

SHARMAN and TRETHERY
(incorporating Tebbs and son)
1809-1984 - The first 175 years

Some Historical Notes about the firm by A W Northey.

ORIGINS AND NAMES

The origin of the firm of Sharman and Trethewy in Bedford goes back at least to 1809 when Francis John Budd who appears to be the founder of the firm established his practice in Bedford under his own name. It is possible that the firm may go back further than 1809 but as there are virtually no existing records for that period it has not proved possible to establish anything definite for earlier than 1809.

The information appearing in this brief history has been gleaned from research through records and documents at the County Record Offices of Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire, old Law Lists and other documentation held by the Law Society in London, copy documents at the Public Record Office, Parish Records held by various churches including St Paul's and St Peter's in Bedford, old copies of the Bedfordshire Times (formerly the Bedfordshire Times and Independent) and old documentation still in the hands of the firm.

The name Sharman first came into the firm's name when Alexander Sharman succeeded to the practice of Francis John Budd on the latter's death on the 8th April 1831. The name Sharman has been part of the firm's name ever since then. The firm's name became Sharman and Turnley in 1838 when Thomas Wesley Turnley (whose first wife was Anne Budd, the daughter of Francis John Budd) became a partner with Alexander Sharman.

When Alexander Sharman died on 9th January 1853 the firm's name remained the same for a while but was reversed to Turnley and Sharman when Mark Sharman, the son of Alexander Sharman, became a partner in 1855. The firm's name again changed to Turnley Sharman and Smail when William Smail became a partner in 1868. On the death of Thomas Wesley Turnley in 1875 the name changed again, this time to Sharman and Smail. This name continued until the partnership between Mark Sharman and William Smail was dissolved in 1889. Mark Sharman who continued the practice instituted Chancery Court proceedings which led to the Court finalising the outstanding aspects of the dissolution in 1894. In the meantime Mark Sharman continued to practice in his own name until he took Alfred Tresawna Trethewy into partnership in 1892, when the present name of the firm was established.

The Tebbs and Son side of the firm goes back to 1870 when Henry Tebbs established his practice at 2 Tavistock Street, Bedford. He carried on

business under his own name until he took his son Henry Nelson Tebbs into partnership in 1898. From 1898 onwards that firm was known as Tebbs and Son with Henry Tebbs in partnership with his son Henry Nelson Tebbs until 1929 and with Henry Nelson Tebbs in partnership with his own son Horace Aubrey Nelson Tebbs between 1930 and 1954. From 1954 until the amalgamation of Tebbs and Son with Sharman and Trethewy Horace Aubrey Nelson Tebbs practised as a sole practitioner still under the style of Tebbs and Son.

As far as the Ampthill office is concerned, it traces its origins back to the practice of John Wright which he established in Ampthill in 1853. His practice and his various appointments were taken over by Sharman and Trethewy in 1899.

PREMISES

Over the years the firm and its original constituent parts have practised from several addresses.

Francis John Budd after apparently originally practising in Olney Buckinghamshire commenced practice on his own in St Paul's Square Bedford in 1809 and continued there until his death in 1831.

Alexander Sharman (1831-1838), Sharman and Turnley (1838-1855), Turnley and Sharman (1855-1868) and Turnley Sharman and Smail (1858-1875) practised in St Cuthbert's Street Bedford on the corner of Lurke Lane between 1831 and 1872.

From 1872 to 1900 Turnley Sharman and Smail (1868-1875), Sharman and Smail (1875-1889), Mark Sharman (1889-1891) and Sharman and Trethewy practised at 6 St Paul's Square. When the present 1 Harpur Street Bedford offices were built in 1899/1900 Sharman and Trethewy moved from 6 St Paul's Square to 1 Harpur Street Bedford, the present location of the Bedford Offices. This move was necessitated as a result of the Bedfordshire County Council requiring 6 St Paul's Square. Gradually as parts of the adjoining building 8 St Paul's Square became vacant these were taken over by the firm with the firm eventually occupying the whole of the two buildings, 1 Harpur Street and 8 St Paul's Square.

Between 1870 and 1927 Henry Tebbs (1870-1898) and later Tebbs and Son (1898-1973) practised at 2 Tavistock Street Bedford and from 1927 to 1932 Tebbs and Son practised at 7 Harpur Place Bedford and from 1932 onwards at 46 Harpur Street Bedford. On the amalgamation of the practices of Sharman and Trethewy and Tebbs and Son in 1974 the 46 Harpur Street Bedford offices were used as the litigation department for the combined practice. In 1979 after the completion of extensive modernization and extension work to 1 Harpur Street Bedford, the whole of the Bedford practice was consolidated at 1 Harpur Street Bedford and the 46 Harpur Street Bedford office was closed.

As far as the Ampthill side of the practice was concerned, John Wright (1853-1899) first practised in Church Street Ampthill, later in Dunstable Street Ampthill and finally again in Church Street Ampthill. When Sharman and Trethewy succeeded to the practice of John Wright in 1899, the firm practised at 29 Church Street Ampthill (the Old Post Office) before moving to their present offices at 88 Dunstable Street (formerly known as Ivermark Ampthill) in 1925. In 1974 the practice acquired the adjoining property at 90 Dunstable Street Ampthill and expanded into that property.

19TH CENTURY – FRANCIS JOHN BUDD TO SHARMAN AND TRETHEWY IN BEDFORD

Francis John Budd came to Bedford from Olney in Buckinghamshire. His father William Budd is listed under Olney in the 1784 Poll Book. Francis John Budd was born in 1783. He practised briefly in Olney after becoming a solicitor and attorney either in partnership with or working for John Garrard. The practise established by John Garrard in Olney is still thriving and is now known as Garrard and Allen. Whilst practising in Bedford, Francis John Budd was for some years his Majesty's Coroner. According to his marriage bond, he married Ann Brightman at Newport Pagnell on the 11th November 1811. He had several children but only three Frederic Budd, John Budd and Anne Budd survived tender years. John Budd apparently went to London in 1835 when aged 21 and was never heard of again. Anne Budd married Thomas Wesley Turnley who in 1838 went into partnership with Alexander Sharman. Frederic Budd, like his father, was a solicitor and attorney but appears to have practised in Wells Street Buckingham and not in Bedford.

Francis John Budd died in April 1831 when only 48 years of age. The practice he built up over the period of 22 years he had been in Bedford was then taken over on his death by the first Sharman, Alexander Sharman. Alexander Sharman hailed from Wellingborough, attended Bedford School (then known as the Grammar School) as a boarder, did his articles in Wellingborough with the family firm which is now known as Sharman, Jackson and Archer. He was admitted as an attorney of his Majesty's Court of Kings Bench at Michaelmas 1824 and was admitted as a solicitor in the High Court of Chancery in February 1830.

Alexander Sharman seems to have been a very prominent man in local affairs, particularly in connection with the railways in the 1840's onwards. He was solicitor to the Bedford and Leicester Railway and he was active politically as a militant whig and was Mayor of Bedford in 1846.

The Sun Insurance Office, now part of the Sun Alliance and London Assurance Group, appointed Alexander Sharman their Bedford Agent on the 3rd June 1835, an appointment which has been passed down through the firm to the present day. This connection continues until today as the senior partner William Sydney Northey is a local director of that insurance company.

Alexander Sharman practised on his own until 1838 when he took into partnership the son-in-law of Francis John Budd, Thomas Wesley Turnley. They were in partnership together until Alexander Sharman died on the 9th January 1853.

Thomas Wesley Turnley was born in London in 1809 and married Anne Budd who died on the birth of her first and only child. He then married Caroline Hornsby, the daughter of the Reverend J Hornsby of Ickwell. Thomas Wesley Turnley was secretary to the Bedfordshire Agricultural Society and Clerk to the Improvement Commissioners for Bedford until that office was merged in the Corporation. On retiring from the Secretaryship of the Bedfordshire Agricultural Society he was presented with a testimonial which, with considerable addition, he subsequently embodied in the drinking fountain in the Market Square in Bedford. This drinking fountain still stands in the Market Square. He was also Secretary to the County Middle Class School and Clerk to the Commissioner of Taxes for Biggleswade. He was active in connection with the late Mr W H Whitbread and others in promoting the Railways in the district. Thomas Wesley Turnley died of apoplexy at the age of 65 on the 9th January 1875.

By the time Alexander Sharman died in 1853 his son Mark Sharman had qualified. After his father's death Mark Sharman was taken into partnership by Thomas Wesley Turnley.

Mark Sharman was born on 23rd December 1832 and was educated like his father at Bedford School. He qualified as a solicitor and was admitted as a solicitor at Easter 1855 and in the same year he appears to have become a partner in the firm. The offices he held included Steward to the Manors of Potton, Clerk to several School Boards, Clerk to the Bedford Rural District Council, Clerk to the Bedford Board of Guardians and Clerk to the Assessment Committee. He too was politically active and was legal adviser to Mr Samuel Whitbread throughout most of Mr Whitbread's 43 years as Member of Parliament for the Borough of Bedford.

Sometime after the death of Thomas Wesley Turnley relations between Mark Sharman and William Smail became very strained and eventually the partnership was dissolved. This dissolution culminated in a Chancery Court action in London which was finally concluded in 1894.

Mark Sharman briefly practised on his own until Alfred Tresawna Trethewy joined him as a partner in 1892, when the firm acquired its present day name. They practised together as partners and latterly with Mark Sharman's son Frederic Sharman as a third partner until Mark Sharman's death on 21st March 1913.

William Smail who joined Thomas Wesley Turnley and Mark Sharman is rather the dark horse in the firm's history. It has not proved possible to discover much about him. After the death of Thomas Wesley Turnley in 1875 he remained in partnership with Mark Sharman until, as already mentioned, the partnership was dissolved in 1889.

The firm's bankers in the 19th century appear to have been Thomas Barnard and Co. of Bedford. That Bank was taken over by Barclays Bank PLC who are still the firm's principal bankers.

END OF 19TH CENTURY AND 20TH CENTURY, SHARMAN AND TRETHERY

Alfred Tresawna Trethewy joined Mark Sharman as a partner in 1892. At that time the firm acquired its present day name. Although he was of Cornish origin, he was born in Conway, son of Alfred Hugh Trethewy, a land agent of Llanrwst in North Wales. He was educated at Christs College, Brecon and at Stratford on Avon and served his articles with a Mr R James in Llanrwst. He was admitted as a solicitor in 1889 and it appears that between 1889 and 1891 he was a partner to a Mr Steele in the firm of Steele and Trethewy in Accrington. When he came to Bedford in 1892 he was not the first of his family to come to Bedfordshire. His uncle, Henry Trethewy JP, who was born at Grampound, Cornwall, and whose own father, another Henry Trethewy, was land agent to Sir Christopher Hawkins of Trewithen Probus, was for many years Steward of the Wrest Park Estates and lived in Silsoe

During the time that Alfred Tresawna Trethewy was a partner in the firm up to the time of his death, he held a number of public offices, including those of Clerk of the Ampthill Board of Guardians and Assessment Committee, Clerk of the Ampthill Urban District Council and Clerk to the Ampthill Charity Trustees. It appears that he was behind the expansion of Sharman and Trethewy into Ampthill when the firm took over the practice of Mr John Wright in 1899. He was a founder member of the Bedford Chamber of Trade, which was formed in 1919 and was Honorary Solicitor to that Chamber of Trade and also the Chairman of its Executive Committee from its inception until his death. In 1925 he instigated the formation of the Owners and Ratepayers Association and was for many years its Secretary.

Alfred Tresawna Trethewy was also a Notary Public and a Commissioner for Oaths and a Director of Dudeney and Johnston Limited, a director of the Bedford Bill Poster Company Limited and of various other companies. He was agent in the candidature of the late Mr George W E Russell who was MP for North Bedfordshire for some years and so was like several earlier partners in the firm, Liberal Agent. He was also a leading light in the Freemasons and was Worshipful Master of the Stuart Lodge, Number 540, in 1913/14, of the Ampthill Lodge in 1912-13 and of the Stuart Lodge of Mark Master Masons no. 4413, and had held office in the Provincial Grand Lodge of Bedfordshire. He was on the committee of the Town and County Golf Club and a member of the Bedford Golf Club. His recreations included golf, tennis and other sports.

Alfred Tresawna Trethewy was married twice, his first wife was Kate Eleanor, daughter of the late Lieutenant Colonel William Lightfoot Bankes of Old Hall, Askrigg, Yorkshire and of Liverpool and his second wife was Kathleen, daughter of the Reverend J M Craig, of Memus, near Kirriemuir. He had four children but none of them went into the Law.

Frederic Sharman, a grandson of Alexander Sharman, and second son of Mark Sharman, became a partner in the firm in 1896. He was born in 1871, was educated at Bedford Modern School and after being articled to his father, Mark Sharman, was admitted as a solicitor in 1895. He succeeded his father as Liberal Agent for the Borough of Bedford and was for a period President of the Bedford Liberal Club. He was secretary of the very successful local swimming club and was involved in Bedford Rowing Club. He was a leading spirit in the Bedford Angling Club. Frederic Sharman, who died at the age of 46 in 1918, was the last of three generations of Sharmans who had been principals in the firm for a span of nearly 90 years.

Before the death of Frederic Sharman, another product of Bedford Modern School, William Llewellyn Jones, who was born in 1879 had become a partner in the firm in 1915.

After school, William Llewellyn Jones became articled to Sharman and Trethewy after winning the Bedford Modern School Exhibition. He served his articles with Sharman and Trethewy, qualifying as a solicitor in 1900 and in the process winning the John Mackrell Prize. He ran the Ampthill Office from 1900 until 1928. On the death of Alfred Tresawna Trethewy he succeeded to the chairmanship of the Board of Management of the Bedford Chamber of Trade and held this position until 1949, when he resigned because he said he wished to make way for a younger man. He was an active Freemason, having been a member of the Stuart and Ampthill Lodges and the Grand Lodge.

Robert Henry Orme became a partner in Sharman and Trethewy in 1928, running the Ampthill Office from then until a few years before his death on 19th December 1946. On his death he left a widow and a young son. During the time he was a partner in the firm, he was Clerk to the Ampthill Urban District Council, Clerk to the Ampthill United Charities and was also Clerk to the Luton Area Assessment Committee and for a brief time, principally because of this appointment, the firm had an office during the 1930's in Luton at 35 New Bedford Road, Luton.

Reginald Henry Barrett was a partner in the firm between 1925 until he retired in 1955. In fact he was the first partner in almost 150 years since the inception of the firm to actually retire before his death. He was the son of a Barnstaple Chartered Accountant who was at one time Mayor of Barnstaple. After education at Cranleigh School, he entered the legal profession at Barnstaple where he was articled in 1909 and later moved to Cardiff. After service in the 1914-18 War he went to Exeter where he was an assistant solicitor. After only a brief stay there he joined Sharman and Trethewy in Bedford in 1920 as an assistant solicitor. From 1931 to 1937 he was Chairman of the Bedford Court of Referees and in the 1939-45 War performed valuable public service as Chairman of the Military Service Hardship Committee, Chairman of the Firewatching Tribunal and Chairman of the Local Appeals Board. He was also a former President of the Bedfordshire Law Society.

Charles Leonard Winterforde Codrington was educated at the Perse School, Cambridge and Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge. At Fitzwilliam College he gained

MA and LLB Degrees in Law. He was articled in London and qualified as a solicitor in 1933. He joined the firm of Sharman and Trethewy when he came to Bedford in 1938 and became a partner in the firm in 1947. During the 1939-45 War he volunteered for the RAF, was commissioned and served in the Desert. In 1945 he was invalided out of the RAF.

Charles Leonard Winterforde Codrington ran the Ampthill office of Sharman and Trethewy from 1947 until 1960. He served as Deputy Clerk of the Ampthill Urban District Council from 1947 until 1953 and was Clerk to that Council from 1953 until 1955 when Mr Jack Bardin became the first full time Clerk to the Council. Charles Leonard Winterforde Codrington was also Clerk to the Ampthill United Parish Charities. In 1970 he retired prematurely from the partnership through ill health. This was some 2 years after his son Ian Charles Codrington became a partner in the firm. Although he retired as a partner, he remained a consultant with the firm until his death in 1972.

Charles Leonard Winterforde Codrington was a member of the Bedford Golf Club and Bedfordshire Cricket Club, a Governor of Redbourne School and a Governor of Russell Primary School in Ampthill. For many years he acted as Treasurer of the Bedfordshire Law Society and was also a former President of that Society.

He was also an active Freemason having been Past Master of the Ampthill Lodge and a Provincial Grand Officer. He was survived by his wife Mary, his son Ian and three grandchildren.

19TH CENTURY AMPHILL ORIGINS

The Ampthill Office of the firm can be traced back to the practice of John Wright. After practising in Rugby in Warwickshire, John Wright established a new practice or perhaps took over another practice in Ampthill in 1853. There is no concrete evidence to show conclusively that he took over any other practice so it has to be presumed for our record purposes that his was a new practice. His bankers were Sharples Tuke Lucas and Seebohm who were eventually taken over by Barclays Bank, one of the present practice's principal bankers. He was the Ampthill agent of the Alliance Insurance Company Limited, now part of the Sun Alliance and London Assurance Group. He was also Registrar of the local County Court which used to sit in Ampthill, Superintendent Registrar of Birth and Deaths for the Ampthill District and Clerk of the Ampthill Urban District Council from its formation in 1893.

Sharman and Trethewy's take over of the practice of John Wright together with his various appointments in 1899 appears to have been master-minded by Alfred Tresawna Trethewy.

TEBBS AND SON

Henry Tebbs established the Tebbs and Son side of the firm in Bedford in 1870. He was Clerk to the Borough Justices, Director of the House of Industry and Superintendent Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages for Bedford. As well as being Unionist Election Agent for Bedford for many years, he was actively involved with the Bedford Rowing Club, at one time being the President of that Club. He was the first Secretary and Treasurer of the Bedford Club when it was formed in 1879. He took his son Henry Nelson Tebbs into partnership in 1898 and from that time onwards the firm was known as Tebbs and Son.

Henry Nelson Tebbs, a son of Henry Tebbs, was admitted as a solicitor in August 1894, after being educated at Bedford Modern School. He was for a time Honorary Treasurer of the Bedford Rowing Club and Honorary Secretary of the Bedford Regatta. He took his own son Horace Aubrey Nelson Tebbs into partnership in 1930. Henry Nelson Tebbs died on the 6th March 1954.

Horace Aubrey Nelson Tebbs M.B.E., a son of Henry Nelson Tebbs, grandson of Henry Tebbs, the third generation of the Tebbs and Son dynasty. He was educated at Bedford School, qualified as a solicitor in November 1929 and became a partner in Tebbs and Son with his father in 1930. On the death of his father in 1954, he continued in practice as sole principal until the amalgamation of his firm with Sharman and Trethewy in 1974. He retired from the partnership of the combined firm in 1978 but has continued to be involved with the firm as a consultant.

STAFF AND THE FUTURE

A happy relationship has existed between partners and staff over the years, a fact borne out by the long service of many members of the staff both past and present. Former members of the staff who have been with the firm for a very long time include A E Adams, A W Breed, Miss E Bird, Mrs D Crowsley, F Bunting, A H Dexter, W H Dunham, A G Fossey, N Hall, Mrs P Lant, F G Minney, D Moore, F W Page, Mrs D S Parrott, W Payne, Mr Pollard, Mrs P T Read, J A Scoyne-Bowden, W H Smith, G C Walker, and Miss N Warren. Present members of the staff with long service of over 20 years now include in alphabetical order, Mrs N J Chance, Mrs M Green, Mrs M Hutchins, Miss S M Lambert, Mrs B Lennox-Lamb, Mr D K Porter and Mrs A E Roberts. The firm is greatly indebted to them and to the many others whose names lack of space prevent their being mentioned.

Not only can the firm look back over the last 175 years with pride but it can also look forward to the future with confidence. Over the years a close and friendly relationship has also been built up between the firm and its clients, many of whose families have been clients of the firm for several generations.

FORMER PARTNERS NOW CONSULTANTS WITH THE FIRM

LEONARD JOHN AYLETT – Admitted as a solicitor in February 1929 and a partner in the firm from 1936 to 1977

HORACE AUBREY NELSON TEBBS M.B.E. – Admitted as a solicitor in November 1929, former a partner and the sole principal in the firm of Tebbs and Son and subsequently a partner in Sharman and Trethewey from 1974 to 1978.

PRESENT PARTNERS

WILLIAM SYDNEY NORTHEY LL.B (Lond.) – Admitted as a solicitor in June 1947 and a partner in the firm from 1952 onwards.

THOMAS ARTHUR BARDEN M.A., B.C.L. (Oxon.) – Admitted as a solicitor in February 1954 and a partner in the firm from 1962 onwards.

IAN CHARLES CODRINGTON M.A. (Cantab.) (son of Charles Leonard Winterforde Codrington) – Admitted as a solicitor in October 1962 and a partner in the firm from 1968 onwards.

ANTHONY WILLIAM NORTHEY M.A., LL.B. (Cantab) (son of William Sydney Northey) – Admitted as a solicitor in April 1972 and a partner in the firm from 1974 onwards.

SIMON GEOFFERY PATRICK SHAUN COCKSEEDGE LL.B. (Wales) – Admitted as a solicitor in March 1974 and a partner in the firm from 1977 onwards

CHARLES NICHOLAS MONSELL LL.B (Manch) – Admitted as a solicitor in April 1975 and a partner in the firm from 1980 onwards.

May 1984
A W NORTHEY