

Samuel Scarlett 1834-1872

By Paul Tubb

Samuel Scarlett was one of the group of Staffordshire pottery workers who went over to Belleek, probably in the 1860s, to help in the foundation of the pottery and their production of the fine parian ware for which Belleek is so famous. By trade he was a Pottery Mould Maker, an essential trade for parian production as the liquid slip used had to be fashioned in moulds to produce the final pieces. He shares with William Henshall, the subject of an earlier article (Newsletter 26/3, October 2005), the distinction of being one of the only two of these early workers to remain in Ireland. However, in Samuel's case it was not of his own volition, because he remained owing to the fact that he was drowned in the River Erne. What I hoped to do, as I set out to research his life, was to throw some light on the man and find out more of the circumstances that brought him to his untimely death.

As usual, I have had considerable help from people I have met through the Internet who responded to my request for information on the Scarlett family. Firstly there is a group of family members in England and Canada, descended in fact from Samuel's uncle John, with whose help I have been able to piece together Samuel's forebears. Also there is a Scarlett Family History Group based in Northern Ireland who have provided me with detail I have not been able to find anywhere else and who were aware of Samuel because of his death reference but could not, of course, connect him with any of their known family groups. Finally there is my own searching through the UK census returns of 1841 to 1901 and on the International Genealogical Index [IGI] produced by the Church of Latter Day Saints in Salt Lake City all of which resources are available on the internet.

The earliest record I have been able to find for Samuel is his entry in the 1841 census when he is said to be aged 6. He is living in High Street, Fenton with his father, mother, 3 older sisters, one older brother and a female servant. This female servant is almost certainly a relation as she has the same surname, Attwood, as Samuel's mother's maiden name. The information given in this early census is not as full as in later ones so the only clue to his birth place is that it was in Staffordshire, as it was for all nine occupants of the house. However it does give occupations for his father and four of his older siblings and all were in the pottery industry. The girls were painters or burnishers, his brother was a potters' <something undecipherable> and his father was a potters' mould maker.

This record shows that Samuel was born before the start of civil registration in 1837 but I have not been able to find any record of his baptism in the church or non-conformist registers in the locality. His older siblings were all baptised in the parish church of Hanley, as listed on the IGI, but it seems that the family moved into the then developing area of Fenton before his sister, Adelaide, was born and I cannot find any record of her baptism either. There was no Church of England church in Fenton at the time, but plenty of non-conformist places of worship were springing up within the development. It would appear, then, that either Adelaide and Samuel were not baptised or the record of the event has not survived or I have not done a completely exhaustive search yet.

The other interesting thing about the 1841 census record of the family is Samuel's father's name, which is transcribed by the enumerator as Pimbro. Such an unusual first name gives rise to the hope that there is a reason for it and that reason might help the genealogist in searching out Samuel's forebears. And so it proved because, with the help of various members of the English and Canadian descendents of Samuel's forebears, we have been able to piece together a reasonably convincing history which starts with a Samuel Scarlett marrying a Hanah Pinborough at Thorpe-next-Norwich in December 1731. This couple maintained the mother's maiden name in the given name of a son born in 1742. Their next son, another Samuel, was born in 1746 and married a Mary Bowker in Peterborough on new year's day in 1771 before moving to Newcastle-under-Lyme where they had 13 or 14 children, the twelfth of whom was given the name Pinberrow in 1789 and the next was called Bowker in 1790. It would seem that the use of a mother's maiden name as the given name of a son was a feature of this family at this time.

The big question is whether or not we accept the migrations from Norwich to Peterborough and then from Peterborough to Newcastle-under-Lyme. Neither journey relates to any 'usual' migratory pattern around England, as most of these are centred on London which acted as a magnet for those seeking fame and fortune. So why did Samuel make for Peterborough? It was on a route through the fenlands from Norwich if one was heading for the midlands, but why would Samuel be going there? There is no evidence that I have found of any relationship to 'Old Scarlett' the gravedigger and sexton of Peterborough Cathedral who is commemorated in the Cathedral and is said to have buried two Queens, Catherine of Aragon and Mary Queen of Scots. We have a small ceramic crested urn with his picture and the story of his life on it. It could be, therefore, that Samuel went to Peterborough to visit relatives, met and married Mary Bowker there before the pair of them set off for Newcastle-under-Lyme in 1772 or 1773. At that time Newcastle-under-Lyme was not, I think, a noted centre for any particular trade but did stand astride one of the 'main roads' of the day between Birmingham and Manchester which towns, although small, were still quite important centres of industry and trade.

I am not sure that we will in the short term find answers to these questions. Interestingly one of my own great great grandfathers was born in Norfolk about 1772 and ended up raising a family in Windsor from 1803 onwards. Perhaps there was some sort of economic depression or other calamity in Norfolk at the time that led families to leave for other parts of the country.

What I think we can say, with some confidence, is that the permanence of the name Pinberrow is a very strong indication that the Pinberrow Scarlett born in Newcastle-under-Lyme in 1789 is closely related to the Hannah Pinborough who married Samuel Scarlett in Thorpe-next-Norwich in 1731. That this Pinberrow's father, Samuel the second, also sought to retain his wife's maiden name by naming the next son Bowker, his own wife's maiden name, indicates to me that there is probably a family tradition of recording the surnames of the females from previous generations in the given names of sons. However, it must be noted that this 'tradition', if it was such, was not carried on by the next generation – or at least I have no evidence of it continuing.

At the time of the 1851 census Pinberrow is living at High Street, Fenton, Stoke-on-Trent aged 60 with wife Elizabeth [57], daughters Sarah [30], Hannah [23], Adelaide [19] and Elizabeth [3] (Elizabeth is more correctly identified as a granddaughter in the 1861 census) and son Samuel aged 17 and father in law James ALWOOD a widowed cordwainer aged 97 and a visitor, Sophia JOHNSON aged 9. All the adults are noted as being employed in the pottery industry. Pinberrow and Samuel are Potters, Sarah and Hannah are Burnishers and Adelaide is an earthenware presser.

Samuel's older brother, William, is resident at 50 Vauxhall Walk; Lambeth with his wife, Ann Jane, and their daughter Mary Sophia. William had married Ann Jane Smith in the spring of 1845 and Mary Sophia had been born later that year in Stoke-on-Trent. William was working as a Pottery Labourer but, as is usual, there is no indication in the census return of which of the numerous pottery manufacturers in and around London's river employed him.

From the IGI we know that Pinberrow Scarlett married Elizabeth Hallwood on November 11th 1817 at Hanley and, as far as I can work it out at present, they had the following 7 children.

[a] Mary, bap* at Hanley Jan 1st 1818. She married Richard Johnson at Caverswall on August 1st 1840 and they were the parents of the Sophia Johnson mentioned above as living with Pinberrow and his family in the 1851 census..

[b] Sarah, bap at Hanley Sept 3rd 1819

[c] William, bap at Hanley Jan 20th 1822

[d] Hannah, bap at Hanley May 9th 1824

[e] Elizabeth, bap at Hanley May 29th 1827

[f] Adelaide, born at Fenton about 1830

[g] Samuel, born at Fenton about 1834

* bap is genealogical shorthand for Baptised or Christened

The names (H)allwood and At(t)wood are clearly the same but recorded differently by different clerks in different circumstances depending upon how they heard what was being told to them.

Pinberrow died aged 90 in the first half of 1879 having, by a long way, outlived his brothers and sisters as far as I can tell at this stage. His death was 108 years after the wedding of his parents in Peterborough in a century which rarely had more than 30 years between the generations. It is equally remarkable that his wife, too, lived to be 90 and her death is noted in the early months of 1880. According to the census returns he is still working at his skilled trade in 1871 and this, plus the love of wife and unmarried daughters and granddaughters, must have contributed to his relative longevity. I am not sure of the official figures for life expectancy in the nineteenth century but the length of life enjoyed by Pinberrow and Elizabeth is unusual among working folk in my limited experience of searching family histories at this time.

Having been born in the year of the French Revolution, Pinberrow lived through the Napoleonic wars – a question as to whether he served in the army or navy is unanswered by my researches so far, but he married quite soon after the end of the war as did many returning soldiers and sailors – and the economic hardships which followed the war and during which time he and Elizabeth began the task of raising their family. He experienced the reform acts of 1832 and 1867, he might have attended the great Exhibition of 1851 in London and would have been aware of the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny. Closer to home he would have witnessed the growth of the pottery industry in his home town and been subjected to the claustrophobia of smoke from the furnaces and kilns which gave the Potteries one of the most polluted atmospheres in England. As we shall see, he and Elizabeth suffered the tragic death of their youngest son, far from home, with all the anguish that such an event must bring. His life, like that of thousands of other working men and women, is the stuff of greatness, not least because of its hidden nature, and it is one of the functions of family historians to bring such lives out into the light.



Our Samuel was still living at home in 1851 and is referred to as just a Potter. On August 14th 1853 he married Martha Bailey a 20 year old spinster of Broad Street, Shelton. The wedding took place in the Bethesda Chapel, Shelton according to the rites and ceremonies of the Methodist New Connection. Samuel is noted as a Potters Mould Maker, a designation that stayed with him for the rest of his life. Bethesda Chapel is still standing but in a rather poor state. In its heyday it was, I think, called the Cathedral of the Potteries and its prime location close to Hanley town centre and the strength of non-conformist sentiment in the area bear that out.



Martha had been baptised in the Bethesda Chapel on October 5th 1834 the fourth child of George Bailey, Potter of Shelton by Mary his wife, daughter of William Cook a potter of Burslem parish. There is a parish register entry from Stoke on Trent in the IGI giving George Bayley and Mary Cook's marriage as being July 24th 1825. The Bethesda Chapel register also gives Martha's date of birth as August 6th 1834 so that on her wedding day she was just 20 years and 8 days old. The witnesses at the marriage were William Scarlett, presumably Samuel's older brother, and an Ann Bailey who may well be one of Martha's sisters.

[Bethesda Chapel, Albion street, Hanley. Above as it was in 1893, below as it is today, awaiting restoration. Pictures from <http://www.thepotteries.org>]

The marriage of Samuel and Martha was blessed with two children, Arthur born in the summer of 1861 and Laura born in the early months of 1864. Given the date of the marriage there may very well have been other children born before 1861 but, if so, they had died before the census return of 1861 which notes both Samuel and Martha living with Pinberrow and Elizabeth at 43 North Side of High Street, Fenton. Both Samuel and his father, Pinberrow, are noted as Potters Mould Makers on the census return and also on the marriage certificate.

In the same house in 1861 are Samuel's three unmarried sisters, three Johnson grandchildren and one Scarlett grandchild and Richard Johnson, Pinberrow's son in law, and the father of the three Johnson grandchildren. I think that, given the huge number of people in such a small house and Pinberrow's advancing years, he omitted his eldest daughter Mary Johnson from the list. I can find no trace of her in the 1861 census index but she is present, as a widow, living with her sisters in the 1881 census.

Incidentally, at the 1861 census, William, Samuel's older brother, is back from London and living in Bedford Street, Hanley as a Potter with wife Ann, a niece Sophia and his wife's sister, Emma Smith. The same quartet are living at Great York Street, Shelton in 1871 so it would seem that the daughter noted in London in 1851 must have died prior to the 1861 census. A probable death reference for a Mary Sophia Scarlett is recorded at Stoke on Trent in the early months of 1857.

By the time of the 1871 census there is no sign of Samuel and the supposition must be that at some point between the birth of Laura in early 1864 and the census of April 1871 Samuel had gone to Belleek. Martha and the two children are recorded as living at 124 Broad Street, Shelton and she calls herself a wife, not head of household, and gives her occupation as that of Potter Transferer while the two children are scholars. Whether Martha and the children ever went to Belleek with Samuel we may never know. Certainly, as we have seen in earlier articles in this series, both Henshall (Newsletter 26/3, October 2005) and Gallimore (Newsletter 27/1, March 2006) were accompanied by their wives and some of their children were born in Fermanagh so there was no bar to wives going over and the accommodation provided by the pottery was more than adequate by the standards of the day.

What we can say with certainty is that Samuel died by drowning in the River Erne at Ballyshannon on the evening of Sunday September 15th 1872. Duncan Scarlett of the Northern Ireland Scarlett family sent me the following account taken from the Enniskillen Advertiser and North West Counties Gazette of 20th September 1872.

“On Sunday evening, September 15th, about half past five three men took a boat out on to the River Erne at Ballyshannon. When crossing at the point of the island (a course very dangerous in high water as it was then) the boat, which had a deep keel, became unmanageable in the current. One of the men jumped on to the island. The boat was then carried to the point of the eel weir where one man jumped on to the wall. The third man was thrown into the water and was seen floating for a long distance before sinking. He was married and leaves a wife and two children. The boat was dashed to pieces on the rocks.”

Duncan has been unable to find any account of the inquest in subsequent editions of the newspaper and I have been unable to find any reference at all to the tragedy in the Staffordshire Sentinel or other newspapers in the Stoke-on-Trent area. Samuel's death certificate arrived from the new Irish records centre in Roscommon, after a six week wait, and that clearly makes reference to an inquest conducted by Andrew Green Jr, coroner for the County of Donegal. The death registration took place on September 30th so it would seem that the inquest, which gave a verdict of Accidental Drowning, must have been conducted by then.

On the death certificate, too, Samuel's occupation is given as 'Mould Maker at Belleek Pottery'. I will continue to search for an inquest report when we are over in Fermanagh during August and will, of course, report any success to you in a subsequent newsletter. It would be fascinating to know the names of his two companions on that ill fated expedition. Also to know whether Martha or any other family member travelled over to Ireland to be present at the inquest, perhaps even to give evidence of identification. Finally I would like to find out if the body was ever recovered and, if so, where it was buried.

No.	Date and Place of Death.	Name and Surname.	Sex.	Condition.	Age last Birth day.	Rank, Profession, or Occupation.	Certified Cause of Death, and Duration of Illness.	Signature, Qualification, and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.
117	Fifteenth to September 1872 River Erne	Samuel Scarlett	M	Married	38 years	Worl'd worker at Belleek Pottery	Accidental Drowning unidentified	Information given from Andrew Green, Jr. Corners for the foundry, of Donegal	Pinberrow September 1872	James Leports Registrar

[Samuel Scarlett's death certificate]

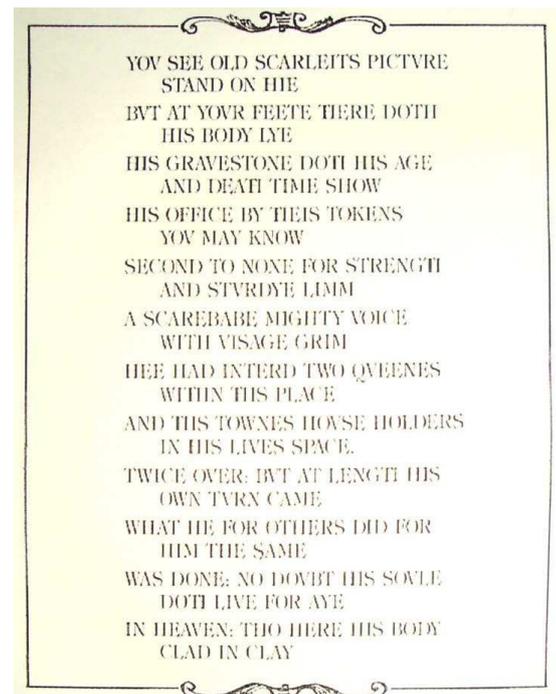
For Samuel's parents, too, the loss of their youngest child must have been difficult to bear particularly as it followed so soon on the other son, William's, death in the early months of 1872. These two untimely deaths meant also that Samuel's son, Arthur, was the only one of Pinberrow's grandchildren able to carry on the family name.

In the following census returns Martha continues to bring up her two children at 124 Broad Street, Shelton. In 1881 she is a potters burnisher and Laura a potters paintress but Arthur does not follow his father, mother and grandfathers into the pottery industry but becomes a letter carrier at the post office. On the evidence of the census returns alone it would appear that whilst Pinberrow's daughters looked after each other and lived together in a single household of widows and maiden ladies they did not offer the same help to the widows of their brothers. Such evidence is, of course, extremely flimsy and, in any case, Ann, William's widow, remarried in 1874 to a William Glover and had in the meantime lived with her sister Emma Smith.

It could be, too, that Martha's non-conformist upbringing led her to assert a determined independence that helped her and her children overcome the loss of husband and father. Martha died in the autumn of 1889 aged 51 and, within a year both Arthur and Laura had married. Arthur married Elizabeth Dunn and Laura married Arthur Prince. At the time of the 1891 census Arthur was living with Elizabeth at 65 Elgin Street, Hanley and was still a postman, whilst Laura was at 81 Liverpool Street with husband and a 3 month old son, Arthur E Prince.



By 1901 Arthur, still a postman, and Elizabeth had an eight year old son, Arthur Samuel, and the family were at 32 Festing Street, Hanley. Laura and Arthur now had three children, Arthur, Charles and Mildred with the family living at 88 Copeland Street, Stoke. I have not, so far, followed these families any further but it would be nice to know whether young Arthur Samuel married and what trade he followed. Any children he may have had could well be still alive and I wonder whether they know of the tragic death in Ballyshannon of their great grandfather.



[Armorial vase and poem relating to "Old Scarlett" the gravedigger and sexton of Peterborough Cathedral]