

## HENRY BRINDLEY. HAIRDRESSER

BY MIKE HINSON

### Early Life

Henry Brindley was born in Sandgate, Kent, the youngest son of George and Charlotte Brindley. He was baptised in the Parish of Cheriton, Folkestone on 25th June 1813 (1).

At some time during the 1830s, the Brindley family made its way to the Birmingham area. Henry Brindley married Maria Smith on 27th April 1835 at the parish church of St Peter, Harborne (2). Maria was born in 1812 at Baxterley Old Hall, Baxterley in North Warwickshire (3).

### The Brindleys Arrive in Sutton Coldfield

By 1838, the Brindleys had arrived in Sutton. An entry on page 10 of the Rates Assessments for 1839 (4) shows that Henry Brindley was the occupant of a tenement in High Street, Great Sutton, that property being part of the estate of the late Samuel Smith. The Census Return for 1841 (5) gives an indication of its location. Houses in High Street were not numbered, however, a careful study of the entries made by the enumerator indicates that the Census was completed in an orderly fashion. On the right hand side of High Street, proceeding towards Tamworth Road, the occupants were listed as:

Sarah Smith, draper; William Wilkins, shoemaker;  
William Brentnall, clock maker; Vincent Holbeche,  
solicitor; William Smith, druggist; Henry  
Brindley, hairdresser.

The latter entry was followed by a list of the occupants of Albert Court, thereafter continuing with entries for High Street. Albert Court is now known as Old Bank Place. Therefore, the house occupied by the Brindleys was near to Old Bank House in the High Street.

By 1841, Henry and Maria had three children. Amelia (aged 6), the eldest, had been born in Birmingham in 1836. George Francis (aged 3 – born in 1838), and Henry (aged 11 months – born in 1840), were both born in Sutton. According to the Census records for 1851 (6), the Brindleys' younger daughter Maria was born in Sutton in 1850.

#### **Henry Brindley: Hairdresser**

At a meeting of the Aston Board of Guardians of the Poor, held at Erdington Workhouse on Tuesday 19th June 1838 (7), it was resolved that an advertisement should be inserted in the Birmingham Gazette, the Herald and the Journal for ' a Barber to shave the Men and cut the Children's Hair'. The Minutes of the Aston Board of Guardians for Tuesday 26th June 1838 recorded a resolution that:

'... Mr H Brindley of Sutton Coldfield be appointed barber for the Workhouse during the ensuing year at a salary of £10 and that he be expected to shave the Men twice a week and cut the hair of the whole of the inmates when requested'.

Quarterly payments were made to Henry Brindley for his services. In January 1842, his salary was increased to £12 per annum.

In addition to working for the Aston Board of Guardians, he had a similar appointment with the Sutton Corporation. The Education Committee's Minutes for 1845 recorded that:

'The committee recommends that Mr. Brindley have £2 per quarter for haircutting at the different schools'.

For this sum he was expected to cut the hair of the children at least six times a year. A regular quarterly payment of £2 is recorded in the Minutes, also in those of the Warden and Society (10), the last payment being made in April 1855(11).

### **Constable Brindley**

It appears that, after his arrival, Henry had quite quickly established himself as a respected and trusted member of the community in Sutton. The Vestry Minutes (12) record the proceedings of a meeting at the Moot Hall (near the site of today's Vesey Gardens) on 1st March 1844:

'At a Meeting of the Ratepayers and Inhabitants held this day in persuance of the following Notice  
"The Inhabitants are requested to attend [the] Vestry at the Moot Hall on Friday next at Eleven o'Clock in the forenoon for the purpose of nominating twelve persons qualified and liable to serve as Constables for this Parish for the ensuing year"  
"Sutton Coldfield" "24th February 1844"  
Mr William Hollis in the Chair.

It was resolved that the following persons be nominated:

William Brentnall	Sutton	Watchmaker
William Wilkins	Sutton	Cordwainer
Henry Brindley	Sutton	Hairdresser
Thomas Botrill	Sutton	Shopkeeper
William Tilley	Sutton	Tailor...

At a later meeting, held at the Moot Hall on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> February 1845, the same inhabitants were re-elected as 'Constables for this Parish in persuance of the Act of

Parliament recently passed intitled 'An Act for the appointment and payment of Parish Constables'.

### **Henry Brindley: Musician**

As well as being a hairdresser, Henry Brindley was a musician, earning money from his talents in a semi-professional capacity. A handbill preserved in the Sidwell collection of papers (13) announced that on Friday 3rd September at 1.30 pm, a quadrille band would be in attendance near Perkins Pool (Blackroot) in Sutton Park. 'Ladies and Gentlemen honouring him with their company will be esteemed a favour,' (see Figure 1).

Also amongst the Sidwell papers (14) is a copy of the Rules of the Sutton Coldfield Musical Society dated 23rd April 1854 (see Figure 2). This records that Mr Brindley was present at a meeting held in the Reading Room for the purpose of forming an Amateur Vocal and Instrumental Band and, presumably, became one of the two ordinary committee members for that year.

Eighteen years later, when Henry Brindley had left Sutton Coldfield, he advertised in Jones' Mercantile Directory of Birmingham for 1865 (15). Although his principal occupation still appeared to be that of hairdresser, he had also become a musical instrument repairer, in addition taking bookings for quadrille bands.

### **Henry Brindley: Rates Collector**

The minutes of the meeting of the Aston Board of Guardians held on 27th December 1853 (16) resolved that, 'Mr H. Brindley of Sutton Coldfield be appointed Collector of Rates for the District of Sutton Coldfield with the poundage allowed by Order of the Poor Law Commissioners'.

The Collectors of Taxes were appointed on a part-time

**SUTTON PARK.**

By Permission of the

**WARDEN, J. P. OATES, ESQ.**

**H. BRINDLEY**

Respectfully announces to his friends and the public that he has ENGAGED A QUADRILLE BAND to be in attendance in SUTTON PARK

**ON FRIDAY NEXT, SEPTEMBER 3rd.**

At half-past One o'clock, (near Perkins's Pool.)

Ladies and Gentlemen honouring him with their company, will be esteemed a favour.

**TICKETS ONE SHILLING EACH.**

To be had at Mr H. Brindley's, High-street,  
Sutton Coldfield.

Leader . . MR G. BRINDLEY.

Second Violin . . MR POUNTEY.

Violoncello . . MR MORTON, JUN.

Cornet de-Piston . . MR J. EADES.

Flageolet . . MR H. BRINDLEY.

August 30th, 1847.

Figure 1 - Handbill published by Henry Brindley, Snr .

# RULES OF THE SUTTON COLDFIELD MUSICAL SOCIETY.

SUTTON COLDFIELD, APRIL 23rd, 1854.

*At a Meeting held in the Reading Room for the purpose of forming an Amateur Vocal and Instrumental Band, present Messrs. LAMPERT, BRINDLEY, WHITWORTH, G. BRENTNALL, J. H. CULL, and W. BRENTNALL, it was Resolved—*

1.—That the gentlemen present form themselves into a Society, for the above-named object, to be called the *Sutton Coldfield Musical Society*.

2.—That ROBERT GARNETT, Esquire, be President; Mr. LAMPERT, Director; Mr. CULL, Treasurer; Mr. W. BRENTNALL, Secretary; and Mr. JOSH. HUGHES, Jun., Librarian, for the present year.

3.—That the President, with the Director, Treasurer, Secretary, Librarian, and two other Members be the Committee of Management.

4.—That all adult Members constitute the General Purposes Committee.

5.—That the practice of Vocal Music commence every Friday Evening at half-past Eight o'clock, and Instrumental Music at a quarter-past Nine; to conclude at Ten o'clock.

6.—That each Member pay 2s.6d. entrance.

7.—That a Rehearsal take place on the last Friday Evening in every month, to which Subscribers of 5s. per annum will be admitted.

8.—That all Subscriptions be appropriated for the Purchase of Music, and other objects necessary for carrying on the management of the Society.

9.—That any persons wishing to join the Society, must give notice to the Secretary, or be proposed by a Member, and if sanctioned by the Director, their election will subsequently follow.

10.—That it is expected every Member will attend regularly, as each Member being absent more than two successive nights (unless prevented by illness or absence from home) will be considered to have left the Society.

11.—That when a Public Concert takes place, each Member shall have one ticket, in addition to his own admission, free.

12.—That the proceeds of one Concert annually be paid over to the Committee of the Literary Institute for the use of their Room on Friday Evenings.

13.—That the Committee of Management meet, on notice from the Secretary, Treasurer, or Director.

JOHN TONKS, PRINTER, NEW STREET, BIRMINGHAM.

Figure 2 — Rules of the Sutton Coldfield Musical Society, 1854.

basis. Their remuneration for this task was determined by the Board as a fixed percentage (2½%) of the total sum which they collected each year.

At a meeting in January 1854, it was resolved that the offer be accepted from several respected Sutton business men who had offered to act as sureties for Henry Brindley. However, by the Spring of 1854, records indicate that all was not going well for him in his new role as Collector of Rates. Not for the first time (there were similar occurrences in 1839, 1845 and in 1847) was the parish of Sutton Coldfield behind in collecting its rates and in forwarding them to the Board's Treasurer. A minute of the Board of Guardians' meeting held on 7th March 1854 is concerned with a letter written by the Clerk to the Sutton Overseers stating that they would be reluctantly compelled to take hostile steps for the recovery thereof unless these arrears were paid before the next meeting.

Regrettably, by April 1855, Henry had been suspended by the Board 'in consequence of his admitted defalcations which make it impolitic for him to hold the office longer'.

A minute of the meeting held on 16th May 1855 records that the auditor had certified a deficiency of £129. 11. 7 against him. The worthy men of Sutton Coldfield who had stood surety were requested to pay their respective portions of the deficit. The Board then sacked Henry from the position of barber at the Erdington Workhouse, one which he had held for seventeen years. It was left to the Overseers of the Poor for Sutton Coldfield to take action against him, if they so wished. There is no evidence that they adopted this course of action. Nevertheless, they dismissed him from his post as hairdresser to the various schools in the parish which he had held for ten years.

Without further information, it is difficult to surmise the reasons why Henry Brindley had failed in this position of trust. There is ample evidence to show that in his other activities he was industrious and a man of integrity, also that he was well regarded by professional men and fellow tradesmen in Sutton. Records (17) indicate that, although the remuneration for such a post was reasonable, the Sutton parish was a large area to cover, in comparison with other parishes in the Aston Union. With the additional clerical

work that had to be undertaken by the Collector, the job seems to have proved too ambitious an undertaking for a man whose time was already heavily committed. Whilst this is no excuse for him having applied for and having accepted the post, entries in the Vestry Minutes for April to September 1855 (18) suggest that there was an awareness of the difficulties at local level. There was an attempt to make the role of Collector more attractive by proposing that it should be a full time position, in combination with the post of Assistant Overseer of the Poor at a salary of £30 per annum.

### **The Brindleys Leave Sutton**

Having lost his main sources of income and having to face the ignominy of failure in a position of trust, Henry Brindley appears to have decided that the best course of action was to leave Sutton Coldfield with his wife and most of his family during the summer of 1855. Eventually, Henry Brindley set up another business at 201, Summer Lane Aston where he lived for the rest of his life.

## References

- 1 International Genealogical Index, 1988 edition.
- 2 Register of Marriages, St. Peter's Church, Harborne (then in Staffordshire). B 'ham Reference Library
- 3 Register of Births, Marriages and Deaths, St Mary's Church, Baxterley, Warwickshire. Warwickshire CRO.
- 4 A Valuation of the Messuages Lands and other Hereditaments liable to Poor Rates in the Parish of Sutton Coldfield, Aston Union, 1839. Local History Dept., Sutton Coldfield Reference Library.
- 5 Census Returns for 1841, Sutton Coldfield, SC Ref. Lib.
- 6 Census Returns for 1851, Sutton Coldfield, SC Ref. Lib..
- 7 Minutes of Aston Board of Guardians, 1837 - 1839. DRO, Birmingham Central Library.
- 8 op. cit.
- 9 Sutton Coldfield Borough Vestry Minutes, 1844-45. Local History Dept, SC Ref. Lib..
- 10 Sutton Coldfield Borough Education Committee Minutes, 1845. Local History Dept., SC Ref. Lib..
- 11 Sutton Coldfield Minutes of Warden and Society, 1845 onwards. Local History Dept. , SC Ref. Lib..
- 12 op. cit.
- 13 Sidwell Papers, 1784 - 1885. DRO, Birmingham Central Library, Ref: 424509 11R90.
- 14 op. cit.
- 15 Jones' Mercantile Directory of Birmingham, 1865. Local History Dept., SC Ref. Lib.
- 16 Minutes of Aston Board of Guardians, 1854-55.
- 17 op. cit.
- 18 Sutton Coldfield Borough Vestry Minutes, 1855. Local History Dept., SC Ref. Lib..
- 19 Census Returns 1861, Sutton Coldfield.