

## Lance Corporal Leslie Morris Bayley

Leslie's great grandfather was Samuel Bayley, a coal and iron master and maltster from West Bromwich.<sup>i</sup> An ironmaster is the manager, and usually owner, of a forge or blast furnace for the processing of iron. It is a term mainly associated with the period of the Industrial Revolution. A maltster is the person who produces malt from barley which is used in the production of beer.

Samuel's business as a maltster was in partnership with Thomas Morris from Burnt Tree, Tipton, a fellow coal and iron master and also his brother-in-law, as he had married his sister Eliza on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1837,<sup>ii</sup> Two years later, however, on 12th October 1839, the business enterprise with Thomas was dissolved by mutual consent.

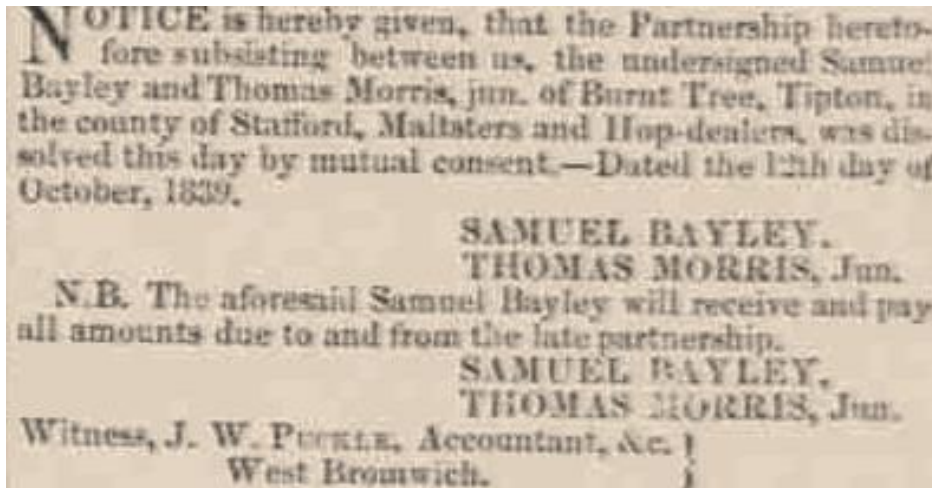


Figure 1: Newspaper report of the dissolved partnership of Samuel and Thomas

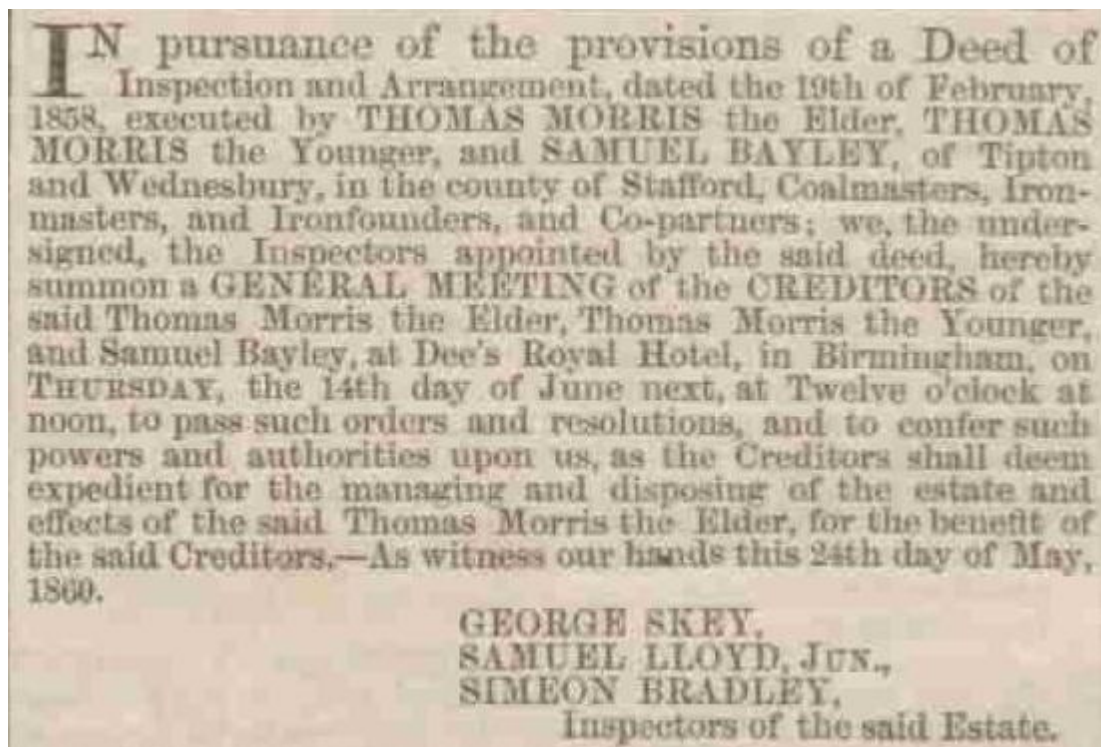
Samuel had a good eye for business as in 1845 he bought shares in the building of a Grand Central Station within the town of Wolverhampton and two years later entered in to a co-partnership with his wife's father and brother as iron and coal masters.

**Description:** Deed of copartnership (31 Dec. 1847) between Thomas Morris the elder, Thomas Morris the younger and Samuel Bayley, carrying on business as coal and iron masters at Park Lane Furnace and Fletchers Farm Colliery, Tipton Colliery, Broadfield Colliery, Scotts Old Field Colliery, Tipton Meadow Colliery, The Single House Colliery and Tipton Green Colliery, in the parishes of Tipton and Wednesbury, Staffs.; furnace and collieries are sole property of Morris the elder; partnership for a term of 21 years from 1 Jan. 1843 under the style of Thomas Morris and Sons; Morris the elder received 1000 p.a. as rent, net profits divided equally between the three partners; Morris the elder to handle financial affairs; partnership dissolves at his death, with option for the others to purchase the works; if any partner dies the others have the option of buying out his share and continuing.

Figure 2: Deed of co-partnership, dated 31<sup>st</sup> December 1847

The 1851 census reflects a time of affluence for Samuel and his family who were living at York House in Oldbury Lane, West Bromwich with two house servants.

However, the iron industry was looking for ever cheaper ways to produce iron and steel and from 1856, the Bessemer process began to develop a method that contributed to the mass production of steel. Prices for steel dropped more than 80% between 1867 and 1884, as a result of the new production techniques, and it initiated the growth of a world steel industry. This had a profound effect on Samuel and his partnership with the Morris'. As early as December 1857, the business was reporting a 'loss upon every ton of iron ore made during the past month, of £1 in every ton, it having been sold at 70s per ton .....and orders for malleable iron from either home or foreign customers are short'.<sup>iii</sup> This led to the business summoning a 'General Meeting of the Creditors' in 1860.<sup>iv</sup>



**I**N pursuance of the provisions of a Deed of Inspection and Arrangement, dated the 19th of February, 1858, executed by THOMAS MORRIS the Elder, THOMAS MORRIS the Younger, and SAMUEL BAYLEY, of Tipton and Wednesbury, in the county of Stafford, Coalmasters, Ironmasters, and Ironfounders, and Co-partners; we, the undersigned, the Inspectors appointed by the said deed, hereby summon a GENERAL MEETING of the CREDITORS of the said Thomas Morris the Elder, Thomas Morris the Younger, and Samuel Bayley, at Dee's Royal Hotel, in Birmingham, on THURSDAY, the 14th day of June next, at Twelve o'clock at noon, to pass such orders and resolutions, and to confer such powers and authorities upon us, as the Creditors shall deem expedient for the managing and disposing of the estate and effects of the said Thomas Morris the Elder, for the benefit of the said Creditors.—As witness our hands this 24th day of May, 1860.

GEORGE SKEY,  
SAMUEL LLOYD, JUN.,  
SIMEON BRADLEY,  
Inspectors of the said Estate.

Figure 3: Newspaper cutting calling for a General Meeting of Creditors, 1860

While this turmoil in the iron and steel markets was taking its course, Thomas Morris Bayley, Samuel's eldest son, born in 1838, had become an articled clerk with Thomas Smith James, a Birmingham solicitor and brother of the well known non-conformist minister John Angell James.<sup>v</sup> It was a profession that would prove useful to the family.

In 1861, Thomas was working as an auctioneer's clerk and resided as a boarder in the High Street of Bromsgrove. While working there he met Lucy Ann Banks, niece of William Fetherston, a Bromsgrove auctioneer and his wife Lucy who lived in the same street and quite probably for whom Thomas worked. On 17<sup>th</sup> September 1863 Thomas and Lucy married at St Peter's Church, Bromsgrove.<sup>vi</sup>

When Morris moved to Birmingham with his family is not clear as he is registered as a 'visitor' at 131 Hatherton Street Walsall, in 1871 with Lucy and their two children, William Alban Fetherston, born in 1864, Bromsgrove and Bertha Madeline, born in 1866, Dudley<sup>vii</sup>

The census in 1881 records Thomas, as a 'Solicitor's clerk' with his family, living in Birmingham at 129 Stratford Road, now an Adidas shop. William, aged 16, was an 'Assurance clerk'.

In 1891, Thomas now a 'commission agent' had moved to 111 Newton Road, Solihull. Daughter, Bertha, had married Frederick Foster Dodd the previous year<sup>viii</sup> leaving just William at home with his parents. William is recorded as a 'Fire and Life Insurance official'. By the time of his death in 1916, Thomas had become a well known solicitor in County Court and Bankruptcy practice.<sup>ix</sup>

On 5<sup>th</sup> June 1893, William, an insurance surveyor, married Alice Mary Rodway, daughter of John Rodway, a butcher, at St Bartholomew's Church Edgbaston.<sup>x</sup> Their only surviving child of two was Leslie Morris Bayley, born in the autumn of 1896.<sup>xi</sup>



**Figure 4: St Bartholomew's Church Edgbaston.**



The family home in 1901 was 62 Parkfield Road, Balsall Heath. Thomas had been promoted to 'chief clerk and surveyor, insurance'.

By 1911 the family had moved to 38 Woodville Road, Kings Heath which remained the family home until Alice died in 1947.

When war was declared on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1914, Leslie was nearly eighteen. As 'technically' the age of enlistment was eighteen, Leslie would have probably enlisted in November. He joined the 16<sup>th</sup> (Service) Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment (Royal Warwicks), the 3<sup>rd</sup> Birmingham Pals, as Private L M Bayley, No 1225. He was in 'C' Company, IX Platoon.<sup>xii</sup>

At the age of nineteen, Leslie was posted to France, on 21<sup>st</sup> November 1915, attached to 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Warwicks, part of Kitchener's Third New Army, K3.<sup>xiii</sup> A few days later, Leslie arrived at Hannescamps, about 18 kms SW of Arras. The weather was cold and wet and caused problems with the trench walls which the battalion were trying to solve by revetting and digging sump holes.<sup>xiv</sup>



**Figure 5: Leslie is named as being in this photograph of the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment, C Coy, IX Platoon**

The Battalion spent the earlier months of 1916 billeted around Arras and in and out of the front line, in reserve and between training as part of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division, which formed part of the 112<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the Third Army, but played no part in the diversionary attack on the Gommecourt salient on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916, the first day on the Somme. The perceived poor performance of some New Army divisions in the fighting and the many losses, led to changes in the organisation of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division in the first half of July. The 112<sup>th</sup> Brigade was attached to the 34<sup>th</sup> Division from 6 July to 22 August, to replace the 102<sup>nd</sup> (Tyneside Scottish) and 103<sup>rd</sup> (Tyneside Irish) Brigades.

While under command of the 34th Division, the Battalion took part in the Battle of Bazentin Ridge and the Battle of Pozières. The objectives of the battle were not achieved. Only some marshy lowlands near the river were gained, and these at great cost. On 19 November, with winter rain again enshrouding the battlefield, offensive operations were called off.<sup>xv</sup>

In 1917, the 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Warwicks as part of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division division participated in the Battle of Arras.

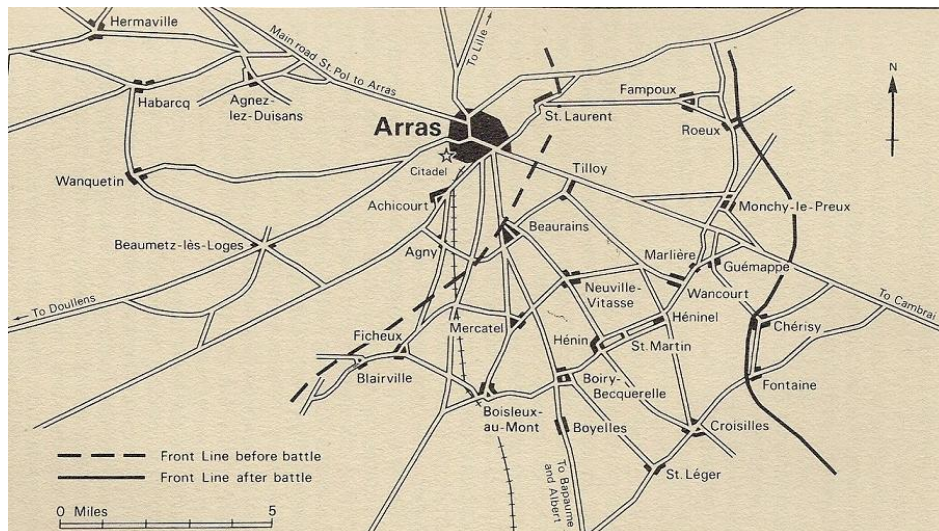


Figure 6: Map showing the progress of the Battle of Arras, in the spring of 1917

At 4 am, on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1917, the 11<sup>th</sup> Royal Warwicks moved to the Wancourt - Feuchy Line and later that day, at 8 pm, to trenches NE of Guémappe.

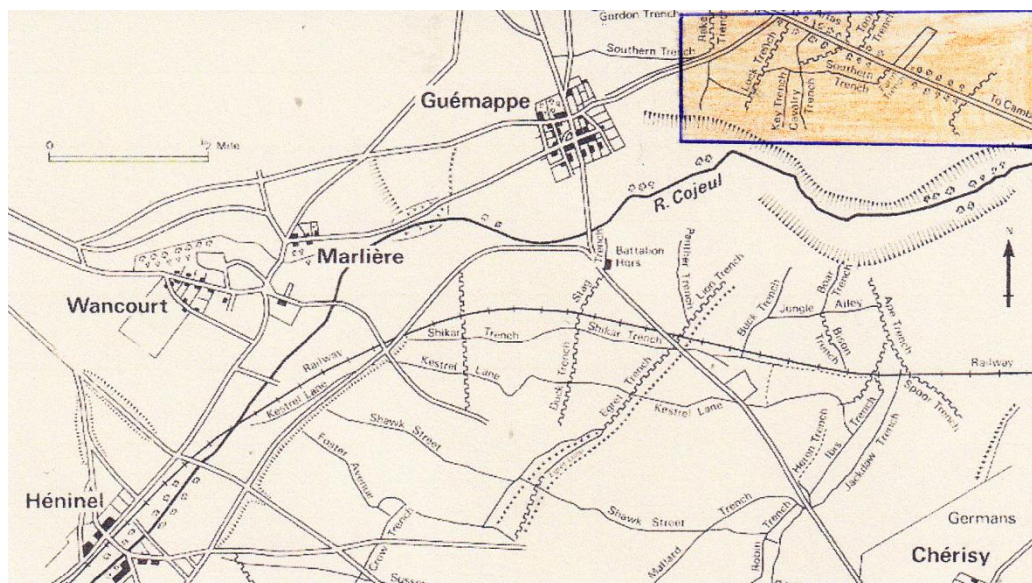


Figure 7: Map showing the position of the trenches NE of Guémappe (highlighted) occupied by the 11<sup>th</sup> Royal Warwicks on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1917



On the day that Leslie was killed, 23<sup>rd</sup> May, the Battalion were positioned in Tool, Cavalry, Farm and Rake trenches, NE of Guémappe. The war diary of the 11<sup>th</sup> Royal Warwicks states:

Position of enemy doubtful and several patrols were sent out to reconnoitre ground and locate enemy positions for which they were commended by the Brigadier. Enemy snipers became more active and special measures were taken to deal with them. For two hours, from 10 pm to midnight, the enemy bombarded our support trenches with gas and shells for which the wind was favourable.

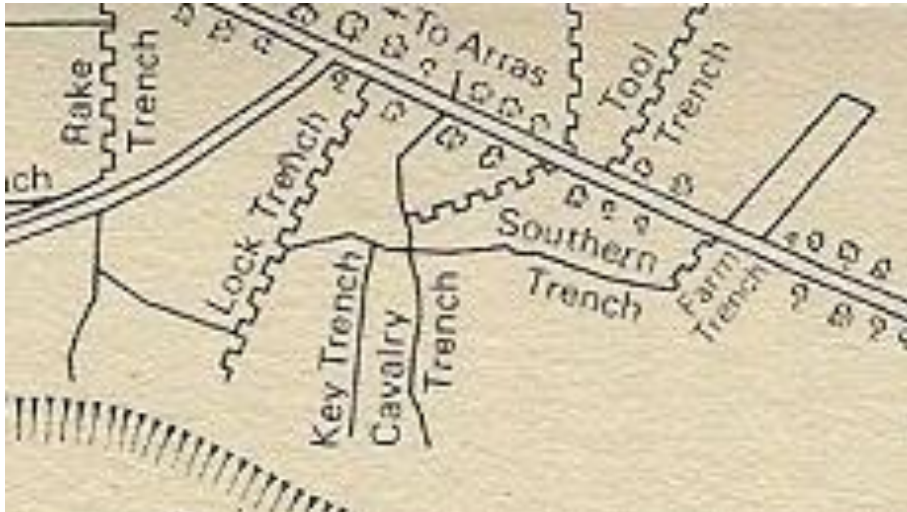


Figure 8: Enlargement of Figure 7 map showing Tool, Cavalry, Farm and Rake trenches

Leslie is commemorated in Bay 3 of the Arras memorial, pictured below. He has no known grave which would indicate that he was likely to have been hit by an enemy shell in the bombardment on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May. There are no casualty figures in the war diary.<sup>xvi</sup> Leslie's name is also on the WW1 memorial at St Mary's Church, Moseley and the Roll of Honour at Birmingham's Hall of Memory.



Leslie's mother must have been devastated to lose not only her husband, who died on Christmas Eve 1916, but also her only child, five months later. Alice continued to live in the family home at 38 Woodville Road until her death at the Red Cross Hospital on 20<sup>th</sup> February 1947.<sup>xvii</sup>

Written and researched by Edwina Rees, Moseley Society History Group

## Permission to copy subject to acknowledgement

The Moseley Society History Group carries out its own research and publishes the results on its website and in booklets, posters and written reports. It also responds to individual enquiries as far as it is able. The History Group grants permission to quote from any of its published research material and any responses to individual enquiries for non-commercial and educational purposes, but only on condition that the History Group is acknowledged as the source of the information used, together with the author where specified, and on the understanding that the History Group cannot guarantee or accept liability for the accuracy of its material. Use for commercial purposes is not permitted unless terms have previously been agreed with the History Group.

### Endnotes

- 
- i 1851 census
  
  - ii *Wolverhampton Chronicle and Staffordshire Advertiser*, 11<sup>th</sup> January 1837  
*Worcester Journal*, 12.1.1837  
Eliza (born 1821) and Thomas (born 1813) have Birth and Baptismal records records naming Thomas and Mary Morris, Tipton as parents
  
  - iii *Wolverhampton Chronicle and Staffordshire*, 30<sup>th</sup> December 1857
  
  - iv *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, 26<sup>th</sup> May 1860
  
  - v *Birmingham Daily Post*, 30<sup>th</sup> December 1916
  
  - vi *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, 19<sup>th</sup> September 1863
  
  - vii England & Wales Births 1837 – 2006, 1864, Bromsgrove, 3/4, 6C, 380  
England & Wales Births 1837 – 2006, Dudley, 1866, 2/4 6C, 144  
England Marriages 1538 – 1973
  
  - viii England & Wales Marriages 1837 – 2006, Birmingham, 1890, 2/4, 6D, 203
  - ix *Birmingham Daily Post*, 30<sup>th</sup> December 1916
  
  - x Marriage certificate
  
  - xi England & Wales marriages, Kings Lynn, 1896, ¾, 6C, 433  
1911 census
  
  - xii Birmingham City Battalions, Book of Honour, 1920, Midlands Historical Data
  
  - xiii British Army WW1 Medal Index

---

The Long, long trail

<http://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/army/regiments-and-corps/the-british-infantry-regiments-of-1914-1918/royal-warwickshire-regiment/>

- xiv National Archives, War Diary 22th Royal Warwickshire Regiment, Ref WO 95/2538/2, p 41
- xv The 37<sup>th</sup> Division  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/37th\\_Division\\_\(United\\_Kingdom\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/37th_Division_(United_Kingdom))  
The Battle of the Ancre  
<http://www.cwgc.org/the-somme/battle-of-the-somme/the-battle-of-the-ancre.aspx>
- xvi National Archives, War Diary 22th Royal Warwickshire Regiment, Ref WO 95/2538/2, p 191
- xvii England & Wales National Probate Calender, 1858 – 1966

## Illustrations

Figure 1 *The Birmingham Gazette*, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1839

Figure 2 Black Country History, Ref No: DSCAM/4/1/24, date 1847 -1848  
[http://blackcountryhistory.org/collections/getrecord/GB145\\_DSCAM\\_4\\_1\\_24/](http://blackcountryhistory.org/collections/getrecord/GB145_DSCAM_4_1_24/)

Figure 3 *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, 26<sup>th</sup> May 1860

Figure 4 St Bartholomew's Church, Edgbaston,  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:St\\_Bartholomew\\_Edgbaston.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:St_Bartholomew_Edgbaston.jpg)

Figure 5 Birmingham City Battalions Book of Honour, 1920. Midlands Historical Data, p 136

Figure 6 7<sup>th</sup> Field Company Royal Engineers  
<http://www.shiny7.uk/7CoyJul-Dec1917.html>

Figure 7 See Figure 6

Figure 8 See figure 7