

One hundred years ago a woman who had built a life, a family, a business and even a church in Belper came to the end of her life. **Sarah Ann Neaum**, born in 1846 without a father, became a leading member of the Belper community, together with **James Bakewell**, born 1844.

Sarah was the first daughter of the unmarried 24 year old lace maker Mary Martin in the village of Stanley, Derbyshire. Originally an agricultural area, by the late 19th Century the main local employer was the coal industry, although brickmaking and some quarrying also took place. In childhood she lived with her mother in the home of her grandfather John Martin, who progressed from a farm labourer to farmer of 14 acres. She had a 7 year younger brother, **William Martin (1844-1908)**, who was a coal miner at the Stanley Pit until he died aged 41. Samuel Roberts Bakewell was an engineman at the same pit. In 1861, Sarah, 15 was a servant at Slater's Castle Farm at Horsley. The following year she moved to Belper and started working at Strutts mill. Within a year she had found a husband.

11 September 1862, Sarah Ann married 23 year old master baker **John Neaum** (1839-1877), at the Independent Chapel. Although aged 16, Sarah claimed to be 21 and the daughter of the deceased journeyman tailor James Martin. Perhaps this was fabricated to hide she was a minor and was born outside wedlock. Sarah's witness was a Samuel Martin. In 1902, she appointed Samuel Martin, accountant as her executor, together with James Bakewell. Samuel since his 20's had been a writing clerk living at The Clusters, Belper. However, there is no record of a Samuel in the family home.

John's witness was his cousin Sarah Ann Neaum, who was about the age as Sara Ann Martin. Six years later, cousin Sarah would marry into the Derby silk manufacturing Dyer family, and her daughter Mary Maud would marry the son of the self-made mayor of Derby Sir Abraham Woodiwiss and her son Allen Hedley married the daughter of the Yorkshire brewer Rueben Senior, two years after he left the equivalent of £8.2 million. Did the cousins remain friends or was there family social rivalry?

John Neaum was the grandson of **John Neaum (1796-1852)** who had arrived in Belper as orphan 52 years before. Within 15 years of arriving Belper, John had married Anne Holmes, had three sons, Joel (1817), Mathew (1820) and William (1821) and become a Superintendent at Strutts Mill, living in Long Row. In 1833, he left Strutts to be a beer filler and grocer at the Land of Promise inn on Bridge Street. Until 1820s alehouses were not purpose built. Friendly societies and other village clubs meet in respectable pubs. For example the Belper Baptists first meet in the "George and Dragon" inn which is still a local public house on August 24th, 1817. In 1830, the ratio of alehouses to population in England was 1:282.

John Neaum, together with 70 other manufacturers and tradesmen (led by the Strutts and G. Brettell & Co) attend a meeting in the evening of 11 February 1839 at the School House, Long Row. They signed a petition for the repeal of the corn Laws. The National Archives hold letters from the Magistrates of Belper, dated 30 March, to Lord John Russell, Home Secretary, reporting the provision of Special Constables and a troop of lancers to deal with anticipated Chartist disturbances and that an ill feeling exists in the town between men employed on the North Midland Railway and workmen erecting the Poor Law Union Workhouse. The Chartist public meeting at Market-Place on 1 April promoted by the Working Men's Association passed peacefully.

In 1837, Joel Neaum married Sarah Gould aged 17. She was the illiterate daughter of John Gould, a cordwainer (shoemaker). **Joel Neaum** served in the Belper Militia as Quarter Master Sargent Rifleman, and was a guard at the Great Exhibition Hyde Park, when he was 34 years old. He renamed the Land of Promise, which stands opposite to the Baptist Chapel, as the Rifleman Arms.

Husband **John Neaum (1839-77)** was born at 9 Berkins Court and by 1871 was an established baker at 23 Belper Lane, Scotches when they married.

When John died aged 38, Sarah found herself a widow with 7 children, the eldest being 13 and the youngest just one. She did not despair. She set to run the bakery, with the help of the two elder sons. Twenty years later, *SA Neaum's Machine, Steam and Hot Air Bakery* was granted the patent for the sole right to manufacture this "special improvement in Bread making ..the Demand for Neaum's (Fletcher's Patent) Digestive Bread increases week by week." Mrs Neaum has two retail shops , on King Street just a few yards above the railway bridge on the left, and on Bridge Street was past the Field Lane turning. She actively worked the bakery. On 5 July 1881, she was knocked from her cart whilst conveying bread by a runaway horse and cart which had bolted from the Lion Hotel.

With the same business like spirit, Sarah, Belper's leading baker, led the building of the new Baptist Church. Mr James Bakewell, Belper's leading grocer, promised £300 if the church could raise £700. This was done with many bazaars and collections, and a loan obtained for £1,000. The work on the present church, which cost over £2,000 was begun in 1893 . On the 7 August 1893, the two foundation stones were laid, recognizing Mrs S.A. Neaum and Samuel Bakewell of Kilbourne, honouring James's father, who died 18 months later. The gothic style church with twin towers was completed the following year.

The children of Sarah and John Neaum were:

Fred (1864-1934) was the pastry cook and confectioner at Neaum's Café in 35 King Street and on Bridge Street near the Triangle, close to Long Row Belper. He was an active member of Belper Fanciers Association.

Walter (1867-1928) carried on the family bakery at 23 Belper Lane. His son was **Martin Burrell Neaum** (1909-1998) was also a Master Baker and a member of Derby Aero Club and flew a Auster 5 in the 1940s.

Arthur (1869-1936) became a lithographic draughtsman and then a partner in Bingham & Neaum, Printers, Wood Street , Derby which was bought by McMillian Limited in 1919. In 1910, he was living at Mill Lane.

Alice Mary (1870-1956) who married Thomas Brooks Shorthose in 1892. She was well educated, stern and worn laced up Lobb boots on her small feet. The only card game which she would allow in the house was Lexicon, because it was educational. When her nephew brought her a new black and white television as a gift, Alice refused to have it in the house after being offended by the long legged Tiller girls during Sunday Night at The Palladian.

Ernest (1872-1883) died at the age of 11.

Arnold (1875-1944) who carried on the family bakery at Belper Lane. He married Alice Boot and had two daughters Joan and Joyce.

Florence Effie (1876-1940) who married **Captain Lewis Clarke Bakewell (1876-1937)** in October 1901. Both were 25 years old. In the March Florence and her future mother in law, Sarah Ellen Key, daughter of a boatman from Heage, sailed from Liverpool to the islands of Madeira, Tenerife and Grand Canary on the Steam Ship Jebba. Lewis was the First Mate. In the same year, he gained his master's ticket. Once married, they lived at the substantial house at 6 The Orchard. Captain Lewis joined the family grocery business.

His grandfather **Samuel Roberts Bakewell** (1818-1895) had been an engineman in the Stanley-Kilbourne mine until his mid 50s. By 1871, he had also become a grocer, and then helped his son James with the grocer business as a carter.

Captain Bakewell was the son of **James Bakewell** (1844- 1940) of The Elms, Elms Row off Field Lane. The Row is now an entrance to a large car park. He brought the first motor car, CH218, in Belper. He had developed Bakewell Bros, wholesale grocer and provisions merchant of Market Place and Bridge Street, Belper. James and Sarah Ellen initially lived in the Market Place, and had the four children in addition to Lewis Clarke:

Samuel Robert , born 1870, who became an architect and surveyor and seems to have moved away.

Charles Henry, born 1874, who retired on the South Coast after a career as a customs officer.

John Ernest, born 1881, who also became a Customs & Excise official in Sussex and then Cheshire.

Frances Alice, born 1882, married William Morton and remained in Belper until her death in 1956.

When Sarah Neaum died at the end of 1915, she left £2,930 (equivalent £290,000 in current terms) to her children.