

## **Herbert Arthur Couchman – Architect of Bass Maltings**



*Herbert Arthur Couchman 1863-1941*

The Maltings at Sleaford are considered by many, including Couchman himself, to be his finest work.

The construction was overseen by Herbert Arthur Couchman, Bass' chief engineer and architect who was born in Tottenham, London on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1863, the son of a Civil Engineer and Surveyor.

By 1881, aged 17 and living at 7 Stanley Villas, Pembury Road in Tottenham, Herbert had followed in his father's footsteps and was an Apprentice Mechanical Engineer.

He married Marion Webb at St Ann's Church, Stamford Hill, Edmonton in 1891 and shortly after, moved to Burton on Trent where he became Bass' Chief Engineer, designing a series of breweries and maltings for the firm.

His first wife, Marion, died in 1899 leaving him with two young children under eight years old, Millicent (born 1892) and Cyril (born 1894). The care of the children was entrusted to his servant Lilian Pattinson, who was originally from Ruskington, near Sleaford.

By 1901, Herbert was overseeing not only the construction of the Maltings in Sleaford, but also the Plough Maltings in Burton on Trent

which were equipped with the latest drum malting machinery. Quite why this less labour-intensive method was not installed at Sleaford is a mystery.

In 1907, upon completion of the Maltings project, Herbert married his servant Lilian at Ruskington All Saints Church, and the couple later moved to Leominster in Herefordshire.

Herbert's son, Cyril, saw service in World War 1 as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in the North Staffs Regiment, though sadly he was killed in action in 1917.

Millicent later suffered a nervous breakdown from which she never recovered and took her own life by hanging herself in 1937.

Harold himself died in Leominster in 1941, leaving several charitable donations to local causes including the Hospital and Church.

As there were no other dependants, Lilian inherited the estate and lived in the family home until she died in 1949.