

Private Colin Rowland Taylor



Figure 1: Guildford Street, Aston

Colin's grandfather, Charles Taylor, was born in 1822 in Wolverhampton.ⁱ In 1849, Charles, a machinist by trade, went into partnership with Thomas Chatwin and Samuel Goodby, tool makers, at 56 Broad Street, Birmingham.ⁱⁱ Charles lodged at the home of Caroline Collins and her sister Sarah in Guildford Street, off Lozells Road, Aston until his marriage to Emma Somerville at St Bartholomew's church, Edgbaston, Birmingham, on June 12th 1851. In the marriage certificate the space where their father's names and occupations should have been recorded was left blank.ⁱⁱⁱ



Figure 2
Interior of a house in Bloomsbury Street
showing the range, 1950.



Figure 3
St Matthew's Church, Duddeston, 1840

Charles and Emma's first child was named Charles after his father. He was born on 29th January 1853 and baptised five weeks later, on 6th March, at St Matthew's church, Duddeston, Birmingham. The family address on the baptismal register was noted as Bloomsbury Street, Duddeston. Four further children were born over the next seven years: George Benjamin, 8th September 1855, William Frederick, 23rd April 1857, John Henry, 29th July 1860 and Alfred Francis, 16th October 1864. They were baptised together on 20th November 1864 at the church of St Matthew's. Both the 1861 census and the 1864 Baptismal Register recorded the family residing at Gloster Place, Alston Street, Ladywood, Birmingham.^{iv}

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that the PARTNERSHIP subsisting between us, the undersigned, **SAMUEL GOODBY, THOMAS CHATWIN, and CHARLES TAYLOR,** carrying on business as Stock, Die, and Tool Makers, in Broad Street, Birmingham, in the county of Warwick, under the Firm of "GOODBY, CHATWIN, and TAYLOR," was, on the 4th day of October instant, **DISSOLVED** by mutual consent; and that all Debt and Debts, Sum and Sums of Money, due and owing to and from the said Firm, will be received and paid by the said Thomas Chatwin and Charles Taylor, by whom the business of Stock, Die, and Tool Makers will in future be carried on in Broad Street, Birmingham aforesaid.—Witness our hands this 13th day of October, 1856.

**SAMUEL GOODBY,
THOMAS CHATWIN,
CHARLES TAYLOR.**

Witness—**THOS. MOORE,** Clerk to
Mr. Cottrell, Solicitor, Birmingham.

1173

Sales by Auction.

**TO MACHINISTS, TOOL MAKERS,
TOOL BROKERS, AND MANUFACTURERS GENERALLY.
IMPORTANT AND UNRESERVED SALE OF
VALUABLE MACHINERY, TOOLS, AND EFFECTS,
At No. 58, BROAD STREET, BIRMINGHAM,
(Belonging to Messrs. Goodby and Chatwin, Machinists and Tool
Makers, under a Deed of Dissolution of Partnership.)**

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,

**BY Messrs. CHESHIRE and GIBSON, on
TUESDAY, the 7th of October next, (by direction of Messrs.
Goodby and Chatwin) the very excellent MACHINERY, TOOLS,
and Effects upon the above Premises; comprising a very powerful
SCREW CUTTING LATHE, with 12 feet gap bed, change
wheels, cross slide centres, and overhead motion, complete; a
3-inch FOOT LATHE, with 5-foot bed, with rack, bar, and screw,
and change wheels for screw cutting, and tangent screw for wheel cut-
ting; one 3-inch ditto, with 3-foot bed, on Druce's principle, with
cross sliding centres, head and change wheels, complete for screw cut-
ting; and Fifteen other LATHES, of various descriptions and sizes,
some of which are double geared, with compound slide rests complete;
a set of SCREW TOOLS, from 1 in. to 2 in., by Whitworth; a set of
Patent Guide STOCKS and DIES, with taper taps and wrenches, in
case, complete; and other sets of Screw Stocks and Dies; capital
Smiths' Bellows, Vices, Anvils, and Swage Blocks, Swage, and other
Smiths' Tools; a Patent Platform Weighing Machine, and other
valuable Effects; full particulars of which will be given in catalogues,
to be obtained fourteen days prior to the Sale, at the Offices of the
Auctioneers, 11, Bennett's Hall, Birmingham.
The Sale will commence at Eleven o'clock in the morning to the
minute.**

In 1856, the partnership of Goodby, Chatwin & Taylor was dissolved. Under a Deed of Dissolution, a large number of tools, machinery, lathes, stocks and dies belonging to Samuel Goodby and Thomas Chatwin were sold by auction.^v

Charles and Thomas Chatwin continued in business together in Broad Street and in 1858, they took out a patent, No 1318, for the 'improvement in screw stocks'.^{vi}

The partnership was dissolved two years later and in 1860, Charles Taylor & Co, a lathe and tool works was established at 2 Little Charles Street, in Birmingham city centre.^{vii}

Charles' ingenuity enabled the business to thrive. Patents for the 'improvement in tube cutters and spring stocks' were taken out in 1865 and by 1871 Charles employed 25 men and ten boys.^{viii} The tool works, however, were not kept in good condition and after an

inspection in May 1872, Charles was ordered to improve the working conditions at his work shop. In January 1874 Charles was summoned to the Birmingham Police Court for not keeping his factory 'in a cleanly state' as required under the Factory Act of 1867. Charles did not deny the offence. His defence was that 'he took on another factory 12 months ago and had not been able to remove to it due to ill health'. It was the first case of its kind. Charles was fined the minimum of a £1 with costs on the understanding if summoned again the penalty would be heavier.^{ix} Charles moved to his new factory at 2 New Edmund Street in the city centre around 1875.^x

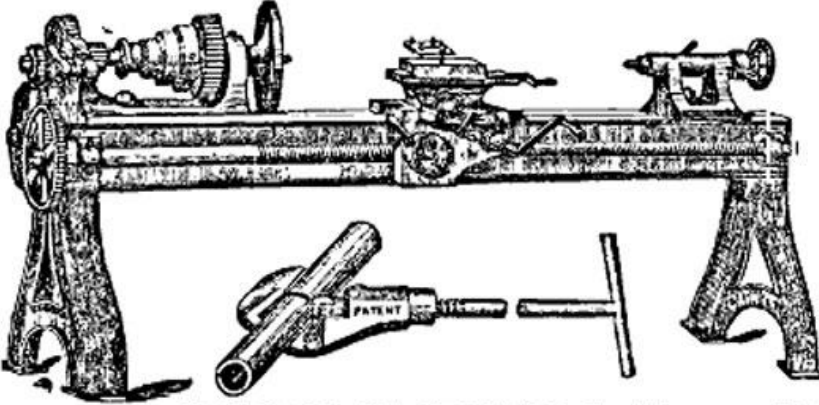
Figure 4

Newspaper cuttings referring to the partnership of Goodby, Chatwin & Taylor being dissolved

The lathes produced by the company could not be described as being at the cutting edge of technology in either design or execution but they acquired an enviable reputation for the manufacture of robust, hard-working products that could be relied upon to give years of service. Charles was a practical engineer, and knew that a large part of the mass production at the time centred round the brass-finishing trade. With a simple lathe, sharp hand tools and a modicum of skill, workers could turn out in their hundreds per shift, small everyday items that today would be moulded in plastic. As a result the piece-work operators were able 'to put shoes on their children's feet and the occasional jam or butter on the family's daily bread'.^{xi}

1879 was a busy year for Charles. A new work shop was established at 43 and 44 Bartholomew Street, Birmingham, operating alongside the old works at New Edmund Street.^{xii} At the end of the year, Charles' second son, George Benjamin Taylor, who worked in the family business as a mechanical and lathe engineer married Kate Elizabeth Jones. They set up home at 155 St Luke's Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham and in 1881, Llewellyn George, was born, the first of four children.

CHARLES TAYLOR,
PATENTEE AND
SOLE MANUFACTURER
OF THE
Rolling Tube Cutter;
MANUFACTURER OF EVERY
DESCRIPTION OF
**TURNING
LATHES,**
ON THE MOST IMPROVED
PRINCIPLES.



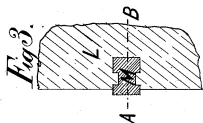
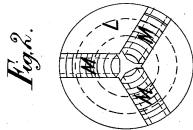
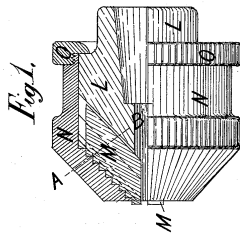
GENERAL MACHINERY for Home and Exportation.
TURNING, BORING, SCREW CUTTING, PLANING, SHAFTING, and PULLEYS, &c., &c., to order.
LATHE & TOOL WORKS,
NEW EDMUND STREET, & 43 & 44, BARTHOLOMEW STREET, **BIRMINGHAM.**

Figure 5:
Advertisement for Charles Taylor lathes from the Lathe and Tool Works at New Edmund Street and Bartholomew Street

The business continued to develop with new tool patents taken out in 1887 for 'chucks for lathes, parts also applicable to vices and clamps', in 1889 for 'a design of a drill chuck' and in 1890 for 'bearings of the shafts of machinery and other rotating shafts, axles and spindles'.^{xiii} Around December 1890, the business moved to just one site in Bartholomew Street.^{xiv}

By 1891, Charles had made his son George foreman at the tool making works. The census for that year also recorded that two more children had been born to George and Kate, George Harry Taylor and Colin Rowland Taylor in 1886 and 1890 respectively, perhaps necessitating the move to a larger home further down Saint Luke's Road at No. 181.

(No Model.)
 C. & G. B. TAYLOR.
 DRILL CHUCK.
 No. 407,554. Patented July 23, 1889.



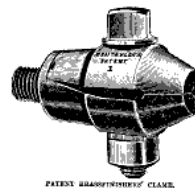
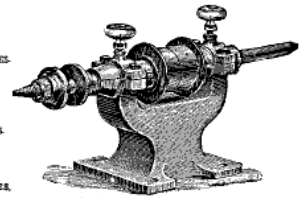
Witnesses:-
Richard Bennett
Arthur J. Powell

Inventors:-
Charles Taylor
George Benjamin Taylor



CHARLES TAYLOR,
Bartholomew St., Birmingham,
 MAKER OF
LATHES, MACHINERY & TOOLS.

BRASSFINISHERS CUTTING.
 FLUGGING & COCK-BORING MACHINES.
 BRASSFINISHERS LATHES & TOOLS
 OF EVERY KIND.
 PATENT LATHE TOOL HOLDERS.
 PATENT HOLLOW SPINDLE LATHES.
 CAPSTAN LATHES.
 BENCH DRILLING MACHINES.
 SENSITIVE DRILLING MACHINES.
 PATENT SPIRAL SELF-CENTRING
 CHUCKS.



PATENT MACHINE-
 VICES.
 DRILL CHUCKS
 AND
 INDEPENDENT JAW
 CHUCKS
 OF ALL VARIETIES.

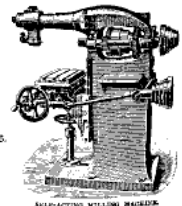


Figure 6:

(Above left) Drill chuck, No. 407.554. Patented 23rd July 1889 by Charles and George B Taylor
 (Above right) 1892 advertisement for Charles Taylor lathes, machinery and tools

A further patent was taken out in 1894 by Charles and George for 'wheels of bicycles, tricycles and other velocipedes and wheel carriages'.^{xv}

Just a year later, Charles died on 23rd October 1895, aged seventy-five, George continued to develop new products with patents in 1903 for the 'improved locking motion of capstans' and in 1906 for 'an improved method of attaching shields to the sleeves of ladies dresses and the like purposes' and 'method of and means for cutting screws and similar threads upon metal articles particularly upon certain parts of lathe and little chucks'.^{xvi} He went on to develop the company's best-known products. Amongst these were the famous Taylor tapered-scroll 3-jaw Chuck, pull-down grip-rack vices and rotary cutting-off machines.^{xvii}

The business continued to flourish and by 1911, George had moved his family from 181 St Luke's Road to 'Rostrevor' 29, Mayfield Road in the leafy suburbs of Moseley, Birmingham. George and Kate by that time had four children with the birth of John Ralph born in 1900. George's third son Colin had joined the family business as a machine tool draughtsman.^{xviii}



Figure 7: Charles Taylor works in Bartholomew Street, Birmingham

When war was declared on 3rd August 1914, two of George's sons, George and Colin enlisted in the army. George joined the 3rd Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment as a private, No 50002. The regiment was a Reserve battalion that served entirely around Harwich and Felixstowe in England, providing home defence and training drafts for front line units. Colin joined 1st Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment (1st RWR) as a private, No 1027.^{xix}

The 1st RWR arrived in France on 22nd August 1914 as part of the British Expeditionary Force. It was part of the 10th Infantry Brigade, 4th Division. Colin, however, did not join the regiment in France until 21st November 1915.^{xx}

Over the next two years the 1st RWR took part in the Battle of the Somme on 1st July 1916 and later, in October, the Battle of Transloy Ridge.

In 1917 the regiment was in action again in the Battle of Arras in April and the Battle of Ypres later in October, including Passchendaele.

In March the following year the 1st RWR fought in the First Battle of Arras in an effort to stem the advance of the German Spring Offensive and again in April, in the Battle of Hazelbrouck and the defence of Hinges Ridge.^{xxi}

The 8th August 1918 has been called 'the black day of the German Army' for it saw the launching of the first of a series of attacks by the Allies, some big, some small

which continued almost without pause for a hundred days until the *German* were compelled to ask for an armistice.

Two days earlier, on 6th August 1918, Colin's battalion had been based in the Vinage Sector. As part of 'A' Coy, Colin occupied the old British Front Line trenches outside the hamlet of Riez du Vinage on the north side of the Aire-La-Bassee canal, after the *German* army was found to have evacuated the position.

At 9.30 am the following morning 'A' Coy moved up to their first objective, then allowed 'C' Coy to move through them and, after a little opposition from enemy artillery and machine guns, achieved and occupied the second objective near the hamlet of Riez du Vinage. A third objective to be attained however was strongly defended by machine guns and further progress was impossible.^{xxii}

The 8th August was a fine and sunny day. At 11 am, 'A' Coy moved up in close support of 'C' Coy who held an extended line. The enemy was very active and holding out in houses with machine guns and snipers on the Saint Quentin Road, on the outskirts of the village, beyond which was the third objective. Preparations were made in the afternoon to put down an artillery barrage on the houses. However the barrage was cancelled. 'C' and 'A' Coys were relieved to take up reserve positions in the old front line trenches. During the course of the day one officer and 2 other ranks were killed and ten others wounded. Colin was one of those killed in the action.^{xxiii}



Figure 8: Map of Riez-du-Vinage. The Saint Quentin Road is off the right hand corner of the map. The Aire-La-Basse Canal is bottom left on the map

Colin was twenty-eight when he was killed. He has no known grave but is commemorated on a memorial panel which forms the sides and back of Dud Corner cemetery, Loos-en-Gohelle, a village 5 kilometres north-west of Lens and 12 kilometres south-west of Béthune. The name "Dud Corner" is believed to be due to the large number of unexploded enemy shells found in the neighbourhood after the Armistice.

Colin is also commemorated on the WW1 memorial at St Mary's Church, Moseley and is also named on the Roll of Honour at Birmingham's Hall of Memory.



**Figure 9 (Above) Dud Corner Cemetery, France
(Above right) WW1 memorial at St Mary's Church,
Moseley**

Colin's younger brother, John, at the age of eighteen, enlisted in the RAF on 14th May 1918 and on 7th June commenced pilot training. By 26th November 1918 he was promoted to Sergeant. John was demobilised on 6th February 1919. He married Sylvia Neville Hall in 1928. John died in 1979, aged seventy-nine.

Colin's eldest brother Llewellyn, an engineer, married Annie, the daughter of Isaac Proctor, a cycle maker, on 6th June 1904 at Christ church, Sparkbrook, Birmingham. Llewellyn became the Managing Director of Charles Taylor (Birmingham) Ltd. On retirement he lived initially at the Old Rectory, Ullingswick, Herefordshire and then at 'Mayfield', 21 Clavering Walk, Coode, Bexhill-on-Sea. He died on 23rd March 1965, aged eighty-four, leaving assets of £35,872, about £693,000 in today's money.^{xxiv}

George Harry Taylor died at 29 Mayfield Road, aged sixty-eight on 23rd May 1954.^{xxv}

Unfortunately, like many machine-tool companies in the last two decades of the 20th century, demand for the products Charles Taylor (Birmingham) Ltd produced was in decline. Faced with the need to embrace expensive and fast-changing

computer-controlled technology and under pressure from low-wage, low-tax and minimal-regulation manufacturing centres in the Far East, they were gradually driven out of business. Charles Taylor (Birmingham) Ltd was dissolved on the 21st of September 1999. Although all trace of engineering has now disappeared the company continues, with the same shareholders, as Charles Taylor (properties) Ltd.

Written and researched by Edwina Rees, Moseley Society History Group

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Endnotes

- i 1851 census
- ii *Morning Chronicle*, 18th October 1856
Birmingham Journal, 18th October 1856
- iii Birmingham, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1754-1937, records the marriage of Charles Taylor, machinist, to Emma Somerville
Graces Guide for 'Charles Taylor' records a marriage to Emma Rudhall but this is not quite correct. When Emma (née Rudhall) married Charles she was in fact a widow having previously been married to George Somerville (West Bromwich, 1844, 1/4, 18, 527). He died three years later in 1847, leaving Emma widowed.
- iv Church of England Baptism Register for St Mathew's church, Duddeston, 1859-1869
- v *Birmingham Journal*, 27th September 1856
Graces Guide
https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/Thomas_Chatwin
- vi *Birmingham Journal*, 28th August 1858
Birmingham Journal, 27th September 1856
- vii Graces's Guide
<https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/File:lm1876POWor-Taylor.jpg>
Public Ledger and Daily Advertiser, 21st January 1861 – partnership dissolved

1862 Kelly's Directory of Birmingham
Birmingham Daily Gazette, 1st February 1864
1871 census

- viii *Birmingham Journal*, 25th November 1865
- ix *Birmingham Daily Post*, 24th January 1874
- x 1875 White & Co's Commercial and Trades Directory of Birmingham
- xi Taylor Machine Works, Birmingham
<http://www.lathes.co.uk/taylor/>
- xii 1879 Post Office Directory of Birmingham
- xiii *Birmingham Daily Past*, 27th June 1890
- xiv The first advertisement for 'Charles Taylor Bartholomew Street, late New Edmund Street', appeared in the *Birmingham Daily Post* on 6th December 1890.
- xv *Birmingham Daily Post*, 7th September 1894
- xvi *Lloyd's List*, 3rd December 1903
Alcester Chronicle, 12TH May 1906
Alcester Chronicle, 25th August 1906
- xvii Taylor Machine Works, Birmingham
<http://www.lathes.co.uk/taylor/>
- xviii Llewellyn's marriage certificate clearly spells his house name as 'Rostrevor' Mayfield Road. The spelling in the 1911 census is unclear
- xix Absent Voters List, Spring 1918, Moseley and Kings Heath Ward, for Mayfield Road
- xx British Army WW1 Medal Index
14th Royal Warwickshire Regiment
<https://wartimememoriesproject.com/greatwar/allied/battalion.php?pid=7356>
- xxi 1st Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment, Wartime Memories Project
<https://www.wartimememoriesproject.com/greatwar/allied/battalion.php?pid=7339>
- xxii Ancestry, War Diary 1st Royal Warwickshire Regiment, WO 1481/1, p 775
- xxiii See xxii
- xxiv *Birmingham Daily Post* 28TH June 1965
- xxv *Birmingham Daily Post*, 25th May 1954

Illustrations

- Figure 1 Guildford Street, Aston Posted by Phil on Birmingham Forum on 27th August 2009
<http://www.birminghamforum.co.uk/index.php?topic=3327.0>
- Figure 2 Interior of a house in Bloomsbury Street showing the range, 1950's
Posted to Birmingham History Forum
https://birminghamhistory.co.uk/forum/index.php?threads/saltley-duddeston-nechells-area.38220/#lg=_xfUid-13-1555438444&slide=0
- Figure 3 St Matthew's Church, Duddeston St Matthew's in 1840 - image from Graham Knight's Birmingham Old Prints. Facebook page
<https://ahistoryofbirminghamchurches.jimdo.com/aston-ss-peter-paul/st-matthew-duddeston/>
- Figure 4 *Birmingham Journal* , 27th September 1856
Aris's Birmingham Gazette , 15th September 1856
- Figure 5 Graces's Guide
<https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/File:Im1876POWor-Taylor.jpg>
- Figure 6 United States Patent Office
<https://patents.google.com/patent/US407554A/en>
Graces's Guide
<https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/File:Im1876POWor-Taylor.jpg>
- Figure 7 From as advert for Charles Taylor in Grace's Guide
<https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/File:Im1876POWor-Taylor.jpg>
- Figure 8 Riez-du-Vinage. Detail from Trench Map Vieille Chapelle; Scale: 1:20000; Edition: 5; Published: 1918; Trenches corrected to 18 June 1918: <http://maps.nls.uk/view/101723830> Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland (Creative Commons CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)
<https://opusculum.wordpress.com/2018/04/14/private-arthur-stanley-chivers-somerset-light-infantry/>
- Figure 9 Dud corner cemetery
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loos_Memorial