



WHO DESIGNED NEW BOLSOVER?

Comments from to our November 2020 Derbyshire VCH Facebook page regarding Percy Bond Houfton's involvement in the design of New Bolsover, warrant a revisit of this interesting architect. He has usually been credited with designing and planning much of New Bolsover, for the Bolsover Colliery Company.

PB Houfton's obituary in the *Derbyshire Times* of 22 May 1926, seems to confirm that he may not have been as involved in designing and planning New Bolsover, as has usually been stated. The crucial comment is; '...Bolsover Model Village had been built by a Notts firm...'. It would seem likely that this firm is Brewill & Baily, Nottinghamshire architects. To them has been ascribed the cooperative store, now demolished Bolsover Colliery Company school, the former Institute and Bainbridge Hall – a former company orphanage.

Whether or not PB Houfton had some hand in the development in his one-time role in the drawing office at the Bolsover Colliery Company (who had New Bolsover constructed) is not known. His obituary states he had employment there early in his career.

In a brief biography of PB Houfton in *Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire at the Opening of the Twentieth Century: Contemporary Biographies*, edited by W.T. Pike and published in 1901, PB Houfton is not mentioned as having involvement with New Bolsover village. Conversely the account says that PB Houfton (through his then practice Houfton and Johnson) was engaged on the 'Boy's Orphanage' – Bainbridge House – usually ascribed to Brewill & Bailey of Nottingham!

Though it is not entirely clear from Pike's biography of PB Houfton or that of John Plowright Houfton, general manager of the Bolsover Colliery Company, in the same publication, they were, according to the *Derbyshire Times* 1926 obituary cousins.

You can find more about the two Houftons, including a copy of the *Derbyshire Times* obituary of PB Houfton, on our Explore website under our asset tab 'The Houftons'

<https://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/explore/items/houftons>

Our thanks to Wendy Stevenson and others for their comments, through our Derbyshire VCH Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/DerbyshireVCH>