

EXTENT OF SOROCOLD'S WATER SUPPLY AT DERBY.

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I N this Society's *Journal* for 1936 (Vol. LVII), the I present writer tried to summarize all that was known of George Sorocold of Derby, one of the pioneers of civil engineering in England, and particularly noted for his practical work in water supply. It has since become abundantly clear that less than justice has been done to Sorocold and other contemporary engineers some of whom were associated with him in a few of his undertakings, and students of industrial history are anxious to find out more and more about these men.

The dates and places of Sorocold's birth and death are still unknown, but about twenty references to members of the Sorocold family have come to light in the parish registers of Winwick, four miles north of Warrington in Lancashire, showing connections with the Sorocolds of Barton near Manchester, of which branch we assumed George to belong.¹

Although we know little more than we did about the man himself, a document has now turned up which throws light on the extent of Sorocold's water supply at Derby. This is in the form of a notebook containing details of the wooden supply-pipes which carried water from Sorocold's water-works through the streets of Derby. The notebook has been for many years in the possession of Mr. Sidney Thompson of Derby, who has kindly allowed a transcript of it to be made and to be printed, for which privileges thanks are tendered.

In the agreement made in 1692 between the Corporation of Derby and George Sorocold only five streets are

¹ MS. details of all Sorocold references have been placed in the Derby Ref Lib. = Author.

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named, all lying between the River Derwent and Markeaton Brook. We now see that the pipes were carried through no fewer than twenty-three streets, so that Bagshaw's² statement that there were four miles of pipes must have been very near the mark. Moreover pipes were carried over the Markeaton Brook in three places, over Sadler Gate bridge to Friar Gate and the Wardwick, over the Gaol Bridge to St. Peter's St., past Bag Lane (East Street) and the pipes in the Morledge were probably taken down Tenant St., and over Tenant St. bridge.

Not only does the notebook include a complete account of the streets supplied from Sorocold's installation, but also describes the course followed, by pipes from Becket Well, which is said to be in "a close at the back of the Calvinist Meeting House", across Markeaton Brook along St. James' St. to the "Reserver" near the end of the Town Hall "where the pump stands".

The diameters of the pipes in the various streets are given, and the distances from definite well-described points are given in feet and inches but the names of subscribers are not given. The pipes vary in diameter from one inch to four and a half inches thick. This presumably refers to the bore of the pipes.

The same notebook contains particulars of the siting of the "Suffs", soughs or drains through the streets, measurements being taken from the same points as were those of the pipes.

Although the list was not completed until 1799, more than a hundred years after the supply was installed, there is no evidence to suggest that it does not show the system substantially as put in by Sorocold. Since the end of the 17th century the town had grown considerably and the population exceeded 10,000, but none of the new streets had been supplied with pipes, which were still confined to the ancient parts of the borough.

There is no difficulty in identifying the streets through which the water-pipes ran, as there have been few changes of name since they were installed. Among names which have disappeared are Leather Lane, Nanny Tags Lane, Rotten Row and Bag Lane. These and other names are

² *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Derbyshire*, 1846, p. 81.

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more fully discussed in a paper on "Old Derby Street Names" by the present writer in *D.A.J.*, Vol. LXIII, 1942.

The notebook is 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ ins. x 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ ins., twelve leaves, the last three blank, with cover of thicker paper. Front cover "The Suffs and Pipes in the Town of Derby taken July 25th, 1799, by Charles Labin, Surveyor, Derby". On the back cover an engraved figure of a man in riding dress, bare headed and carrying a riding switch under his left arm. Beneath is the following inscription: "A REVD MACARONI. Pubd Accor' to Act Oct 1t 1773 by M. Darly 39 Strand".

Matthew Darley was a printseller and caricaturist; he and his wife Mary were engravers, they flourished about 1770.

The Oxford Dictionary (s.v. 2) describes a Macaroni as a type of fop or dandy which arose in England about 1760 and took its name from the Macaroni Club.

The title on p. 1 reads:

"The Enginneer Guide to the Suffs and Pipes in the Town of Derby in the Streets and Lanes from the Engine to Different Parts of the town, by Charles Lakin, Derby, Surveyor July 15th 1779, by order of M^r Chambers.'

Index or An Alphabetical List of the Streets and Lanes
with the Suffs and Pipes in the same.

St. Alkmunds Churchyard	1	Nany Tags Lane	17
Amen Alley	2	St. Peters Street	18
Bridgegate the uper end	3	Queen Street	19
Bridgegate the lower end	4	Rotten Rowe	20
Bold Lane	5	Sadler Gate	21
Cornmarket	6	Ward Wick	22
Full Street	7	Walker Lane	23
Fryer Gate	8	The Cundit Pipes	
Iron Gate	9	the first from the	
St. James Lane	10	Cundy or well	
King Street	11	Down the Close	2
Leather Lane	12	a long by Calvinist Well	3
Market Place	13	Crosses the Bruck	4
St. Mary Gate	14	St. James Lane	5
Morlidge	15	Corn Market	6
St. Michaels Lane	16	Leather Lane	7