

CHARLES MARKHAM (1823-1888)

An old Northampton family, the Markhams were well known for their association with the law. Charles, however, broke with tradition, studied chemistry at Edinburgh University and went on to devote his life to engineering.

Whilst working as Assistant Super-Intendant to the Midland Railway Company at Derby, Charles perfected a device to change over the firing of locomotives from coke to coal. He later went on to meet and form a partnership with Richard Barrow, the owner of Staveley Works. Together they formed the Staveley Coal and Iron Company and opened no fewer than twenty collieries, with a work force of over 4,000. Charles acted as both Managing Director and Chief Engineer.

During his time at Staveley, Markham was keen to promote the health and welfare of his workforce. The Company provided workers' cottages, day and evening classes, a library, a church, several chapels, a medical service and annual subscriptions to local schools. Markham was also a keen supporter of the Chesterfield and North Derbyshire Hospital, which received an annual income from his company. Charles was forced into retirement by ill-health in 1886 and died in 1888.

