidence that Smith was involved initially in this venture, his influential patrons Daniel Douglas and the Browns were.

When Smith did enter the scene - his telltale marginal notes on documents announced the fact as early as 1767 - he performed essentially as he had with enclosures: he may have been clerk to the Bridgend Pike as early as 1770, having been charged to obtain Parliamentary approval for that section of the road from Horbling to Donington. In 1784 he was appointed clerk to the 'Trustees for repair of the roads from Donington High Bridge to Hacconby Way Post' at five guineas *per annum*. In 1794 he succeeded the deceased Douglas as treasurer to both the Bridgend and Southeast District Trusts. Smith convened turnpike trust meetings, at least those for the Southeast District, every third week at the George Inn in Billingborough or the Bull in Bourne, from the mid 1780s until 1800.

Drainage schemes, which proved central to the economic resurgence of rural England in the late eighteenth century, were also germane to the elder Smith's business interests. His appointment in 1782 as clerk of the Black Sluice Drainage Trust was consistent with other roles he played in serving the improvement-minded farmers. Lincolnshire drainage projects before the great burst of energy of the 1760s were rarely realised; only that of Deeping Fen after the Restoration amounted to anything. Otherwise, the old channels were merely patched as necessary. The great flood of 1763, which spared hardly an acre of the 22,000 in Holland Fen, provided the impetus. Fenland proprietors met at the White Hart Inn in Boston at the end of April, 1764 and there decided to improve regional drainage by repairing the old Black Sluice, which lay in ruins for a century. The landholders and corporation of Boston obtained a Parliamentary Act for this purpose. Responsibility for undertaking this scheme rested with a Commission consisting of a single representative from the numerous parishes involved. Finance and security were basic considerations. The Black Sluice in Skirbeck Quarter, intended for draining the Holland and Kesteven fens between Kyme and Bourne, was to be financed from rates collected by a vestry of two persons selected from those living in each parish or township. Just as there had been opposition to turnpikes and enclosures, drainage trustees had to contend with vandalizing of the banks and works. Black Sluice was perceived as oppressive to those who won their livelihood exploiting the wildlife of the fens. In 1768, just two years after the passage of the Drainage Act and with Holland Fen enclosed and divided, some rioting did ensue.

Once again, Smith owed the clerkship to his client and patron Daniel Douglas, a Black Sluice as well as turnpike commissioner. Douglas paid the clerk's stipend for both directly from his personal account, which Smith administered. In 1793 Smith was even nominated by his sometime business associate Thomas Forsyth to be treasurer but was declared ineligible because of his clerkship. After the elder Smith's retirement the Smith firm retained a key role in Black Sluice matters: Benjamin Jr succeeded his father as clerk on the commission, serving for more than fifty years. A window in the Horbling parish church commemorates this fact.

Because Smith's patrons/clients professed to be concerned for the moral well being of their fellow man, they created charities designed to improve the character and intellect of those less fortunate. The most notable of these local charities was that founded by Thomas Cowley of Wikes in Donington parish early in the eighteenth century. Its purpose was to assist the poor, the aged and, especially, to hire a schoolmaster 'for teaching 20 poor children in Donington to read English and write'. As the years passed virtually all the proceeds from the Cowley bequest supported two boys' and two girls' schools. The Anthony Barnes testament of 1727, moreover, provided for impoverished clergymen's widows, education for clergymen's sons and 'chaldrons of coals' and shoes for the poor. In Billingborough Robert Kelham, Smith's London agent, similarly endowed his native village with monies and six new Testaments for poor students. As he had for enclosure, turnpike and drainage commissions, the elder Benjamin Smith clerked for some of these charities. His professional association and personal ties with their benefactors facilitated such a role. Benjamin II also attended the Cowley charity, which, although only lightly rewarded, remained a trust of the firm until its dissolution.

Lawlessness in eighteenth-century England, a theme that has attracted the interest of scholars in the last few years, bears on the present narrative. Those who won their worldly goods by 'improving' their property had no intention of letting it slip away.<sup>4</sup> Benjamin Smith's perceptions of contemporary criminal law are unknown; however, his efforts at combating lawlessness coincided with those which he took regarding enclosures, drainage and turnpiking. Reacting in 1788 to a rash of horse, cattle and sheep thefts, he and other landowners organised the Falkingham [Folkingham] Association for Prosecuting Felons. Such self-help was a not unusual response to the uneven law enforcement in the rural England of that day.

At the first meeting of the Association Smith was named clerk and treasurer. In such a role he doubtless participated in drafting the articles of intent. These stated that anyone committing felonies against the subscribers or their property within a ten-mile radius of the town of Folkingham would be brought to justice and punished; the document also contained a reward system based on the seriousness of the offence. The articles of incorporation were signed by landholders, most of whom were Smith clients. As clerk and treasurer he recorded the dues paid or owed by the subscribers and oversaw procedures for informing the Association of a felony. His report, prepared for each annual meeting, recorded this income and such expenses as advertising the meeting and thefts and copying the rule book. Smith received no compensation for his work. The annual meeting convened usually at the Five Bells or the Greyhound in Folkingham market square. This organization endured into the second half of the next century.

The elder Smith groomed his son variously for the law, setting up a course of study, assigning tasks in the workplace and, finally, sent him off to London to make contacts and gain a broader understanding of the legal system. Benjamin Jr's commonplace book, diaries and bill books confirm the works that he studied and his routine of collecting rents, holding copyhold court and commitment to improving the firm's record-keeping. Young Smith also assisted in his father's commission clerkships - attending meetings, taking minutes and maintaining accounts. Father and son often travelled together on business - to nearby Donington, Bourne, Billingborough, Folkingham and even Sleaford, Stamford, Boston and Lincoln. These journeys were an occasion for socializing as well as business. When they did not dine or sleep in their clients' homes, they stopped at an inn.<sup>5</sup>

In the mid 1790s Benjamin Smith Sr resolved to extend his son's legal practicum beyond Horbling. Twice Benjamin Jr was sent to London, the first time in 1795.<sup>6</sup> Since Father's principal purpose for the trip was to acquaint his son with

his professional contacts in London, they made the rounds of attorneys' chambers. They drank tea at Lincoln's Inn and, more importantly, dined with Smith's then London agent, Christopher Johnson, in Hatton Gardens.<sup>7</sup> These strategic calls in 1795 laid the groundwork for young Benjamin's return the following year when his sojourn was intended to facilitate his enrolment and admission to the law courts.

Young Smith's eight-month residence in London from the autumn of 1796 to the spring of 1797 provided him an occasion for study, exposure to the lawyering routine and an active social life. Departing from Folkingham in early November, he took up lodgings in Falcon Square.<sup>8</sup> Benjamin Jr lost no time in renewing acquaintance with his father's associates and clients. He especially endeared himself to Johnson and his new partner, Alexander Forbes Gaskell. Treating Smith like a son, Johnson invited him to his home many times during his London stay. The aging Robert Kelham, only recently retired from the Johnson-Gaskell firm, occasionally made an appearance at these affairs. That he did could have been beneficial to Smith both because of his erudition and, more than likely, his business connections.

Smith's encounters with his father's agents were not limited to social affairs. Johnson and Gaskell invited him to use space in their new chambers in Queen's Square, likely to further his father's business. That he called regularly on solicitors Harvey and Ryder in Lincoln's Inn Fields would seem to confirm that fact.<sup>9</sup> Doubtless, young Benjamin positioned himself to cultivate relationships beneficial to his own career while at the same time learning the law and attending his father's affairs.

Johnson and Gaskell most likely supervised young Smith's apprenticeship in London and certainly assisted in his admission and enrolment as attorney. On a rainy day in early May, 1797, according to his diary, Smith proceeded in the company of Gaskell to Lord Kenyon's Chambers 'for my fiat'.<sup>10</sup> Next morning 'I was admitted in the King's Bench'. Smith, fully accredited as an attorney in his twenty-first year, returned to Horbling in the summer of 1797.

The Smith firm was changing by the early 1790s. The father, already age sixty in 1792, had been active for over thirty years performing routine legal tasks with only the assistance of anonymous clerks. By the late 1780s he had hired one William Worth to record precedents and perform various clerical tasks. Only in 1793 did Benjamin Sr formalise Worth's place in the firm by offering him articles of clerkship.<sup>11</sup> As clerk he collected rents, attended drainage, turnpike and charities meetings and served as deputy steward for sundry copyhold manors. In effect, or in fact, he became managing clerk and served as such for fifteen years. After young Smith returned to Horbling, his father immediately began transferring major responsibility to him, leaving apprentice Worth quite out of the loop.

The elder Smith signalled his intention to retire in October, 1798 when he moved from Red Hall to Folkingham (Fig. 1). Young Benjamin, meanwhile, occupied the homestead in Spring Lane, an act which carried with it a good deal of symbolism. Nearly twenty-two years of age, he was both master in the family mansion and *de facto* manager of the firm housed there. Having acquired from or through his father diverse manorial stewardships, lordships and clerkships, he set out to impose his own managerial style upon the firm. His apprenticeship, which had accorded him knowledge of the firm's *modus operandi*, allowed him to slip into new role with relative ease. Immediately after his father's death in 1807, he introduced notable changes.

The first of these were the Worth partnerships, which continued for just over a decade. Shortly after his father's death, Benjamin II offered the long-serving William Worth Sr a quarter partnership. After the latter died in January, 1812, Smith offered the same terms to William Worth Jr, who



Fig. 1. Red Hall in Spring Lane, Horbling, residence of Benjamin Smith Sr and Benjamin Smith Jr, before it was razed in the mid-1960s (photograph verified by late Harry Bowden).

succeeded his father. Benjamin Smith Jr's relations with him, however, were troubled from the outset. He recorded disapprovingly on 12 May 1813 that partner Worth had got drunk at the Folkingham fair, lost his money and had gone off to Edinburgh. It remained for his brother Henry to fetch him. By 1817 Smith was complaining bitterly about Worth's behaviour, particularly his drinking. In October the partnership was, as advertised in the *London Gazette*, dissolved. The two settled, Worth remaining simply as clerk. They did work together for another year, apparently without major disruption. When in mid November, 1818 Worth expressed a desire to leave Horbling, Smith recorded in his diary: 'I wish he was gone.'

Similarly, he penned on 13 December: 'Note this morning from WW that he wished to leave me w[hi]ch I am glad of & wish was done.' On the thirtieth Worth 'went to London after a situation.' This did not work out, for on 9 January Worth told Smith that 'he sho[ul]d fix at Don[ing]ton which I hope will not annoy me.' Smith responded two days later that 'as he was going to Donington he co[ul]d not come again into my office.' On the thirteenth they 'had words', when Smith asked 'for key to his office.' That Worth had a sale of his household on 24 March seemed to mark the end of it. On 5 April Smith called at the Cracrofts who had just moved into the house previously occupied by Worth.

William Worth did not entirely fade from the picture. He continued practising law in the area, later turning up in Bourne. He reputedly lost a sizable savings in speculation. The accounts show that he actually remained Smith's client into the 1830s and perhaps 1840s. The son, Charles Frederick, became the famous fashion designer of Second Empire France.

Although the friction between Smith and Worth hardly produced a congenial work environment, the accounts show that the firm prospered during their association. Indeed, it was this partnership which built a new office facility. An improved setting, better bookkeeping and improved modes of transportation reflected the firm's graduation from a parochial and provincial firm to one which embraced business in both Lincolnshire and London.

When Benjamin Smith Jr moved into Red Hall, he either staked out a work area within the house or continued in the very cramped outhouse that had been his father's since the 1760s. Only after the latter's death, did he contemplate creating a more functional and convenient office setting. This new determination resulted initially in his building an office in Donington in 1814 and concluded just over a decade later with one in Spring Lane, Horbling. Strategically placed in Market Square, the Donington facility beckoned from afar, proving a convenience to those requiring legal services on, say, horse market days (Fig.2). While Smith Sr's Horbling-based catchment area had been limited in the west by Folkingham, Bourne and Donington, Benjamin Jr's establishment of the Donington base provided a springboard to the Boston urban centre and the flourishing market town of Spalding.



Fig. 2. Smith firm's office in Donington market place, 1814 (A. J. Schmidt).

Worth's removal and Smith's marriage in 1821 to long-time client Fanny Graves evidently led to a still further rethinking of both the home and work environment.<sup>12</sup> In the end Smith decided to refurbish Red Hall in Spring Lane, where he continued to reside, and build another office opposite it.<sup>13</sup> With Benjamin Wilkinson ensconced as partner in 1823, the firm settled on this new and accessible location.<sup>14</sup> Work was begun and concluded in 1825 despite a horrid summer of labour problems. On 1 September Smith reported, 'We removed all books & papers from the old office.' Celebrating with Wilkinson and a friend at dinner that evening Smith remarked that he felt 'very grateful to the Almighty for enabling me to enjoy the comforts of the new offices I most humbly pray for his blessing upon this change of habitation & that I may here through the influence of his Holy Spirit lead a pious & useful life.'<sup>15</sup> (Fig.3).

Although its location for receiving rents and mortgage interest gave the Donington office greater strategic importance, the proximity of the Horbling building to the partners' residences made it the firm's hub. Inside, Smith's and Wilkinson's chambers, to the right and left of the interior flagstone entrance, were more spacious than the single one in Donington. Smith, an avid bird-watcher, particularly delighted in listening to the birds from this location. It was probably he who pencilled on the privy wall the date the cuckoo was first heard each May.

Like the Donington office, the one in Spring Lane was Georgian/Regency, but in a simpler vein. Its ordinariness suggests that it was hardly on a cutting architectural edge. Rather, it was simply a shell to contain the business. The building's contour was governed by a pointed gable rather than hip roof; its street facade was flat and unadorned. Of the two remaining ground floor rooms in back, one was reserved for the managing clerk and the other for the junior ones. A strong room in back, larger and more secure than the one in Donington, suggests an increasing volume of business for the firm. An attic provided ample storage space for dated or less critical records. The clerks' furniture - high desks and stools - was of the same order as that in Donington. Each room had the usual coal-burning fireplace but no facilities for cooking. Sheet metal covering on wooden shutters increased the protection from both heat and cold. The privy, attached to the

back right side of the building, was entered from outside.

It would be a mistake to assume that law offices, whether in modest outbuildings or refined new ones, provided a complete picture of a firm's work environment. Red Hall across Spring Lane no doubt continued its pivotal role in the business: Smith found it convenient to slip downstairs to his study at an early hour to post his accounts; moreover, it was in the great house that deals were struck. It remained the venue for socializing as well as business, where hospitality was offered freely to clients, family and friends. These people came for tea and meals and often stayed the night or longer. Red Hall signified the gentlemanly status which Smith derived from the profession.<sup>16</sup> The house, no less than the office building, symbolised the elevated station reached by respected professionals in rural communities. It had been thus with Benjamin Smith Sr; it was ever more with his son.

Smith-Wilkinson proved an effective and compatible combination for a quarter century. Benjamin Wilkinson as a person is virtually a blank: there are no letters, while the few business diaries are notable for what they do not reveal. A memorial in the Horbling Church calls him 'kind and benevolent in his disposition and of great integrity of character' and 'deservedly loved and respected by all.' Relying on this bland testimonial and the numerous, usually non-judgemental, diary references to him by Smith, we imagine Wilkinson to have been an even-tempered person, one who assented to the senior partner's exercising control. Such acquiescence could either have stemmed from Wilkinson's genius for coping with a sometimes testy and meddlesome Smith or it could have exemplified a pliable and/or congenial nature (Fig.4).

The two partners and their wives generally maintained a cordial relationship: Wilkinson often took tea or dined at the Smith's and the two families exchanged visits. Childless themselves, Benjamin and Fanny Smith developed genuine affection for the Wilkinson children - Harriet, Ellen and Edward. On 7 October 1833 Smith attended his godson Edward Wilkinson's christening. After his partner's death Smith substituted as father to all the Wilkinson children. On 18 August 1852, the occasion of Harriet Wilkinson's wedding, he 'attended church & gave her away,' calling the affair 'the



Fig.3. Smith firm's office in Spring Lane, Horbling, 1825 (A. J. Schmidt).



Fig. 4. *Portrait of Benjamin Smith Jr c.1830 (copy from the original in the possession of the late Harry Bowden. Present location uncertain).*

most gay concern I have seen'. Moreover, he counselled Edward for a career in the law and made himself ever available to him.<sup>17</sup>

Wilkinson's health became a problem for the firm even by the 1830s, but his most debilitating illness prior to the fatal one occurred on 11 December 1843, several months after Smith had revealed his plans to retire. Wilkinson suffered from paralysis. On the thirteenth he was no better. Smith wrote that 'we entertain much fear respecting him.' Despite such foreboding, Wilkinson did recover albeit for only two years. By the spring of 1846 he was very ill again; the seizure which he suffered that summer was much more severe than the first. Smith observed that 'Wilkinson became quite deranged in July...[and] so violent & deranged that ...on 6 Aug[ust] he was taken to the Asylum at Lincoln where he continued in changeable health all the year & towards the end had a 3rd attack of paralysis.' On 5 April 1847 Ann Wilkinson signed a petition for lunacy. Smith added: 'I feared she would not'. The partner, aged fifty-two, died 15 January 1848.<sup>18</sup>

Benjamin Wilkinson's death did not terminate Smith's preoccupation with the Wilkinsons. However much his compassion for the widow and children, he wished to avoid costly litigation and any unpleasantness that might inhibit a settlement.<sup>19</sup> Amicable relations between the senior partner and Ann Wilkinson lasted for only a year. Deeply involved with Black Sluice matters in London, Smith was sorely annoyed by distractions caused by what he regarded as her irrational behaviour. First he had to contend with the widow's demands for an extraordinary financial settlement. Then in late July, 1851 he learned that Mrs Wilkinson was involved romantically with the firm's clerk, Benjamin Wood. Smith

immediately confronted her in early August. Although Widow Wilkinson convinced him that she had no serious intentions regarding Wood, they did marry in November.<sup>20</sup> The diaries reveal nothing more of the matter.

In the early 1830s Smith was obsessed with the notion of retirement. By the end of the decade the senior partner appeared decided to settle his portion of the partnership on one Thomas Garfit, who had joined the firm in 1833. He seemed a good prospect, probably a better one than the other clerk, George Wiles, for Smith had long done business with Thomas' father, William, of the Boston bank of Garfit and Claypon.

On 17 August 1833 Smith noted that 'Mr Garfit & his son Tho[mas] breakfasted here.' Although Smith mentioned Garfit frequently and the mutual benefits of having him in the firm were evident, it soon became questionable whether he would ever fit in. On 3 October 1838 Smith observed that 'T. Garfit left us. Sorry to lose him.' Yet periodically Garfit reappeared. Whatever arrangements had been made, they turned sour in early October, 1841 when Garfit sought to alter the terms. Smith was outraged, and on 31 December broke off 'owing to his high and extraordinary conduct.' In his diary summary for that year Smith recorded that 'the communications w<sup>th</sup> Mr Garfit during the end of the summer & year for a Partnership & my retiring were not of any agreeable nature & terminated in a complete Breach from his high & very extraordinary conduct.' Although Garfit remained in the office until at least 4 January 1842, 'still agitating', he had forfeited a future in the firm.

Smith-Wiles proved an enduring partnership, lasting from 1848 to 1854. When Wilkinson's health broke, Smith carried a heavy work load, especially pursuing Black Sluice matters in London. For all this he came to rely heavily on George Wiles whom he took as partner on 17 February 1848, just a month after Wilkinson's death. Although Wiles, like Wilkinson, is something of an enigma, it is not surprising that he was chosen to succeed Wilkinson. He had been, in many respects, the most dependable in a long line of clerks. Unquestionably competent - although his handwriting was almost indecipherable - he had played a key role in the firm for more than a dozen years. A bachelor, Wiles had won the affection of both Fanny and Benjamin who frequently entertained him for tea or dinner. It was not unusual that he was joined by his good friend Henry Smith, Frank's son and Benjamin and Fanny's trusted nephew. Invited to the Smiths for Christmas dinner in 1852, Wiles also joined them at the Donington fair the next year. During those years when Smith made so many trips to and from London, Wiles often met the tired old man at some desolate rail station and brought him home. George Wiles' succession in the partnership was initially based on a 75/25 profit ratio; however, it became 50/50; as Smith deferred increasingly to his young partner.

A principal distinction between Benjamin Smith Sr's and his son's tenure in the firm was one of orientation. Benjamin Smith Sr had predicated his lawyering almost exclusively on land and estate matters; the son during the Wilkinson and Wiles eras divided his time between such country concerns and money market ventures in London. His thorough understanding of both the local mortgage and City money markets was central to the firm's new direction. Connections in south Lincolnshire had brought him into contact with the people who possessed the means to invest while those in London provided the wherewithal for sound investments. In his lifetime Smith made countless trips to London to conduct such business.<sup>21</sup> His journeys in the 1830s and 1840s, on the other hand, were undertaken as much to move bills in Commons as to oversee client investments. In addition, he frequently took time to enjoy the arts, music, theatre, the Zoological Gardens, Crystal Palace, join the Statistical Society, listen to his favourite preachers, and call on friends, clients and associates.<sup>22</sup>

Smith business contacts in London probably began with Benjamin I's old friend, agent and client, Robert Kelham (1717 to 1808), who likely was the intermediary between the banking and stockbrokerage firm of his son-in-law, Marmaduke Langdale (1756-1832), and Smith Jr.<sup>23</sup> For the Langdales, Benjamin Smith was a valuable resource, a conduit for tapping an elusive provincial surplus.<sup>24</sup> Their mutually beneficial relationship, which lasted for half a century, exemplified how capital was moved from the provinces in order to accommodate entrepreneurial appetite for credit no less than investors' pursuit of earnings.

The indispensable Kelham had achieved a notable reputation among his contemporaries as a scholar. Here he receives recognition for his lawyering in London and entrepreneurial matchmaking. In the late 1750s the elder Smith took him on as both Lincolnshire client and London agent. Twenty years or so later Kelham invited Christopher Johnson, the same who played host to young Smith during his legal apprenticeship, into partnership. In the early 1790s Alexander Forbes-Gaskell joined the firm. After Kelham retired in the summer of 1795, Johnson and Gaskell continued in partnership.

Kelham's private even more than his professional life played on the Smith relationship. In 1778 his daughter Sarah Augusta married young Marmaduke Langdale (Fig.5). In his lifetime young Langdale was variously a banker, stockbroker and distiller as well as landholder in Worcestershire and Yorkshire. Little else is known about Langdale, for neither his business nor personal papers have survived. He was a member of the stock exchange by 1805. In 1810 Marmaduke used 7 Capel Court, Bartholomew Lane for his brokerage address; by 1815, 17 New Ormond Street, Queens Square, Bloomsbury was designated for his business as well as

residence; a dozen years later this firm had moved to 15 Angel Court, Throgmorton Street. In 1825 he was listed a partner in the Dixon, Langdale, Dixon and Brooks Bank.

Langdale's marriage to Sarah Augusta Kelham in 1778 produced ten children of whom the eldest son Marmaduke Robert (1785-1860) and the eldest daughter Sarah are important for this narrative: Marmaduke Robert succeeded his father as head of the firm while Sarah married the Revd Edward Smith (1780-1813), Benjamin Sr's youngest son (Fig.6). Marmaduke Robert had clerked in his father's brokerage firm as early as 1805 and by at least 1815 most likely was in partnership. After taking over from his father young Marmaduke managed the Angel Court office until joined by son Alfred in partnership in 1841. So it remained through the 1850s. It was Marmaduke Robert who most often engaged Benjamin Smith II in business matters.<sup>25</sup>

Three distinct periods characterise Smith-Langdale business and family ties. During the first period, from 1803 to 1813, the connection was established, presumably at the initiation of Benjamin Smith II and the two Marmadukes. It was subsequently cemented by the marriage of Sarah Langdale and Edward Smith in 1809, and then shaken, but by no means ended, by Edward's death in 1813. The second period, about a decade in length, was that of Sarah's Folkingham widowhood during which she was under the almost constant scrutiny of Benjamin II and her brother Marmaduke Robert. The third period commenced in 1824 with Sarah's marriage to the Revd Charles Day, curate and sometime preacher in the Folkingham church. Although this union outraged Smith, business collaboration between him and Marmaduke Robert continued unabated. During these years of the late 1820s through the early 1850s Smith also hobnobbed socially with the Langdales on his frequent trips to London.



Fig.5. *Portrait of Marmaduke Langdale Sr (Courtesy of Anthony Langdale, Esq. of Godalming Surrey).*



Fig.6. *Portrait of Marmaduke Robert Langdale (Courtesy of Anthony Langdale, Esq. of Godalming, Surrey).*

However profitable London business was for the firm, the economy of rural Lincolnshire left much to be desired. The first years of the Wiles partnership, in particular, were difficult ones. Smith confided in his diary, that 1850 one of 'extreme anxiety & to many of ruin.' The drop in agriculture prices 'produced much ruin.' As Smith observed, 'Taking possession of mortgaged property & people going to America have been very frequent. I have been compelled to take various property in mortgage to me. The deficient crops from blight in this year has been so general that I know not how occupiers are to pay Rent & we must fear the great extension of deep distress. I was the means of various People going from this Parish to America such as we were glad to get rid of & more well I hope to go in the spring tho[ugh] at a heavy expense to me.'<sup>26</sup> The next year, 1851, was better; improvement continued thereafter.

The Smith-Wiles routine appears not to have varied substantially from that of the preceding partnership. Despite Smith's talk of retiring, one wonders whether Wiles or anyone else took him seriously. Yet it must have been evident to all concerned that Wiles would take over the firm, probably sooner than later. Although Smith continued with Black Sluice business in London, he did not neglect local matters. He attended Barnes, Cowley, Black Sluice and vestry meetings, wrote letters, up-dated ledgers and held forth with local magistrates, and on rent days. Wiles, meanwhile, performed his end of the Lincolnshire routine well; he had, after all, learned it from Wilkinson.

After Benjamin Smith suffered a stroke in 1854, the business was settled on Wiles<sup>27</sup> (Fig. 7). In September of 1858, the year Smith died, Wiles chose one William Emerson Chapman as his partner and subsequently renamed the firm Wiles and Chapman<sup>28</sup> (Fig. 8). When Wiles' nephew, Charles Smyth Wiles, joined the firm and advanced to partner in 1874, the firm changed to Wiles, Chapman & Wiles. This



Fig. 7. Photograph of Benjamin Smith Jr after his stroke in 1854 (copy from the original in the possession of the late Harry Bowden. Present location uncertain).

arrangement lasted just five years, for in 1879 both Chapman and the senior Wiles died. The next year, 1880, Charles Smyth Wiles brought in Benjamin Smith III, the son of George Wiles' great friend, Henry. With the last Wiles' retirement three years later the firm reverted to B. Smith & Company.

Benjamin III brought his brother George into the firm in the mid 1880s and eventually his son Graham Gould Smith in 1913. Indeed, for a short span, from 1913 to 1914, there were three Smiths in the fold. Benjamin III died in June, 1914; Graham Gould, having served on the Western Front in the Great War, retired in 1931; George, however, lived until 1945.<sup>29</sup> Although there were no diaries to lend colour to the lives of the partners from the death of Benjamin II to that of Benjamin III, the firm's papers reveal a continuing involvement with copyholds, drainage (not just Black Sluice but other drainage boards as well) and the Barnes and Cowley charities. It was, moreover, a sign of the times that the firm should expand its business to utilities such as the Billingborough and Horbling Gas Company and the Great Northern, Sleaford and Bourne Railway.<sup>30</sup> In the late nineteenth century as it had in Benjamin Smith Sr's day, the firm's business mirrored the south Lincolnshire economy.

Meanwhile, a new generation of Smiths took over the firm after the First World War. George's son, Francis Gould, or 'Frank' (1900-59), became a partner in 1925. As partner Harry Bowden put it, 'He became a partner on the 5<sup>th</sup> December 1925, just beating the transitional provisions of the Law of property Act 1925, under which all legal estates in land took to their wings at midnight on the 31<sup>st</sup> December 1925.' Bowden, who voiced admiration for Frank, credited him with introducing modern bookkeeping procedures, the Kains Solicitors Accounts, into the firm. 'This must have been, shortly before the Law Society introduced the Solicitors' Accounts Rules. Books, of a sort, had previously been kept but it is doubtful if there was any form audit or any separate bank account for clients moneys.'<sup>31</sup>

However much impact Benjamin Smiths I and II had on the firm - their paper trail tells it all - the compelling role played by Harry Bowden (1913-97) for over half a century was hardly less impressive. Having served his articles with Andrew, Race & Company of Lincoln, he entered the firm on 1 May 1939 as Assistant Solicitor to take charge of the Donington office (Fig. 9). This initial stint in the firm proved short lived, for Bowden entered the army in 1940 and did not return until early 1946. Through the War years the firm's burden fell fully upon Frank Gould Smith.

After Bowden returned and became a partner on 1 April 1950, he and Frank Smith divided responsibilities: Smith oversaw the Horbling office while Bowden managed Donington. 'In addition,' as Bowden observed, 'for many years the Donington office had been represented at Spalding and Boston on their respective Market Days; Tuesday and Wednesday, having accommodation for a few hours at friendly offices where clients were met by appointment, deeds executed and Probate papers sworn.' Because this proved a cumbersome practice, B. Smith purchased W. F. Howard and Company as well as offices at 31 The Crescent in Spalding.

That Howard's catchment area extended to Long Sutton proved a boon to B. Smith which hitherto done little business beyond Spalding. Bowden added the Spalding office to his duties in Donington. In this he was assisted by managing clerks A. E. Almond and subsequently George Burgess at Donington and Albert Munton at Spalding. This arrangement appears to have worked well until the autumn of 1959 when on 11 September Frank Smith died suddenly at age fifty-nine. There being no principals in the firm other than Bowden, he took on all three offices. Reputedly a stickler for details, Bowden ran an efficient operation.<sup>32</sup> His managing clerks were J. J. Cooper and R. G. Louth in Horbling, George Burgess in Donington and Albert Munton in Spalding.



Fig.8. Grave marker in Horbling churchyard of Benjamin Smith Jr (on other side of marker the name of his brother, Francis, is inscribed (A. J. Schmidt).



Fig.9. Portrait of late Harry Bowden, Esq. of the firm of B. Smith & Co. (Courtesy of Mrs Alice Bowden of Spalding).

Harry Bowden's commitment to the firm went beyond running the office and lawyering. He had a compulsive interest in the firm's history. Just a few years after his becoming a partner he undertook negotiating with the Lincolnshire Archive Office in the Exchequer Gate, Lincoln, to house the firm's extensive archive. The year 1952 to 1953 saw the first mention of the Horbling documents in the *Archivists' Report* of the L.A.O.<sup>33</sup> It remained, however, until Frank Smith's death in 1959 for any significant action. By 1961 Harry Bowden again took up the matter of transferring the firm's accumulated records. The result, according to Archivist Joan Varley, was that 'a furniture van load of documents' ultimately was deposited in one of the old prison cells in the newly established Lincoln Archives Offices in the Castle in Lincoln. Varley's words suggest its magnitude: 'This large accumulation...will fill almost to overflowing a single cell.'<sup>34</sup>

Meanwhile, the firm continued fully engaged. On 1 May 1964 Anthony Albert Harris joined as Assistant Solicitor in the Donington office. Two years later, on 1 April, he was taken into partnership by Harry Bowden. In 1968 Bowden withdrew from a separate partnership of W. F. Howard & Co. at Spalding and with Harris set up a new office at 11/12 Station Street, Spalding; this office was moved to 3 Broad Street on 1 May 1973. In the same year Richard Antony Knipe concluded his Articles with Harry Bowden; on admission he remained as Assistant Solicitor at Spalding. On New Year's Day, 1975 he was taken into partnership.

On 11 July 1977 Christopher Morris Mew joined the firm as Assistant Solicitor in the Spalding office. The following year, on 4 June 1979, Mew transferred to the Horbling office. Bowden, meanwhile, retired from the partnership but remained as Consultant (13 December 1979). Dianne Lesley Miller joined the firm on 1 July 1980 as Assistant Solicitor at the Spalding office. At the new year Mew became a partner. Harris, Knipe and Mew purchased the Donington office, also on 1 January 1981. The three partners also acquired premises for a Bourne office at 98 North Street on 31 December of the same year. This facility opened 4 January 1983. A year later, on 1 January 1984, Miller became a partner.



Major changes occurred in 1990 when Harris and Mew continued as B. Smith & Company at Donington and Horbling; Knipe and Miller became Knipe Miller & Company at Spalding; and the Bourne office was sold to Double & Megson. The same year (on 5 January) Alan Bray joined the Donington office as Assistant Litigation Solicitor. There was further change in the Horbling and Donington offices during 1993: on 1 February David Vincent Gunson joined the Horbling firm as Assistant Solicitor. The next month, on 26 March, Harris retired but remained as Consultant. The premises at 24 Market Place were expanded in July, 1993 through purchase. Melanie Elizabeth Greig joined the firm as Assistant Litigation Solicitor on 20 September, while Bray left a few days later.

These shifts in personnel and property set the stage for modernization and enlargement of the Donington office the new ground floor of which was in use by 1 May 1994. Horbling, on the other hand, was reduced to Tuesday and Thursday afternoon openings or by appointment from 10 April 1995.<sup>35</sup> Personnel changes included the departure of Gunson on 13 February 1995; the following year Andrew Simon John Littlefield joined the firm as an Assistant Solicitor on 26 February.

On 11 August 1997 Harry Bowden died. Having long suffered from Parkinson's Disease, he retained to the last an unflagging interest in the firm and its history. In the mid 1980s he had even set out to edit the many Benjamin Smith II personal diaries but had got little encouragement from publishers. One of his final acts was the transfer of these journals and assorted papers to the Lincolnshire Archives Office.<sup>36</sup>

B. Smith & Co.'s fortunes changed dramatically with the death of its only senior partner, Christopher Mew in late 2001. Negotiations for the firm's future proceeded immediately. By early 2002 it was determined that the firm would be absorbed by another Lincolnshire firm, Chatterton's of Horncastle and Boston. The Smith firm, profitable until the very end of its long history, was characterised by its staff solicitor, Jon F. G. Calthrop:

The majority of the firm's work between 1990 and the present has been approximately 40% conveyancing, mainly domestic but some business, approximately 40% probate and administration of estates as the firm has acted for many generations of local families including farming families and about 20% litigation, the majority of which is family work but some of which is general civil litigation and accident claims. That continues to be the mix. It has generally demanded three non-contentious staff and one litigation solicitor.<sup>37</sup>

Chatterton's traces its lineage to three separate Horncastle firms.<sup>38</sup> One, founded by Richard Clitheroe in 1794, continued through five generations until after the First World War. Upon the death of Richard William Clitheroe in September, 1930, his property and presumably the firm of Clitheroe and Son itself were taken over by Solicitor Richard Chatterton. Another strand in this narrative is represented by the firm of Tweed and Peacock, established in 1954 but tracing its roots to one founded in 1856 by Frederick William Tweed. It associated with Chatterton in 1971 because of the aging and ill health of its partners.

The legal Chattertons arrived on the scene later than either the Clitheroes or Tweeds. Although John Elsey Chatterton began a substantial, but non-legal, career in Horncastle in the 1890s, he did arrange for his sons to be articled in the Tweed firm. Of these Richard was key, having practised in Horncastle for many years and serving even as the president of the Lincolnshire Law society. As noted, he initiated the merger with Tweed and Peacock in 1971.<sup>39</sup> Aside from its absorption of B. Smith, Chatterton's had taken over several other firms - Millington, Simpsons & Giles in Boston in 1978 and Peake Snow and Jeudwine in Sleaford in May, 1997.<sup>40</sup>

The Smith and Chatterton firms each provide an important dimension of Lincolnshire legal history in part because of the colourful partners who guided them and in part because the records of each firm allow for reconstructing a good story. This brief survey taps only superficially the richness of one of the repositories of records, the business and private papers of the Benjamin Smiths of Horbling and Donington.

## Notes

1. See A. J. Schmidt 'The country attorney in late eighteenth-century England: Benjamin Smith of Horbling', *Law and History Review*, 8 (1990), pp.237-71 and 'The Smiths of Horbling: country attorneys', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 54 (1991), pp.143-76 for greater detail about Benjamin Smith I and early Benjamin Smith II.
2. Benjamin Smith, born in 1731 in St Peter's Eastgate, Lincoln to Benjamin and Elizabeth Smith, married in 1767 Elizabeth Fryer, nearly ten years his junior, from neighbouring Spanby.
3. The eldest was Elizabeth (1769-1854), who married a Dr Bloomfield, resided in Folkingham. Because the eldest son, Attorney Benjamin Jr (1777-1858) was childless, the line of descent passed through Francis (1778-1844) the grazier who resided at Monk's Hall in Gosberton. The youngest son, Edward, or 'Ned' (1780-1813), was schooled at Uppingham and St John's, Cambridge and became a clergyman. Although he fathered two children, both died without issue.
4. Douglas Hay argues that criminal law in eighteenth-century England was intended to terrorize those who coveted property of the affluent. See 'Property, authority, and the criminal law,' in *Albion's Fatal Tree*, edited by Douglas Hay, *et al.* (New York, 1975), pp.17-63.
5. At least once during this clerkship, in early spring 1795, they travelled to the Assizes in Lincoln and stayed the night at the Reindeer. For a fuller discussion of this trip, see Schmidt, 'A career in the law: clerkship and the profession in late eighteenth-century Lincolnshire', *Lincolnshire History & Archaeology*, 31 (1996), pp.32, 38, note 55.
6. The Schmidt article on clerkship documents Benjamin Smith Jr's legal education, drawing heavily on young Smith's diaries. Owned by Hugh Gould Smith of Belstead, Ipswich but long in the possession of the late Harry Bowden, these diaries were deposited in the L.A.O. before Bowden's death in August, 1997.
7. This was Kelham's old law firm. For more on Kelham, see A. J. Schmidt, 'From provincial to professional: Attorney Robert Kelham (1717-1808) in eighteenth-century London' in *The London Journal*, 25 (2000), pp.96-109.
8. The location of young Ben's lodgings, in Falcon Square, will be evident on any late eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century map of London. Today only the name remains, for the square was an early casualty of the August, 1940 Blitz.
9. Occasionally he 'drank wine' with William Harvey in New Square. Not surprisingly, the Smith firm occasionally hired Harvey's services L.A.O., Smith 11/Firm's Business, Bills, 1790-1803[04], p.388 shows charges for such consultation. Smith's diary reveals that he also called on Attorney Ryder, probably Thomas, whom he saw twice in November 1796.
10. This was Lloyd Lord Kenyon, Chief Justice of England. The date was 2 May 1797 (L.A.O., Smith 15/ Diary).
11. L.A.O., Smith 11/Firm's Business, Worth's Articles of Clerkship, 8 April 1793. Worth's genealogy is in Henry Peet, editor, *Horbling Registers* (Liverpool and London, 1895), pp.152, 161, 174.
12. Smith had begun a courtship of Frances Graves of Martin and Horncastle; in 1821 they were married. The Graves had been long-time friends and clients of the Smiths; Fanny would provide Smith the love and companionship he lacked following the death of his first wife. After their marriage, his ailments and depression diminished, and Red Hall in Horbling exuded hospitality as it had in his parents' time. For details regarding building the Donington and Horbling offices, see A. J. Schmidt, 'Lawyer professionalism in rural England: changes in routine and rewards in the early nineteenth century', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, 32 (1977), pp.25-39.
13. Smith recorded significant alterations to Red Hall in 1825, 1827, 1829 and 1834 (L.A.O., Smith 15/ Diary).
14. Benjamin Wilkinson was admitted and enrolled in the common law courts on 13 February 1819 (The Law Society Rolls, Chancery Lane).
15. What we know of the building of this new edifice is limited to Smith's diary references. See especially his diary summary for 1825. Cleaning, painting and furnishing the new office building consumed most of September.
16. That the professions were rooted in the pursuit of honour and authority which Red Hall epitomized is the subject of Samuel Haber, *The Quest for Authority and Honor in the American Professions, 1750-1900*

- (Chicago, 1991). Benjamin Smith's diaries recount innumerable instances of the hospitality which he extended to his clients and business associates. Red Hall's frequent renovations and full complement of servants should have provided them with ample comfort.
17. Smith mentioned his advising Edward in a diary reference dated 13 October 1849.
  18. The Benjamin Wilkinson account in L.A.O. Smith 11/Firm's Business, Ledgers AV, show that during Wilkinson's confinement in Lincoln Mrs Wilkinson received periodic stipends of £5, presumably for living expenses, through the firm. Expenses incurred by Wilkinson at the Lincoln Lunatic Asylum were also handled through this account.
  19. That this was so is evident in Smith's diary summary for 1848 in which he noted that 'Mr W[i]l[k]i[n]s[o]n's death on 15 Jan[uary] relieved me from a chancery suit & much difficulty & I settled acc[oun]ts w[i]t[h] Mrs W[i]l[k]i[n]s[o]n on 17 Feb[uary] taking Mr Wiles into partnership.'
  20. Smith diary summary, 1851.
  21. Smith's diaries indicate that from 1817 to 1854 he made 119 business trips to London. This number is exclusive of those undertaken by his partners and clerks in behalf of the firm. He journeyed to London thirteen times between 1818 and 1824, or sixty times from 1818 to 1843. Although travel was less arduous with the coming of the railway in 1840s, Smith greatly increased the number of annual trips in his advanced age. Between 1844 and 1849, during this six year span, he made forty journeys; he made nine trips in each of 1845 and 1849, the latter when he was seventy-three years old! During his early years as head of the firm he seems to have averaged about two trips a year.
  22. Smith alluded to such activity in his diaries. His numerous trips to London during the 1840s, especially those regarding Black Sluice drainage matters in Parliament, he detailed in both his diary and separate London journals, which remain in the possession of Hugh Gould Smith.
  23. The Langdales are mentioned prominently in the article by Schmidt on Kelham in *The London Journal*, mentioned above, and the detailed account of the Langdales in Schmidt, 'The Smith-Kelham-Langdale nexus: country attorneys, family connections, and London business in the early nineteenth century' in *Lincolnshire History & Archaeology*, 29 (1994), pp.17-27.
  24. The Langdale account appeared for the first time in the Smith ledger in 1803, the year that Smith reorganized the firm's accounts, and remained there as long as Smith was active in the firm. See L.A.O. Smith 11/Firm's Business, Ledgers A-B, 1803ff., *passim*. Langdale transactions also figured in Smith's separate London account books, which he kept from 1837 to 1852.
  25. Marmaduke Robert's marriage in 1812 to Louisa (1792-1863), the second daughter and co-heiress of George Jourdan of Guilford Street, produced four sons. The Marmaduke Robert Langdales resided at 38 Gower Street, Bedford Square, Bloomsbury and Garston House, Godstone, Surrey.
  26. These quotes are from Smith's diary summary of 1850.
  27. He remained so until Smith relinquished the business fully to him, working out a settlement, dated 3 August 1854. This document, formerly in the possession of Harry Bowden, was lost in the transfer of papers to the L.A.O. This author retains a photocopy.
  28. This chronology of partners who succeeded Benjamin Smith II is largely derived from the compilation of Managing Clerk James Joseph Cooper, whose sixty years of service to the Smith firm covered many of those when Harry Bowden was senior partner (*The Firm now called B. Smith & Co: Solicitors of Horbling and Donington 17... to 1761; 1761-1936*). Despite the valuable information in this piece, there are numerous errors. Cooper did, incidentally, have access to the Benjamin Smith II diaries from 1811 to 1817, now lost. He did not, however, see those from 1799 to 1811. The chronology, used by the Smith firm as late as 1999, is a modified version of Cooper's rendering. Harry Bowden probably used the Cooper outline when he, too, sketched the firm's history in an undated (but probably early 1980s) piece entitled 'Some notes on the firm of B. Smith & Co: lawyers practising in south Lincolnshire from circa 1760.' Hereafter cited as Harry Bowden, *Smith firm notes*. The locations of the partners' residences remain uncertain. Wiles lived in Horbling Hall until his death. Hugh Smith (letter of 22 May 1995) mentioned that as a child he, too, had resided in Horbling Hall which his paternal grandfather, Benjamin III, acquired after George Wiles died. Hugh (letter of 4 October 1992) further observed that the author of the reference in the *Shell Guide Book* calls Horbling Hall a 'Victorian-Tudor villa' and wonders whether it was a nineteenth-century creation built, possibly, by Wiles.
  29. There was still another partner during these years, but his tenure was brief. He was James Bedford who was a partner from February until June, 1915, when he died.
  30. 'Smith of Horbling', *Archivists' Report* 13 (from 21 March 1961 to 20 March 1962), p.38.
  31. Bowden, *Smith firm notes*. These are in the present author's possession. Whether another copy exists is unknown.
  32. Letter from Alice (Mrs Harry) Bowden, dated 13 April 2002.
  33. pp.69-71.
  34. *Archivists' Report* 13, 1961-62, p.32. Despite the size of this deposit it seems not to have attracted much notice for more than two decades, that is, until it was uncovered by this author who was at the time researching English legal history. In the early 1950s Schmidt had begun researching at the L.A.O., when it was still housed in the Exchequer Gate in Lincoln. After his initial visit in the autumn of 1952 he returned periodically over the next half century gathering materials on one topic or another. In the summer of 1983 he came upon the Smith of Horbling papers. A year later, when he returned to Lincoln to examine these papers more thoroughly, he met Harry Bowden. Bowden shared with Schmidt his knowledge of the firm's history as well as important Smith personal papers, most notably the Benjamin Smith II diaries. Schmidt, in turn, tracked down Kelham and Langdale descendants and established the connection between those two families and the Smiths. The consequence was Schmidt's publishing the articles cited above which identified the Smith firm as an example *par excellence* of the kind of country law firm which was a crucial player in England's economy during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. See the reference to the Schmidt's publications by Guy Holborn, *Sources of Biographical Information on Past Lawyers* (Warwick, 1999), p.144.
  35. Red Hall was demolished in the 1960s; on its site Bowden built his own home which he occupied until his retirement to Spalding.
  36. Schmidt had accompanied Bowden to the L.A.O. in the early 1990s to arrange for the diary transfer which took place just before just before Bowden died. This author's final visit with Bowden, in the summer of 1997, occurred just after his having presented a paper on the Smith firm at the Thirteenth Legal History Conference at Trinity Hall, Cambridge.
  37. Letter to author dated 18 March 2002.
  38. The author acknowledges the contribution of P. L. Cropley, Esq., the Chatterton Senior Partner, to this conclusion. His informative letter of 15 April 2002 and his having sent to me a copy of *Chattertons: The Development of the Solicitor in Horncastle* (Horncastle, 1997) and the so-called 'Storyboard' account of the firm form the basis for this conclusion. In his letter Mr Cropley observed that Chatterton's, which had begun in the town of Horncastle, continues to operate there and in Boston and Sleaford.
  39. He died 26 March 1981 at the age of eighty-four, p.38.
  40. Chatterton 'Storyboard', p.1.