



NEW BOLSOVER AND A FAMOUS DEPARTMENT STORE: A TENUOUS LINK?

There's a tenuous link between New Bolsover and a famous Newcastle department store – Bainbridge – now part of the John Lewis Partnership.

Emerson Muschamp Bainbridge, (1845-1911) at whose behest New Bolsover model village was constructed for the Bolsover Colliery Company in the 1890s, might be described as a non-conformist Liberal. As managing director of the Bolsover Colliery Company, he tried to ensure that his worker's conditions were improved with such developments as New Bolsover, later Creswell and other developments by the company.

His Father, also Emerson Muschamp (1817-1892), created the famous Bainbridge department store in Newcastle-Upton-Tyne – credited with being the first such store of its kind. After an early partnership failed Bainbridge brought in a cousin John Bell Muschamp in the early 1840s. Emmerson was the sole proprietor of the store by 1850.

The business prospered, becoming a well-loved and important part of the Newcastle economy and shopping scene. In the early 1950s ownership transferred to the John Lewis Partnership, who have continued to invest in the business – which still trades albeit under the partnership brand in the Eldon Square shopping centre.

Bainbridge junior must have taken note of his father's actions towards his employees. At Newcastle, Bainbridge senior was interested in the welfare of his employees. Though conditions were harsh, many of his staff lived in a well-furnished hostel near to his Newcastle department store.

At New Bolsover and elsewhere, Bainbridge junior made sure his workers were provided with leisure facilities, allotments and that there were places of worship and even an orphanage. For the time, the development was well-designed, with plenty of space, but is not really typical of the late 19th century workers' housing, which generally comprised monotonous terraces and poor welfare provision.

For further details on Emmerson Bainbridge senior's activities, the department store he founded and its links with the John Lewis Partnership see:

https://johnlewismemorystore.org.uk/content/branch_finder/branches_a-b/bainbridges/early_days-6-2/humble_beginnings-6

The picture below of Emmerson Muschamp Bainbridge junior is taken from the 'Black and White Parliamentary Album of 1895' –

<https://ia800305.us.archive.org/34/items/blackwhiteparli00compgoog/blackwhiteparli00compgoog.pdf> – when was MP for Gainsborough.

