

## **The Parkers of Rantergate (Now the Framework Knitters' Museum)**

One branch of the Parker family, a long-established village family, lived from 1829-1929 in Chapel Street Ruddington.

This unique surviving complex of buildings comprises a complete nineteenth-century knitters' yard representing a transitional stage between the domestic and factory systems of textile production and is now the Ruddington Framework Knitters Museum

The cottages and original workshops were actually built in 1829 and occupied from the start by the Parkers who progressed from being framework knitters (1841 and 1851 censuses) to hosiers (1871 census) and "hosiery manufacturer" (1905 obituary). Samuel originally rented his premises while his son William grew to being a major employer who purchased the site and enlarged the frameshops so that, at full capacity, they could contain fifty frames and he was said to employ 150 people.

The family played a prominent part in the life of the village. Samuel was selected to give evidence to the 1845 Parliamentary Enquiry into the Conditions of Framework Knitters. William was one of the group of seven people who founded the Ruddington Co-operative Society in 1860 (one of the first in Nottinghamshire), was a trustee of the Primitive Methodist chapel (opposite his home and now part of the Museum) and played a leading part on the parish council. John, the third and final generation of the family to live in the cottages, was a bag hosier who did his best to continue a dying industry, superseded by factory mechanisation. He was a founder member of the Ruddington Liberal Club and served on the Co-operative Society committee. When he died in 1929, at the end of an era, the Parker family had occupied the Chapel Street site for exactly 100 years.

It is to be expected that a family of this standing would be involved in the thriving Ruddington friendly society movement and, along with Samuel's elder brother (who continued the family joinery business that lasted until 1963)

and George from another village branch of the family, they indeed were. More work needs to be done but the table shows the friendly society links identified to-date.

(With acknowledgement to "The Parkers of Rantergate" by Dorothy M. Shrimpton: RFKM 1989.)