



Cardiff Model Engineering Society

During my research on questions for the Quiz I came across the following items about our Site so I have collected them together for general background information for the Members. *The articles and pictures are not ours and hence must not be used externally.*



The photograph above, supplied by the Welsh Government Aerial Photography Unit, is a highly magnified portion of the 1950 aerial photograph found on this site and shows Heath House on 16th August 1950.

Having acquired a substantial estate in the area the Lewis family built a mansion, Heathfield House, at sometime between 1835 and 1840.^[1] This later became known as Heath House, and other than a few cottages it was the only building on the Heath until the 1890s, when the Lewis estate began urban development, starting with Allensbank Road and Whitchurch Road. Other landowners also leased their land for residential and commercial development, and by the mid twentieth century the only remaining open space was Heath House and its surrounding parkland.

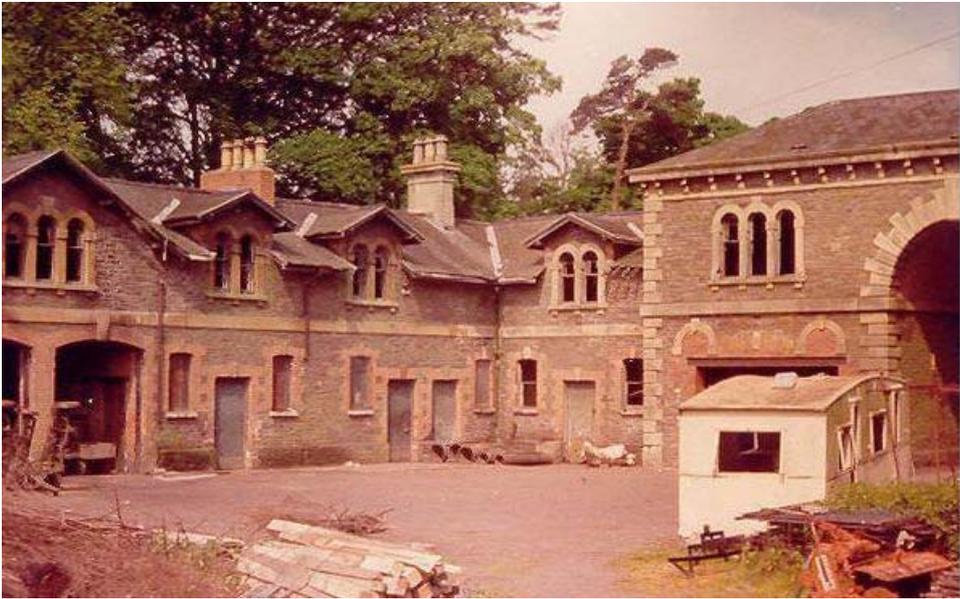
Heath House as shown on the 1901 Ordnance Survey map included "*walled garden, possible summerhouse, parterres, woodland, parkland, orchard, lodge, isolated geometric copses, carriage drive, formal garden, greenhouses and pond.*"^[2]

The house and land were bought by the Cardiff Council in 1938, preserving for recreational use the space which became the present day Heath Park. Prior to its acquisition by the Council, Heath House was the headquarters of a haulage business run by Mr George Tucker. This business was founded in 1913 and Mr Tucker took a long lease on Heath House early in the development of his business. He adapted the extensive outhouses as garages and workshops.^[3]

After the 1939-45 war, plans were prepared to use the mansion as a recreation centre.^{[4],[5]} In February 1947 it was agreed to serve notice on George Tucker to vacate Heath House in order that it could be utilised as a Recreation Centre for Gabalfa.^[6] He vacated the house on 31st December 1948 and the yard and out-buildings in March 1949.^[7] Later that year (by which time the business had been nationalised) Tucker's Transport was operating from premises in Newport Road.^[8]

The large lawn in front of Heath House was in regular use in the 1950s for summer events: for example in July 1954 the Heath Citizens Association held a garden party there^[9] and on two dates in July 1956 the Boy Scouts Association held sports events there.^[10] The outbuildings were adapted for use as changing accommodation for the playing fields.^[11]

The house became the responsibility of the Education Committee and was rented by the Heath Citizens Association for about 15 years until October 1964. The following year, in November 1965, the roof and interior were destroyed by fire.^[12] The report in the South Wales Echo described Heath House as "*the derelict 20-roomed house*" and stated that the Citizens Association had moved to new premises when its condition "*became too bad to remain there.*" The Parks Committee agreed to urge the Education Committee to expedite the demolition of the house,^[13] but not the outbuildings, as these were being used as machine sheds and changing rooms.^[14] The house was not actually demolished until 1980, and in the meantime the ruined building was used unofficially as changing accommodation for the playing fields.^[14]







Nationalization Ends 35 Years of Effort in Haulage

DECEMBER 31 1948 was the end of 35 years in transport for Mr. George Tucker, Heath, Cardiff. At midnight on that date, his 25 vehicles, ranging from 5-tonners up to 15-ton eight-wheelers, went under State control as a result of one of the first compulsory acquisition orders to be issued,

All that he retains are two vehicles operated under C licences, which he will use in farm work.

Compensation has not yet been agreed, but as Messrs. Tuckers Transport is one of the first undertakings to be acquired, the final figure agreed will probably set a precedent for future acquisitions.

"I can so, with satisfaction that in my 35 years in the business, the only time I have had to record a loss on the year's trading was in 1944," Mr. Tucker said this week. "We were operating under Ministry instructions then, and lost £1,100."

The business was founded in 1913 with horsed transport, and graduated to its present form through steam-driven vehicles. Promising quick deliveries, trade has spread from regular South Wales-Covent Garden ruffs to take in ship store deliveries, steel and tinplate loads.

"One thing of which we boast," Mr. Tucker added, "is that there have been no bottlenecks in the business. Our experience has ensured that very little waiting was necessary for return loads, and we have been able to ensure that all our drivers had every Sunday at home."

The staff of 40, with periods of service ranging up to 27 years, came under Ministry control on December 31. As drivers returned from their runs after this date, they reported to the garage, in Newport Road, Cardiff, acquired by the State when All-British Carriers, Ltd., agreed to voluntary nationalization about six months ago.

The firm's headquarters was in a country house, taken by Mr. Tucker on a long lease early in the development of his business, and situated in the centre of what is now one of Cardiff's public parks. Extensive outhouses had been adapted as garages and workshops.

Drivers will in future work a 44-hour week without overtime, Mr. Tucker has been informed. There will also be a difference in some running schedules. Where, by working overtime, loads had gone from South Wales in a day, drivers will now stop at High Wycombe or some other intermediate point.

"I have contested this acquisition as far as I was able," Mr. Tucker concluded. "and I accept the fact...that there is nothing further I can do."