ACQUAINTANCES of WILSON WEATHERLEY PHIPSON

In 2002 the CIBSE Heritage Group produced a biography Wilson Weatherley Phipson, Victorian Engineer Extraordinary 1838-91, written and edited by Brian Roberts, Chairman of the Group. It was updated in 2006 and a limited number of copies printed. It ran to 142 pages with 63 illustrations and featured many of the Victorian hand-written Phipson documents in the Heritage Collection. An electronic book version was subsequently added to the Heritage web site. Further updates have been posted under Victorian Heating Engineers by Heritage Group Webmaster Frank Ferris.

While still a young boy Wilson Phipson was introduced to many influential people when his Father held open house at Ladywood. According to his A Memoir (an anonymous tribute after his death) these visitors included Sir Henry Bulwer, Thomas Carlyle, William Charles Macready, Dr Kennedy, Phillip Henry Muntz, Attwood, Tesseren de Bort, Scholfield and Charles Henfrey.

Mention is also made of the circle of friends he made as a young man in Belgium, including Earl Cowley, Prince George of Prussia, Baron von Rosenberg, Leloup, the Nagelmackers, Victor Eeckhout, Princess Charlotte and the Emperor Maximilian.

These people came from the arts, had banking connections, were Members of Parliament, engineers (many connected with the railways), the nobility and royalty.
Note that some name spellings in the Memoir are incorrect.

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THE ARTS CONNECTION

Thomas Carlyle 1795-1881. The famous Scottish writer, essayist and historian who Samuel Phipson is said “to have helped put on the map.” Carlyle moved to Cheyne Row in Chelsea in 1834.

William Charles Macready 1793-1873. A Scottish actor who made his debut in Birmingham in 1833 and went on to became famous as actor-manager at both Covent Garden and Drury Lane.
Victor Eeckhout 1821-79. An accomplished Belgium painter. Typical of his work is “Musicians of Tangier” (above).

THE POLITICAL CONNECTION

Sir Henry Bulwer MP 1801-72. Diplomat he married the daughter of Earl Cowley. He was a Liberal MP in 1830 and again in 1868.
Thomas Attwood MP 1783-1859 and his statue in Birmingham’s Highgate Park. He was a businessman and a banker who founded the Birmingham Political Union in 1830. He was a supporter of the Chartist Movement which led to the Parliamentary Reform Act of 1832, the same year that he was elected as a Liberal as Birmingham’s first MP.

Joshua Scholefield 1774-1844 was an iron manufacturer, merchant and banker being a Director of the National Provincial Bank of England. His younger son William was Birmingham’s first Mayor, its other Liberal MP from 1832 and a colleague of Thomas Attwood. The bank connection may be how Phipson came to provide the heating and ventilation for three branches of the National Provincial Bank of England.

Pierre Edmund Teisserenc de Bort 1814-92. French politician, writer and railway expert who became French Minister of Agriculture and Commerce 1872-73. (Not to be confused with his namesake Leon Philippe who was a pioneer of instrumented unmanned balloons and has craters on the Moon and on Mars named for him).
Philip Henry Muntz MP JP. Chaired Birmingham Political Union 1835, Was Mayor of Birmingham 1839-40, Liberal MP for Birmingham 1867 an made an Honorary Freeman of the City in 1888.. His Father, George Frederick Muntz MP 1794-1857 developed Muntz metal.
A CLIENT CONNECTION

Phipson while working on his many projects dealt mainly with architects he sometimes reported directly to the client.

Thomas Holloway 1800-83. A Victorian businessman and philanthropist who made his fortune from patent medicine (Holloway’s Pills) and funded both the Sanatorium and the College which bear his name. The Heritage Collection of Phipson papers include his hand written report of 28 August 1887 to Thos. Holloway Esq.,
RAILWAY CONNECTIONS

**Charles Henfrey 1818-91.** Civil Engineer who built the Dorking to Shalford section of railway line.

**Georges Nagelmackers 1845-1905** and an Orient Express poster of 1888. Born into a wealthy banking family he founded the Compagnie Internationale des Wagons Lits in Belgium in 1872.
Henry Richmond Charles Wellesley, 1st Earl Cowley KG KCB PC 1804-84.
Career diplomat serving as British Ambassador to Paris for 15 years. Instrumental in arranging for Phipson to attend the Ecole Imperiale des Ponts et Chaussees in Paris from 1854-56.
In 1857 Princess Charlotte of Belgium, 1840-1927 married Archduke Maximilian of Austria 1832-67. He accepted the position of Emperor of Mexico at the instigation of Napoleon III but his reign ended abruptly when in 1867 he was captured and shot during a civil war. Phipson composed a piano solo “Carillon des Noces” for Charlotte who kept the original. This which has been traced to Vienna and can be listened to on the Heritage Web Site.
Charlotte became Princess Carlota while the unfortunate Maximilian was executed by firing squad, depicted in Manet’s famous painting of 1868-69.