

THE SHELDON FAMILY IN BROWN EDGE

In compiling his own family tree the author has collected the names of more than 400 members of the Sheldon family who have lived in Brown Edge up to the time of the 1901 Census and this exercise attempts to trace the ancestry of those members of the Sheldon households included in the Brown Edge Census of 1901 back to what are believed to be three brothers:

William (1752-1826)

John (born about 1764)

Richard (born about 1765)

The relationship between these three is not totally clear but it is possible that they were the children of Richard SHELTON (and there have been many variants of the spelling of Sheldon in those early years) who married Ruth Fox at Leek St Edwards Church in 1750.

William Sheldon

William Sheldon married Mary Newell at Norton Church in 1777 and his birth date was recorded as "around 1752" and his death is recorded at Brown Edge in 1826.

There were three sons of the marriage christened at Norton but only Richard (1791-1860) and his wife Jane are recorded as living in Brown Edge in the census returns of both 1841 and 1851. Richard and Jane had two children Mary (born 1814) who married James Haywood and Richard (1816-1891). The son Richard never married and is buried at St. Anne's Church and it would appear that the male line of this branch of the family ceased with his death.

Richard Sheldon

Early records show that Richard and his wife Alice Bradshaw had 4 sons and 5 daughters christened at Norton. The 4 sons worked as bargemen on the canals and cannot be located at all census dates although Charles (born 1786) who married Charlotte Mountford and his family appear in Brown Edge at various times. One of their sons, Samuel, (1828-1887) married the widow Hannah Simcock who already had 2 sons and as husband and wife they had 2 sons of their own – Samuel (1855-1881) and Charles Henry (born 1863). The family lived in Brown Edge but the father went to prison for 6 years in 1856 for his part in an assault on a gamekeeper whilst poaching; the birth of his two only children coinciding with him entering and leaving Stafford Jail.

The younger Samuel married Hannah Sherratt in 1880 and a daughter Mary Ann was born in the same year but the father died at the young age of 25 in 1881. His widow remarried Joshua Beresford in 1886.

By the time of the 1901 Census the only descendant of this branch of the family who can be found in the locality was Charles Henry who married the widow Minnie Goldstraw late in life and was described as a poultry dealer living in Norton Green. Given that he married late in life there are probably no male descendants of this branch of the family.

John Sheldon

John Sheldon was christened at Norton Church in 1764 and he married Mary Frost there in 1789. The Parish Register shows both of them as being "Of Norton". Given the above circumstances of John's two brothers it is clear that by the time of the 1901 Census (the latest available) all members of the Sheldon family living in Brown Edge can trace their ancestral line back to this branch of the family. John and Mary had 3 daughters and 4 sons - Richard (1789-1862), Thomas (1791-1859), John (born 1792), and William (born 1794).

Richard Sheldon married Mary Shrigley at Norton in 1816 and they had 6 daughters (including Sabra who married Joseph Bowyer) and with no sons the male line of this branch ended with his death in 1862. The family lived in a cottage at Fiddler's Bank.

Thomas Sheldon married Joyce Mayer at Leek in 1811 and they had 3 sons and 6 daughters. Thomas and Joyce spent their married life in Brown Edge living in a cottage in Church Road She died in 1837 and he died in 1859 and is buried at St Anne's Church with the most unusual headstone:

*"O ponder well my sudden fall
Death will quickly soon you call
Ye little think who read this stone
How soon the case may be your own"*

Their eldest son, Thomas, (1814-1889) married Deborah Mayer in 1839 and they initially lived in Norton Green before moving to a farm at Stanley. Thomas and Deborah had a large family and many of their children returned to Norton Green around 1880 and Deborah also returned there as a widow around 1890. Thomas and Deborah are buried at Norton Church.

Their married grandson Walter was living in Brown Edge with his family in 1901.

The second son -Josiah or Jesse (born 1817) married Hannah Simcock at Biddulph in 1841 and they spent their lives in Brown Edge. They had 4 sons and 2 daughters. One son (Richard) died at an early age and another son, Jesse, died in 1889 at the age of 46 as a result of being kicked by a pit pony at Chatterley Whitfield Colliery. His widow Caroline Bowyer remarried Ephraim Sherratt and the family was living in Smallthorne in 1901 before returning to Brown Edge after that date. The other 2 sons Jacob (1845-1928) and Thomas (born 1848) both married and spent their lives in Brown Edge and were included with their own families in the 1901 Census.

The third son – Jacob (1825-1893) married Mary Ann Hood at Brown Edge in 1846 and they also spent their lives in Brown Edge. They had 4 sons and 3 daughters. One son (Enoch) died at an early age; sons Thomas (1852-1932) and Joseph (1855-1927) were born, married, and died in Brown Edge and their other son – Jesse (born 1862) was living in Fenton at the time of the 1901 Census.

John Sheldon married Johanna Mountford at Norton in 1817 and they were the parents of 6 sons and 5 daughters. Sons Richard (born 1820) and George ((1846-1893) never married. Sons John (born 1834) and William (born 1848) married and moved out of the locality, and sons Abraham and Sampson married local girls and raised their respective families in Brown Edge. Abraham (1824–1898) married Emma Holdcroft and they were the parents of 3 sons and 3 daughters. Two of the sons, Josiah (born 1867) and Abraham (born 1869) remained unmarried by the time of the 1901 Census and were not living in Brown Edge, and son Charles (born 1862) died as an infant. Sampson (1838-1917) married Mary Knight at Brown Edge in 1868 and they were the parents of 3 sons and 3 daughters. Sampson and Mary were living in Brown Edge in 1901 as were sons Sampson (born 1870, and married to Hannah Willott), and George Henry (born 1874, and married to Margaret Bowyer). The third son, John William (born 1877, and married to Rachael Wellings) was living in Norton.

William Sheldon married Hannah Bolton at Norton in 1817 but very little information about them is available. They only appear to have had one child (William) christened at Norton in the year of their marriage and they do not appear in any Census returns.

William (1817-1879) married Mary Lowe (1816-1891) at Stoke St Peter's church in 1838 and they first appear in Brown Edge in the Census of 1851 although their first child's birth may have been recorded as Richard SHELTON at Endon in 1839. Richard (1839-1928), who later became the long serving licensee of the Lump of Coal pub in Brown Edge, had 3 sisters (Hannah born 1844, Harriett born 1852 and Mary born 1857) and 4 brothers (William 1846-1895, George 1848-1893, Thomas born 1855, and Joseph born 1856. Sister Harriett married Thomas Sheldon the son of Josiah/Jesse Sheldon and in 1901 they were living next door to Richard. In that census Thomas was described as a coal miner and it was after 1901 that he became a butcher operating from the same premises. It has been mentioned in other publications that Richard and Thomas were brothers when in fact they were brothers-in-law.

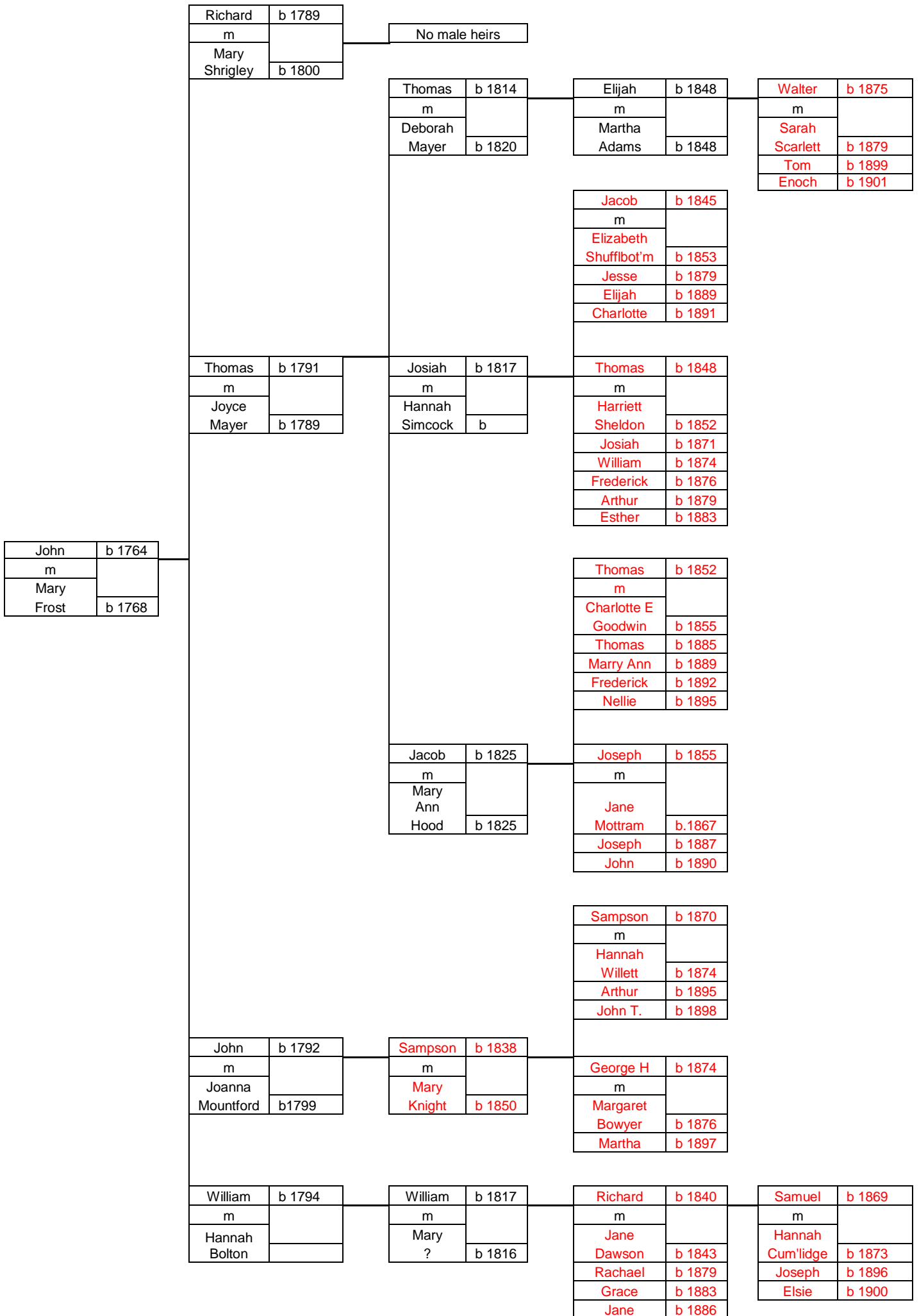
Richard's brothers, William and George never married, Thomas and Joseph died as infants, leaving Richard as the surviving male member of this branch of the family.

Richard married Jane Dawson at Brown Edge in 1860 and they had 11 children (4 sons and 7 daughters) and the 1901 Census shows daughters Rachael (born 1879), Grace (born 1883) and Jane (born 1886) living with them at the Lump of Coal, whilst their son Samuel (born 1869) was also living in the village with his own family. Of the other sons (Josiah born 1865) died as an infant, Thomas (1863-1899) died at the relative young age of 36 and was unmarried, and the other son George (1866-1934) was living at Bagnall. He had married Annie Basnett whose father had been the licensee of the Rose and Crown at Stanley and they moved to the Lump of Coal when Richard retired.

It is unfortunate that the various Census returns for Brown Edge rarely included an address although in other localities it was an accepted practice. The lack of addresses has made the compilation of the Sheldon family tree more difficult. The following chart attempts to trace the ancestry of those members of the family (coloured red) who were living in Brown Edge at the time of the 1901 Census. Other members of the family who were also living in the village at other households were – Richard Sheldon (born 1876 and son of Jesse/Caroline Bowyer) who was living with his future in laws, the Sherratts, and Sarah (born 1886 and daughter of Jacob and Elizabeth Shufflebottom) who was in service with the Vicar, M. Goodwin Young. She appears to have inherited this job from her sister Mary (also known as Polly) who had married Joseph Edge and was living in the village.

SHELDON FAMILY TREE

The names in red relate to the family members included in the Brown Edge 1901 Census



It is hoped that this information may prove helpful to anyone attempting to trace their family tree. The author has not lived in Staffordshire for over 30 years and much of the research has been carried out at a distance and therefore may contain the odd error. Corrections, or photographs of any of the family members mentioned, particularly of the Thomas Sheldon/Joyce Mayer line, would be appreciated. Please contact me through the site webmaster.

John Sheldon 2008.