



Number **Twenty-Seven** **March 2024**

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Butterley Display

With support from a grant from Ripley Town Council, we have provided six large display boards for the premises of Distinct Bathrooms, situated in the old Pattern Shop of the Butterley site. See the cover picture.

The owners were keen to display images relating to the history of the site, and we took the opportunity to provide some of the history of Butterley to visitors to the site. I'm sure they wouldn't mind if you popped in to have a look, even if you have no intention of refitting your bathroom!

BIT Update

The Butterley Ironworks Trust continue to do what they can to save some of the Butterley site and promote its use as a heritage attraction.

They have recently been talking with Ripley Town Council about a joint plan to take on responsibility for the blast furnace wall to develop it as a heritage asset.

A condition of the planning permission for the site is that the wall is preserved. The owners' agent have been very active and have secured Scheduled Monument Consent to repair the wall. No actual work will be undertaken until AVBC agree to progress the planning permission.

Meanwhile, the deterioration of the rest of the site (with the exception of the Pattern Shop which is occupied by businesses) continues.



50 Years of Amber Valley

Along with other local heritage groups we have been asked to help with the celebrations for Amber Valley Borough Council's 50th anniversary.

It helps that the venue for the celebrations is a few yards from our room in the Town Hall! We will be putting on a display and helping to explain the history of making in the area at the public event on 6th April from 10am to 2pm.

Why not pop in and see us? (I think we are the “shedders” referred to in the ad)

The Making of Amber Valley 50 years of Amber Valley Borough Council



Join your community in a celebration of Amber Valley!

As Amber Valley Borough Council marks its 50th birthday, **Ripley Market Place** will play host to a day of celebrations on **Saturday 6 April 2024**.

A programme of live entertainment will be provided by movers, shakers, dancers and musicians from across Amber Valley's communities, and there's an invitation for YOU to get involved and join in with the free interactive activities on offer for everyone.

Come along between **10am and 2pm** to be part of the fun, and leave your mark by helping to fill a very special community art installation with hand-crafted figures representing the wonderful people who make our beautiful Amber Valley all that it is today.

Not-for-profit arts organisation [Furthest from the Sea](#), mischief makers [Maison Foo Theatre](#), and local community makers, sewers, growers and shedders are collaborating with [Make/Shift](#) and Amber Valley Borough Council to deliver a birthday party to remember.

MAKE/SHIFT



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

Live Acts at the Empire and the Hippodrome

Ripley's two cinemas, the Empire and the Hippodrome, were opened in 1912 and 1913 respectively, and lasted for almost a hundred years.

In their early days, however, they did not limit themselves to merely showing films: there were regular live acts too. This was partly because the early films were silent and also quite short and so didn't fill a programme, but also because there were a large number of music-hall acts available for booking, usually for a week's performances, travelling round the combined theatres/cinemas, all over the country. Sarah Marshall, the wife of John Marshall, the owner of the Hippodrome, even rented out rooms above the Marshall shops in Oxford Street for visiting artistes.

The programme from their opening to around the late 1920s (when longer better films and the advent of the talkies put an end to live acts) usually included a singer, a comedian and often some form of novelty act. The ad below is for the Hippodrome from the Ripley and Heanor News of 19th December 1913.

Starring Engagement of
FRED PULLAN & MAY WOOD.
The Refined Comedy Duo, from South African
Tour, Queen's Hall, and Crystal Palace, London.

GLOBELLO.
The World's Greatest Globe Juggling Act.

For 3 Nights Only. Pleasing Engagement of
JACK MILLS.
(Late of Ripley), Comedy Bar and Trapeze Act.
Come and see the Local Ripleyite who has a
great Future before him.

FRED PULLAN.
In his Extraordinary Female Impersonations.

Secured at Enormous Expense,
WALKER'S COMEDY
ELEPHANT 'BOLIVOR.'
The Great Comedy Animal Acts.

Researching these acts is difficult : there were hundreds if not thousands of them, and they often appeared under different names and in different combinations.

However, the review in the Ripley and Heanor News tells us that Fred Pullan and May Wood “won the appreciation of Monday night’s audience with “A Rough Diamond” and later caused roars of laughter in the skit of the society lady and the shopwalker – a sketch full of humour but without even a suggestion of suggestiveness.” It sounds as though many other sketches were indeed rather suggestive!

Unusually, there are also pictures of the performers available online.



Fred Pullan and May Wood



Fred Pullan in one of his female impersonator roles.

James Gration Update

James, or Jim, Gration was the son of a local miner, and in 1911 was working as a flour miller's carter and living in Buckland Hollow. He married a little bit up in the world, to John Marshall's daughter Edith in 1914.

He was given the job of managing the new Hippodrome theatre and cinema, opened in 1913.

Nevertheless, in 1916 he enlisted, and had a distinguished military career, being awarded the DCM in 1918. He was killed in action on 24th March 1918. His body was not found, and at first it was thought that he had been captured. He was later commemorated on the Arras memorial for those with no known grave.

However, recently a researcher was able to identify some remains found in France as those of Sergeant Gration, and, after careful checking by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, they have now been reburied in a marked grave in Lebusquiere Cemetery.



The photograph, by John Marshall, shows Jim and Edith in the Zoo gardens in Oxford Street.

Then and Now: Church Street....



....and Oxford Street

