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CORRESPONDENCE OF THE STOURBRIDGE  
IRONWORKS IN 1830

A HANDLIST

Compiled by  
Paul Kelly.

London, 1972.



# PREFATORY NOTE.

The following 132 letters were bought by the University of London Library in 1972 from Francis Edwards, 83 Marylebone High Street, London. Their previous history is not known.

The documents are related to the Rastrick collection in the University of London Library.<sup>1</sup> In 1819, Rastrick became a partner in the Stourbridge Ironworks. The firm was known as John Bradley & Co. John Bradley died in 1816, and his half-brother, James Foster (1786-1853), was subsequently to become sole proprietor of the Stourbridge Ironworks.<sup>2</sup>

Except for a few letters addressed to Foster himself - which are specified in the list - all correspondence is addressed to John Bradley & Co.; and all the papers belong to the year 1830. Correspondents are listed alphabetically. Many of the letters are orders, and are usually very detailed. In the list, I have not mentioned notes - usually relating to the dates of the dispatch of orders &c. - made by the recipients of the letters. Where I have indicated the contents of a letter, it may not be assumed that this is an entirely accurate guide to the contents of the whole letter. Further, some of the signatures are difficult to decipher; and there may be some errors in the transcription of initials and surnames.

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1. See the handlist of the Rastrick papers, compiled by T.D. Rogers, 1968, which has been reproduced by the National Register of Archives.
  2. See Norman Mutton, 'An Engineer at work in the West Midlands: The Diary of John Urpeth Rastrick for 1820' in the Journal of West Midlands Regional Studies (special publication, No. 1, 1969), p. 3.

1830

1. 10 June, J. Andersons & Co., Wolverhampton. Demand for payment.
- 2/1-4.
  - /1 8 Jan., Joseph Allinson, Whitehaven. Order - to be sent c/o Mr. [William] Dawson, 8 Goree Piazza, Liverpool. "...the iron you sent by Ames & Co. Dec. 14th. has not come to hand".
  - /2 23 Jan., same. Encloses a bill for £181/0/6 to be placed to his credit. "...The iron sent by Ames & Co. the 14th. Dec. has never come to hand".
  - /3 26 Jan., same. Sends an addition to a former order - both to be forwarded as soon as possible c/o William Dawson, Liverpool.
  - /4 30 Aug., same. Order - to be sent c/o Dawson.
- 3/1-3.
  - /1 4 Jan., J.A. Ames, Stourport, to James Foster. Wishes to see him about a possible contract for a consignment of rails for the Bristol Railway Company.
  - /2 14 Jan., Ames & Co., Stourport. Concerns the shipping of iron rods to Bingham & Co. of Derby.
  - /3 30 Jan., J.G. Ames, Stourport. The iron for Joseph Allinson of Whitehaven, "mention'd in your favour of the 26th. Inst.", was shipped for Liverpool on 19 Jan.
4. 28 June, John Barker, Wolverhampton. "...your Boats have not brought us any Limestone for some time back. Please inform us whether we are to expect any more by them as we may make our arrangements accordingly.  
Perhaps you can inform me tomorrow by Mr. Foster ...".
5. 23 June, W.R. Bayliffe, Rotherham. Order.
6. 26 June, James Bell, Whitehaven. Encloses a bill for £44/12/6 "being the Amount of my Account". He is disappointed that his orders of 12 Feb. and 29 May have not yet been sent.
- 7A. 13 Jan., Bingham & Co., Derby. Order - to be sent by Ames & Co.
- 7B. 25 June, Richard Burlingham & Co., Evesham. Complain that they have not received any sheet iron or rods for a long time.

8/1-2.

/1

14 Jan., S. & T. Bishop & Co., London. Concerns an order which has not yet been delivered.

/2

17 Sept., same to James Foster. "The Proving Machine is arrived, but I fear there will be some error in putting it together unless you will desire Mr. Rastrick to send us a plan of ye same on paper....".

9/1-2.

/1

25 June, Robert Curwen, Whitehaven. Order.

/2

4 Sept., same. Encloses a payment of £20 and complains of undelivered orders.

10.

14 June, John Coppock, Canal Office, Oxford. Parsons & Co. "have this day received your bill for £21/17/8 the amount due from you to the Oxford Canal Company for Tonnage for the month of May last".

11/1-2.

/1

12 June, J. & B. Cort, Leicester. Reminder of a previous order.

/2

14 Sept., same. Order.

12.

26 June, Jukes Coulson, London, to James Foster. Begins "My dear Friend" and headed "The king is dead". Concerns the price of iron fixed at the recent meeting and the death of the king [George IV].

13.

12 Jan., Joseph Cox & Sons, Dudley. Order.

14.

29 May, William Croudson, Wigan. Order. "As Iron will be wanted here for the Rail Road please to state your Lowest Price...

...Please to state if you make any other than the Patent Rail, as I think it probable some other kind will be substituted for the Patent on acc[oun]t of the difference in price".

15.

24 June, Daglish & Brimelow, Pemberton. Enclose payment of £273/11/9 "which is the amount of your account for Rails."

16/1-5.

/1

28 Jan., Daniels & Payne, Shardlow [Derbyshire]. Order.

/2

9 June, G. Balls for Daniels & Payne, London. Order. Complains also of deficiencies in a previous order.

/3

25 June, William Tatum for Daniels & Payne, London. Requires immediate dispatch of a previous order.

- /4 30 Aug., G. Balls for Daniels and Payne, London. Requires immediate dispatch of an order made in a letter of 26 Jan. [To Foster, Rastrick & Co.].
- /5 8 Sept., same. Order.
- 17/1-3.
- /1 5 Oct., Eaton & Sons, Bristol. Have paid £87/2 to the account of James Foster. Request the immediate dispatch of previous orders which are urgently required.
- /2 22 Oct., same. Order and a reminder of a previous order made on 8 May.
- /3 9 Nov., same. Have paid £75/10 to the account of James Foster. Request the dispatch of former orders which are urgently required.
18. 31 May, Edwards & Hawkins, Gloucester. "You will oblige us by forwarding our small order on hand".
19. 13 Jan., C. Finch & Son, Cambridge. "You will doubtless be surprised that in these critical times we again send two Bills value One hundred & Seventeen Pounds 14/6 to be plac[ed] [on] account & for which acknowledge the receipt.  
Why don't many blow out their furnaces. It is the only remedy to cure the disease that is so prevalent; but say you, we don't like to begin, so say others, but it must come if not voluntarily, necessity will compel". Followed by an order to be sent "When the Canal is navigable".
- 20/1-2.
- /1 19 Jan., Robert Gould for Daniels & Co. Bristol. Order.
- /2 12 June, Robert Gould for Daniels & Co., Bristol. Concerning an order which has not yet been delivered.
21. 9 Jan., H. Grazebrooke, Glasgow. Detailed statement of account, and encloses a bill for £274/9/0 to cover it. Followed by an order.
22. 12 Jan., Gwynn & Gibbs, Bristol. Enclose payment of account. "We are this morning in possession of your List which will now enable us to do more business in future".

23/1-2.

/1

12 Jan., J. Hancock, Burton. Has not received the iron invoiced to him on 23 Dec. which was supposed to have been shipped by Ames & Co. Asks for it to be sent "with the utmost speed" to S. & T.E. Hall, Mount Street, Nottingham.

/2

27 Sept., John Hancock, Cookley Iron Works, to James Foster. Concerns chiefly the lamentable state of the iron trade. "I much lament the state of the Iron Trade & think a reduction [of prices] must take place or the Welch will take all our connexions in Liverpoole & Bristole - I have not been sending one fourth of my usual quantity this Quarter to either of those places & I have now every order cancelled in those Towns for Iron; unless at a reduced price.....I have written my friends that I cannot say anything as to prices untill the ensuing meeting when something I hope will be done. In the Tin plate Trade it is just the same, at a time [when] we were looking forward to some improvement in prices; the Welch Houses have within the present Month being offering them at reduced prices; As we Bar Iron makers are not permitted to attend the select vestry of Pig makers at Sheffield - I hope you will plead our cause & it would be very desirable if they would conclude [illegible] next quarters prices at their first meeting as it is keeping the Trade in such a state of uncertainty so long to wait untill Birm[ingham] on quarter day".

24/1-3.

/1

9 Jan., Harley & Lang, [Bristol]. Order.

/2

8 June, same. Order.

/3

19 June. Request for dispatch of a previous order.

25.

30 Jan., Jesse Hartley, Dockyard, Liverpool. "I am badly in want of some real good Iron for Chains - and Mr. Rastrick has just referred me to you stating however that he is not certain that you will supply it to be manufactured direct - but through some commercial house". Though he wants the price to be as low as possible, he emphasises that he wants the best possible quality which is "the prime object".

26/1-2.

/1

7 Feb., J[ames] Hatton, Son & Co. Encloses payment for the last month's account.

/2

11 June, same. As they are entirely out of iron, they want the hoops which they ordered on 2 April.

27/1-2.

/1

14 June, Joseph & William Heath for George John Lentin, Warrington. Reminder of previous orders, made on 19 and 25 March, 27 April and 27 May, which have not been delivered.



/2

Sept., same. Reminder of a previous order which is urgently required.

28.

7 Sept., Henton & Rossall, Lancaster. Reminder of an order for two sheets of iron made on 5 Aug. which are urgently required.

29/1-5.

/1

23 Jan., Richard Hunt & Co., Bristol. Orders to be sent to Oxford, Reading and Bristol.

/2

27 Jan., same. Order.

/3

31 May, same. Order and "The Round Rods ordered May 5th. are much wanted".

/4

15 June, same. Order and "We are very much in want of Round Rods particularly 3/8....also Hoops 1. 178 ord[ere]d 16th. March & 23 April".

/5

7 Sept., same. Order and amendments to previous orders.

30/1-2.

/1

15 Jan., James Jackson, Eardington Iron Works. Acknowledges receipt of Foster's letter concerning a bill, value £561, which Jackson has passed to the credit of Bradley & Co. Would "feel obliged by a further remittance having several heavy payments to make at this time". Will send the consignments which have been ordered.

19-5-97 /2

11 June, Thomas Jackson, Eardington Iron Works. "We have forwarded the undermention'd Castings from Hamptons Load [Hampton Load] to Stourport which I hope will arrive safe".

31/1-2.

/1

9 Jan., Henry C. James for Harford Brothers, [Bristol]. Order in addition to long-standing orders "and that are particularly wanted".

/2

5 June, same. "On the other side we hand you an order for Bars Bolts Rods Hoops Sheets &c. and beg your immediate and best attention to this with former orders particularly Hoops & Sheet Iron..... we hope you will please send us an early supply of those articles as we are dayley giving offence to our best Friends".

32.

10 Jan., J. Jones, Bridgnorth. Returns bills for £15/8/3.

33.

12 May, Thomas Jones, Rowley near Dudley. Encloses a cheque to the amount of Bradley & Co.'s account.

34.

15 Sept. E. Johnston & Co., London. Order.

35/1-3.

- /1 19 June, F. Levick, The Chillington Coal & Iron Co., Chillington Iron Works. Order.
- /2 26 June, same. Concerns some confusion which has arisen over an order.
- /3 11 Sept., same. Reminder of a previous order.

36.

5 Jan., S. Lewis, Dixon's Green, near Dudley. "I have received your account which seems correct". The frost is the reason why Bradley & Co.'s order has not been sent. It will be dispatched "as soon as the Canals will allow".

37.

26 June, Moser & Ellosin, London. Order.

38/1-3.

- /1 14 Jan., Montague & Church, Gloucester. Order and reminder of previous order. Concerns also the price of iron.
- /2 15 June, same. Order and reminder of previous orders.
- /3 June, same. Urgent reminder of a previous order.

39/1-4.

- /1 5 June, Thomas Moore & Son, Wigan. Order and reminder of previous orders.
- /2 2 Sept., same, Manchester. Order and reminder of previous orders.
- /3 4 Sept., same, Manchester. Order and reminder of previous orders.
- /4 21 Sept., same, Manchester. Order and: "We are very much disappointed at not receiving [the] Invoice of Plates, which we have written about so frequently" - also other previous orders.

40/1-7.

- /1 4 Jan., [dated 1829 though postmarked 1830], Richard Nott & Son, Bristol. Enclose acceptance for the last month's account.
- /2 7 June, same. Enclose payment of £231/3/2 and order.
- /3 20 June, same. Order.
- /4 26 June, same. Order. Concerns also the price of iron.
- /5 4 Sept., same. Order.
- /6 14 Sept., same. Order.
- /7 20 Sept., same. Concerning previous orders: "We have waited a tedious time for the annex'd and missed many Vessels....".



41. 7 Jan., Palmer, Green & Co., Brighton. Order.
42. 26 June, Robert Rayne, Newcastle. Order and reminder of previous order made on 28 Apr.
- 43/1-12.
- /1 11 Jan., Robertson & Fothergill, Bristol. "We are this morning advised of a reduction in Pig Iron, and we have heard a rumour that you had reduced every thing 10/- per ton. If so we wonder we have not heard from you. If it is the case we hope to hear from you per return of Post. We have had a Barge in to day. We therefore suppose your Canal is navigable & that you will ship the Goods we so much want, with the under-mentioned immediately".
- /2 16 Jan., same. Concerns undelivered previous orders. Another manufacturer has offered them more advantageous terms, and Robertson & Fothergill want a discount.
- /3 19 Jan., same. "We have been thinking why you do not make Shear molds & Axle molds - if you were to, we could take many Tons per quarter - We could send you patterns of the different sorts - and if of the same quality as SC Crown Ham<sup>d</sup>. & price the same, they would do. We wish you reply in a post or two...". Followed by an order and: "N.B. Altho you deliver all Goods Devy takes great care of Hoops &c. and if it makes no difference to you we wish you would employ him".
- /4 23 Jan., same. Order.
- /5 25 Jan., same. Reminder of previous orders.
- /6 30 Jan., same. Order and reminder of a previous order.
- /7 31 May, same. Order and reminder of a previous order.
- /8 31 May, same. Order
- /9(a) 15 June, same. "That you may see the situation of a poor industrious Tradesman for want of Tip Iron we enclose you his note just rec[eive]d - We hope it will have the desired effect".
- /9(b) 15 May, Walter Rocker to Robertson & Fothergill. ".....If I cannot get the Tip Iron in a few days I must decline that part of my Trade".
- /10 22 June, Robertson & Fothergill, Bristol. Order and urgent reminder of previous orders.
- /11 7 Sept., same. Enclose payment for last month's account. And an order "which we hope you will forward in 10 or 12 days".
- /12 17 Sept., same. Order and reminder of previous orders. "P.S. It is rumoured here that you north Country Gents. intend reducing iron at Q[uar]ter day. We hope not, no good can possibly be the result".

44/1-2.

- /1 14 Jan., Sharp & Brown, Halifax. Order.
- /2 26 Jan., same. Order.

Manchester.

45.

10 Sept., Thomas Sharp & Co. A Urgent reminder of previous orders: "you cannot have an Idea of ill consequences resulting to us from the delay".

46/1-3.

- /1 9 June, Thomas Shaw, Burnley. Cancellation of an order.
- /2 12 June, same. Concerns the cancellation of his order. He is willing to have the iron plates in question which he can use "as you have been so kind to me in several other instances as well as this".
- /3 7 June, same. Order - requires quick delivery.

47.

24 May, Thomas Shawland, London. Reminder of previous order.

48/1-7.

- /1 8 Jan., Tarratt & Neve, Wolverhampton. Order.
- /2 3 June, same. Order.
- /3 9 June, same. Order.
- /4 16 June, same. Order.
- /5 24 June, same. Order and reminder of a previous order.
- /6 26 June, same. Order.
- /7 8 June, Joseph Tarratt & Sons, Wolverhampton. Order. "We regret that our orders for hoops should be of such very small sizes but unless some alteration is made in the American Tariff, the orders from that quarter will generally be for the small sizes only. As you say the small sizes are a losing article would it not be better to put an extra price upon them".

49/1-3.

- /1 3 June, Thompson & Co., Wigan. Urgent reminder of a previous order.
- /2 8 June, same. Concerns a previous order.
- /3 24 June, same. Order.

50.

6 Sept., Thorne & Sons, Westborough. Urgent reminder of a previous order.

51/1-3.

- /1 11 Jan., Joshua Underhill, Hampton Loade. Order to be sent by Jones & Co. of Stourport.
- /2 18 June, same. Order and reminder of previous order.
- /3 16 Sept. Order to be sent by Ames & Co.

52.

31 May. John Varden &amp; Son, London. Order.

53/1-3.

- /1 9 June, Leonard, Warren & Co., Bristol. Enclose payment of their account for £177/3/-. "We shall feel particularly obliged if you would forward the round rods ordered the 8th. April immediately"
- /2 30 Aug., same. Order.
- /3 31 Aug., same. Order.

54/1-2.

- /1 11 Jan., Robert Whittaker, Preston. Order.
- /2 7 June, same. Order.

55/1-8.

- /1 4 Jan., Mead Wilson & Co., Liverpool. Concerns their account and and an order. "The canal having closed with Frost none of the Iron has yet arrived but no doubt will be here as soon as the navigation opens".
- /2 9 May, same. "We have received your Mr. Foster's Letter of the 6th. and note the Contents, which by the bye is very poor consolation, and an excuse that cannot be admitted as reasonable under the Circumstances in which we were placed with your house. In an order for 500 tons of Iron for Stock to send all the heavy Iron, and little or none of the Lighter and middle kinds, which are daily wanted is really out of all order, and what we could not have expected in your house above all others would have done, to the great injury of even the worst Customers or friend you had". Concerns also other previous orders and a further order.
- /3 31 May, same. Concerns their account.
- /4 7 June, same. Order.
- /5 21 June, same. Order "Wanted immediately".
- /6 24 June, same. Order.
- /7 1 Sept., same. Order. "Please say if Mr. Foster is at home as we want to write him about operations in the north - Hunt of Bristol is ruining

1830

us all - we cannot go on this way - it will not do we are sure either for you or us".

/8

3 Sept., same. Addition to previous orders.

56/1-2.

/1

4 June, R. Wilson & Co., Leicester. Reminder of a previous order and an addition to it.

/2

23 June, same. Order. Concerns also a previous order which cannot be immediately supplied by Bradley & Co.