



Needles, Redditch and The Long Crendon Connection

A collection of articles, research and records relating to the fascinating story of the the needle, Redditch and the connection to Long Crendon.



Long Crendon Needle Makers Cottage and a Redditch Needle Factory

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Contents

Needles, Redditch and The Long Crendon Connection.....	<u>6</u>
The Humble Needle.....	<u>6</u>
The History Of Needles.....	<u>7</u>
Needle Making.....	<u>10</u>
Long Crendon & Needle Making.....	<u>12</u>
The Last Needle Workshop in Long Crendon.....	<u>12</u>
Introduction.....	<u>12</u>
Background.....	<u>12</u>
Discussion.....	<u>13</u>
The Migration.....	<u>14</u>
The Journey.....	<u>14</u>
The Leaving Of Long Crendon.....	<u>14</u>
Over The Hills.....	<u>15</u>
The Last Days On The Road.....	<u>15</u>
Redditch and Needle Making.....	<u>17</u>
The long Crendon – Redditch Connection.....	<u>19</u>
Redditch to Long Crendon.....	<u>19</u>
Some of the Migrants.....	<u>21</u>
Long Crendon to Redditch.....	<u>23</u>
Was the Move worth It?	<u>24</u>
What Links Exist?.....	<u>24</u>
Links to Today's Generations.....	<u>27</u>
Simon Partridge.....	<u>27</u>
Peter White	<u>27</u>
Ann Brace.....	<u>28</u>
Angela Floyd.....	<u>29</u>

Continued.....

Thomas Mutton.....29
Gary Pritchard.....29
Njaire Russ.....30
Your Input and Connections?.....30



This well known photograph dated 1860 shows a group of the Long Crendon needle makers who "trekked" up to the Redditch/Studley area from South Oxfordshire to continue their trade in the growing needle district of Redditch.

Needles, Redditch and The Long Crendon Connection

The Humble Needle

Even a small thing like a needle has had a role in the history of humans. In the History of Redditch the humble needle plays a very important part. However, there is much more to the story of the needle and how Redditch dominated the supply of needles in the 19th century, producing over 95% of the worlds needs. This booklet is a collection of some of the key elements in that story collected together from various sources, but first some facts and history about the hand sewing needle:

- The first sewing needles were made from bone and were used to sew animal hides together. The oldest known bone ones were found in what is now southwestern France and has been estimated to be over 25,000 years old.
- Needles made from copper, silver and bronze were used in ancient Egypt.
- The oldest iron needle known was found in what is now Germany, and dates back to the 3rd century B.C.E.
- Bookbinders and shoemakers used ones made from hog bristles in the Middle Ages.
- Native Americans used porcupine quills and the pointed end of agave leaves for sewing needles. The fibres of the agave leaf were also used for thread.
- Metal needle making was perfected by Muslims in Spain in the 11th century. Spanish Muslims were some of the most knowledgeable medical doctors in the world at the time, and had perfected many surgical techniques that required needles for suturing.
- When the Muslims were driven out of Spain in the 15th century, they took the knowledge of needle making with them to Arab lands. Muslims returned to making them, and Arab traders took them to Europe.
- Europe learned the art of needle making from Arab needle makers, and it came to England in the 17th century. Before this time, metal needles were made in Europe by the local blacksmith, and resulted in very crude needles.
- The knowledge of needle making was also used to make fish hooks in England. The country became well known for high quality fish hooks as well as sewing needles in the middle of the 17th century.
- Metal needles were handcrafted before the industrial age. The process began with cutting wire long enough to make two needles. Then points were ground on either end of the wire, the wire was flattened in the middle and eyes punched out. The needles were then separated. This operation is still followed today, but machines now do the work instead of humans.
- Around 1850 needle making machines began producing needles and turned needle making from a cottage industry into an industry done in factories. By 1866 there were 100 million needles being made in England a year.
- The English town and district of Redditch in central England became the centre of the world's needle production in the 19th century. The craftsmanship of the needles made there was so great that a foreign manufacturer sent a hypodermic needle to Redditch claiming that it was smaller than Redditch needle makers could produce. The needle was sent back to the manufacturer with a needle made by Redditch craftsman so small that it fit inside the foreign manufacturer's!

Source: *Facts from "The Origins Of Every Day Things" for more articles: <http://originsofthings.blogspot.com/> The Worshipful Company of Needlemakers - Short History*

The History Of Needles

The early history of needles is shrouded in obscurity. Stone Age people used bone awls to pierce skins for thronging, and later an eye was developed in the awl to hold the thread and draw it through the hole as that was made. In the Bronze and Iron Ages metal needles appeared and different forms were evolved for various tasks and many of these, as well as those of the Medieval period, have survived practically unchanged.

Despite the apparent unsuitability of iron needles, for they rusted quickly and were brittle, fine needles must have been available for embroidery such as the Bayeux Tapestry and the later splendid copes and vestments of Opus Anglicanum. Very little is known about needle making in Medieval England. Probably local blacksmiths or whitesmiths (workers in tin) supplied the needs of their neighbourhoods, for there is no evidence of guild organisation even in London, though we can surmise that there was a group of needle makers in the City by the beginning of the 16th century, since there was a Needlers' Lane then.

Towards the close of the Middle Ages the manufacture of strong steel developed particularly in centres like Toledo and Nuremberg. From this steel fine wire could be drawn producing stronger and more flexible needles. The supply of these for the English market seems to have been dominated at first by German merchants until 1563 when the Importation Act attempted to check this trade.

Even in Tudor times it is difficult to establish what was actually happening. It is probable that foreign craftsmen settled as needle makers here to fulfil the demand for these improved needles, two names that appear at this time were Christopher King and Elias Kraus, the latter apparently from Aachen. Small groups established themselves in the provinces as well, for example in Chichester, in Long Crendon and in the English Midlands, around Studley and Redditch.

By the late 16th and early 17th centuries needle making was carried out in various areas of London. Many workshops were to be found in the buildings on London Bridge and around the bridgeheads, others were on the outskirts of the City, particularly Whitechapel, but the craft was still not organised on a guild basis.

Nevertheless, it was a rule of the City that all who wished to trade or manufacture within its limits had to be Freemen of the City and one qualification for that was the freedom of a livery company, so we find needle makers joining many companies including the Blacksmiths, the Drapers, the Merchant Taylors, the Dyers, the Tallow Chandlers and the Ironmongers, in order to gain the Freedom of the City. However, this was not entirely satisfactory for they were in a minority in these Companies and it was impossible to control the quality of workmanship or materials, to restrict the number of apprentices or the importation of needles from abroad.

After various attempts to regulate matters through the Blacksmiths had failed, one John Hobcroft and his fellow needle makers banded together, collected enough money, and petitioned the Lord Mayor and the Court of Alderman that they might form a company of their own.

This was when Oliver Cromwell was Lord Protector, and it was he who granted the Letters Patent of 10 November 1656 which incorporated (ie created) the Needle makers. This Company and the Framework Knitters, are the only two City Companies to have a Cromwellian foundation.

The Byelaws or Ordinances which set out the detailed regulations were not approved until 8 May 1658 but they still named as Master and Wardens the men so noted in the Letters Patent: John Hobcroft, Matthew Chantrell and John Potter.

In 1660 the monarchy was restored and the Needle makers prudently sought new instruments of incorporation. Charles II granted Letters Patent on 9 February 1664 and the new Byelaws were approved by the Court of Aldermen on 20 June of the same year. The Master now named was Matthew Chantrell, the Wardens John Shipman and William Watts. These instruments of 1664 still govern the Company. Both of the original Charters are held in the Guildhall Library where they may be inspected.

Basically the two sets of documents do not differ to any great degree. The Needle makers were incorporated, they had the right of assembly and of electing annually a Master and two Wardens from a Court of twelve Assistants drawn from the body of Freemen. There was to be a Clerk and a Beadle to carry out the decisions of the Master and Wardens and of the Court, and both men were to serve for life or during good behaviour. The former was to keep the Minutes of the Court and to look after the records.

The craft was organised on very strict guild lines and a real effort was made to establish a firm industrial structure. The Company was granted the right of search, within certain limits of the City, for needles and materials of inferior workmanship and of destroying any such goods found.

The Freedom of the Company could be obtained in different ways:

- by servitude as an apprentice
- by redemption on payment of a larger fee or fine, or
- by patrimony, that is by right of a father who was a Freeman of the Company.

Apprentices were to be bound for seven years to a Freeman of the Company. Only the Master and the Wardens could bind two apprentices at any one time, other Freemen were restricted to one. The Freedom was open to both men and women but some restrictions were placed on the latter.

There was to be no hawking of needles in the streets or in alehouses. Fines could be levied for any breach of the regulations and all members were to pay quarterage, to be collected by the Beadle. Both sets of the Byelaws have decorated margins on the first membrane or skin, and both show the Arms of the company, a blue shield with the three crowned needles but without the supporters.

Though the Company was given the right to have a Livery no attempt was made to take this up until 1712 when the Company, on petitioning the Lord Mayor and the Court of Aldermen, was allowed to have a Livery of 50 and the right for the Livery of voting for the City's Members of Parliament.

Though the Letters Patent of 1664 granted the Company these rights only in the City of London and within a limit of 10 miles of its boundaries, the Company tried to exercise its jurisdiction in the provinces. They had some success in Chichester and to a lesser extent in Redditch and Studley. However, by the early 18th century the expanding needle industry of the Midlands had rejected the Londoners' control.

While they prospered the industry in London declined and the Company's fortunes fell. The holding of searches lapsed and the membership shrank. Surprisingly, in the last quarter of the century the numbers began to grow again but the new liverymen were not drawn from the needle industry: they came from many trades and crafts, men eager to gain the right to do business in the City and to have the Parliamentary franchise.

This renewed prosperity of the Company did not last much beyond the 1820's, and a new period of decline and poverty set in. After the Reform Act of 1832 there was a devaluation of the Livery's Parliamentary franchise. There was also a gradual removal of restrictions of trade and business in the City and the Freedom was no longer necessary. Fewer people applied for admission and when Assistants died their places on the Court were left vacant. Between 1856 and 1873 there were three new freemen of whom only two became Liverymen and for several years there were only three Assistants capable of holding offices.

In October 1873 the Company appeared to be on the verge of extinction, when the Clerk reported that nineteen men had applied for admission to the Company. Politicians, professional men and businessmen, they wished to take part in City matters. Many more followed and by June 1875 the Livery was granted an increase to 200. (Later it was further extended to 250, the current number allowed.)

The revived Company quickly established good relations with the needle industry in the Midlands and in 1876 a ceremonial visit was paid to Redditch. The practice began of awarding prizes for new inventions in tool making and machine processing though not at first on a regular basis. Within the City of London the Company set out to encourage education particularly in technical aspects, and it supported the City and Guilds of London Institute from its beginning, as well as for many years providing scholarships or exhibitions at the City of London Schools. As its charitable interests had grown a new charitable trust was set up in 1983.

The links with Redditch have been maintained. Courts have been held there on several occasions and in 1983 members of the Company were present when HM The Queen opened the Needle makers Museum at Forge Mill.

Not only are prizes given to young people in the industry but also for skill in the use of the needle in knitting and embroidery. When Courts have been held at Redditch certificates of proficiency have been awarded for long service in the industry and several needle makers have been made honorary Freemen.

Since the revival many distinguished men have joined the Company. One of the most interesting connections has been with the Royal Family. HSH The Duke of Teck, who had married Princess Mary of Cambridge, was Master in 1896. Both his wife and his daughter, Princess May of Teck, later HM Queen Mary (married to King George V), were made honorary Freemen. In December 1919 his grandson HRH Prince Albert, later King George VI, was admitted to the Company.

Though in the 19th and 20th centuries the Needle makers had several honorary Freemen who were women, and though throughout its history up to 1873 there were always widows and spinsters who were ordinary Freemen, it was not until July 1982 that the first lady was admitted to the Livery.

The Company is not wealthy and has never had its own Hall. For many years Courts were held in a chamber in Guildhall and then in various City taverns or in the Clerk's offices. The custom of Livery dinners has persisted throughout the Company's history except in times of poverty but it was only in the 20th century that the holding of Ladies Nights became established.

The first Church service to be held in conjunction with the Election Court was in October 1931 and a few years later the Company began its association with a Territorial unit linked with the City of London. (For details on these associations please see Livery Church and Affiliated Regiment.)

Though the three needles and coronets had been used since 1658 and the supporters, Adam and Eve, since about 1700, the Company did not obtain a Grant of Arms from the College of Heralds until 1986. Adam and Eve first appear on the head of the Beadle's staff and on several pieces of plate purchased at the beginning of the 18th century. These are the three silver tankards, the two pulley salts and the two trencher salts. The rest of the plate has been given by members of the Company, for example, the silver cup and cover of William Nicholson, Sheriff in 1781, and the gilt rose water dish and ewer presented by Thomas King, the Clerk, to mark 38 years of service. Several pieces were donated to mark the accession and coronation of HM The Queen in 1952/53.

Deputy Sir Michael Snyder, Master in 2006, the year of the 350th Anniversary, presented a contemporary loving cup to mark the occasion. The most recent acquisition is a rose water dish presented by Past Master Ronald Hadley in 2007. Having celebrated the 350th anniversary of the original charter in 2006 minds are turning now to a celebration of the 350th anniversary of the granting of the Royal Charter which will fall in 2014.

Source: *This short history was written originally by MV Stokes during her time as Honorary Archivist. It has been edited and updated by PR Grant, Clerk.*
Source: *The Worshipful Company of Needle makers -*
http://www.needlemakers.org.uk/about_us/short_history.htm

Needle Making

Needles are not known to have been introduced into England until the time of Queen Elizabeth in 1560. A quotation tells us that " in the reign of Mary I of England steel wire needles were first made, and then by a Spanish negro, who kept his secret during his lifetime; they were afterwards made in the reign of Elizabeth by one Elias Krause, a German. The great secret was lost after his death, and recovered again about a hundred years later. In the year 1656 Cromwell incorporated the Company of Needlemakers." Long Crendon in Buckinghamshire is the town where Christopher Greening originally started the English manufacture of needles in 1650. The trade, however, migrated to Redditch in Worcestershire, where some twenty thousand families are now supported by this work, to which they are very steady, faithful adherents. The women, though, prove better adapted not only to the handling of the finished needle but also to its production. The first eye-drilling machine was invented in 1826. The wiredrawing is done in Sheffield. Among Redditch needles should be mentioned the former sable (grain of sand) bead needles, Nos. 14 and 16, a scant inch long, silver-eyed and of cast steel, for mounting those finest of old beads that may never be reproduced, since the Germans in the World War destroyed the manufacturing machinery near Venice. The needles were made by R. Hemming and Sons and are marked " Royal Improved, Warranted not to cut in the Eye, Forge Needle Mills." These needles are of particular interest because the passing of any instrument through the minute sable bead holes has been a moot point. Some packages of the small Redditch needles bear a tiny picture of Queen Victoria's head in her girlhood. A quaint, paper-lace bedecked box full of these needle papers, together with the beads, has recently fallen into my hands. The outside box contains several lesser glass-topped ones the glass secured by paper-lace bindings holding the lids in place. And all of the little compartments are planned just to fit the whole.

England in modern times has been manufacturing most of the hand-sewing needles used by the world, though the United States of America is said to have been producing most of the sewing-machine needles — in 1900 making 1,120,532 gross, valued at \$1,027,949, not including crochet, knitting, darning, tapestry, chenille, rug, Whitechapel, hand-sewing or special trade needles. At one time Aix-la- Chapelle weekly turned out 50,000,000 needles. Needles are generally sold in papers of twenty-five, fifty or one hundred.

In the making of needles, wire is selected, measured, evenly coiled, cut into eight-foot lengths by dividing the coil — each half of which makes one hundred little pieces — and cut into double needle lengths. These are, of course, slightly curved from the preceding coiling, so they are softened by tiring and pressed out straight. A century and a half ago the needle wire was made more tractable by greasing it with " hog's lard," and the needles were rendered less brittle by baking and roasting them. Thousands were laid in heaps on buckram with powder of emery and oil, to be polished. Long rolls, squeezed tight at the ends and fastened, sausage-like, with cord, were made of the buckram. Labourers then pushed several rows to and fro on a board for a day and a half or two days. The needles were cleansed in warm soapy water and dried in parcels of bran.

Both ends of the double lengths are pointed, and formerly a good workman pointed some one hundred thousand needles a day by simultaneously rubbing them by hand over a grindstone; but in spite of his wearing a muffler, he was bound to inhale many fine particles of stone and steel. The modern factory is equipped with a tube into which the injurious dust is steadily sucked away to safety. And a rubber wheel fitted into a fixed hollow stone pushes the needles in quantity over the grinding surface, emitting brilliant showers of sparks.

At first the mechanics had to flatten the surface of the wire where the eye was to be drilled, as the tiny thing was otherwise prone to Needle Making.

Needle-making was an important industry within the village from the early 17th century to the mid-19th. The first documentary reference to needle making in the village dates from 1618. There is no mention of the industry during the Civil War - transportation to market was probably

too difficult - but by 1660s it was thriving. By the beginning of the 18th century needle makers in Long Crendon were producing heavier types of needles which were used for making sails and tents. Despite a decline in the industry around the 1820s, the village enjoyed a renaissance in the early 1850s when Kirby Beard's pin manufactory of Gloucestershire leased 23, Chilton Road bringing a small workforce from Redditch to train Long Crendon workers in more modern methods of needle production. Despite building up a work force of almost 100, the needle making industry in the village went into decline once again due to the cost of coal and competition from the Midlands and in 1862, Kirby Beard left the village taking two-thirds of the younger worker back to Redditch. A number of individuals continued to make needles on a small scale and it was not until the end of the 19th century that the industry died out completely in the village.

Initially needles were made in former agricultural barns, in linked terrace houses along the High Street or in small

workshops which were built at the back of cottages. In a number of cottages in the High Street needle cupboards still survive between adjacent buildings (e.g. nos. 7, 9 High Street) through which needles were pushed to undergo the next process in their manufacturer. Cupboards were also built in the angle of chimney corners where the needles could be kept dry and free of rust.

Source: *Old-Time Tools and Toys of Needlework* By Gertrude Whiting



A Needle Maker cottage in Long Crendon

Long Crendon & Needle Making

The Last Needle Workshop in Long Crendon

Archaeological recording work recognised what was originally considered a garden shed to be the 19th-century workshop and scouring mill of Matthew Shrimpton that finally ceased to be used in the early 20th century.

Introduction

Investigations were carried out on an outbuilding at 76a High Street, Long Crendon (NGR SP 69677 08918) as part of a planning application in 2008. The first impressions of the building were that of an early 20th century brick-built outbuilding of poor construction and little historic value. On closer investigation this impression proved inaccurate.

Background

Needle making had been an important industry in Long Crendon since the 17th century. Donald (1971) records that in 1848 Samuel Shrimpton and his son, Andrew, installed a steam powered scouring mill at 76 High Street, "where it was installed in the brick shed at the back of the house." The Shrimptons' had been a needle making family since 1739 and Emanuel is so recorded on the census of 1841. Outbuildings are marked in the area behind 76 and 78 High Street on the 1827 Inelosurc map of Long Crendon. The building is also depicted on the 1st edition OS map of 1885.

Prior to 1845 all scouring was done at Long Crendon by Richard Shrimpton, with a Horse Mill kept in a barn behind "Dodwell's Store" (Donald 1971). In 1845 John Harris of Thame set up a steam engine at Ilarrod. A second was installed by Edward Shrimpton and his son Jonah at their factory at Arnott's Yard. Although the industry was modernised at this time it was still in overall decline in the area. Matthew Shrimpton was the last manufacturer of needles, specifically darning needles and bodkins, in Long Crendon from his workshop at 76 High Street (Donald 1971). However, the census of 1891 places him living at Buekway, not High Street. Donald (1973) contradicts herself, placing Matthew Shrimpton at 78 High Street during this time. This is likely to be a typing error as she mentions his neighbour Mr. Lovell "who made needles in his spare time in the shed at the rear of 78 High Street."

The 1901 census records Jonah Lovell and his wife Louisa living at 78 High Street. He was aged 55 and an agricultural labourer. The couple had lived here since 1871. At this time Walter B. Crook a farmer and his wife Annie were living at 76 High Street (May 1991)

Short Description of the Building The property (Fig. 1) is single storey and rectangular in plan. Only the northern, eastern, parts of the western and the internal walls remain of the original structure, although traces of the original footings of the southern wall could be identified. The building was presumably roved in red ceramic roof tiles, due to the numbers located in layers within the building or incorporated into the fabric of later additions.

Originally the building was constructed on stone footings with a single brick course thick wall built upon them. The footings in the northern wall were apparently constructed to a greater height than those of the other walls, the equivalent of six courses of bricks high. This appears to have been a deliberate attempt to create a raised shelf-like structure along this wall, presumably for storage.

The interior was originally divided into two rooms. An internal wall divides the first room from the second and has a small doorway. This is clearly bonded into the fabric of the northern wall and accommodates a fireplace. This fireplace shows a distinct scar of plaster where a covering or structure has been attached to it. Below this scar is considerable discolouration of the wall surface by soot or burning. An opening on the side of the chimneystack at a level just below the top of the scar would indicate that a second flue had been accommodated.

The original floor was of beaten earth: this had a deposit of coal dust, ash and charcoal over and trampled into it. Set into the floor were four iron fixings, presumably footing for machinery. A brick plinth in the second room also appears to be a setting for further industrial equipment: a pipe in the cistern wall may indicate that it was an overflow for a quenching basin.

Discussion

The building certainly shows signs of an industrial past: certainly it displays unusual features for a simple garden shed. The fireplace seems out of place in such a structure. It could mark the building as a hovel dwelling, if it were not for the presence of the scorching, the scars of the second Hue and the footings in the floor. These are indicative of some form of cottage industry and appear to be associated with either the hardening process of the needles, or to have provided heat for the steam scouring mill. The brick plinth and chimney pipe also appear to be associated with this process.

Contemporary pictures of steam powered scouring engines show that they were not large in size (Shrimpton 1897) and could have easily been accommodated in a building of these dimensions. Considering the presence of the coal dust and fixtures within the first room, it is likely that it housed the steam engine.

The stone footings of the northern wall could represent an earlier building that the standing one was built off. No return for this stone was seen along the eastern wall, but stone footings were seen near the centre of the wall. The wording (Donald 1971) of Emanuel Shrimpton's installation of 1848 would imply that the brick building was already standing, although it may have been built specially to accommodate the new engine.

From the evidence, it appears that the building is in fact the "brick shed" described in 1848 as housing the steam powered scouring engine. This brick shed is also likely to be the same one that Mr. Lovell would use in his spare time to make needles.

Source: *David Gilbert - John Moore Heritage Services*

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The Migration

The needle makers of Long Crendon in Buckinghamshire decided that their trade could be improved and made more profitable by moving it to the Needleland of the Redditch, Studley and Alcester district, where new technology had made needle making a profitable undertaking. In 1844, in the midst of winter, several families put all their belongings into a caravan of covered wagons and set out for Astwood Bank. Three days later they arrived, in reasonable shape, in spite of wintry conditions. Getting the vehicles up the hills they met en route must have been a strenuous business. Prior to 1844, various individuals from Long Crendon had come into our area and it is probable that Astwood Bank was a pre-arranged place between the travellers and those already established.

The migration contained a number of Shrimptons, who settled widely in the area and their descendants may still be found in Alcester, Studley and the Ridgeway.

The Journey

During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the village of Long Crendon in Bucks was well known for the cottage industry of needle making. With the introduction of machinery into manufacturing, Long Crendon was left behind. Coal transported by canal to Oxford and then wagon was expensive, and the only other source of power was a watermill in the fields at Notley Abbey. Redditch, the other main area where needles were made was near coalfields and had ample supplies of water from mills on the river Arrow. The old Long Crendon needle makers did not think the machine made article would ever match hand-made needles, but some of the younger men were impressed by Redditch efficiency.

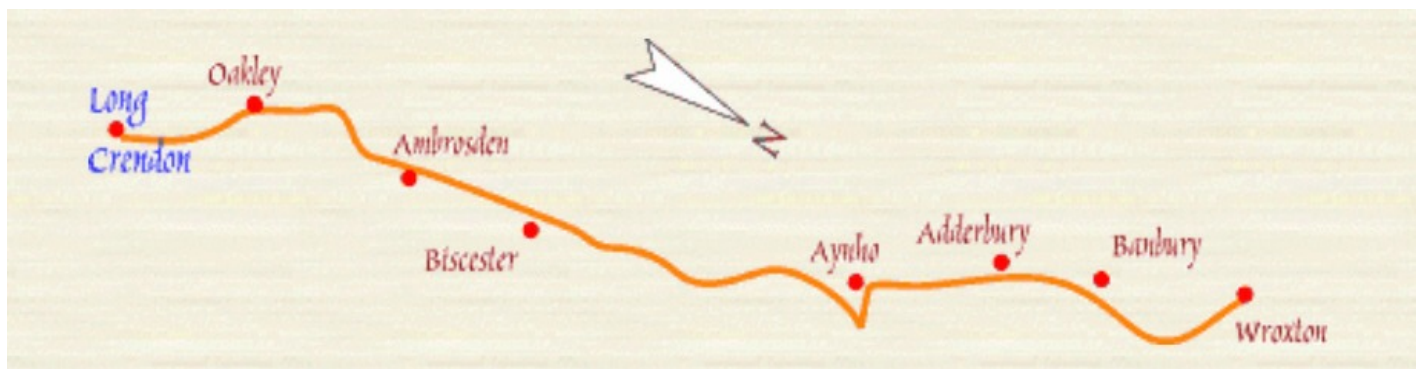
In 1644 a group of them made the journey north, arriving at the unheard of hour of 2 a.m.. About a hundred years ago, the Redditch Indicator published a booklet "Notes on a decayed needleland" by William Shrimpton with some details of that journey. I wanted to know the names, relationships and more about the journey. After researches in newspapers the 'Bucks Herald', the 'Banbury Guardian' and the 'Oxford City and County Herald', in the weather records at Oxford University Observatory, and encyclopedias of the period, I have reconstructed the conditions they would have met on their journey. I have traversed the route taken, even on an overgrown section near Ambrosden, where it is just possible to use a car.

The Banbury 'Cockhorses' mentioned were freelance horsemen who were paid to assist the great wagons getting up the hills out of the town. The York paving there had been recently laid, and the town was lit by gas lamps. Stratford favoured oil street lamps. The horse-drawn trains took goods on from the end of the Stratford canal to Moreton in the Marsh, with a branch to Shipston on Stour.

The Leaving Of Long Crendon

It was about midnight on Sunday, 28 January 1844* when the covered wagons left Long Crendon on their way to Astwood Bank near Redditch. The 'needlelands' were 66 miles and three days' journey away. The weather was remarkably good for the time of year, despite drizzle earlier in the day, and the moon, not yet full, shone between light clouds. Farewells had been said earlier to relations and friends, the 'Old Britons Club' at the 'Churchill Arms', the 'Tradesmans' Club at the 'Eight Bells' and the 'Hand in Hand' club at the 'Star'.

Eighteen adults and children made the journey, led by John Ephraim Shrimpton of Air Hill, who had planned it, his wife Eleanor, their children Anne, Sarah, Eliza, Elizabeth, Amos and Emma. Anne left behind her sweetheart, Amos Dodwell. John Ephraim took his apprentice, William Hawkes,



son of Martha Hawkes of Burts Lane. Also in the party were his cousin, John Solomon Shrimpton, with wife Mary Ann and baby Ann; Mary's brother, Solomon David Shrimpton, the Harris family, John Eph's neighbours Ephraira and Kezia, with son Samuel and the baby.

One covered wagon, lent by John Kirby Shrimpton and drawn by two horses carried the women and children, this was driven by William Towersey, The other, loaned by Will Carter of Smiths End, was drawn by four horses, since it was carrying the furniture and trade appliances. This was driven by Richard Beckett of High St, seen off by his wife Sophia and the six children.

John Ephraira had chosen his route carefully, making for Adderbury on the first day, to conserve the horses for the tougher part of the journey on Tuesday. Leaving by the Oakley public road, they skirted the 'shoot' where only last week the Hector of Chilton, Mr Chetwode, and his friends had got such a marvellous bag. Rumbling through Ambrosden, they reached the Aylesbury turnpike just short of Bicester. With the weather holding and the temperature in the mid 40s, this was an easy stretch. Out of Bicester, up the hill to Stoke Wood, on to Aynho, then down the hill to the canal, as so to the Plough at Adderbury. The women and children spent the night in the Inn while the men slept in the covered wagons.

Over The Hills

Tuesday saw the party on the road at daybreak, rattling into Banbury as the day warmed up to 47o with a gentle westerly wind. The winter sunshine showed up the stark new Yorkshire Stone of the footpath in the handsome market town, whose prosperity depended on the plush and webbing Industries. Going out of the town up the long hill on the Warwick road, they were glad of the help of the 'Cockhorses' to pull the heavy wagons.

They turned left at Drayton on the Wroxtton road, where progress was slow over the undulating route. Climbing out of the village to Uplands Farm, they reached the crest of Edge Hill, Now, one wagon at a time, with the horses at back and front, they eased cautiously down into the Vale of the Red Horse, The sun shone from a clear sky as they went over Windmill Hill to Fillerton Priors.

But as they went the sun faded and with darkness they felt a nip in the air, threatening worse to come. They were glad to reach Eatlington, the night stop, but while the women were snug in the inn, the men felt the frost penetrating beneath the covers of the wagons.

The Last Days On The Road

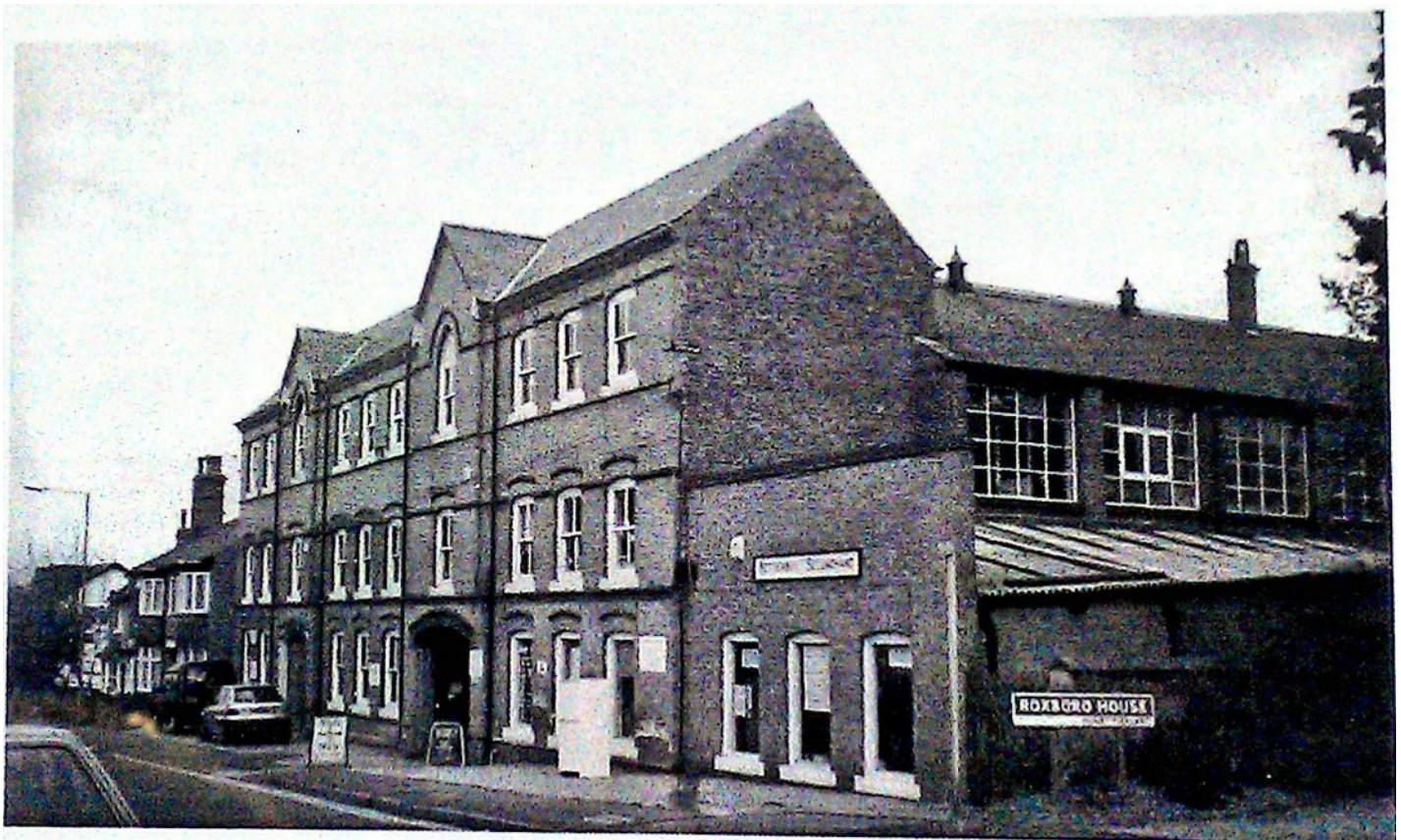
The plan was for a good run to Stratford, on to Alcester, and arrival in Astwrod Bank in the late afternoon. It was very cold when they left Eatlington and they were glad to arrive in Stratford, passing through nut bush thickets. They rumbled past the 'Shoulder of Mutton', and at Clopton



Bridge saw the horse trains setting off for Moreton in the Marsh. On they went down Bridge St, with the 'Golden Lion' and 'Red Horse' on the right and the 'Red Lion' on the left, then through the town to the Alcester road.

As they climbed Red Hill, the weather was changing. A north-west wind brought heavy gray clouds to obscure the sun. Soon the first flakes of snow started falling, light at first, then like wet bird droppings, which intensified, and, with the wind gathering force in front of them, it was like a stinging wall.

Past Alcester up the hill to Coughton Park, slipping and stumbling in the snow, their speed was slowed to a crawl. The snow stopped, but it lay hard frozen and darkness was on them. First the men, then the women had to help push to aid the horses. At least they grew warmer with their efforts, but it was midnight before they reached the Ridgeway. At last, with the moon shining brightly on a white landscape, they reached Astwood Bank at 2am. on the morning of Thursday, February 1. The long journey into a new life was over.



Crescent Works, Mount Pleasant, Redditch - Home to Partridges of Redditch. One of the needlemaking manufacturers to employ the Long Crendon workers

Redditch and Needle Making

Until the the 16th century needle making in Britain had been carried out by the local blacksmith, or whitemith (workers in tin), who would have supplied the needs of their immediate neighbours. Typically these needles would have been made from sheet iron cut into lengths which was then hammered and rolled to the thickness required. The points would then hand filed, with the eye created by flattening the head and then forcing a hole through it with a punch. This time consuming process resulted in a functional but poor quality needle. The process was slightly more advanced on the continent where the best quality needles were being made from high quality drawn steel wire in centres like Toledo and Nuremberg, in what are now Spain and Germany respectively. It would take political and religious unrest in Europe, forcing the migration of some of these foreign needle makers, to England to bring positive change to production methods in Britain. Largely speaking these emigres were Flemish Huguenots – Protestant workers and artisans – escaping Catholic persecution in France for Elizabethan tolerance in England. These foreign craftsmen settled along the Thames in central London as well as in the provinces including Chichester, Long Crendon and around Studley and Redditch in the Midlands. The new skills these craftsmen brought with them meant that needle making moved away from the blacksmiths realm into a dedicated cottage industry purely focused on needles. A guild of master needle makers was founded in London in 1656, called The Worshipful Company of Needle Makers with its charter granted by Oliver Cromwell.

In the areas around Redditch the earliest reference to needle making was recorded in 1639. This cluster of migrant needle makers stretched from Henley-in-Arden to Stoke Prior and from Alcester to Kings Norton. Redditch sat in the in the middle of this area but it wasn't until 1700 that records show Redditch had become an active focus for needle production. At this time there were about 600 needle makers around Redditch, with power for the manufacturing process being supplied by a network of streams and rivers such as the River Arrow. This use of water power, primarily to polish the needles, gave the Redditch needle makers a technical advantage over their competition elsewhere in the country. The needles they made were less expensive to produce and of a higher quality. Over time other manufacturers find themselves unable to compete and eventually closed down, some even taking the radical step of moving their whole operation, including workers, to the Redditch area.

During the 17th and early 18th centuries needle making remained a cottage industry but one with a fair degree of organisation. Steel wire was drawn in Birmingham and then sent out to needle producers in the adjacent towns of Studley, Alcester, Henley-in Arden and Redditch. Some workers carried out all the stages of needle production, whilst others specialised in certain areas. One such specialisation was needle pointing which up until 1870 was done by hand. This was the best paid job available, but it was also the most dangerous. Apart from the physical dangers from slivers of metal flying up into workers eyes, or the potential for the grindstone to shatter, there was always an unseen danger from inhaling the dust from the needles and the grindstone. Through continued exposure pointers would often contract a crippling lung disease called Pointers Rot. The average life expectancy of a pointer during this period was no more than 35 years. These were occupations that were also open to women, at least outside London. Another factor in the migration of crafts people to the regions was that needle manufacture in London was being stifled through by-laws which prevented, for example, women from working in needle making within the boundaries of Greater London.

By the mid 18th century new machines were introduced to increase productivity to meet national demand but also to supply a growing world wide market centred on the British colonies. By 1850, the work of cutting and pointing the needle wire moved inside factories and Redditch was killing off their competition by being the only British centre making needles on an industrial scale. Migration to the area continued until about 1862, and alongside this growth needle scouring mills and factories were built up across the region. By 1866 there were nearly 100 million needles produced each year in Britain, and by the end of the century Redditch, and the surrounding district

had a virtual monopoly on production. Continued investment, streamlining of process and increased automation of factory systems would see 45 million needles produced per week by the eve of the Second World War.

In 1730 Henry Millward & Sons was founded in Redditch by Symon Millward. Symon's son Henry took over the business in 1770 and by the end of the 18th century the company was the largest manufacturer in the whole district. By the end of the next century Henry Millward & Sons had the largest factory in England for the production of needles. The company went on to play an active part in amalgamating the various needle making operations in the Redditch area. It absorbed several local companies and became The English Needle & Fishing Tackle Company in 1932. This company became Needle Industries Ltd in May 1946 and in 1961, following further mergers, it became Needle Industries Group Ltd. In 1973 the Scottish textile company Coats Paton took over the organisation. In 1984 Coats Paton acquired another needle making company, Aero Needles Group Ltd., forming the largest needle company in the world, which at its peak employed 15,000 people.

John James is the trading name of Entaco Limited, a privately owned British company based in Redditch, long known as the Needle Capital of the World. In 1930 two of the great needle maker giants Milward and Hall joined forces under a single holding company, namely Amalgamated Needles and Fish Hooks Limited. In 1932 they formed a separate manufacturing division called the English Needle and Fishing Tackle Company or Entaco. Studley-based Entaco is one of the last remaining bastions of this important heritage, and has been making needles for over 300 years, the only remaining UK manufacturer of sewing needles. Now a much smaller business with a 100-strong workforce, it has seen generations of the same family pass over its threshold to earn their living.

John James itself was formed in 1840 and the original John James factory appeared listed as a business for the first time in an 1860 directory for the Redditch area. The factory presence was even acknowledged by the great English novelist Charles Dickens (1812 to 1870) when he mentioned a visit to Redditch in his Household Worlds journal.

"We have been to Redditch, that remarkable little . . . town, to see needles made . . . because our English needles of today are spreading all over the known world, wherever exchange of commodities is going on. We are allowed to go over the Victoria Works, the manufactory of Mr John James. That so many (needles) should go forth into the world from one house is wonderful enough . . . but the making ready for sale exhibits a miracle of dexterity"

John James himself originally focused on industrial needles and in particular sail making needles, before the company moved into producing their Finest Quality Needles in its distinctive yellow and black packaging for hand sewing and needlecraft use.

Due to foreign competition from Asia and the dramatic rise in factory made clothing, the town of Redditch is no longer the world leader it used to be. However, the tradition of needle making in the area continues with Britain's only remaining manufacturer still producing over 400 million needles a year, having carved out a niche for consistently high quality needles in the face of cheaper imports.

The long Crendon – Redditch Connection

Redditch to Long Crendon

Redditch Needle-workers were recruited by the Kirby Beard Co to work in its Long Crendon factory in the mid 1800's in an attempt to boost production and compete the the growing Redditch needle industry.

Since the early 1600's Long Crendon, a Village in Buckinghamshire, had been famous for its needle making industry but by the end of the 1700's business was in decline and workers began to drift northwards to settle in thriving Redditch- In December 1848 this trend was reversed when Kirby Beard set up a factory in Long Crendon and recruited experienced Redditch workers to build up production and help develop local skills Research has identified most, but probably not all, of those Redditch recruits who were:-

Thomas Cooper
Joseph Williams
Charles Chester
Sarah Williams
Richard Stanley
Robert Haynes
Joseph Alcock
Charles Lewis
Eliza Haynes
Eliza Alcock
William James
Charles Spiers
Frederick Court
Nancy Spiers
Branden Laight
Ellen Laight
Charles Baylis
Samuel Hill
David Hill

Involved in the early build up phases were Thomas Cooper, Charles Chester, Richard Stanley, Charles Lewis, Joseph and Sarah Williams, Robert and Eliza Haynes who appear to have stayed in Long Crendon just a few years before returning to Redditch. William James and Frederick Court, who married local girls, were also among the first recruits and stayed until the factory closed in 1862.

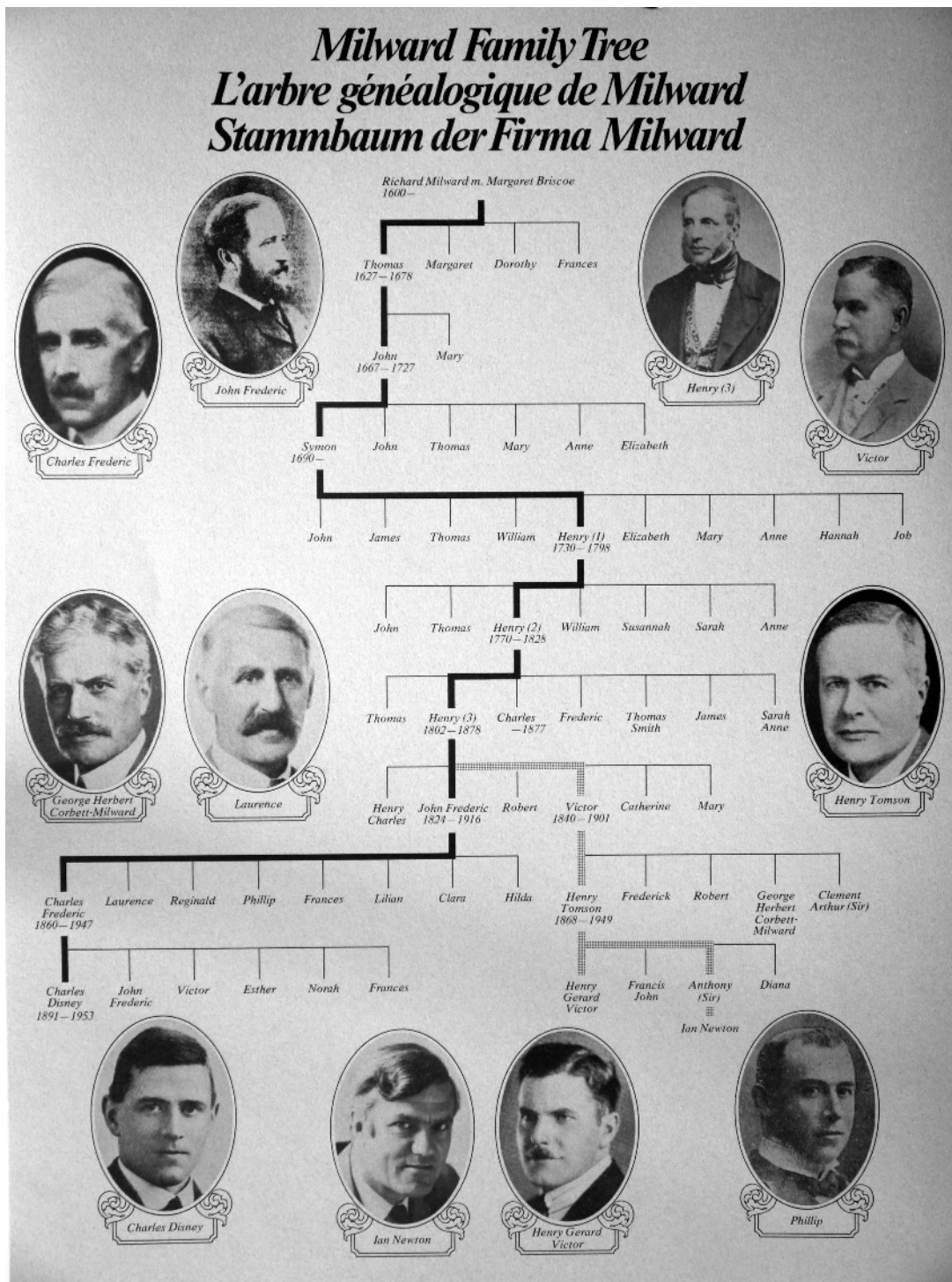
Joseph and Eliza Alcock were also early arrivals and although Joseph died in 1855 Eliza and her 10 year old daughter Emma remained in Long Crendon until the factory closed.

It was in 1850 that Charles and Nancy Spiers were recruited, they settled had four children and remained in Long Crendon until the factory closed. Branden Laight and his wife Ellen were also 1850 recruits and around 1853 Branden became foreman of the Stamping Shop but in 1858, following a management dispute, the family returned to Redditch.

The mid 1850's saw the last of the Redditch workers moving to Long Crendon. In 1854 Charles Baylis and his family moved upon his appointment as manager of the Kirby Beard factory. Samuel Hill, a single man, was recruited around the same time to be followed in 1855/6 by David Hill and family. All settled in Long Crendon and remained there until the factory closed in 1862.

In all at least 19 Redditch needle workers, accompanied by 12 of their wives/children, were recruited by Kirby Beard to work in their Long Crendon factory which in 1861 employed 22 men, 11 women, 9 boys and 16 girls. Comments regarding the information given here, particularly any omissions, would be most welcome.

Source: *K D Govier, November 1995 Tel 0121 705 1221 Ref: BRECRTS WPS*



Some of the Migrants

Other needlemakers and traders such as the Shrimptons, Charles Spencer and the Henry Johnson family who were not directly involved with Kirby Beard also migrated to Redditch about the same time. These migrants have been excluded from the figures presented here, if taken into account



it is estimated that about 100 of Long Crendon's small population left the village during the 1860's Contemporary accounts indicate that about 38 of Kirby Beards employees moved to Redditch. This tends to be confirmed by the headcount of 37 in a photograph taken before the workers left Long Crendon These figures suggest that those identified do represent most, if not all, of the migrating Kirby Beard workers.



Long Crendon to Redditch

When Kirby Beard transferred his needle making operations to Redditch in 1862, three quarters of the workforce, about 37 employees according to contemporary accounts, went with them.

Census returns, baptisms, registrations of births, marriages and deaths have been analysed to identify those most likely to have been involved. The 37 needle workers so identified, and the 39 wives and children who went with them, were photographed and those named below are believed to feature in that photograph.

Walter Biggs
Thomas Biggs
Frederick Curt
Adelaid Curt
Jethro Govier
Henry Govier
Emmanual Harris
David Harris
Robert Haynes
Eliza Haynes
William James
Mary James
George Johnson
Benjamin Johnson
William Mallam
Frank Turvey
Esther Turner
Elizabeth Turner
Jonah Warner
Job Feasey
Mary Feasey
Ann Feasey
David Hill
Samuel Hill
Charles Spiers
Nancy Spiers
Phillip Spencer
Emma Spencer

Was the Move worth It?

Of the workers who first settle in the Redditch Needle area, John Ephraim Shrimpton soon moved from Astwood to Studley in Warwickshire, First he was needle making foreman in Priory Mill, then he set up in business in Alcester road. Amos Dodwell came north to marry his Anne at Studley church in September, 1840. The apprentice, William Hawkes, married a Spinnall girl and moved to Studley, first at Tom's Town, then Alcester Rd. John Solomon and family first lived at Alcester Rd, then moved to Alcester itself, where he died aged 40 in 1865. Henry Beckett, son of the wagon driver, Richard, also moved to Alcester Road, Studley, with his wife and son later.

All the migrants were Baptists, being admitted by letter to Studley chapel. John Ephraim, his wife and Kezia Harris (also of Alcester Rd) were, however, excluded for 'schism' on 26 August 1848. Solomon David stayed at Astwood Bank, though he married Studley girl.

Will Carter, who loaned a wagon, later migrated to the area, as a farmer at Tardebigg, where he died in 1901 at the ripe old age of one hundred and ten.

What Links Exist?

Needle workers found living in Long Crendon in 1861 and Redditch in 1871

1. Charles Baylis, Born c1821 Redditch area Recruited by Kirby Beard in 1852 to manage their Long Crendon factory he migrated with his wife Ann and their children Charles, Elizabeth, James and Louisa. Was living in the Ipsley area in 1871.
2. Maria Biggs, born c1840 Long Crendon area. Migrated with her niece Louisa and brothers Waller and Thomas In 1871 was living in Red Lion St Redditch
3. Walter Biggs, born c1843 Long Crendon, brother of Maria and Thomas Was living in William St, Redditch, in 1871
4. Thomas Biggs, born c1852 Long Crendon, brother of Maria & Walter, lived in Red Lion St 1871.
5. Frederick Court, born c1835 Redditch area Recruited by Kirby Beard c1855 for their Long Crendon factory he migrated with his wife Adelaid (who died in June 1867) and their sons Charles and George Believed to have remarried (to Hannah) he lived in Prospect I Till, Redditch, in 1871.
6. Adelaid Court, born c1836 Long Crendon, wife of Frederick. Died in Redditch area June 1867.
7. Jethro Govier, born 1844 Long Crendon, migrated with his brother Henry Married Harriet Smith 1865 and was living in Adelaid St, Redditch, in 1871.
8. Henry Govier, born 1846 Long Crendon, brother of Jethro Married Eleanor Laight in 1869 and was living in Edward St, Redditch, in 1871.
9. Emmanuel Harris, born 1835 Long Crendon area, migrated with his wife Eliza and daughter Sarah, In 1871 he was living in Victoia St, Redditch.
10. David Harris, born c1806 Long Crendon area, migrated with his wife Ann and their sons Caleb and John. Was living in Alcester Road, Studley in 1871. John was an agricultural worker but became a needle worker after migrating to Redditch.
11. Caleb Harris, born c1846 Long Crendon. Son of David and Ann & lived with his parents in 1871.

12. Benjamin Harris, born c1833 Long Crendon area. Migrated with his wife Eliza and their children Ellen, Wilf, Jane and Lania. Lived in Evesham Street, Redditch in 1871.
13. Robert Haynes, born c1817 Redditch area. Recruited by Kirby Beard c1855 for their Long Crendon factory he migrated with his wife Eliza but died in Redditch in 1866.
14. Eliza Haynes, born c1817 Redditch area and was recruited by Kirby Beard c1855 for their Long Crendon factory. Wife of Robert she lived in Mount Pleasant, Redditch in 1871.
15. William James, born c1831 Redditch area and recruited by Kirby beard c1855 for their Long Crendon factory. Marrying in Long Crendon he migrated with his wife Mary and in 1871 was living in Ipsley, Redditch.
16. Mary James, born c1831 Long Crendon area. Wife of William she was living with him in 1871.
17. George Johnson, born c1829 Long Crendon area. Migrating with his wife Ellen and their children Harriet, Emma, George, Mary and Susan they were living in Beoley Road, Redditch, in 1871.
18. Benjamin Johnson, born c1827 Long Crendon area he migrated with his wife Elizabeth and daughters Annie and Jane. In 1871 they were living in Queen Street, Redditch.
19. William Mallam, born c1847 Long Crendon area, a single man he migrated and married c1868. In 1871 he was living with his wife Ann in Beoley Road, Redditch.
20. Thirza Pritchard, born c1843 Long Crendon area, migrated with her brother George and married William Jennings c1865. Was living in Mount Pleasant, Redditch, in 1871.
21. George Pritchard, born c1849 Long Crendon. Brother of Thirza he migrated as a needle maker but became a carpenter. Married c1868, in 1871 he was living in Redditch Road, Redditch.
22. Esther Turner, born c1845 Long Crendon area, migrated with sister Elizabeth and in 1871 was living in Windsor Street, Redditch.
23. Elizabeth Turner, born c1851 Long Crendon area, sister of Esther she migrated and in 1871 was living in Windsor Street Redditch.
24. Frank Turvey, born c1841 Long Crendon he migrated marrying in Redditch c1865. In 1871 he was living in Ipsley, Redditch.
25. Jonah Warner, born c1847 Long Crendon area, he migrated in August 1862 a few weeks after the main party had left Long Crendon. In 1871 he was living in Edward Street, Redditch.

Needleworkers known to have been in Long Crendon c1861 & found in Redditch area 1871.

1. Job Feasey, born c1814 Redditch area. He, his wife Mary and their children Ann, Job, Richard, Mary, Betsy, Thomas and Edwin were known to have been in the Long Crendon area about the time of the migration but have not been located in the 1861 census. However in 1871 they were living in Studley and it seems almost certain that the family were involved in the 1862 migration.
2. Mary Feasey, born c1822 Redditch area. Wife of Job she was living in Studley in 1871.
3. Ann Feasey, born c1847 Long Crendon. Daughter of Job and Ann she lived in Studley in 1871.
4. Job Feasey, born c1849 Long Crendon area. Son of Job and Ann he was living in Studley in 1871.
5. David Hill, born c1827 Redditch area and recruited by Kirby Beard c1856. Not located in 1861 but known to have been in the Long Crendon area in the late 1850's. Was living in Evesham Street, Redditch, in 1871 with his wife Harriet and children Thomas, Fanny and Emily. Almost certainly he migrated with his family in 1862.

6. Phillip Spencer, born c1844 Long Crendon. Not located in 1861 but known to have been working for Kirby Beard around that time. Assumed to have migrated with his sister Emma, was living in Ipsley St Redditch in 1871.
7. Emma Spencer, born c1848 Long Crendon. Sister of Phillip she married William Shrimpton in 1868 and was living in Britten Street, Redditch in 1871.

Needle workers found living in Long Crendon in 1861 but not positively located in 1871.

1. Eliza Alcock, born c1824 Redditch area. Recruited (with her husband Joseph who died 1855 in Long Crendon) by Kirby Beard c1853 for their Long Crendon factory. Not located in 1871 but it seems almost certain that she would have returned, with her daughter Emma, to their home town Redditch when the Long Crendon factory closed.
2. Emma Alcock, born c1846 Redditch area and daughter of Eliza. Assumed to have migrated to Redditch with her mother in 1862.
3. Samuel Hill, born c1833 Redditch area and recruited by Kirby Beard c1855 for their Long Crendon Factory. A single man he has not been located in 1871 but is assumed to have returned to his home town Redditch in 1862 when the Long Crendon factory closed.
4. Charles Spiers, born c1822 Redditch area and recruited by Kirby Beard c1850 for their Long Crendon factory. Not located in 1871 but it seems almost certain that he would have returned to his home town Redditch with his wife Nancy and their children Sara, Ann, Catherine and Charles when the Long Crendon factory closed. This tends to be confirmed by finding Sara, Catherine and Charles Spiers in the Redditch area in 1881.
5. Nancy Spiers, born c1820 Redditch area and recruited by Kirby Beard for their Long Crendon factory. Wife of Charles she is assumed to have returned with him to Redditch in 1862.

Source: *K D Govier - November 1995*



Kink-stamp operators "eyeing" needles in a Redditch factory

Links to Today's Generations

Simon Partridge

On my mother's side the background differs somewhat from that of the Partridges. For instance, the Spencers do not originate from Redditch but from the village of Long Crendon in Buckinghamshire close to Oxford. They were needle makers, a manufacturing trade closely allied with fish hook making, in which the former trade existed in both Long Crendon and Redditch and this would explain their eventual move in the 1860's to the latter. Several families made such a move and some later returned to their original village. Like the Partridges, the Spencers had been agricultural labourers during the 18th century and presumably earlier and then become needle makers as the Industrial Revolution took hold in the 19th century.

Mr Philip Spencer was one of the dwindling number of workers in the needle trade who originally came from Long Crendon. A Redditch Indicator obituary for him published 12th June 1918 says:

"Born in this small Buckinghamshire village 75 years ago he came to Redditch in 1864, and soon entered into business as a manufacturer of surgical needles, founding the firm of Messers P. Spencer and Sons. Some years ago he resigned the actual control, but to the last hour of his life he maintained an active interest in the work that he had originated and so successfully carried on. He had been for many years a member of the Board of Guardians of the Alcester Union and at the time of his decease also held the post of overseer of Upper Ipsley Parish."

Source: *Extract from A REDDITCH BOYHOOD by Simon Partridge. March 2008*

Peter White

In 2006 I was researching my family history on my Mother's side when I discovered that my Granny Johnson's Mum (my Great Grandmother) had been born in Long Crendon in 1848. I returned to the book to read the passage again and eventually spoke to Anne Bradford about my discovery. She in turn emailed to me this photograph.....

It seems that the list refers to the photograph. As I read it excitement mounted in me.....for there were two names there which I knew from my family researches - they were Esther Turner and Elizabeth Turner, sisters in the Turner family of Long Crendon Buckinghamshire, the tree of which is documented later on (Elizabeth's Birth Certificate also). So Ann Bradford was right....but which two girls were the Turner sisters in the photograph? From the names chosen by Elizabeth for her daughter (my Grandmother Esther Rebecca) years later, I concluded that the sisters were close. The two girls to the right hand side of the 1862 picture are of similar features and stand close together. The stature of the shorter girl would suggest that she might be about 14 years old (Elizabeth) and that of the girl to her left to be older, perhaps 17, and therefore her sister Esther. Upon this evidence I believe I am looking at my Great Grandmother Elizabeth who would give birth some 22 years later to the lady whom I knew as Granny Johnson.....a child whom tragically Elizabeth would only know for a few short months before her death in her thirty sixth year.

To return to the list....I believe that it holds further information and to that end I have done further work and it tells us that some of the needle workers who left Redditch and journeyed to Long Crendon in 1848 decided to return to Redditch in 1862. These I have highlighted in red. So perhaps the photograph shows some who were originally natives of Redditch.

Source: *Conversations with Peter White 2013/2014*

Ann Brace

My great grandfather Philip Spencer left Long Crendon and married Emma Allcock. He became leader of the town Band along with his sons and, later, grandsons. At one time 18 of the 22 band members were Spencers. Philip served on the Upper Ipsley School Board He was organist for the Congregational church and ran the Sunday School for 46 years. Philip was also a composer and a 'renowned performer of the euphonium'! He remained Conductor of the Band until his death in 1918. He was also of course a Needle Manufacturer - altogether a 'Good Egg'.

I lived in Plymouth road with my grandparents from c 1948 until 1952, attending Bridge Street School before the High School. Much of my time was spent at the Methodist chapel in Mount Pleasant. Our Sunday School leader was Mr Ingles. The church was packed for Anniversaries and we had a marvellous youth club twice a week, run by Colin Johnson We were useful for Sunday services when we took turns to pump the organ, until a new electric one was bought. Sunday school outings were usually to the Malvern hills. I remember Alan Partridge at church and youth club,

My Grandfather was William Best who came from a poor farm labourer family in Alvechurch.

William worked at Lane Farm, Southan's Hopwood Brewery in 1897, then in Leicester and Rutland Asylum, gathering references for entering the Birmingham Police force. He received a commendation for stopping a runaway horse and was promoted to Sergeant in Redditch, living with his family in Church Road. They eventually moved to 89 Plymouth Road and, when he retired he became a night porter at the Abbey hostel - a job which he loved. I remember that, as he grew older, he would always walk with his stick down the middle of the road, being greeted by everyone - quite easy with little or no traffic.

The photo here is of Alvechurch National School in about 1880, and the other is William Best in the Birmingham Police force in c1905



Source: Email conversations 2013/2014

Angela Floyd

Ann(ie) Feasey came from Long Crendon with her parents and married William Beckett (mentioned as the wagon driver's son) in 1876 and lived in Studley, both continued in the needle industry. They had 3 children, Ernest, Florence and Annie. Florence is my grandmother and married William Yates from Cookhill, they eventually settled in Astwood Bank. They had 5 children, Sidney, Ernest, Kenneth, Olive and John. Olive Yates was my mother. Rosemarie (from the group) is my cousin, her father was Ken Yates.

What I didn't know and was really amazing to me was that I believed the Feaseys came from Long Crendon when in fact I hadn't realised that there were many people with the name Feasey from Redditch who originally went to Long Crendon to work and then came all the way back here.

Thomas Mutton

My gg-grandmother was Eva Lewis, her father was William Lewis and his father was William Lewis and so and so forth. They were all involved in the needler making industry with the later being noted as "employers" around the 1850's onwards. Two of Eva's sister inlaws on the Mutton side married into the Shrimpton family. Sarah Ann Mutton married Fredrick Shrimpton and Ada Mutton married Fredrick Ledbury, nephew of Fredrick Shrimpton. I do not know a great deal about the Shrimptons but now understand the family came up from Long Crendon in the 1800's. I understand this was due to industry moving on in the Birmingham area and so more work.

The information you provided backs and verifies what my own research has found about Long Crendon, Redditch and the needle making industry. I was actually able to find (what I assume to be) a relative on the list of people who made the journey to Long Crendon. His name was Charles Lewis. From my research I am not able to find a link with our tree to Charles (yet) but given both names I am confident there is a link somewhere as they were all needle makers. Perhaps a brother or cousin.

I was able to find a census record with the four men (Thomas Cooper, Charles Chester, Richard Stanley and Charles Lewis) all lodging in a house in Long Crendon so that was good to find that verification.

Gary Pritchard

My family originated from Long Crendon in the early 1700's. I always wondered how we got to being in Birmingham and information on the RLHS web site has put it all into perspective. One of my gt gt granddads George Pritchard b.1849 must have moved to Birmingham area from Long Crendon to seek work. I don't know at what age he moved, all I know is, is that he got married at the maypole to a woman from Langley, Warkwickshire. Is it feasible he moved with the needle makers ?

George & Mary must have settled in Bearwood, Smethwick because 4 generations including myself all lived at some point in the same house in Ethel Street, Bearwood, which is still there today.

Source: Email from Gary Pritchard 20/11/2015

Njairé Russ

We received this letter from New Zealand with apparent links to the Spencer's and Partridge's families but have not, as yet, been able to substantiate any of these links.

<p>2 Cottrell Road R01 Richmond 4081 New Zealand</p>	<p>We understand that Spencer-Shrimpton were needlemakers in Redditch having come from Long Crendon Jonah was born in Long Crendon 1840 came out to Australia. 1874 Chatesworth then on to NZ. Died 1926 in Tureden NZ.</p>
<p>Redditch Historical Group Hoping you can help me. May 1831 - Long Crendon John Jonas Shrimpton m. Mary Young</p>	<p>During the war NZ send food parcel to Redditch and were send sewing needles back from family members I have just visited an elderly lady who is Jonah's granddaughter from the second marriage, she had alot of interesting stories. Hoping you can find some one who can help me or knows some one of this line</p>
<p>Children: Any others? Samuel came to NZ 1855 married Charlotte Sampson. He came out on the Royal Stuart 1864. Jonah came to NZ married Maria Heslop 1864. this is my line.</p>	<p>Yours faithfully Njairé Russ.</p>
<p>Sarah m Charles Spencer & lived at 50 Edward St Redditch 1916-17. we have a photo of her in NZ visiting her brothers, also one with a grandson Henry Charles Spencer died after a 4 1/2 long illness, He had died by 1916 at 1916 1916. Did this couple or do this couple have any living relations in Redditch.</p>	<p>Email. waimea.excavators@extra.co.nz.</p>

Your Input and Connections?

If you have any ancestors in the needle trades, or any connections to Long Crendon, please get in touch so that we can add another piece of this fascinating jigsaw.

