



The Church Street shop of Bembridge and Cox in the early twentieth century

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Face to Face Meetings Restart

We have begun to meet in person again, using a room in the AVCVS in the Market Place. It felt a bit odd at first, and of course if the situation changes, we may have to revert to Zoom, but overall it was a good experience. At the much delayed AGM, the following officers were appointed:

Chair : Peter Smith

Vice-Chair: Tim Castledine

Secretary : Eunice McCutcheon

Treasurer: Robert Grasar

Committee: Mike Frost, Sylvia Mason, Vera Riley, Jane Stephens

The meeting expressed its gratitude and thanks to the outgoing Treasurer and Secretary, Jane and Vera, for their dedication and hard work over the years. Jane will hand over to Robert at the end of the financial year.

We would also like to express our heartfelt thanks to Joyce Slack, the outgoing Chair, who took over the more or less defunct Trust in 2012 and remained Chair until ill health forced her to retire.

The next AGM will be on 12th April 2022 at 2.15pm, when a business meeting will also take place. There will be a meeting before then on Tuesday 25th January at 2.15pm in the AVCVS room. Mailing list members are welcome, but because the room is fairly small, they are asked to contact Peter before attending.

BIT Update

The Butterley Ironworks Trust, on the back of a successful crowdfunding venture, are working with Focus Consultant Group to obtain match funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This money will allow for a professional feasibility study and a plan for the use of parts of the site as a heritage asset.

Worton's Spot

We have had an enquiry recently about a house on Derby Road which is listed in a census as being in Worton's Spot, probably behind the old Rising Sun pub. If anyone has more information on this area, do get in touch.

Pentrich Revolution

Group Update

The Pentrich & South Wingfield Revolution Group was established in 2015 to prepare for the Bicentenary of the rising that took place in 1817. It became a charitable incorporated organisation in 2016.



The group exceeded their wildest expectations: their major exhibition ran for three months at the National Justice Museum in Nottingham and there were several mobile and temporary exhibitions in Derbyshire. They produced 21 circular walks around the villages that have a noticeable link with the rising and placed site boards in the majority of these villages.

One of the very first things they did was to commission 45 artists to create artworks which would tell the story visually. The paintings have played an invaluable part in the group's continuing projects. The paintings are used as covers for the 18 books that they have produced or re-published since 2015. The most recent book "The Pentrich Revolution Update' complements the others as it features all of the new information that the group has discovered since 2015. The book includes descriptions of many of the men and what happened to them after the failed revolution.

It was always suspected that the transported men took a plea bargain and the group have discovered three pieces of evidence which actually proves this. The 14 men were offered banishment to Australia as opposed to becoming convicts if they changed their not guilty plea to guilty. Unfortunately, but perhaps not surprisingly, this offer was reneged upon and on arrival to Australia the men were distributed as normal convicts. It took until 1835 for them to regain their freedom through absolute pardons by which time 4 had died and one had served his 14 year sentence.

The group hope eventually to create a permanent local exhibition to encourage descendants and interested people from all around the world to come and learn more about the hidden history of the Pentrich Revolution.'

To purchase any of the group's products contact

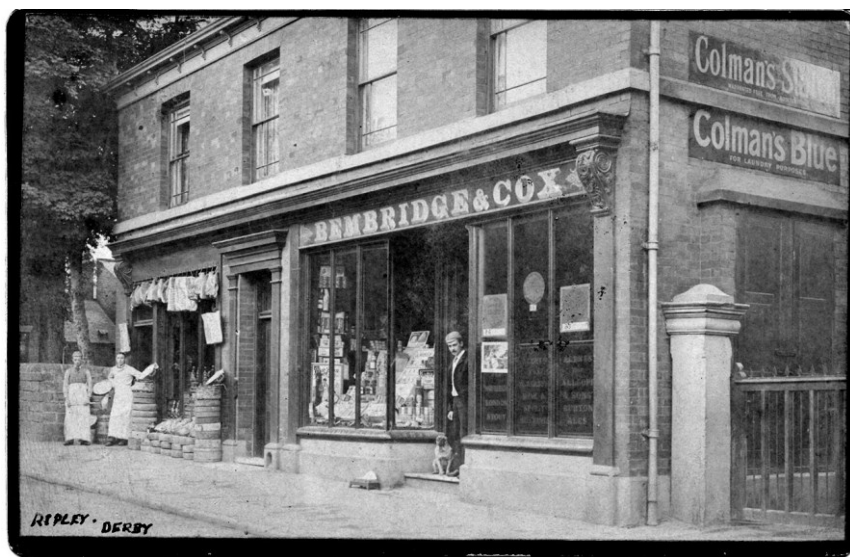
- pentrich1817sales@gmail.com or telephone 07511 303164

www.pentrichrevolution.org.uk - www.facebook.com/pentrichrevolution

Bembridge and Cox

A Grocers for over a Hundred Years : Ward, Bembridge and Cox and Stansby's

In the days of the independent family-run shop, parents usually handed their business to their children, or to close relatives. This is what happened with a particular Ripley grocer's shop, just down from the Church. Now we can see what they looked like, with the donation of some wonderful photographs from Rodney Smith.



The shop front around 1900

The family story began in Quorndon, Leicestershire, with the family of Joseph and Mary Ball. They had at least 10 children, and three of the daughters married grocers, creating a dynasty that lasted almost until the First World War.

Ann Ball and her husband Thomas Ward moved from Leicestershire to open a shop in Ripley, first on Nottingham Road then from 1831 on Church Street. As was often the case in the days without gas or electric lighting, they also made and sold candles, having a small factory at the back of the shop. In 1841, Ann's ten-year old niece Sophia Jackson was living with them.

Ten years later, their apprentice was Thomas Hutton Cox, who was to marry another niece, Eliza Spencer. Two more nephews are also living with them, as well as Sophia and the lodger she was to marry, William Bell Bembridge.

Both William Bembridge and Thomas Hutton Cox were to set up their own shops, and in 1857 they combined to take over the business upon Thomas Ward's death. Their shop was to remain in Ripley for over 50 years, and William Bembridge became a member of the Local Board, then of Ripley Urban District Council, and a magistrate. He and his wife had only one child who died in infancy,



The back of the shop

but their relatives Thomas Hutton Cox and his wife Eliza both died in their thirties, leaving five children to be looked after by the Bembridges.

In the early twentieth century, William Bembridge and his extended family lived in Scarsdale House, the large house on Cromford Road built by surgeon and brewery owner W. H. Fletcher for his head brewer. Horace Crossley preceded Bembridge as occupant of the house, whilst after he died, the house was used by a series of doctors as their residence and surgery.



On Bembridge's death in 1909, the shop was sold to Hugh Boden Stansby, who had a business on Nottingham Road. His shop, run by himself and his son, was to remain in business until 1956. The premises had housed a family-run grocers for a total of 125 years.

William Bell Bembridge

The Charm of the Herbalist

Ripley has a number of long-lived independent shops, but one of the longest lasting must have been Wilkinsons herbalists, which had a shop in the town for over a hundred years. It was started in the 1870s by David Wilkinson, a former stonemason from Crich: how he downed his chisel and became a herbalist is a mystery.

As early as 1884, he was in conflict with the medical establishment : in February of that year he was cited in a coroner's inquest on the death of Humphrey Shaw of Peasehill who, according to Marshall Hooper, the doctor who carried out a post-mortem, died of tuberculosis, but who had been treated by Mather, a herbal doctor in Derby, and Wilkinson for bronchitis. Dr Hooper did not think that the medicine supplied by the herbalist was poisonous, but it clearly didn't

help the patient. It was also pointed out that Wilkinson was attaching the initials M.B. at the end of his name, which he had no right to do.

He also apparently registered a patent "for the removal of tumours, abscesses, and other things", but was forced by the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain to accept its revocation.

After his death in 1897 the business was carried on by his son Henry, and from the 1920s by his grandsons David and Percy. At one time in the late 1930s, both David and Percy seem to have shops, one in Oxford Street and one in Chapel Street.

Herbal cures such as those sold by Wilkinsons have gone in and out of fashion over the years. Known since medieval times, in the late 19th century, they offered poor people a cheap alternative to the doctor; as the medical profession became more regulated, they were frowned upon as being unscientific and supplanted by chemists like that of John Wain, who came to Ripley in 1859.

Things came to a head for Percy Wilkinson, the third generation of the herbalists, in 1937 when he was accused of deliberately confusing the name of their shop with the word "pharmacy".

The 1933 Pharmacy and Poisons Act had determined that only registered and qualified pharmacists could advertise their shop as a pharmacy or chemist. When an inspector visited Wilkinsons, however, he found that in the sign "D. Wilkinson

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—

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—

All Kinds of Herbs, etc., kept in Stock,
and you will be assured of the Best
Advice,

—

Note the Address—
CHAPEL STREET, RIPLEY.

The Shop with the Experience behind it.
Proprietor: **DAVID H. WILKINSON.**

Advert from 1931

and Sons. The Herbal Charmacy”, the letter “C” in “Charmacy” was in Old English type, which made it look like a “P”. The British Pharmaceutical Society charged that it was a deliberate attempt to make people believe that the firm were qualified chemists.

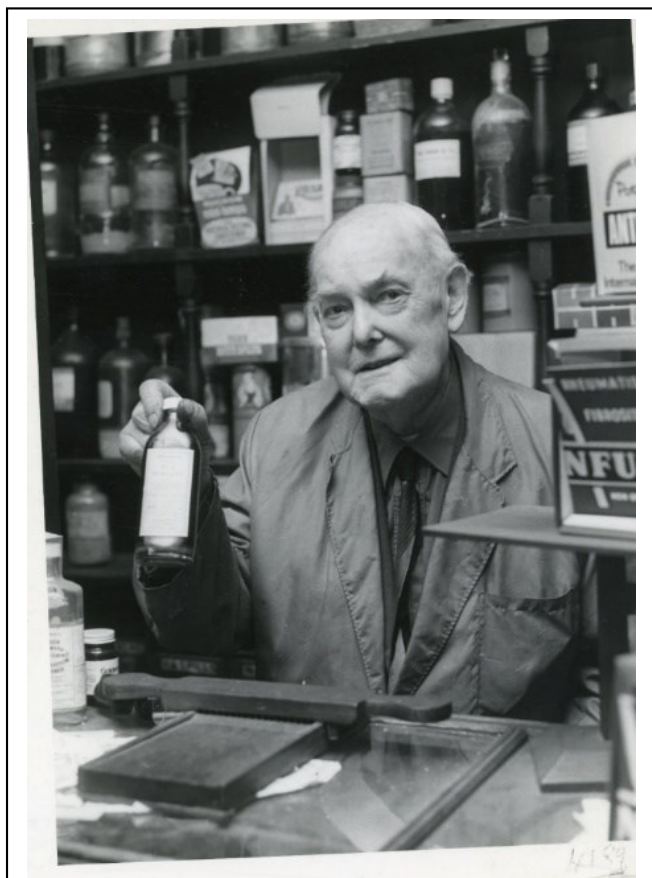
The inspector also bought a bottle of medicinal paraffin with a label saying “Herbal Pharmacy”, but with the last word crossed out in pencil. In his defence, Wilkinson claimed that “Charmacy” was clearly printed, and that all their labels had been altered before the Act came into force. The magistrates didn’t believe him and fined him 20 shillings (and two guineas fees.)

Nevertheless, he continued trading until 1977, though not under the sign of “Charmacy”.

According to an article in the Ripley and Heanor News, the shop, by then in Oxford Street, closed on his retirement. He died a year later.

Older people in Ripley may well have memories of these shops and shopkeepers. If so, do share them via the Trust’s website : **www.rdht.org.uk/contact-us/**

(A shorter version of this article will appear in a future edition of “Voices” magazine)



Percy Wilkinson in 1977