

Backtrack Masthead

Whats in a name?

One of the questions I'm quite often asked is "who are the original Brown Edge families"

This is not easy to answer but families who you might think as being permanently attached to Brown Edge are relative newcomers. The Turners, Davenports, Mountfords and Simcocks all have recorded histories going back to the Domesday book and before that even, but not here in Brown Edge.

The Mountfords are descended from the De Montforts, in Warwickshire, The Davenports from a Saxon family who lived at Davenport, Cheshire, the Turners probably from the Norman Tosney family who settled in Leek and the Simcocks?

Well here is a story! It would appear that the first Simcocks and from whom all the Brown Edge Simcocks seem to descend, are from a Ralph Simcock or a Thomas Simcock (probably cousins)

Ralph had moved to Brown Edge before 1841 and after 1832 from Horton where he like most Simcocks before him had originated. He was the first of his line that used the name Simcock instead of Symcock or Symcox.

The 1841 census had him living somewhere around the Boardmans Bank area next to Woodhouse (now Upper Stone House) He was now a Collier. For generations before they had been Farmers.

Thomas Simcock married Sarah Fox at Horton and was living in Brown Edge in 1832 again close to School Bank.

Ralph's son Joseph married Mary Charlesworth from Brown Edge. They were married in Horton Church in 1842. Brown Edge Church was not yet open.



Thomas's son Joshua married a Joice Charlesworth in 1844

The Charlesworths were originally from Alton and subsequently lived at Sparrow Bill Cottage on Boardmans Bank/Stone House Lane. I suspect this is where Ralph Simcock lived when he arrived on Brown Edge, and on reflection even recently a branch of the Simcocks lived next door (obviously in a house more recently built than 1840) to this.

Reading who the Simcocks married is like reading a who's who of Brown Edge. Sheldons, Foxes, Fosters, Goodwins, Dawsons, Sherratts and more.

Tracing the Symcocks back further is relatively easy because Horton Church records are quite well preserved. They show several generations of Ralph Symcocks intermarrying with the Beech Family until the first one to be born in Leek in 1648. He lived in Horton but again died in Leek in 1697.

His father was an Edward Symcock who was born in 1620 and his mother was Margaret Deeley b 1620 who were both born in Not, Graz-Umgebung, Styria, Austria. This seems very strange as they are both clearly English names. They were married in Halesowen. At that point the trail goes cold

Other researchers have also found this a puzzle and it would appear from their research that the Deeleys and the Symcocks were involved in printing books, as this part of Austria was the centre for printing. They lived in Austria for about 20 years trading in books to England.

So where did the Symcocks come from? If you read some of the American based heraldry sites they say that that "from ancient times they came from Symcoe in Cornwall and possess a family crest. Well I'm not so sure about that as all the Cornish versions are spelt with an n ie syncote

Others have said that this is an English medieval surname and is a 'Crusader' name being one of Greek-Hebrew origins that was introduced into Europe by returning Knight Templars and other 'pilgrims' from the Holy Land in the 12th century. Developed from the personal name Simon, itself the Greek version of the Hebrew "Simeon" meaning "he who hears", the name Simon became popular in Europe as its introduction coincided with both the Christian Revival period and in England to Simon de Montford, However all this really is speculation and not absolutely clear as early examples of the surname recording include Simon Simcocke of Somerset in the Subsidy Rolls of the year 1327, and Thomas Symcokes of Staffordshire in 1395

Despite it appearing to us to be quite a common name it is in fact extremely rare apart from here in North Staffs

Looking back a bit further it to the 1500's it would appear that there was a cluster of Symcocks at Frodsham in Cheshire and indeed a Raphe Symcock born around 1580 born in Mobberley and married in 1620 to a Maud Shaw whose father was Edward Shaw.

Could this be the Family that went to Austria? Only when the Austrian records are examined will we be able to tell for sure.

So who are the original Brown Edge families? Of course this is difficult to answer as Brown Edge itself was not really formed or used as a name to describe the whole Parish until 1844. Before that it was Sandy Lane and Brown Edge referred more to Hill Top.

Although very old records mention Sherutts, Poyntons, Goodins and Forde's, without doubt the oldest name for a family around here is a guy by the name of Ulivet who in the Domesday Book was said to hold Nortone. Ulivets full name was Ulivet de Meiri. Ulivet became landowner here in 1050 ie before the Norman Conquest. He is the forerunner of all the Mares or Meares of Norton. This is unusual in two ways in that he was obviously a Saxon who kept his lands after the conquest and who could not be related to the similarly named Norman de la Mere's.

So Arthur Mare you havnt travelled far in 1000 years have you? And you were proudly boasting to me you actually had a holiday a couple of weeks ago whatever is the world coming to.

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Distribution of Simcock people in 1881



So what is it?

Again several people have recently asked me what the strange building was at the back of the Church.



The answer is quite simple really as it is the Chimney from the original coal fired heating System.

Obviously this must have been quite advanced and luxurious for its time and would have consumed a tremendous amount of coal. This of course was not a problem as the benefactor of the Church Hugh Henshall Williamson owned Chatterley Whitfield Pit.

The Church House was built as a caretakers cottage and one of their duties was to keep the fire going. A Mr and Mrs Charlesworth were the caretakers.

There used to be another level of the circular chimney of about three courses before the actual chimney pot. This was taken down in the seventies as it was becoming quite insecure.

The actual Boiler house is some ten to fifteen yards away at the base of the spire so the flue has to travel some distance.

I might be making this up but I seem to remember Bob Cumberlidge telling me that you can get access to the flue from the base of the wall in the lower churchyard.

Top UK Towns by Total Occurrences

Town	Total	Frequency %	Index
Stoke Upon Trent , Staffordshire	82	0.0784	26.9932
Norton In Moors , Staffordshire	49	0.9387	323.2190
Mobberley , Cheshire	30	2.0380	700.9346
Warrington , Lancashire	28	0.0681	23.4545
Macclesfield , Cheshire	25	0.0872	30.0228
Caverswall , Staffordshire	24	0.4682	161.1820
Manchester , Lancashire	22	0.0141	4.8579
Leek Lowe , Staffordshire	22	0.1677	57.7276
Horton , Staffordshire	21	1.7399	598.2906
West Derby , Lancashire	20	0.0197	6.7884