

# THE STAFFORD BRANCH CANAL / RIVER SOW NAVIGATION

## LOCK HOUSE ARTIFACTS

### W D BATKIN MINERAL WATER BOTTLE

Researched and written by

David Jones

One of the items uncovered during an SRL Work Party in 2014 was a glass mineral water bottle manufactured for *W D Batkin Ltd* of Stafford probably around 1920. See the photograph below.<sup>1</sup>



The crown-top bottle was found in the Branch Canal Basin close to the site of the former Lock House at Baswich and is in excellent condition. Its dimensions are:

Overall Height: 8¾" (222mm)  
Start of neck (where it curves in) from base: 4¼" (105mm)  
Diameter of the base: 2⅜" (62mm)  
Outside Diameter of top: 1" (22mm)  
Inside Diameter of top: ⅝" (17mm)

It is colourless and has the moulded inscription "BATKIN LTD W.D.B. STAFFORD" on the body, and the letters "F.G.C." on the base.

"W.D.B." are the initials of Wilmot Dudley Batkin (1848-1935). In 1902 he had bought the *Eclipse Works* (13 Gaol Road, Stafford) to manufacture soft drinks, taking over the business of *Hardman & Openshaw* (Ale Bottlers and Mineral Water Manufacturers), and traded under the name of W.D.Batkin Ltd. He was a bottling agent for Vimto and Guinness, and an agent for Smith's Crisps. He probably did not make his own bottles but bought them in, he seems to have been fairly business savvy and would know the right people; the markings on the bottles would be the makers marks.<sup>2</sup>

In this case, the letters "F.G.C." indicate that the bottle was made by *Forster's Glass Company* of St Helens (Lancashire) – this company traded between 1902 and 1966 when it became part of *Rockware Glass*.

The Staffordshire County Museum at Shugborough have a number of Batkin beer and mineral water bottles in their collection.<sup>3</sup> Many are of the Codd<sup>4</sup> type, however item 94.008.0001 is identical with the one found at Baswich except for a different set of marks on the base – "F258 / S I / UGB" – this item was dug up during excavation of foundations for the Staffordshire Record Office extension in March 1994. "U.G.B." shows this bottle was made by the *United Glass Bottle Manufacturers Ltd.*, a large conglomerate of several British glass manufacturers formed in 1913 – this signalled

the introduction into the UK of fully automated bottle making machines first patented in the United States by Michael Owens (1903).

Wilmot Batkin was a well-known figure in Stafford during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He was a member of the Staffordshire Knot Lodge, a member of the County Conservative Club and the Constitutional Club for many years. He was also a member of Stafford Bowling Club and was keenly interested in shooting, winning numerous trophies and prizes when competing at clay pigeon shoots.<sup>5</sup>

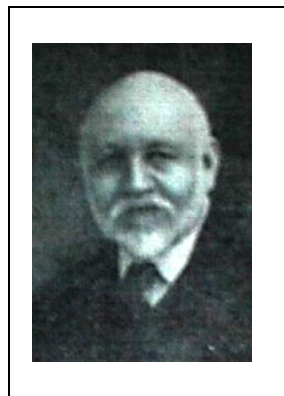
He was married three times and had six children. According to a family story, he had to be prevented from marrying a fourth time shortly before his death; it seems that Wilmot was what we today would call 'a bit of a lad'.<sup>2</sup>

After Wilmot's death in 1935, the business in Gaol Road passed to his second son, George Dudley Batkin<sup>6</sup> (1878-1957). It is thought that the company carried on until the 1960s.

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## **WILMOT DUDLEY BATKIN**

### **Some Additional Insights into his Family and Businesses**



Wilmot Dudley Batkin was born in 1848 and baptised at St Marys Church Stafford on 7 June 1848.

His first wife was Mary Turner (1854-1885). They were married on 13 July 1875 at St Thomas Church Penkhull (Stoke-on-Trent). She was 21 and Wilmot was 27. They had two children: John Turner Batkin (1876-1951) and George Dudley Batkin (1878-1957). Mary passed away in 1885 aged only 31.

A year after Mary's death, Wilmot married Caroline Bridgwood (1855-1913), a spinster, on 17 May 1886 at St Mary's Church (Stafford). She was 31 and Wilmot was 38. They had four children: Wilmot Cecil Batkin (1887-1953), Walter Bridgwood Batkin (1889-1977), Elsie May Batkin (1891-1982) and Dorothy Batkin (1894-1988). Caroline died in 1913 aged 58.

Wilmot's third wife was Elizabeth Trew (c1865-1930). They were married on 18 August 1914 at St Thomas Walton on the Hill (Baswich). He was 66, a widower of

13 Gaol Road and she was 49, a widow of Milford. Their marriage certificate states that the occupation of both their fathers is “gentleman”.

Elizabeth Trew (née Gilbert) was the widow of Charles Leonard Trew; they had married in 1892 in Conway (North Wales) but never had children. By 1901 they were living in Stafford; he was the proprietor of the 15 room *Waverley Temperance Hotel* at 20 Greengate Street and she was assisting in the business. Elizabeth was living there when her husband Charles passed away in January 1912.

Wilmot’s parents were John Batkin (c1807-1896), a hairdresser, and Elizabeth Dudley (c1810-1875); they had married on 10 July 1828 and appear to have had ten children: William Henry (1829-1881), Clara<sup>7</sup> (b 1830), John (1832-1897), Edmund (1838-1881), Elizabeth<sup>8</sup> (1840-1922), Herbert (1842-1886), Francis (1846-1895), Wilmot Dudley (1848-1935), Emily Ann<sup>9</sup> (1850-1942) and Lucy Jane<sup>10</sup> (1852-1935).

Wilmot’s father (John) was a hairdresser in Stafford and it seems that Wilmot followed in his father’s footsteps, working for Charles Bond, Court Hairdresser of 239 Oxford Street in central London during the late 1860s, probably as an apprentice. By September 1870 Wilmot had returned to Stafford and was working in his father’s shop (36 Gaolgate Street).<sup>11</sup>

However Wilmot would not remain as a hairdresser. His mother died in March 1875 and by the time he married Mary Turner four months later, Wilmot was a licenced victualler in Stafford.

His father<sup>12</sup> (John Batkin) was the owner/leaseholder of the *Maid’s Head Inn* (39 Gaolgate Street) from 1867 until his death in 1896. Initially, Wilmot’s brother-in-law (Richard Sudbury) was the licensee, but from 1875 to 1897 Wilmot was the licensee/occupier. It seems that Wilmot did not live on the premises and that his family’s home was 23 Broad Street.

In 1879 Wilmot set up business with Richard Sudbury and they traded as *Sudbury & Batkin* Wine and Spirit Merchants.<sup>13</sup>

The 1881 Census confirms that Wilmot and his family were living at 23 Broad Street and that he was a “wine merchant”.

In 1886, a year after Wilmot’s wife Mary died, Wilmot married Caroline Bridgwood; their marriage certificate records they were *both* living at 39 Gaolgate Street and Wilmot was described as a “malster”. It should be noted that in the 1881 Census Caroline Bridgwood was a barmaid at 39 Gaolgate Street, the *Maid’s Head*.

In October 1887 a disasterous fire destroyed several buildings in the centre of Stafford, on the corner of Gaolgate Street and Market Street – the Elizabethan House, Mummery’s Jewellery Shop, Miss Johnson’s Book Shop and Boots the Chemist. The *Maid’s Head* was at risk but was saved by the actions of the Stafford Volunteer Fire Brigade. Afterwards, as a mark of his

appreciation, Wilmot presented each of the firemen with a silver medal recognising their bravery.

The medal was made by J.A.Restall & Company of Birmingham. The obverse was inscribed "Presented / by / W.D.Batkin / For services at Fire / Stafford / 1 Oct 1887"; the reverse featured the monogram "SVFB" – Stafford Volunteer Fire Brigade. The name of each recipient was inscribed on the edge.<sup>14</sup>

The 1891 Census records that Wilmot is described as a "Wine & Spirit Merchant" aged 43 of 39 Gaolgate Street, The *Maid's Head*.

Following his father's death in 1896 (at 1 Vine Street, Stafford aged 88), Wilmot Batkin became the owner/leaseholder of the *Maid's Head*. The following year Stretton's Derby Brewery Limited took over the *Maid's Head* (holding the lease until 1927), and Wilmot opened a wine and spirit merchant business at 29 Crabbery Street.

In 1898 Richard Sudbury died and soon after Wilmot seems to have sold *Sudbury & Batkin* to Edward Appelbee Gibbs (1860-1936) because in the 1901 Census, Wilmot (aged 53) is described as a "retired wine merchant" living at Eccleshall Road, Tillington, just to the north of Stafford.

Wilmot was not "retired" for long. In 1902 he bought the *Eclipse Works* in Gaol Road (Stafford) to manufacture soft drinks, taking over *Hardman & Openshaw* (Ale Bottlers and Mineral Water Manufacturers) and started trading under the name of W.D.Batkin Ltd.

Kelly's 1904 Directory of Staffordshire confirms that Wilmot was a "Mineral Water Manufacturer & Bottler of 13 Gaol Road", and he continued in this role until at least 1922.

By 1928, when Wilmot was 80, he had moved to Rowley Park in Stafford (Broomfields, Lawn Road) and was described as a "Private Resident"; the business was probably managed by his son, George Dudley Batkin. Wilmot remained at Broomfields until at least 1932 before moving to 11 Rising Brook (Stafford).

Wilmot passed away on the 21 May 1935 aged 87, and his funeral was at Stafford Cemetery (Eccleshall Road) three days later.<sup>15</sup>

Probate was granted at Birmingham on 7 August 1935 and two of his sons were executors: John Turner Batkin (a Brewer living in Rotherham, Yorkshire) and George Dudley Batkin (13 Gaol Road, Stafford)<sup>16</sup> – and it was George who inherited W.D.Batkin Ltd.<sup>17</sup>

George Dudley Batkin continued to live in Stafford and when he died on 17 October 1957 his address was 12 Lovatt Street. Administration was granted at Birmingham on 30 December 1957 to his nephew, James Dudley Batkin, a brewer.

## References

- (1) Photograph courtesy of Geoff Hales and Yvonne Plant.
- (2) email from Frank Batkin, Coatesville, Indiana, USA., 31 January 2015.
- (3) *Gateway to the Past*:  
<http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/leisure/archives/collections/OnlineCatalogues/GatewaytothePast/home.aspx> .
- (4) The Codd type bottle had a marble and rubber washer in the neck. Originally patented in 1872 by Hiram Codd for carbonated soft drinks.
- (5) *Staffordshire Advertiser* 25 May 1935 (See Appendix 1).
- (6) Wilmot Dudley Batkin's Will (See Appendix 3).
- (7) Clara Batkin married George Scott on 24 August 1854.
- (8) Elizabeth Batkin married Richard Sudbury (1834-1898) on 8 September 1862.
- (9) Emily Ann Batkin married John Jaquest Perkins (1847-1914) on 27 March 1872.
- (10) Lucy Jane Batkin married Walter Hollis Cheadle (1851-1928) on 5 August 1875.
- (11) *Staffordshire Advertiser* 3 September 1870 (See Appendix 6).
- (12) John Batkin seems to have been an astute businessman with many interests and at one time was a Municipal Alderman.
- (13) The *Staffordshire Record Office* has an 1879 Deed relating to debts owed to *Sudbury & Batkin* (see Appendix 7).
- (14) An example of this medal is in the Staffordshire County Museum at Shugborough (AccNo 80.135.0008) and has the edge inscription "W.Brookfield". I suspect that W.Brookfield was "Walter Cartwright Brookfield", a Miller and Corn Merchant, who in 1881 was living at 2 Greengate Street close to the *Maid's Head*. Walter Brookfield was the son of John Brookfield (a "Draper and Mercer JP for the Boro. of Stafford" in the 1871 Census) and his wife Sarah Ann. On 24 December 1901 Walter Brookfield applied to be admitted to the Freedom of the City of London.
- (15) *Staffordshire Advertiser* 25 May 1935 (See Appendix 1).
- (16) Wilmot Dudley Batkin's entry in the *National Probate Calendar* 1935 (See Appendix 2).
- (17) Wilmot Dudley Batkin's Will (See Appendix 3).

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## APPENDICES

- (1) Transcript of a Newspaper Report of the death of W.D.Batkin, 25 May 1935.
  - (2) Entry in *National Probate Calendar*: Index of Wills and Administrations (1935).
  - (3) Last Will and Testament of Wilmot Dudley Batkin (1930).
  - (4) Census Records for the household of Wilmot Dudley Batkin's father, John Batkin, (1841-1891), which included Wilmot Dudley Batkin (1851-1871).
  - (5) Census Records for the household of Wilmot Dudley Batkin (1881-1911).
  - (6) John Batkin's Advertisement in the *Staffordshire Advertiser* 3 September 1870.
  - (7) Transcript of a Deed relating to debts owed to Sudbury & Batkin (1879).
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## APPENDIX 1

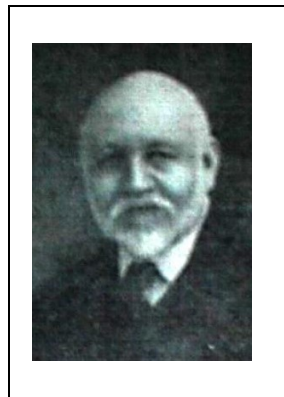
### Newspaper Report of the death of W D Batkin

(*The Staffordshire Advertiser* : Saturday 25 May 1935)

#### DEATH OF MR W.D.BATKIN

#### OLDEST STAFFORD FREEMASON

Following a brief illness, the death occurred at his residence, 11 Rising Brook, Stafford, on Monday night, of Mr W.D.Batkin. The deceased who was 87 years of age, was a native of the town, his father being the late Mr John Batkin, who for many years was associated with the business life of the town.



For the greater part of his life Mr W.D.Batkin had been associated with the licensed trade and was landlord of the *Maid's Head* some 60 years ago. For a number of years he carried on business as a wine and spirit merchant in Crabbery Street, and some 30 years ago he acquired the business of Hardman and Openshaw, ale bottlers and mineral water manufacturers, Gaol Road, which was subsequently carried on under the name of W.D.Batkin Ltd. He continued to take an active interest in the business which is managed by his son, Mr Geo. Batkin up to a week before his death, when he had a seizure.

A member of the Staffordshire Knot Lodge, Mr Batkin was the oldest Freemason in the town, and had held all the offices in his lodge. He was also one of the oldest members of the Stafford Bowling Club, and he had been a member of the County Conservative Club, and the Constitutional Club for many years. Mr.Batkin was keenly interested in shooting, and at one time was one of the best shots in the district. He won numerous trophies and prizes when competing at clay pigeon shoots.

He leaves four sons and three\* daughters.

The funeral took place at the Stafford Cemetery yesterday (Friday).

Reference: Transcribed and checked by David Jones on 27 January 2015 at the William Salt Library, Stafford.

[ Photograph reproduced courtesy of Frank and Susan Batkin ]

\*I am only aware of two daughters: Elsie May Batkin and Dorothy Batkin. I suspect that the reporter incorrectly thought there were three daughters: Elsie, May and Dorothy.

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## **APPENDIX 2**

### **National Probate Calendar: Index of Wills and Administrations: 1935**

**BATKIN** Wilmot Dudley of 11 Rising Brook Stafford **Staffordshire** died 21 May 1935 Probate **Birmingham** 7 August to John Turner Batkin brewer's manager George Dudley Batkin mineral water manufacturer and Herbert Owen accountant. Effects £4228 5s. 5d.

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## **APPENDIX 3**

### **Last Will and Testament of Wilmot Dudley Batkin, dated 1930.**

This is the last will and testament of me Wilmot Dudley Batkin of "Broomfield", Rowley Park, Stafford in the county of Stafford, made this eleventh day of April in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and thirty.

I hereby revoke all wills made by me at any time heretofore. I appoint my son John Turner Batkin, "Rosalyn", Doncaster Road, Rotherham, my son George Dudley Batkin, 13 Gaol road, Stafford and Herbert Owen, Market Square, Stafford, accountant to be my executors and direct that all my debts and funeral expenses shall be paid as soon as conveniently may be made after my decease. I give and bequeath unto the aforesaid Herbert Owen the sum of twenty five pounds for services as executor of this my will.

I give and bequeath my diamond ring to my son John Turner Batkin, my diamond stud on pin to my son Walter Bridgwood Batkin, my gold hoop ring to my son Wilmot Cecil Batkin. My solid silver waiter tray to my daughter Elsie May Freeman, my silver plated tea set, my decorated china desert set and my silver goblet to my daughter Dorothy Perkins. My sporting gun, cartridge magazine, bag and cartridges to my son in law Gerrard Perkins. My gold watch to my son George Dudley and my chain and guinea coin to my son in law Norman Freeman.

I give and bequeath the house and premises situate and being number 13 Gaol road and my shares in W D Batkin Ltd., mineral water manufacturers and bottles together with all machinery stock in trade horses vehicles and all other articles appertaining to

the business to my son George Dudley Batkin, the said George Dudley Batkin to receive all monies due to the company and to pay all monies due from the company including any monies due to the bank at the time of my decease.

I give and bequeath to my son Wilmot Cecil Batkin the sum of two hundred pounds (he having received considerable sums of money at various times) to be paid to him when and as convenient to my executors.

I direct that my executors shall realise the whole of my real and personal estate not otherwise disposed of as expeditiously as they consider desirable but at all events within the period of three years from the date of my decease and to divide the proceeds of my residuary estate after all expenses have been paid in connection therewith in equal proportions among my son John Turner Batkin, my son Walter Bridgwood Batkin and my daughter Elsie May Freeman and my daughter Dorothy Perkins.

I desire that the particulars of my estate shall not be publicly announced.

W D BATKIN

Signed by the said testator in the presence of us present at the same time who at his request in his presence and in the presence of each other have subscribed our names as witness

A I WARD, Shoe manufacturer, "Trevordene", 23 Newport rd., Stafford.

A PERCY PICKSTOCK, Traveller, 121 Newport rd., Stafford.

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[ Reproduced courtesy of Frank and Susan Batkin, Coatesville, Indiana, USA ]  
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#### **APPENDIX 4**

##### **Census Records for Wilmot Batkin's father, John Batkin (1841-1891)**

**1841 Census.** Gaolgate Street. John Batkin (30) hairdresser, Elizabeth (30), Clara (10), John (8), Edmund (3), Elizabeth (1) together with three 15 year-old hairdresser apprentices.

**1851 Census:** 26 Gaolgate Street. John Batkin (43) hairdresser, Elizabeth (40), William Henry (21) hairdresser, Clara (20), John (19) apprentice, Edmund (12) scholar, Elizabeth (10) scholar, Herbert (8) scholar, Francis (4), **Wilmot (3)**, Emily Ann (9 months); William Johnson (64, widower, uncle), Robert Taylor (12) apprentice, George Scott (10) apprentice, and Helen Ausele (16) servant.



**1861 Census:** 36 Gaolgate Street. John Batkin (54) hairdresser, Elizabeth (50), Clara Scott Batkin (31), Clara Scott Batkin (5 months, granddaughter), Elizabeth (21), Francis (14) grocer, **Wilmot (13) scholar**, Lucy J (9); Ann Dudley (44) sister-in-law, Thomas W. Watkins (17) and George Dawson (17) apprentice hairdressers, Mary Vernon (19) servant and Elizabeth Johnson (40) boarder.

**1871 Census:** 36 Gaolgate Street. John Batkin (63) hairdresser, Elizabeth (60), William Henry (41) hairdresser, **Wilmot (23) hairdresser**, Emily A (20), Lucy J (19); Elizabeth Johnson (52), William Buttery (15) apprentice to hairdresser, and Hannah Myatt (20) domestic servant.

**1881 Census:** 36 Gaolgate Street. John Batkin (73) widow, municipal alderman, Francis (34) widow, grocers assistant, Clara Scott (19), George Morgan (20) and Frederick Tunstall (18) boarders, hairdressers, Emma Mausto (66) and Selina Dawson (22) domestic servants.

**1891 Census:** 36 & 37 Gaolgate Street. John Batkin (84) boarder, retired hairdresser; Charles Kent (47) Head of House, hairdresser; Caroline E Kent (42) wife, Charles H Kent (19) apprentice hairdresser, Hubert H James (20) boarder, apprentice hairdresser; Henry J Freeman (25) boarder, assistant hairdresser; and Ann Yale (15) general domestic servant.

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## **APPENDIX 5**

### **Census Records for the household of Wilmot Dudley Batkin (1881-1911)**

**1881 Census:** 23 Broad Street. **Wilmot (33)** a wine merchant, Mary (26) wine merchant's wife, John (4), George (2); Sarah Wood (25) domestic servant, Mary Harper (16), nurse domestic servant, William Dix (19) Cellarman (domestic).

**1891 Census:** 39 Gaolgate Street, Maid's Head Inn. **Wilmot (43)** Wine & Spirit merchant, Caroline (36) wife, John (14), George (12), Wilmot (3), Walter (2), Elsie (3 months); Maud M Batkin (22) niece, a Barmaid, Alice M Veigh (17) mother help, Mary E Bullock (22) and Hannah Rodwell (18) general domestic servants, William Varley (17) Bar lad.

**1901 Census:** at Eccleshall Road, Tillington. **Wilmot Dudley (53)** retired wine merchant; Caroline (46), Walter (12), Elsie May (10), Dorothy (6); Agnes Thomson (32) a domestic help and Sabina Surreddge (28) a servant.

**1911 Census:** at 13 Gaol Road, Stafford (6 rooms). **Wilmot (63)** Mineral Water Manufacturer, Caroline (56), Walter Bridgewood (22) brewer, Elsie May (20), Dorothy (16); Sarah Ann Hassal (21) domestic (servant).

## **APPENDIX 6**

### **Advertisement in the *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 3 September 1870**

J.Batkin, Hairdresser, &c, in tendering his grateful acknowledgements to his numerous Friends and the Public generally for the very distinguished Patronage they have favoured him with for more than forty years, begs respectfully to inform them that for the future, his BUSINESS will be CONDUCTED with the ASSISTANCE of HIS SON, W.D.Batkin, who has for some time been with C.Bond<sup>a</sup>, Court Hairdresser, Oxford-street, London. This arrangement will enable him to execute all orders entrusted to his care equal to any house in the trade, and hopes by strict attention and superior workmanship to merit a continuance of their kind Patronage.  
36 GAOLGATE STREET, STAFFORD.

(a) Charles Bond was born in Devon.

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## **APPENDIX 7**

### **Transcription of a Deed relating to debts owed to Wine and Spirit Merchants called Sudbury & Batkin (Richard Sudbury and Wilmot Dudley Batkin) of Stafford (1879)**

Indenture made 31<sup>st</sup> May 1879  
Thomas Crutchley of Wyrley, Publican  
William Bickley of the Turf Tavern, Bloxwich.

Sudbury & Batkin: £25 goods 13 January 1879 + £5 5s for costs of action = £30 5s.  
Richard Batkin: £33 17s goods + £3 10s for costs of action = £37 7s.

Thomas Crutchley to pay £30 5s to Sudbury & Batkin and £37 7s to Richard Sudbury

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**Ref:** Document D1375/2/2/7 seen at: *Staffordshire Record Office* 27 January 2015.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

David Jones would like to thank:

- Frank and Susan Batkin (of Coatesville, Indiana, USA) for providing some information about Wilmot Dudley Batkin and for giving permission to reproduce Wilmot Dudley Batkin's Last Will and Testament, and his photograph. (email correspondence in 2015).
- Chris Copp (Senior Museums Officer, Staffordshire County Museum, Shugborough) for providing some information about the Batkin beer and mineral water bottles in the County Collections.
- Liz Street at Staffordshire Record Office and Dominic Farr at the William Salt Library.

## **OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

- (a) Census Records 1841-1911,
- (b) Birth, Marriage and Death Registration Index (General Record Office),
- (c) Parish Records (Staffordshire Record Office) (SRO),
- (d) Various Trade Directories (SRO and William Salt Library),
- (e) National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations),
- (f) Various issues of the *Staffordshire Advertiser* (William Salt Library),
- (g) *Stafford Street Series* by Roy Lewis: 36 & 39 Gaolgate Street (Book 4); and 23 Crabberly Street (Book 14) (William Salt Library).

## **FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT GLASS AND BOTTLE MAKING**

- *Bottles and Bottle Collecting* by A A C Hedges; Shire Album 6, Shire Publications Ltd., 1988. ISBN 0 85263 209 6.
- *International Bottle Collectors' Guide* by Edward Fletcher; Blandford Press Ltd., 1975. ISBN 0 7137 0758 5.
- The World of Glass: <http://www.worldofglass.com> . Based at St Helens, Lancashire.
- The British Antique Bottle Forum: <http://www.britishbottleforum.co.uk>

Two excellent websites based in the United States are:

- Glass Bottle Marks: <http://www.glassbottlemarks.com> .
- Historic Glass Bottle Identification & Information Website hosted by the Society for Historical Archaeology (USA): <http://www.sha.org/bottle> .

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