

ARTHUR FAMILY OF COACHMAKERS

Charles Arthur, born in Holborn, Middlesex in 1765 married Mary Brooker in Shoreditch, London. Their eldest son Benjamin was born in 1803. They then moved to Claines, Worcestershire, where a daughter and five sons were born; Susannah in 1805, Francis in 1807, Edward in 1809, James in 1811, Henry in 1812, and Frederick in 1814. By 1816 Charles and his family had moved to Benson where Charles worked as a coachmaker with Mr Shackelford.

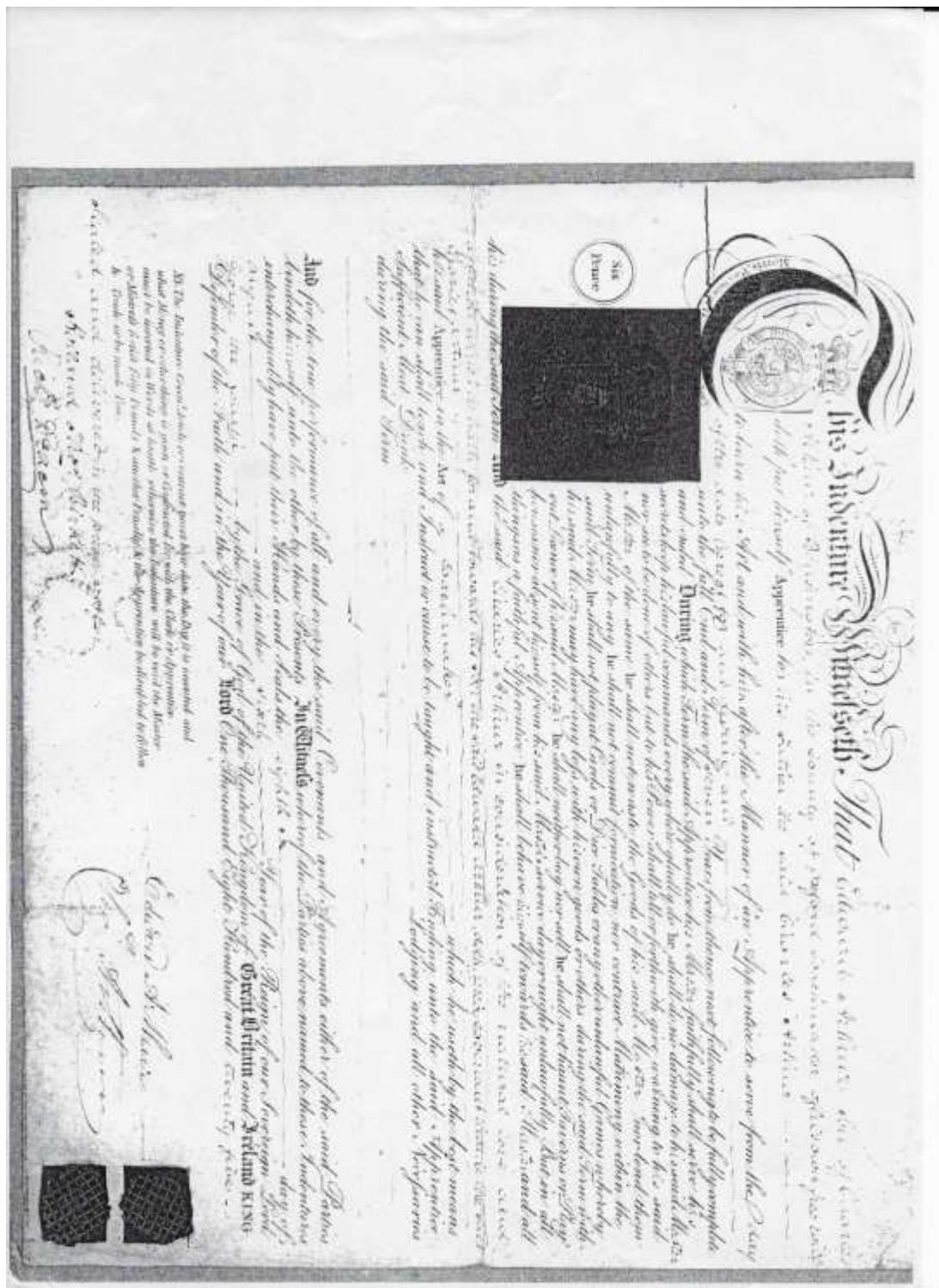
We know that Charles lived in Benson in 1816, because his daughter, Mary Ann was baptised in the parish church. He then had three more sons baptised; Richard in 1819, Thomas in 1820 and John in 1823. He retired in 1833, aged about 68 and handed over his business to his eldest son, Benjamin, who had been born in 1803 in Holborn. Benjamin moved the business to the High Street coachmaking premises, once occupied by the Padbury family.

The advertisement below from Jackson's Oxford Journal of 1833 mentions Benjamin's father's late residence, which was *probably* the house now known as "The Limes". (*There is a contemporary record of Mr Shackleton living here.*)

BENSON, OXON.
BENJAMIN ARTHUR,
COACH AND HARNESS MAKER,
GRATEFUL for the many favours and patronage he has received from the Nobility, Gentry, and others, during the short time he has remained in business at his father's late residence, begs to inform his friends and the public that he is removed to a central situation in Benson, nearly opposite the Old Red Lion, (premises far preferable to the old manufactory), where his business will be carried on with punctuality and dispatch, and on the most reasonable terms; and he trusts, by an unremitting attention to their commands, to merit their approval, and a continuance of their favours.

The baptism records of four of his children in St Helen's Church, Benson of 1816 to 1823 record that Charles was a coachmaker, married to Mary. (*We now know from her children's death certificates that her maiden name was Brooker.*)

The descendants of Charles have a document (*shown below*) recording that Charles Arthur, coachmaker of Benson, had a son, **Edward**, who became his apprentice in 1825. Edward was baptised in Claines, Worcestershire in 1809 and would have been 16 in 1825.



In 1842, it was recorded that **Francis and Edward Arthur**, coachmakers of Birmingham had been declared bankrupt. (*See the 1842 gazette entry below.*) Their brother, **Frederick** was recorded as a coachpainter. (*See below.*)

Gazette, Friday, July 29.

BANKRUPTS.

BANKRUPTCY SUPERSEDED.

TURNER Frederick Edward, of Holywell, chemist.

TOWN AND COUNTRY FIATS.

ARTHUR Francis, and **Edward Arthur**, of Birmingham, in the county of Warwick, coach-makers.—Sols. **Harding**, Birmingham, and Stafford, Buckingham-street. Fiat, July 26. Pet. Cr. **Frederick Arthur**, of Birmingham, coach-painter.

Francis Arthur, born in about 1807 in Claines is recorded in both the censuses of 1851 and 1861 living in Worcestershire. In 1851 he is a **coachbuilder** in St Martins, Birmingham and in 1861 he is a retired **coachbuilder**. He is married to Harriet, born about 1808 in Oxfordshire. She died in 1861 in the district of Kings Norton, near Birmingham, Worcestershire. Francis died in 1868, aged 61 also in the district of Kings Norton, Worcestershire.

Edward Arthur married Anna Elizabeth George in 1835 in England. His brother, **Frederick Arthur** married Emma Jones in Birmingham, England in 1842 and they had six children. In the 1851 census **Henry Arthur** (*another brother*) was a Manchester agent (*linen/cotton agent*) married to Isabella (*born in Clerkenwell c.1823*) with two daughters and living in Lambeth (London).

By 1840 coachbuilding was in decline in England because railways were reaching across the country. **Edward and Frederick Arthur** therefore emigrated and were recorded as coachbuilders of Elizabeth Street, Sydney, Australia from the 1850s to the 1870s. Frederick arrived in Australia in 1844 and Edward arrived in 1848. Their brother, **Richard** was a carver and gilder in Holborn, London in 1851 and joined his brothers in Sydney in 1853. He was recorded as a carver and gilder in Drutt Street, Sydney in 1858.



Edward Arthur 1809 – 1878



Frederick Arthur 1814 - 1899

Edward Arthur, born in 1809 in Claines, died in 1878 in Sydney leaving no children. His death certificate confirms that he was a coachbuilder, born in England to Charles Arthur and Mary Brooker. **Frederick** Arthur born 1814 in Claines died in Fifefield Farm, Liverpool, Sydney in 1899 and his death certificate confirms that he was born in Worcestershire. Frederick left six children. **Richard** Arthur born in Benson in 1819 died in Sydney in 1873. His death certificate confirms that his parents were also Charles Arthur and Mary Brooker.

Charles Arthur worked as a coachbuilder in Benson from 1816 to 1833 when he handed over his business to his eldest son, Benjamin, who had married Caroline Esther Strainge in 1826. The business continued in Benson until 1842, when Benjamin moved to High Street, Wallingford. His daughter, Sophia (born in 1837) married William Pettit in 1858, two years after he had established the well-known department store in Wallingford. Sophia's brother, Henry Arthur married Frances Pettit in 1859 in Newmarket.

Three of Benjamin's brothers exported their coachbuilding and coachpainting skills to Sydney, Australia, where their business continued until the 1870s.

The Arthur family story was researched by Jane Farquharson and Errol Edwards of Sydney, Australia, great, great grandson of Frederick Arthur. Photographs are reproduced with kind permission of Errol Edwards.