

T. Saxon & Co, Botanical Brewers, 123A Balsall Heath Road.

We were contacted recently by someone who found a bottle in Earlswood Woods, carrying the name Saxons. We also have a Saxons stoneware jar in our office base



The company was founded by Thomas Saxon who moved from Heywood, Lancashire to Wolverhampton in the 1890s. In 1899 he was living in Pool St, and in the 1901 census he was listed there as a Botanical Brewer with a note that he brewed ale at home. By 1911 the family had moved to Lower Villiers St. but by now the business was growing as this was the year they also took on a workshop in Balsall Heath.

The Beer Act of 1830 introduced the concept of the beer house, in effect a new type of public house created by allowing any rate-paying householder to apply for a license to brew and sell beer on the premises. Botanical Beer had herbs and flowers added to create interesting flavours.

The Birmingham History Forum says that the house at 123 Balsall Heath Road was originally occupied by a stonemason, Richard Folland, who had a workshop at the back before the houses were built. After he left, around 1902, there were several occupants for the workshops, including Saxons.

Thomas Saxon died in 1914 leaving an estate of over £3000, a sizeable sum, and his son, another Thomas Saxon, took the reins. By 1920 the company had taken over all the workshops at 123A Balsall Heath Road, while still continuing their business in Wolverhampton. When this Thomas died in 1948 he left an estate of almost £35,000 so he was clearly very successful. His son, yet another Thomas, took over the company.

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lostchildrenproject**

Membership of the Society costs £12 a year. Membership runs from January to December each year and application forms are available on the website. Fees at meetings are: £1 for members and £3 for visitors. Meetings are held at St Paul's Venture, Malvern Street at 7:30 p.m. Refreshments will be served from 7 pm to 7:20 pm.

Coming soon

**Thursday March 30th 2023
Keith Robinson. The history of
Victorian Darlaston and the
Black Country is told through
the lives of ordinary people in
one street.**

The Birmingham History Forum has some more recent history.

“ Saxon & Co, in Birmingham, remained in business until 1944. The Birmingham Mail (August 2nd 1944) carried an advert for good stabling, water and gateway entrance to be let. Applications were to be made to Saxon & Co, 123A Balsall Heath Road.

The firm seems to have remained there till the early 1960s. Below is a photo taken around 1970 of the entrance of what was once the Saxon Botanical brewery, through the archway on the left. ”



It is interesting to note that the premises were listed on the north side of the road , next to the River Rea and just across the river from the cinema, originally called The Balsall Heath Picture House and later, The Luxor. This was close to the junction with Longmore St. described in the Gazette of November, 2021, as an emptied out community space.

Val Hart

In Memory of Bron Salway.

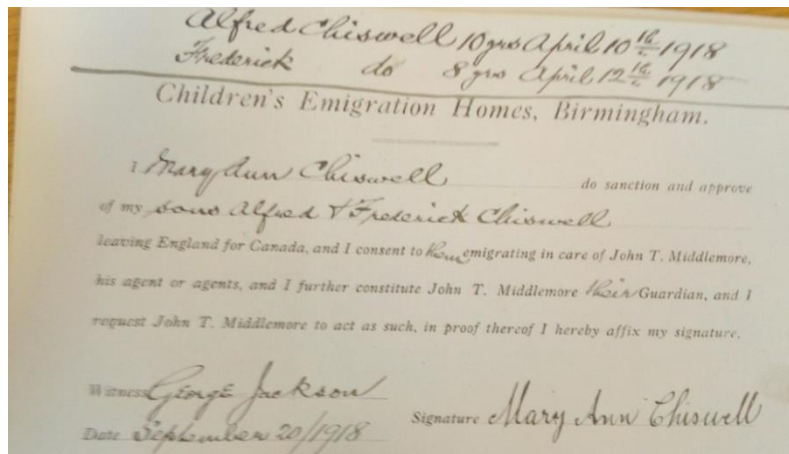


Thank you to all who have contributed to Bron's memorial fund. Currently over £8900 has been raised. We are considering what to do, possibly planting a tree and maybe an Interpretation Board on the Moseley Road, with some information about the area's history, & including Bron's name. Suggestions would be welcome.

More Lost Children from The Middlemore Homes

The Chiswell Brothers emigrated 1920, age 10 & 12

Alfred and his brother Frederick were admitted to the Homes in Sept 1918. Their father had died 12 months previously after a long illness. Mary Ann, their mother, had been working in a factory but had an accident with her left foot which meant she lost work for a fortnight. They were living in lodgings and very short of food. "Mother has had no food this morning but managed to give the children some toast and lard." She signed this consent form for emigration.



This is a letter Alfred wrote from the ship to Mr Jackson in Birmingham.

20th May 1920

Dear Sir, Just a few lines to tell you about our journey, which was a very nice one in the beginning. At first we got all our cordurye suits on then we went into the dining room, and then after that we went into the brakes (charabancs) which was very nice. But we still remember that prayer that you had with us. Then we started to wave our kerchiefs and also the girls waved their kerchiefs too. Then after that we got off the brakes and we went into the station. We waited for about half an hour then we had to say goodbye to Nurse Owen and Mrs. Basset and yourself. It was very sad to have left you all.

We then got on to the train and we started off. We passed many canals and other nice places. Then we reached Liverpool. We got off the train. Then we waited for a little time and then got on to the brakes and we landed at the Liverpool Docks.



We then had our names called out and then went to the doctor to be passed. Then went on to the ship but we did not start till half past five and while we were having our tea because there was a lot of luggage to be got on to the ship

On the next day we were nearly all seasick. Matron also was took ill and Mr. Plenderleith was took ill. Then on the Wednesday which was May 19th we saw a lot of icebergs.

Must close my letter now. With best love from your Middlemore Boy

Alfred Chiswell



Alfred and Fred were settled in New Brunswick and both married in Canada. Two siblings stayed in England . We don't know whether they kept in contact.

Val Hart

