# Coalbrookdale Assignment
# History Around Us Objective 2 and 3
# SOURCE PACK

## "The Darby family cared about its workers between 1700 and 1860".

*View of the Upper Works at Coalbrookdale by Francois Vivares in 1758 shows a sophisticated landscape. Smoke from Abraham Darby I's Furnace rises in the middle of the picture.*

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Ironbridge
BIRTHPLACE OF INDUSTRY

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## Contents

## Acknowledgemnets

The Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust wishes to thank Roger Emmitt from QLS, Blake Valley Technology College Staffordshire and Staffordshire Partnership.

Sources reproduced by kind permission:

W. Grant Muter, *Buildings of an Industrial Community* (1979).
Phillimore & Co. Ltd, Shopwyke Manor Barn, Chichester, West Sussex. PO20 2BG.

Barrie Trinder, *The Industrial Revolution in Shropshire* (1981).
Phillimore & Co Ltd, Shopwyke Manor Barn, Chichester, West Sussex. PO20 2BG.

Barrie Trinder, *The Darbys of Coalbrookdale (1981).*
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Colin Shephard, Andy Reid and Keith Shephard, *Peace & War* (John Murray, 1999).
Hodder Murray.

Geoff Alton, *Exploring Coalbrookdale* (1987).
Stanley Thornes.

Christine Vialls, *Iron and the Industrial Revolution* (1980).
Cambridge University Press.

Mike Pooley, *Coalbrookdale, 3 Historic Woodland Walks (2003).*

## Coalbrookdale Assignment
## History Around Us Objectives 2 and 3

**Approximately 1000 words in length.**

**12.5% of final GCSE Grade.**

Testing objectives 2 and 3

- Candidates must demonstrate the ability to use historical sources critically in their context, by comprehending, analysing, evaluating and interpreting them.

- Candidates must demonstrate the ability to comprehend, analyse and evaluate, in relation to the historical context, how and why historical events, people, situations and changes have been interpreted and represented in different ways.

Using your field trip notes from the visit to Coalbrookdale, answer the following question in the form of an essay. Your answer should reflect the objectives being tested above.

**"The Darby family cared about its workers between 1700 and 1860"**

a) To what extent does the evidence remaining at Coalbrookdale and the documentary and pictorial evidence you have been given support this statement ?

b) Which was the more useful and reliable evidence in helping you answer the question, the site itself, or the other sources you have seen ?
Explain your answer carefully.

| **Mark Scheme for Objectives 2 and 3** | | Marks |
|---|---|---|
| Level 1 | Description of site only showing buildings constructed by the Darby family. | 1 - 3 |
| Level 2 | Description of site only showing that the Darbys cared about their workers by provision of houses and schools etc. | 4 - 6 |
| Level 3 | Description of site and reference to the sources showing the Darbys cared about their workers. | 7 - 10 |
| Level 4 | Description of site and reference to the sources with awareness that the Darbys may have had other motives than philanthropy in their provision. Compares interpretations and concludes for or against. | 11 - 16 |
| Level 5 | Description of site and evaluation of sources to show that the Darbys may have had mixed motives in their provision and that their attitude may have changed during the time scale specified. Compares interpretations specifically. Makes conclusions which takes these changes into account. | 17 - 22 |
| Level 6 | As above in Level 5 but also cross reference sources to examine provision/condition in other industrial areas in the context of the period. | 23 - 25 |

## Suggested Plan

Use your notes, what you saw in Coalbrookdale and your knowledge to put forward your case.

USE YOUR OWN INFORMATION WHENEVER POSSIBLE.

A (750-1300 words approx).

Present diagrams and/or photographs that support the statement that the Darbys cared about their workers. Label each carefully by saying when each was built, who built it and why it was built.

Write a paragraph to explain what these buildings show.

Select and identify those sources that tell you the Darbys cared for their workers. Quote from each to show it tells you they did.

Select and identify those sources that suggest the Darbys may have changed in the years 1700-1860 in their attitude to their workers. Explain by reference to the sources how they changed and in what ways. Use your own recollections and findings.

Examine how the Darbys treatment of their workers compared to other industries and industrialists.

B (250-500 words approx).

Think about the question you have been answering on the Darbys.
Explain why you think the evidence was presented in the way it was.

Explain what the evidence from the site made you conclude.

Explain how the evidence from the other documents/sources led you to a more considered view. You must refer to the sources in your answer.

Conclude by saying which specific sources you thought were most useful and reliable, and which were of little or no use. Explain why.

**SOURCE 1**

**Dynasty of Ironfounders - The Darbys of Coalbrookdale by Arthur Raistrick.**

The wages for the first week of blowing are as follows

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 11th. mo. 17th. | By Cash pd Jno Tyler founder | 10.0 | |
| | Jno Felton keeper | 8.0 | |
| | Richard Hart filler | 7.0 | |
| | Edwd Bear mine burner | 6.6. | |
| | Rich Knowles stocker of ye bridge | 6.6 | 1.18. 0 |

Wage conversion:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| John Tyler - Founder | 10.0 | = 50 pence |
| John Felton - Keeper | 8.0 | = 40 pence |
| Richard Hart - Filler | 7.0 | = 35 pence |
| Edward Bear - Mine Burner | 6.6 | = 32.5 pence |
| Rich Knowles - Stoker of Ye Bridge | 6.6 | = 32.5 pence |
| TOTAL | £1.18.0 | = £1.90 |

## SOURCE 2

**Museum of Iron, Coalbrookdale by The Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust.**

**The Coalbrookdale Ironmasters**

**Abraham Darby I**

After 1709, it took Abraham Darby several difficult years to perfect coke smelting. In 1715, he began the expansion of the Coalbrookdale ironworks building a second blast furnace close to the first. He concentrated on developing a market for his cast-iron pots which he sold at markets and fairs in the Midlands and in the areas along the River Severn.

**Richard Ford and Thomas Goldney**

Abraham Darby I died at the age of 39 in 1717. His son Abraham II was only 6 at the time and the works fell under the control of Thomas Goldney, a Bristol merchant. The works were managed by Richard Ford, Abraham's son in law. From the 1720's, Coalbrookdale began to cast parts and iron cylinders for the recently developed steam engines. They also began to cast iron wheels for use on the wooden railways used at the local collieries.

**Abraham Darby II**

*"...small and slight of stature, very active and strong. His eyes were black and very bright and his complexion dark."*

In 1728, Abraham Darby II started work at the ironworks and by the age of 31 he was a full partner and took over as manager when Richard Ford died in 1745. Under his control the Company began to expand rapidly. Mining rights on the Coalfield were leased and wooden railways built to link the mines and ironworks. Most importantly of all, he perfected a way of smelting pig iron with coke that was good enough to convert into wrought-iron, for which there was great demand. At Horsehay, a few miles to the north of Coalbrookdale, he started to build another blast furnace in 1755 and very soon he was selling iron "as fast as made, at profit enough, will soon find money enough for another furnace and the pocket too".

**SOURCE 2 continued**

**Richard Reynolds**

*"...a Quaker who seemed particularly careful of his speech."*

When Abraham Darby II died at the age of 51, history repeated itself. His son Abraham was only 11 and it was the son in law who took over management of the works - Richard Reynolds. He introduced the first iron rails. These were made from cast-iron and laid on top of the old wooden rails, making them much more hard wearing. By the 1780's, the company had over 20 miles of track linking mines, furnaces, forges, warehouses and the River Severn.

**Abraham Darby III**

In 1768 Reynolds handed over the management of Coalbrookdale to Abraham Darby III and during his life time Coalbrookdale grew to become the most celebrated industrial region in Britain. The iron trade continued to prosper.
In the 1780's, Coalbrookdale became a supplier of steam cylinders for the new Boulton and Watt engines. Watt was only able to build his improved engines because there was a machine for finishing the steam cylinders which had an accuracy never before possible. It was developed by one of Darby's competitors, the ironmaster John Wilkinson, who had a genius for business, and for iron working. The boring machine was just one of his innovations.

*"Mr Wilkinson has improved the art of boring cylinders so that I promise upon a 72 inch cylinder being not further from the truth than the thickness of a thin six-pence in the worst part."*
James Watt 1776.

Abraham Darby III's most famous achievement was the Iron Bridge. He was only 24 when the idea of an iron bridge was first proposed. There are 378 1/2 tons of cast-iron in the Bridge. To produce it he first had to re-build and enlarge the Old Furnace in Coalbrookdale in 1777. The Bridge was completed in 1779 and opened to traffic on 1 January 1781.

**Darby Women**

"Sarah Darby was the head of the Coalbrookdale Company, which she ruled with a firm, prudent hand. The names of Sarah and Rebecca Darby stood first on the notes of the bank called the Petticoat Bank. She was of sedentary habits.

*(continued over)*

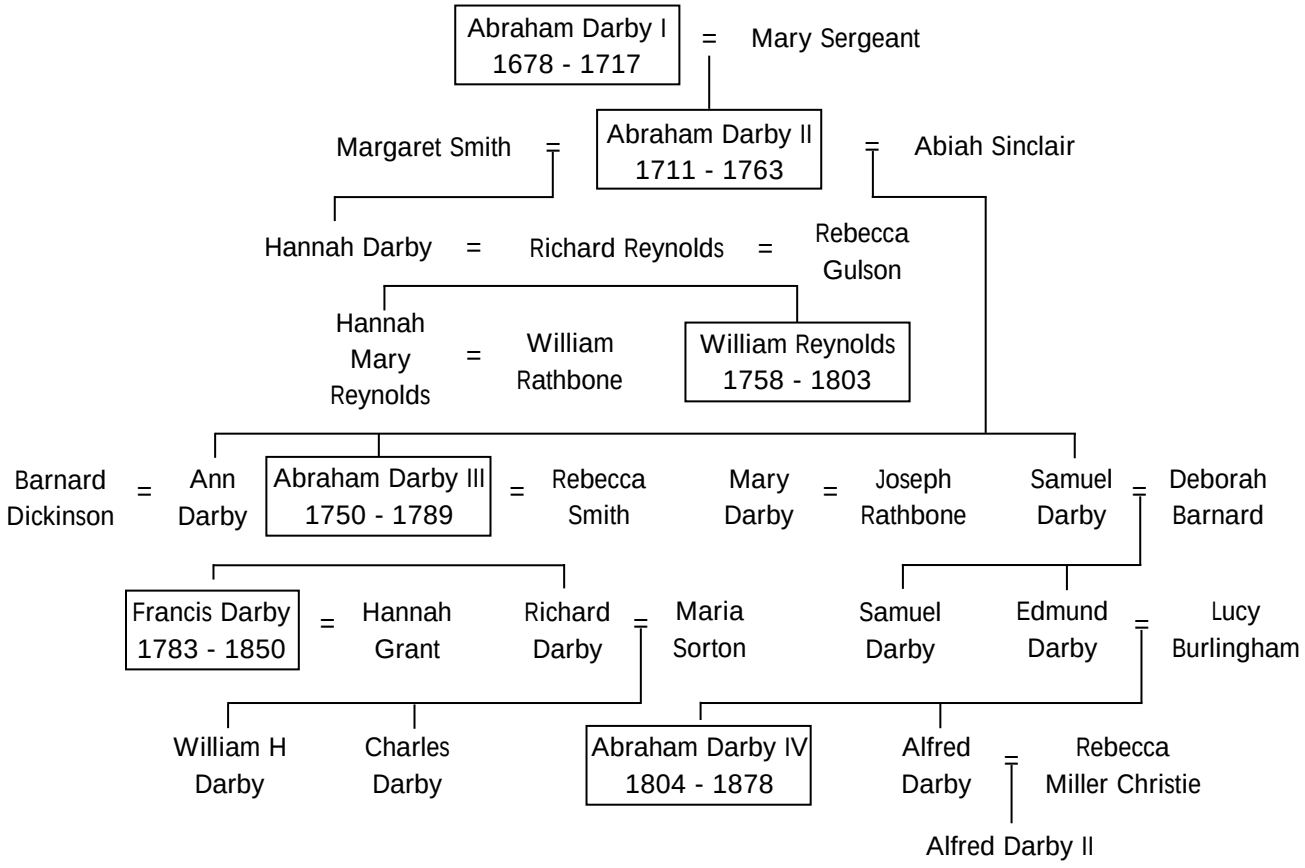
**SOURCE 2 continued**

She sat in her drawing room in great state surrounded by tables and papers, like a lawyers office." Abraham Darby died at the age of 39 in 1789 and there was again a problem of succession. His eldest son Francis was only 5 and his nephew Edmund only 14. The controlling shareholders were now the Darby women, Abraham Darby's widow Rebecca, and his sisters, Sarah Darby, Mary Rathbone and his brother Samuel's widow Deborah. The women, especially Sarah attend all board meetings, keen to look to protect the interests of their children. Day to day management of the works is left to a manager, Richard Dearman.

**Edmund Darby**

Edmund Darby took over in 1803. Britain was at war with Napoleon and the price of iron was high as a result. It was another boom time for Shropshire's iron industry.

*In the years that followed 1709; the Darby family were to make Coalbrookdale the most famous ironworks in the world. New products of all kinds were made of cast-iron by the Coalbrookdale Company founded by Abraham Darby.*



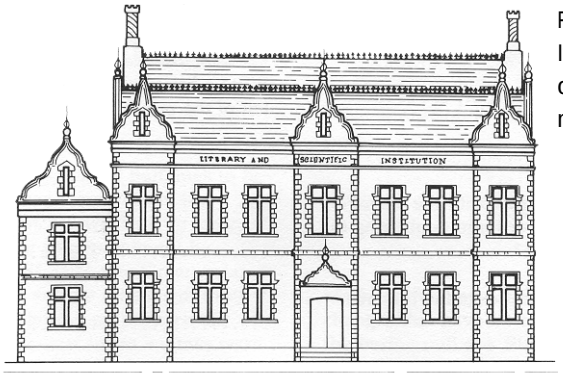
## SOURCE 3

**Exploring Coalbrookdale by Geoff Alton**

**The Literary and Scientific Institute**

This building was financed and built by the Coalbrookdale Company and opened on 30th May 1859. The principle aim of the institute was to provide the adults of Coalbrookdale with the chance of an education in literary and scientific subjects. In addition to this, the institute organised concerts, art exhibitions and poetry readings. There was also a public library of about 3000 books.

Although physical remains like the Scientific Institute cannot tell us about the past in the same way that a diary or letter can, nevertheless we can still use such remains as sources of evidence about the past. For example, the institute is evidence of the building techniques available to mid nineteenth century craftsmen in Coalbrookdale. More than this, however, it tells us something about the Coalbrookdale Company's attitudes.




Front elevation of the Scientific Institute. It was built of bricks produced at the Company's own works, and the architect was the work's manager Charles Crookes.

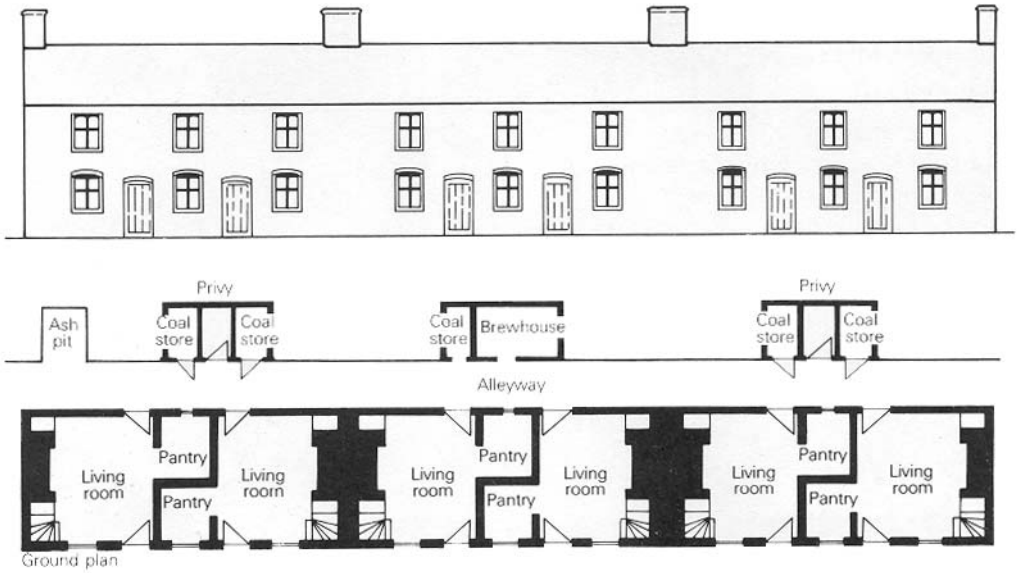
Abraham Darby IV (1804 - 1878).

**Holy Trinity Church**

At the top of the flight of steps you will come to an iron gate leading into the back of the churchyard. Remember that the church and cemetery are still in use today. The church lies on the south side of Church Road overlooking the present day iron-works in the valley below. The church was financed partly by Abraham Darby IV who contributed £6000 towards the building costs. It is designed in what is known as the decorated style of the Gothic revival. Inside the church are several examples of cast-iron art work and a panel of sixteenth century Flemish glass. The church was consecrated on 25 July 1854.

**SOURCE 3 continued**

**Charity Row (also known as Church Row) c.1789**




Some of the first industrial housing in Britain was built by the Coalbrookdale Company. This is not surprising, considering the lack of houses in the area when Abraham Darby I came here in 1709. One way to attract a workforce was to build houses; and at Coalbrookdale this took many forms, from the single detached cottage to the terraced row. As the community grew, so did the range of buildings provided for the workforce, including shops, inns, religious institutions, a mill, a laundry and a school. Unlike other terraced cottages built by the Coalbrookdale Company, Church Row was built for a specific group of its employees - the widows of former workers.

**Carpenter's Row c. 1783**

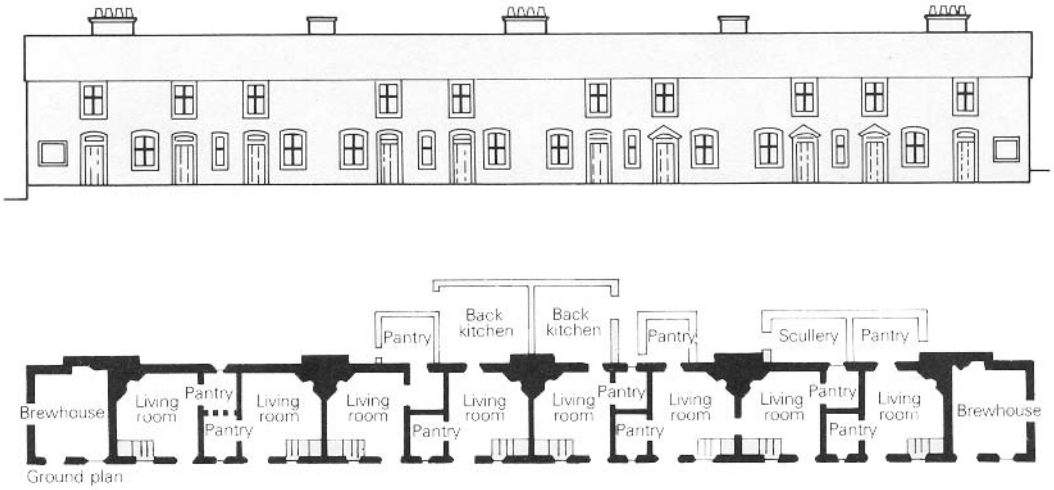
Like Charity Row, Carpenter's Row was built by the Coalbrookdale Company. The row originally consisted of eight cottages and two brew houses. The design of the row was symmetrical: numbers 1-5 were mirror images of numbers 6-10. The appearance of the terrace has been altered slightly, including extensions at the back and the knocking through of dividing walls to make larger rooms.

As with all the houses in Coalbrookdale, the privies or toilets would have been outside, and consisted of little more than a brick building containing a wooden seat over a hole in the ground. There was no drainage, so emptying would have been done by the 'night soil' cart.

*(continued over)*

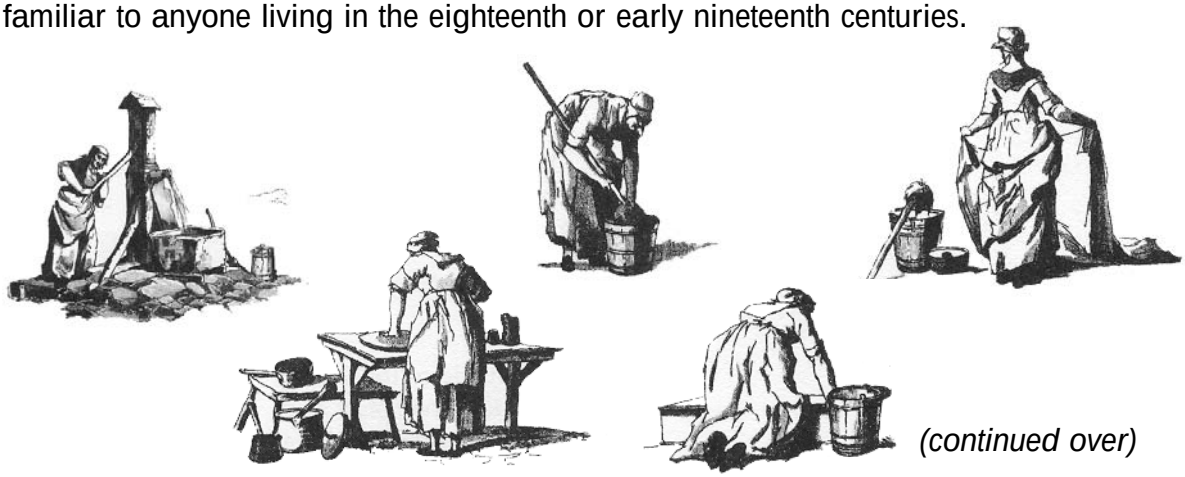
**SOURCE 3 continued**

Carpenters Row c1783.




Water was not supplied direct to individual houses until the twentieth century. Before this date the people had to make use of local springs, wells and rainwater butts. The main source of water for upper Coalbrookdale seems to have been the 'Bathwell Pumps', situated somewhere near the upper works. Fetching and carrying water was a daily household task of great importance to family life. Like washing, ironing and brewing it was nearly always a woman's work. Charles Peskin, a local man, tells of women walking a third of a mile to fetch water, and then carrying it home balanced on their heads.

Peskin also remembers 'when every housekeeper in the Dale baked their own bread and what a lovely smell it was. The yeast or barm could be obtained from the publicans after their brewing… The dough was placed in front of the fire in large earthenware pans to assist it to rise'. Although Charles Peskin's diary, from which much of this information about daily life in Coalbrookdale comes was written in the late nineteenth century, nevertheless what it describes would have been familiar to anyone living in the eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries.



*(continued over)*

**SOURCE 3 continued**

Despite an acute shortage of good building land in Coalbrookdale, most houses, including those built by the Company, seem to have had a large plot of garden attached to them. The gardens of Carpenter's Row are clearly shown on the 1827 map.

In the eighteenth century Carpenters Row would have been lit by candles or oil lamps. Gas was available after 1839, but it is not clear how many households took advantage of this new form of lighting. The two brew houses shown on the plan were used mainly by the housewives of the row to brew the family's beer. When not in use for brewing these rooms were used for washing and starching the family's clothes. If you consider how long a housewife had to spend washing by hand you can easily see why the wash houses of Coalbrookdale became notorious as centres of local gossip and the occasional village scandal.

In addition to the numerous chores involved with running a home and looking after a family, many of the women of Coalbrookdale in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries would have worked 12-14 shifts labouring on local farms or in one of the many coal and ironstone mines in the area.

**The Coalbrookdale and The Grove Public Houses**

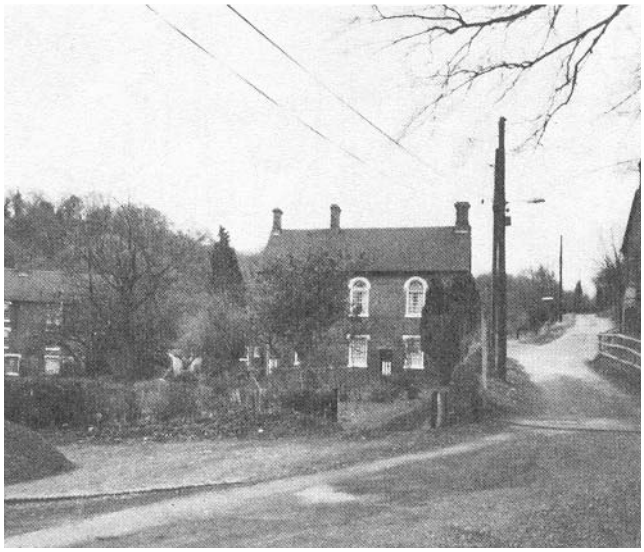
The Coalbrookdale or Dale Inn has been a public house since at least 1843, and the Grove since 1839. It is worth noting that a number of the buildings associated with the ironworks changed their use during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For example, two workshops, a brewhouse and a laundry were all converted into houses. The number of rooms in the Coalbrookdale pub suggest that this building was probably built as a pub, sometime in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Documentary sources mention the brewing of beer by the Coalbrookdale works in the eighteenth century. Both a brewhouse and a malt house are shown on a plan of Coalbrookdale dated 1753, which can be seen in the Museum of Iron. In an age when there was no piped water in people's homes, beer was the most popular drink. It was also very often less of a health risk than drinking water from polluted wells and streams, though this wasn't realised until medical science proved that germs were the cause of disease in the late 1870's.

**SOURCE 3 continued**

**The Boy's School (now School House Row)**

In some of the new industrial communities of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, employers provided schooling for their apprentices. Factory owners thus became directly involved in the education of their workforce. The exact date of this school is not known, but we do know that the Coalbrookdale Company had established a day school for boys as early as 1718. We also know that the first public Anglican services in Coalbrookdale were held here before Holy Trinity Church was built. The building was erected in 1840. By 1851 some 80 boys were being taught at this school. At the bottom of the school yard red-hot slag from the blast furnaces was often left to cool. It was common practice for the schoolboys to bake potatoes in the slag ready for playtime.



The boy's School, village green and Engine Row.
To the left of the School is the old corn mill.

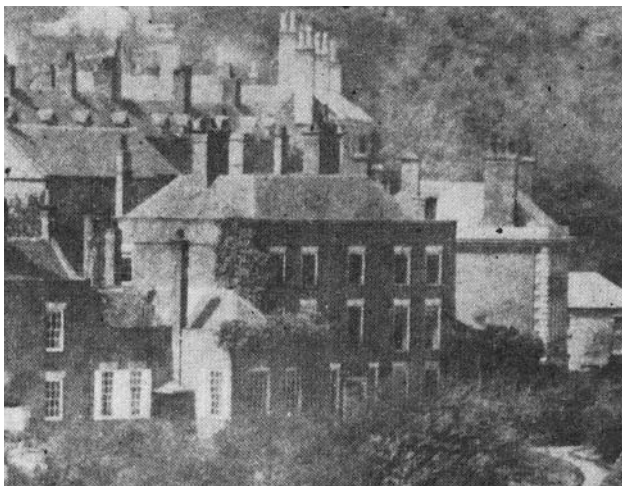
**The Mill (now known as numbers 1-3 Mill House Cottages)**

In 1756 there was a serious grain shortage in the area, because of a poor harvest. The shortage of grain, and the high price of bread that followed, led to a number of riots in local towns between industrial workers and farmers. On one occasion a group of men came to the house of Abraham Darby III and threatened to destroy the ironworks, unless their demands for food and drink were met. Although the mill was not built as a direct result of the food shortages of 1756, it is thought that Abraham Darby III built the mill in 1786 because he wanted to gain control over the local grain trade. At the time Darby already owned a number of farms, which could be used to provide corn for his mill in times of shortages elsewhere. By doing this, the company could ensure that similar food riots did not happen again.

**SOURCE 3 continued**

**Dale House**

It is thought that this was the house begun by Abraham Darby I, but not completed until shortly after his death in 1717. His son Abraham Darby II was brought up here and between 1776-80 Abraham Darby III and his wife Rebecca lived here. During the nineteenth century it became the home of the various managers of the Coalbrookdale works. Dale House has undergone a number of changes since it was built and is now being restored to its former appearance.



Dale House in the late nineteenth century.

Artists impression of Rosehill House.

**Rosehill House**

Rosehill House was built during the 1730's for the manager of the Coalbrookdale Company, Richard Ford. Later Abraham Darby III's son, Richard, lived here with his wife Maria. Today the inside of the house has been restored inside to show the lifestyle of the Darby family during the early nineteenth century.

Together with Dale House, Rosehill became both a home for the ironmasters and their families and a centre for entertainment and discussion. Many visitors from Britain and overseas came here in the late eighteenth century to find out more about the new industrial inventions of the age. The Darby family had connections with John McAdam, Thomas Telford, John Wilkinson and Richard and William Reynolds. More regular visitors were the Quaker friends of the family. Abiah Darby, the wife of Abraham Darby II, tells in her journal of the many Quaker meetings in the two houses. Once a year many Quakers came and stayed at Coalbrookdale before going to attend the annual meeting of Welsh Quakers. The hospitality offered by the Darbys must have been welcoming to those travelling Quakers in an age when there were few inns to stay at.

**SOURCE 3 continued**

**Quakers**

Quaker is the name given to a religious movement which started in the seventeenth century. Its members believed in a simpler form of religious service than that of the established Church of England and they formed their own 'societies of friends'. Their places of worship were simple buildings, and their meetings were mostly held in silence, since there was no set form of service and no priests or ministers. Quakers had high moral standards and chose to live simply and honestly. A Quaker could be excluded from the group for bankruptcy, drunkenness, immoral behaviour or marrying a non-member. They believed in hard work and careful management of money. Unnecessary luxury was considered a sin. They dressed in ordinary clothes and preferred to invest money, rather than spend it.

Although Rosehill House is evidence of the wealth of the Quaker ironmasters of Coalbrookdale, the furnishings are very plain in design and there are none of the signs of extravagance that were so often found in the mansions of other late eighteenth and early nineteenth century industrialists.

**Tea Kettle Row (now numbers 1-36, Darby Road)**

This row, built sometime around 1746, is one of the earliest terraces of cottages to be built in Coalbrookdale. Although there is no evidence that this row was built by the Coalbrookdale Company, it did house members of its workforce.

Tea Kettle Row today.

**Descriptions of The Dale**

According to Abiah Darby, the second wife of Abraham Darby II, Coalbrookdale was a very rural community when Abraham Darby I set up his remote ironworks in the valley in 1709.

> *"This place and its environs was very barren, little stirring among the inhabitants. So that I have heard they were obliged to exchange their small produce one to another instead of money."*

From Abiah Darby's diary, 1775.

**SOURCE 3 continued**

By 1758 Coalbrookdale was a flourishing community and, according to George Perry, a local man:

> *"The face of the country shows the happy effects of this flourishing trade, the lower class of people who are very numerous here, are enabled to live comfortably; their cottages, which almost cover some of the neighbouring hills, are thronged with healthy children."*

From a description of Coalbrookdale by George Perry, 1758

Whether or not the ironworkers of Coalbrookdale thought they lived 'comfortably' we shall probably never know. What is known, however, is the role played by the Coalbrookdale Company, and in particular the Darby family, in the growth and development of the area. The Darby's religious beliefs strongly influenced their attitudes to their workers. This included the provision of social facilities and reasonably good housing in return for hard work, reliability and a sense of responsibility and loyalty to the Company.

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Coalbrookdale Company had control over the lives and prosperity of the people living and working in the area. The warehouse clock is evidence of the power of the Company over its workers: according to Charles Peskin, a late nineteenth-century employee, the works' bell rang at 5.30 every morning, except Sunday, and work began at 6 o'clock. Anyone late for work could be fined or dismissed. The Company also punished its workers for bad behaviour outside the ironworks. For example, any workman found stealing from local gardens and orchards would be whipped by the work's foreman. Peskin also records in his diary how in the 1870's, 'it was not unusual for dilatory and presumably idle workmen - fellows who persistently lost morning "quarters" (pay for a quarter of a day's work) - to be fetched forcibly from home, put in a wheelbarrow, and, in the middle of a procession accompanied with tin cans, gongs, whistles and anything noisy, conveyed triumphantly to the foundry and upset there. This was called ringing them in.'

## SOURCE 4

**The Quaker Burial Grounds, Information Sheet 3.**
**by The Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust**

**The Quaker Burial Grounds**

The Society of Friends, or the Quakers, have for over 300 years been a small but highly influential group within English Christendom and over-seas. The society was formed by George Fox in the 1650's, one of many radical Christian groups which emerged during the social turmoil of the Interregnum. Its members suffered much persecution, partly because they refused to take oaths, or to pay tithes or rates to the Church of England. The society's meetings for worship have never followed set forms, and a considerable part of each has always been devoted to silence. There have never been priests or ordained ministers but discipline, particularly in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was severe. A Quaker could be excluded from the Society for bankruptcy, drunkenness or for marrying a non-member. Both locally and nationally Friends gave assistance to each other in the event of distress. In the eighteenth century, when the financial system was still primitive, members of the society knew that they could do business with each other in confidence, and the regular local, regional and national meeting provided a wide basis of contacts. Quakerism spread to other parts of the English-speaking world, and visitors from overseas, particularly America, were regularly welcomed at meetings, and in households of British Quakers.

The role of Quakers in industry was of an importance far out of proportion to the size of the Society, and nowhere was this more so than in the ironworking district of Shropshire. Regular meetings of the Society of Friends are no longer held in the Severn Gorge, but the graveyards at Broseley and Coalbrookdale, maintained by the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, serve as memorials to past Quaker witness and achievements.

**The Coalbrookdale Burial Ground**

Quaker meetings were occasionally held in Coalbrookdale from the time of Abraham Darby I, and the first proper meeting house was erected by his son in 1741. When the second Abraham Darby died in 1763 he left provision for the meeting house to be enlarged, and for "a place for such Friends who shall choose

**SOURCE 4 continued**

to be buried there, containing by estimation...one hundred feet in length and thirty-six feet in breadth..." He himself was the first to be buried in his ground and many members of his family lie there, including his wife, the formidable Abiah Darby, his son Abraham Darby III, builder of the Iron Bridge, and the saintly Deborah Darby, as well as William Reynolds, the most versatile of the Shropshire ironmasters, Richard Dearman and Barnard Dickinson, both managers of the Coalbrookdale Company in the early nineteenth century, and members of the Gilpin, Horton, Luccock and Norris families, all of whom were associated with iron making in the district. In 1808 Richard Reynolds paid for a new meeting house to be built "upon a more eligible site...the Meeting House devised by Abraham Darby having become inconvenient". This building survived until recent times and a small shop now stands on its site. In 1851 the burial grounds were enlarged when Adelaide Whitmore, a daughter of Francis Darby who had renounced Quakerism for the Church of England, gave an additional plot of land. It now covered 530 square yards and since then has remained unchanged. Although memorial stones merely line the wall, a plan survives showing the position of each burial. The last of the Darbys to be interred there was Rebecca Sorton Darby who died in 1910, and the last burial of all took place in 1938.

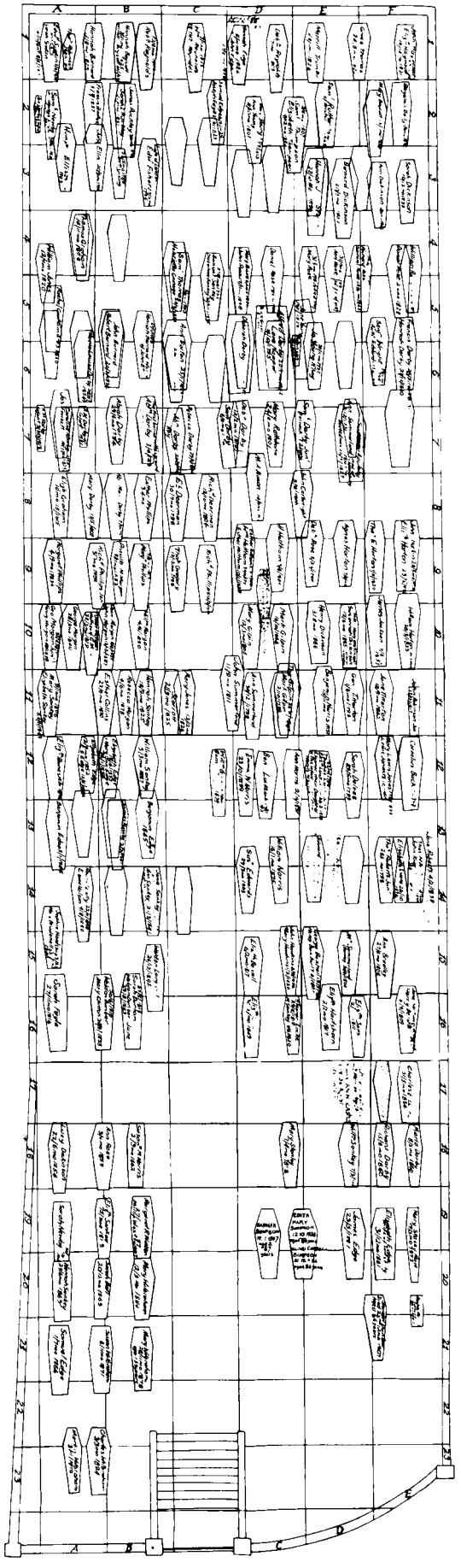
**Quaker Burial Ground**

The Quakers do not have gravestones in their burial grounds, but memorial stones, as the individual graves are unmarked. A museum pamphlet shows the position of the graves underneath the lawned area.

*(illustration overleaf)*

**Quaker Burial Ground**

The position of the graves underneath the lawned area.



*A Plan of*
*COALBROOKDALE BURIAL GROUND.*

## SOURCE 5

**Peace & War by Colin Shephard, Andy Reid and Keith Shephard, (John Murray, 1999).**

**Abraham Darby III**

Abraham Darby III took over the business in the 1770's. As the business grew he needed to attract more workers. So he took various measures. At a time of food shortages he bought up local farms to grow food for his workers. He paid higher wages than workers could earn at nearby potteries, farms or mines. He built good houses for his workers.

However, Darby III's real success was in making Coalbrookdale itself more famous. He built an iron bridge over the River Severn - the first of its kind in the world. He used it to advertise the uses of iron. Artists, engineers and sightseers came to Coalbrookdale to see this 'wonder of the modern world.'

## SOURCE 6

**Coalbrookdale - 3 Historic Woodland Walks by Mike Pooley.**

The Quaker ironmaster and philanthropist Richard Reynolds began constructing his Sabbath Walks in the summer of 1782, after his purchase of most of Coalbrookdale the previous year.

The serpentine walks extended over Lincoln Hill and into adjoining Dale Coppice. Reynolds widened, levelled and gravelled, before landscaping what had probably been pre-existing paths established through industrial activity over many years. The Sabbath Walks were always public walks – some of the very first ever constructed – and it is said that the ironmaster was particularly concerned to encourage workmen to walk with their families on Sundays (their day off) rather than spend their time in the one guaranteed amenity open as usual - the alehouse. For this reason they are sometimes called the Workmen`s Walks, although the Victorian local historian, John Randall, coined the phrase “Sabbath Walks”.

## SOURCE 7

**Iron and the Industrial Revolution by Christine Vialls.**

**Life in the Gorge**

In the days before steam-powered blowing engines were used, the ironmasters had to build their works close to streams with enough flow of water to turn their water-wheels. This often meant that the works were in very isolated places. So they also had to build homes for their workpeople. The Darby family, for example, built many rows of cottages in Coalbrookdale as well as near other works they owned. As the company expanded they needed more men to run the new furnaces and ironworks and by the middle of the eighteenth century there was not enough local labour to meet their needs. Providing homes for workers, as well as offering high wages, as the Coalbrookdale Company did during the eighteenth century, were the best ways of attracting workers to the area.

Lured by the high wages, skilled workers, who were needed for some jobs in the blast furnaces and foundries, often came to the Severn Gorge district from other iron-making areas, particularly from the nearby Black Country. Unskilled workers, on the other hand, came to the ironworks from the rural parts of Shropshire, Staffordshire, and Neighbouring Welsh counties. With the expansion of the east Shropshire coalfield, there was an increasing demand for unskilled workers here too. Some farmworkers also moved to the Severn Gorge area because agricultural wages there were higher than in rural areas with no industries. Often the farm-workers' children would find jobs in one of the local industries, while the fathers remained in agriculture. Many new workers came into industry in this way. There was also a noticeable migration of potters from Staffordshire to the Broseley area near the Severn Gorge. The population of the east Shropshire coalfield in 1711 had been about 11,500. By the end of 1760 it had reached 20,000 and by 1801 it was over 34,800.

Work for the men in the forges and blast furnaces was tough and hard. Many of the men were highly skilled and worked very long hours. Blast furnacemen worked twelve-hour shifts from six till six and they had to work seven days a week to keep the furnaces in continuous blast.

*(continued over)*

**SOURCE 7 continued**

On Sundays the shifts changed over so the men who had done the day shift had to do the night shift as well. This meant that on alternate Sundays the men worked twenty-four hours. Forge workers also worked a twelve-hour day. Puddling, especially, was very hard work and the working life of a puddler was said to be over by the time he reached forty.

Mining was well paid but it was dangerous as well as very tiring. Some miners worked twelve-hour shifts. Although long-wall mining was safer than the old methods there were still frequent accidents and the health of most miners was permanently damaged by the time they were fifty because of the damp and bad air in the mines.

The cottages which the Darby family built for their workers were similar to those built by other ironmasters but compared very favourably with the cottages of agricultural labourers in other parts of Shropshire. They usually had two rooms on the ground floor and two bedrooms above. Tea Kettle Row was one of the earliest groups of cottages built by the company in about 1753. Of course not all people employed in the Darby works lived in company cottages and some workers did not even live in the villages where they worked. Instead they walked to work, often several kilometres, from nearby towns.

### Comparative Wages

| YEAR | OCCUPATION | AMOUNT EARNED |
|---|---|---|
| **1776** | Farm-Labourer in Broseley | Board and 4s (shillings) a week. 6s in the harvest. |
| **1776** | foundry Worker in Coalbrookdale | 8s - 10s a week (often much more). |
| **1776** | Collier | 1s 8d a day - 18s 4d for 11 day fortnight. |
| **1796** | Farm-Labourer in Broseley | 10s a week. |
| **1796** | Ironworker in Broseley | £1 10s - £2 a week. |
| **1796** | Farm-Labourer in Madeley | 9s a week. 10s in Summer. |
| **1796** | Unskilled Worker in Madeley | 11s a week. 12s in Summer. |
| **1796** | Skilled Ironworker in Madeley | up to £2 a week. |

*(continued over)*

**SOURCE 7 continued**

Despite all the extra homes that were built in the eighteenth century, there was still a shortage in east Shropshire owing to the sudden increase in population. For instance, in January 1782 the population of Madeley parish (which included Coalbrookdale, Ironbridge, Coalport, Blists Hill, Madeley Wood and Madeley Court) was 2,690 and there were only 440 houses (an average of 6 people per house). By March 1801 the overcrowding had eased slightly: although the population had nearly doubled to 4,758, there were now 943 houses in the parish (an average of 5 people per house).

Providing homes for their workpeople may have been a necessity for ironmasters in Shropshire but many of them also tried to look after the general wellbeing of their employees and their families. The Darby family were unique in Shropshire for the numbers of facilities they provided for their workers. They built schools, and provided company shops and cottages for widows. Charity Row in Coalbrookdale is one such group of cottages built by the Darbys to house the widows of company employees. While Abraham Darby III was running the works, the company began paying yearly rent for a mill where the workers and their families could grind their own grain free of charge.

It was a member of the Darby family - Abraham Darby II's widow, Abiah - who first suggested founding Sunday Schools in east Shropshire. Sunday Schools already existed in Gloucestershire and Yorkshire and in 1784 Abiah wrote to John Fletcher, the vicar of Madeley, pressing him to start similar schools in Shropshire 'for the benefit of poor children who have and are suffered to play and riot about on that day which is and ought to be dedicated to divine worship'. At a time when most children started work before the age of ten, the only chance they had of receiving any education was at Sunday school. Reading and writing, as well as the principles of good moral behaviour were taught to children who were working a six day week.

[1].The Darbys themselves lived near their work. Just before he died in 1717, Abraham Darby I had arranged to have a new house built. This was probably the house now called the Grange (or Rosehill House), near Tea kettle Row and between the Upper Furnace and the Quaker Meeting House. His son Abraham Darby II, lived at Dale House, next to the Grange until he built himself a new house.

Notes to this paragraph are on page 46.

## SOURCE 8

**Building of an Industrial Community by W. Grant Muter 1979.**

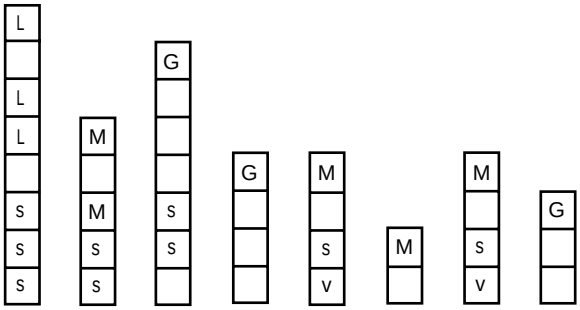
The Ironworker did not face the extreme dangers which threatened the miner. Only one fatal accident in an ironworks is recorded in the Madeley parish register between 1789 and 1812, when there were 35 deaths in mines in the parish. The ironworker's high wages were earned by excessive hours or a high degree of skill rather than by exposure to danger. Two sets of men were usually employed at furnaces and forges, working shifts of 12 hours from 6 o'clock to 6 o'clock, changing from night to day shift or vice versa each weekend. Wages were normally reckoned every four weeks. Such long hours were normal until well past the middle of the nineteenth century.

The dimensions of each house gave reasonably adequate space standards. The floor area averaged almost 33 sq m. Headroom was moderately good. Certainly the rows represented a higher standard of accommodation than was being built in parts of Wales at a roughly contemporary date. The Company houses in Coalbrookdale were small, compact dwellings, comparatively well-built, with adequate ventilation, and provided enough space for food storage and preparation.

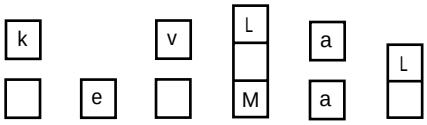
The Company charged a rental of 7% on its cottages in Coalbrookdale in the 1790's, which, while by no means extortionate, was somewhat higher than the 5 % which became fashionable among philanthropic providers of housing in the nineteenth century. The Company was in no way unique as a provider of cottages and it is likely that housing was built as much out of economic necessity as from purely philanthropic motives. In conditions of labour shortage the provision of housing was essential if workers were to be attracted and retained. Other companies not owned by Quaker philanthropists were just as active in house building, and some of the dwellings they constructed were of a rather higher standard than those erected by the Darbys and the Reynolds.

**SOURCE 8 continued**

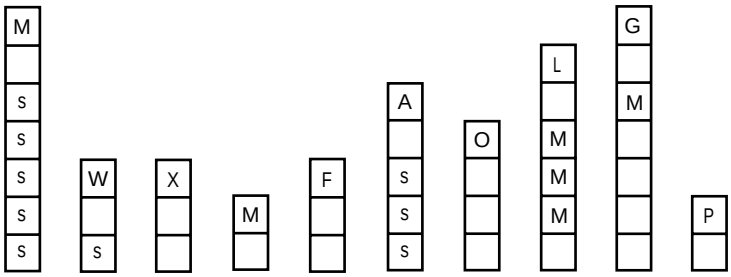
**Occupancy of four of the Rows in 1851.**



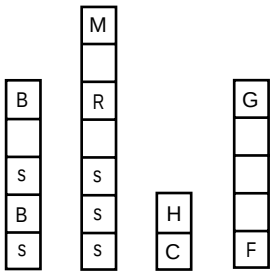

Carpenters Row




Charity Row




School House Row




Engine Row

Key

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| L | = | Labourer |
| M | = | Moulder |
| G | = | Grate fitter / Polisher |
| W | = | Wire worker |
| X | = | Chaser |
| F | = | Fitter |
| A | = | File cutter |
| O | = | Cooper |
| P | = | Painter |

Key

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| B | = | Bricklayer |
| R | = | Printer and bookbinder |
| H | = | Proprietor of houses |
| k | = | Milk seller |
| c | = | Seanstress |
| v | = | Charwoman |
| a | = | Almswoman |
| s | = | Scholar |

## SOURCE 9

**Dr Kay, 1832 Writing about Manchester**

The greatest portion of those districts lived in by the labouring population (mill workers) are newly built… The houses are ill drained, often ill ventilated, unprovided with toilets, and in consequence, the streets which are narrow unpaved and worn into deep ruts, become the common resting place of mud, refuse and disgusting rubbish… in Parliament Street there is only one toilet for 380 inhabitants, which is placed in a narrow passage from where its flow of muck infests the close-by houses, and must prove a most fertile source of disease.

## SOURCE 10

**Parliamentary Reports**

**Children Employment Commission. Parliamentary Papers 1842. Report No. 381.**
**Report on the Coal and Iron Mines of South Staffordshire and Shropshire and the Iron Smelting Works of those districts. James Mitchell Esq LL.D.**

**No. 41 - William Tranter**

Is agent to the Coalbrookdale Company, and in that capacity has occasion to go down into the mines both of coal and iron. There are many children in the mines, only boys below. Some are as young as about six and they are at various ages up to manhood. In the coal mines some boys are employed in bringing the coals in small carriages, called dans, to the horse road, and others in pitching them into the carriages drawn by the horses. The mines are too low for men to do such work. Some of them are two feet in thickness, but there are places to go through at times no more than 18 inches, or perhaps 20 inches. The boys crawl on their hands and knees. The face of the work along which the dans are drawn is made as straight as possible in order to get out the coal in as good a state as we can. There are no complaints of injury, except when a boy may meet with an accident, and then he leaves off until he gets well. The boys do the work cheerfully, and have no dislike to it. The dans are pushed on rails; it is very low but the work is not heavy. The company does not employ any boys who draw by girdle and chain; it was so formerly, but has not been for many years. Formerly the girdle was employed when there were no rails and the labour was very severe; but now that there are rails, there is no longer any necessity for boys to draw by the girdle. Witness does not see any way by which the labour of pushing the dans can be avoided, but considers that the labour by the girdle is not now necessary; not the least.
The witness has never seen the bye-chain.

*Some few boys are employed to open doors.*

*Some boys are employed to hook on the carriages to the chains in the shaft.*

*Some boys go on errands for the miners to other parts of the pit, and fetch what men may have occasion for.*

*Boys are employed to drive the horses.*

*Some will begin as early as from 13 to 14 to work like men with the pick, but the greater part from 14 to 16.*

*The usual hours of work are from six to six. In some pits the work ceases for an hour to dinner, but in others not, and the people take refreshment as they can, and in such pits it is custom to leave half an hour earlier.*

*Boys from six to seven may earn in the pits about 6d a day; about nine they may earn*

*(continued over)*

**SOURCE 10 continued**

*from 10d to 1s; according to the work; about 12, a boy may get 1s 6d - 1s 8d, and some get as much as 2s a day.*

*The generality of the colliers are small.*

In the iron-mines there is not so large a proportion of boys, and the reason is that the mines are in general higher, and consequently there is room for men, and boys are not so much wanted. There is room for small horses and donkeys, and in some of them for large horses.

**No. 43 – Robert Bailey**

Is superintendent of the mills and forges of the Coalbrookdale Company. Boys are employed in this department, but no young girls. The ages of boys are from seven to all ages. Very rarely any as early as seven, but from eight upwards. There is such a variety of work that a person may be employed from an early period of life to old age. Some children straighten the bars with wood hammers. Of the bars there is a great variety, and some of the youngest boys straighten the small bars, and the stronger boys are employed where strength is required.

*Boys are employed in piling the bars before being heated for passing through the rolls.*

*Boys are employed for catching bars and passing them round the rolls to men.*

*Boys are employed according to their strength, there is such a variety of employments.*

*The usual hours in the mills are from six to five, out of which half an hour to breakfast, and about half an hour to dinner.*

*There are two sets of people, who work alternately day and night.*

*This branch does not work Sundays.*

*The boys are lively, cheerful, and playful after their days work. They are generally fond of the employment. In frosty weather, at the dinner hour, and after work, they are fond of going to slide on the ice.*

**No. 45 – A Surgeon who did not wish his name to be published.**

Has practiced 13 years in the district. There was no epidemic in 1839 in this district, except scarlet fever, which was not very fatal. Cannot state any distinct reason why deaths within the first three years of life should be more than in other districts, as very few cases of the young are brought to surgeons. Children go to the iron and coal works at as early an age as from 6 to 10. They carry on their heads loads of ironstone and of limestone. They are frequently diseased chiefly of chest affections, that is of the heart and lungs. Scarcely one on 10 escapes.

**SOURCE 10 continued**

They work beyond their strength. He has almost always cases under his care of vomiting of blood, frequently brought on whilst actually employed at their work. This he thinks arises from exertion beyond their strength, and takes place in children between 8 and 13. The children are not fit for such work until 13, or at most only some few who are exceptions. Down the pits the children draw the carriages when the beds are so low that asses cannot be employed. They are geared like beats of draught. In afterlife they suffer from the same diseases, as the suffering at their early age lays the foundation of diseases of the heart and lungs. Can see no mode of putting an end to such work, as the size of men makes it impossible for them to do it. Most colliers at the age of 30 become asthmatic. There are few attain that age without having the respiratory apparatus disordered. They are subject to hypertrophy of the heart at that age, no doubt laying the foundation of such disease at the early age from 8 to 13 years. Few colliers attain the 51st year. This may be said in every respect the same with persons of all description. Does not know how machinery could be substituted, as the roads in the pits are so intricate. The children being injured in early life continue to suffer all their lives after. Many die young from consumption, and suffer all their lives from diseases of the lungs. There is very little difference between the coal-mines and the iron-mines. There is no danger to persons who do such work after 15.

*Apprentices are seldom bound till 15, and then for five or six years.*

*Girls do not go below into the pits, but they work on the top, and suffer from the same causes, but not so much.*

*A child of eight or nine will gain 6d a day and the expense to his parents will not be 2s or 2s 6d a week.*

*Accidents in the coal or iron pits are not very numerous.*

*There are few accidents from broken limbs, but chiefly from contusions and explosions.*

*As many as 80 or 100 may suffer from explosions in a year.*

*On the average about 40 a year in one of the districts, and from 40 to 60 in other parts of the coal field.*

He has known no case of death from carbonic acid, nor has he heard of any case of death from water, not in 20 years. It is exceedingly rare for the chain to break, and it is exceedingly rare for the miners to be drawn over the pulley. Scarcely and accidents happen by pieces falling from the roof of the pits, but one accident occurred by a brick falling out of a shaft.

**SOURCE 10 continued**

**No. 61 – William Sankey.**

I was 15 this month. I am tall and strong of my age. I worked on the bank at 7 years old. I worked at the brick kiln. I assisted to bear away the bricks. I got 5d a day. I worked at the brick-kiln 3 years, and got at last 7d a day. I then went down into the pit to draw with the girdle. I began at 6 and left off at 6 at night.

We came up sometimes 10, and sometimes 12 men and boys. There were sometimes accidents. A man was coming up once by himself, and when he was near the top the chain in which he hung unhooked, and he fell down and was killed.

The shaft was upwards of 200 yards, and he was near the top when the chain unhooked. The chain has broken in many a pit. May chains and ropes have been broken and people been killed. At Dawley, about 2 years ago, the people going down dropped, and it appeared that the rope had been cut. I am now in an ironstone pit and push a dan to the horseway, to the place called the levels. The dans are turned over, and the ironstone is collected into another larger carriage, and drawn by the horse to the foot of the shaft. I like the work very well. I get 20d a day, and work sometimes 9, 10 or 11 days a fortnight. We generally play on the Monday after we get the money. After the money is received at the butty's house, most of the men go and drink some drink. On the Sunday very few drink, but a good many more on the Monday. On the Tuesday morning we all come to work. There are teetotallers, but not amongst the miners. We call the teetotallers water-bellies. A miner could not do without drinking beer. It is good for the constitution.

I can read very well. I have read the Bible, and the Prayer-book, and the Pilgrim's Progress, and I can say the whole of the Catechism. I always say the Lord's Prayer before going to bed, and in the morning when I waken. I have read many other books, such as Bunyan's Holy War, and some sermon-books. I do not know where America is. I have heard of France. I do not know what sort of people the French are. It is my duty to fight them. An Englishman could beat seven Frenchmen any day. I keep my health well in the mine. We strip to our work. We put our clothes on again before we come up. We have a cabin and a fire at the top of the shaft; but we get no beer; but we warm ourselves, and go home. We then strip off our upper garments, and coat, waistcoat, and shirt, and wash face, neck, breast, hands, and half up the arms, with cold water and soap, and wipe the rest with a towel. We put on our working clothes again and sit down to victuals. It is generally a hot supper, and the principle meal of the day. The engine in the pit never stops, and we eat when we can. Between 8 and 9 I go to bed and sleep very sound. I get up at 4 or soon after. I get some warm coffee, and some bread and butter, and sometimes a

**SOURCE 10 continued**

bit of cheese, or some ham. I then go off to the pit, taking with me something to eat when I can. We wash all down to the middle on Saturday nights; sometimes with hot water. On Sundays I get up at 7, and wash face and hands. I breakfast about 9 and go to Iron Bridge Church school a little after 9 and after school the boys walk into church at half-past 10. We come out at 1 and go to dinner; always a good dinner on Sundays. We sometimes have not much in the week. After dinner I go to school and remain till 4. I go home and have tea. Then I go to church at 6, and come home and have supper and go to bed. I have no idle time. On holidays I gather horse-muck off the roads, and put it on our garden. It is a small garden. We grow potatoes in it, and cabbages, and greens, and nothing else. I dig it and like to see things grow. I cannot write. I never went to school but on Sundays.

**Miners in Coalbrookdale**

Weekly expenses of a man, wife and 2 children, under 7, with 14s. a week:

| | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|
| Flour, 2 stones (@ 2s. 6d. per stone) | 5 | 0 |
| Cheese, 2lb (@ 8d. per lb) | 1 | 4 |
| Butter, 1lb | 1 | 1 |
| Potatoes, peck and a half | 1 | 0 |
| Rent | 2 | 6 |
| Firing allowed by the master | 0 | 0 |
| Field club, 4d. per fortnight | 0 | 2 |
| Meat, seldom any | 0 | 0 |
| Beer, a pail a fortnight, at 1s. | 0 | 6 |
| Bacon, 2lb | 1 | 6 |
| Soap | 0 | 6 |
| Tea, 1oz | 0 | 4 |
| Coffee, 2oz | 0 | 4 |
| Total | 14 | 3 |

When any clothes are bought some things must be stinted to save the money to pay for them. There is a Court of Conscience, which speedily decides cases of debt. A pair of shoes costs 11s. and will last a year, with the expense of 4s. for mending. A man with a wife and 3 or 4 children must pinch himself and family in order to exist. A suit of Sunday clothes, and shoes, lasts for many years. The clothes must be carefully laid by, as well as the Sunday shoes, after public worship is over. Many men work all day in the pit with only a bit of dry bread to eat.

## SOURCE 11

**The Industrial Revolution in Shropshire by Barrie Trinder**

…Some of the Dale workmen had been active among the rioters at Shifnal on the Tuesday, and there had been a threat that if the ironworkers were not allowed to march to Wellington the Dale works would be destroyed. When the colliers called at Coalbrookdale on the Thursday morning Hannah Darby said, 'they behaved pretty civil only asking for meat and drink which we were glad to give them to keep them quiet'. Abraham Darby II gave one of his clerks £20 to present to the colliers' leaders if the destruction of the works should be threatened but this was not necessary. The Darbys employed several men to carry buckets of ale down the drive to their gate, and three days' bread was baked for distribution.

…..The following year Abraham Darby II petitioned for mercy on behalf of four of the captured rioters who had been reprieved from hanging but sentenced to 14 years' transportation. He insisted that they were honest, industrious and laborious workmen until they were drawn into the riots by the threatenings of others, and with a view to procure sustenance for their starving families.

…..The introduction by the Coalbrookdale partners of a new system of regulating wages and hours of work led to the threat of riots in 1791. On Monday 8 August feeling against the new regulations became so intense that about a thousand workers assembled and threatened to destroy Richard Reynolds's house. Reynolds made some concessions which eased the atmosphere, but not before a troop of the Royal Oxford Blues had been summoned from Wolverhampton. The soldiers stayed in the Coalbrookdale region until Friday 12 August, and Reynolds paid them 50 guineas for their services. Three men and a woman were subsequently fined and imprisoned for taking part in riots at Coalpit Bank and Wrockwardine Wood.

…..At a meeting of gentlemen, farmers, millers, tradesmen and ironmasters held in Ironbridge on 9 July 1795 it was resolved to raise a subscription from which food prices would be subsidised. Grain would be purchased at 12s. a bushel to be sold to the poor at 9s. The subscription would be used to cover the loss of 3s. a bushel and the costs of milling. In addition large quantities of Indian Corn were ordered from Liverpool. Subscriptions from local landowners, iron companies and ironmasters were of the order of 100 guineas each, and subscribers included George and Cecil Forester, Isaac Hawkins Browne, the Coalbrookdale Company, Richard Reynolds and John Wilkinson. Reynolds and Wilkinson took advantage of their own involvement in agriculture to bring grain from their farms on to the market below the prevailing prices.

*(continued over)*

**SOURCE 11 continued**

…..The seven-year period of depression in the iron trade between 1815 and 1822 was one of profound social crisis in Shropshire, a crisis in which an awareness of national political issues was more apparent than in those of the eighteenth century, and one in which the ancient sense of contract between ironmasters and men, by which the men refrained from damaging works in return for the masters' assuming responsibility for their relief, was no longer evident.

…..On 29 January 1821, wage reductions were announced by most of the Shropshire ironmaking partnerships. Two days later many colliers did not go to work but loitered around the pit tops. Some went to pits which were still operating and demanded that the miners should be brought to the surface. The next day, 1 February, parties of colliers went to the ironworks to encourage men to strike.

…..The iron companies in the north of the coalfield, including the Botfields and the Lilleshall Co. compromised with their employees, agreeing to reduce wages by 4d. a day instead of 6d., after which the men went back to work, but in the southern part of the district, the Coalbrookdale, Lightmoor and Madeley Wood companies insisted on the full reduction, in consequence of which the local magistrates feared further disorders.

## SOURCE 12

**Chapel Row, Coalbrookdale by Edward Thomas. Jones**
**August 4th 1857.**

Eccle. 7 7th v. Solomon the wise man says
"Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad, and a gift destroyeth the heart".

I cannot satisfy myself very well without making a revelation of the oppression and injustice done to honest and industrious hard-working men in the works I am employed in during nearly 19 years. I hope I am not murmuring and finding fault with the Lord, in his dealings to Man. I know that God made man upright but man has sought out many inventions and one invention is to oppress others in their wages, so as to enrich himself. Now I know and am certain, that there are a certain number of men in our works, most unreasonably and unjustly and unchristianly allowed the privilege to oppress a lot of men and lads by having a profit out of their labour and sweat of their brow - for them to have plenty and to share - to provide for old age, or a rainy day - for the future - to well clothe their families and well feed very plentifully - and their houses quite glutted up with furniture and instruments of music for their children, watches and gold chains and frequent long journeys of pleasure and out for their health (as they call it) and able to build a house to live in, and buy several others, and to have shares in Railways and Gas Works and Building Societies, and put money in the Bank and be able to leave their Widows or Children a nice little (or large) income for life after them, and their sons after them put in their situation very dishonestly, allowed to oppress others, to make them rich and some of their idle, and shame work and bluster over their men and lads.

I saw a Foreman's monthly amount a short time back, it was £47.14s.3d. After he had paid his men and lads he would take home at the very least £17. He could put £10 in the Bank and save £100 in 10 month, while the men who get the money can only get £4 per month, half fed and half clothed, and cannot keep out of debt for the life of them, being so oppressed in their circumstances, and greatly grieved and depressed in their minds, and their children not half educated and out of their power to put them to a trade suitable for them. I live in a day of much talk about education of the children of the working class - and that there will be put a poor prospect for those who are not well educated and learnt the art of drawing

*(continued over)*

**SOURCE 12 continued**

etc., in a few years to come in getting good situations in the world, etc. My own deliberate and decided opinion is that they have not begun at the right beginning on the system of education. Take for instance Foremen's children. They can give them a good education and able to put them to any Trade they choose, they have the means of doing so, or put them in the shop with them. Ah, but not so with the working men under them, they have not the means in their power neither to well educate them nor put them to what Trade they like, no, no, their children must as soon as possible do to work before they are able, at almost any job they can get and at any wages they please to give them. Now I know that this is matter of fact these things are so, and who is to blame for allowing such a state to exist, or such unfairness to the truly working class? I mean to say the Masters are in particular, and their Managers under them. Let the men work for the masters themselves and be paid each man out of the office. Let each man rise in his circumstances justly by his own merit and paid accordingly and not allow him to work for the Foreman's benefit but for the right Master and his own. Let the Master take a right true interest in each of his men and enquire into their rights and wrongs and into their true character and worth, and into the quantity and quality of their work, and are they sober, honest, industrious and steady men, etc., etc.

## SOURCE 13

**The Iron works of Coalbrookdale.**

**Moral and Religious Training of the Workforce 1846.**

**By The Ironbridge Gorge Museum Library**

**The Iron Works of Coalbrookdale 1846**

'Not a little of the success of the Coalbrookdale works must be attributed to the great attention paid to the religious and moral training of the workmen, and the care bestowed on their physical condition. Excellent schools are provided for the children, and lecturers are occasionally engaged to instruct the adults. There is a good Mechanics' Institute at Ironbridge, and there are two or three circulating and subscription libraries in the neighbourhood. Coals are supplied to the operatives at seven shillings per ton, and this cheapness of fuel greatly contributes to the comfort of their households.

The influence of good men lives after them; the little town of Madeley in this neighbourhood was the residence of that eminent divine and truly pious Christian, Rev. John Fletcher. His memory is still hallowed in this vicinity, and the influence of his instructions and example has extended over two generations beyond his death. The training and education of the children, the aid for mental improvement offered with no niggard hand to the operatives, have rendered the work-people of Coalbrookdale a very superior class to those usually employed in mines and forges. Even in a pecuniary point of view, this has proved advantageous to their employers for the more intelligent workmen are found to be the more skillful and the more industrious. Since the introduction of design into the works, and the regular production of fancy castings, the operatives have begun to cultivate a taste for the arts, and to take a lively interest in the artistic excellence of the castings. Some of their critical observations on the different figures produced, evinced sound judgment and matured reflection. They are for the most part fond of music, and have frequent musical re-unions amongst themselves when the labours of the day are finished. Above all, temperance is a principle among them; and a large majority of the artisans and workmen belong to Temperance Societies.

*(continued over)*

**SOURCE 13 continued**

Some ideas of the extent of the works, and their "population", may be formed from the fact that, in the foundries alone, as moulders, fitters, finishers, &c. there are 600 men employed: in the works of the company altogether, including the "bar-iron trade", and the colliery fields, employment is given between 3000 to 4000 men and boys.'

## SOURCE 14

**The Darbys of Coalbrookdale by Barrie Trinder 1981.**

**Home and Families**

Five generations of the Darby family lived in Coalbrookdale and were concerned with the management of the ironworks. From the time that Abraham Darby II's children were of age there were often several different Darby households in the Dale, and naturally enough there are numerous houses associated with the family. Indeed, all of the range of mansions on the western side of Coalbrookdale have probably at some time or other been occupied by Darbys. Abraham I lived at "White End" near the upper Forge which is now demolished, and then at Madeley Court. He was building a new house in Coalbrookdale at the time of his death. It is generally accepted that this was the house now called Dale House. Abraham II was brought up there, but he built a new home on top of the hill to the west of the Dale in about 1750. This stood among ornamental grounds and was named 'Sunniside', although it was sometimes called Sunny Bank. It was demolished during the nineteenth century. To the north of Sunniside lay the 'White House' which itself was re-named Sunniside after the demolition of the original house of that name. It was demolished in the 1950's. The Chestnuts, which still survives, is a fine early nineteenth century house built by Sarah Darby.

Like other ironmasters of the eighteenth century the Darbys were always short of labour at busy periods. They attracted migrant workers for their mines, furnaces and forges by offering them higher wages than could normally be obtained in agriculture, and by providing housing which was generally of a better standard than was usual in rural areas. While many of the iron-making and mining hamlets of east Shropshire have now been swept away, the Darby settlements at Horsehay and Coalbrookdale still for the most part survive as impressive monuments to social history of the Industrial Revolution period.

By no means all of the Darby's work people lived in Coalbrookdale or Horsehay, or, indeed, in Company housing of any sort. Census returns show that many must have walked daily to their work from such places as the towns of Dawley and Madeley, and from such squatter type settlements as Gravel Leasows and Holywell Lane.

*(continued over)*

**SOURCE 14 continued**

Coalbrookdale retains an impressive number of communal buildings. It seems likely that Abraham III was the first of the Darbys to concern himself with a mill in the Dale. His accounts show that in 1786 he began to pay yearly rent for a corn mill, and that he was engaged at the time in rebuilding a mill, paying for masons' and mill wrights' work and for such items as millstones and dressing cloths. This was probably the mill which in 1801 was being worked by the injection water from the great 'Resolution' steam engine. It was used at times by the workmen for grinding their grain. The surviving mill building probably dates from the time when the 'Resolution' was dismantled in the nineteenth century. The buildings of two nineteenth century schools, one for boys and one for girls, survive in Coalbrookdale, and at Dawley can be seen the Pool Hill schools, built in 1844 by the Darbys in the same extravagant Gothic Style as the warehouse by the Severn. The last of the Quaker meeting houses in Coalbrookdale has been demolished, but the burial ground is preserved. In the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries the Wesleyan Methodists attracted many followers in Coalbrookdale initially as a result of the work of the Saintly John Fletcher, vicar of Madeley from 1760 to 1785. Fletcher, himself was responsible for having built the first Methodist meeting house in Coalbrookdale. It was all but complete at the time of his death in 1785. Subsequently, during the period when his widow Mary was the leader of the local Methodists, the Darbys were accustomed from time to time to visit Methodist services. The founding of the first Sunday Schools in the district in the early 1780s followed by a suggestion by Abiah Darby.

The fourth Abraham Darby turned from his family's traditional Quakerism to the Church of England. In 1850 Anglican services began to be held in the boys' school at Coalbrookdale, and in December 1851 the foundation stone of a new church was laid, the cost of which was borne by Abraham Darby IV. The workmen were at the time collecting money for a peal of eight bells. The church, designed by the London architects Reeves and Voysey, was consecrated in 1854. It incorporates several products of the ironworks, notably cast-iron pew doors, and there are iron tombs in the graveyard.

*(continued over)*

**SOURCE 14 continued**

The other notable Darby contribution to the life and landscape of Coalbrookdale in the mid nineteenth century was the Literary and Scientific Institution. The first moves towards the establishment of an institution were begun in 1852, and at a public meeting in January of the following year a formal resolution proposing the founding of 'the Coalbrookdale Literary and Scientific Institution' was passed.
In 1856 a school of art was founded in Coalbrookdale, with the object of promoting high standards of design in the ironworks. Accommodation for both of these bodies was provided in the new building built by the Company to the design of Charles Crookes in 1859. The style was described at the time as Tudor Gothic, and the builders were proud that they had been able to use the Company's blue and white bricks throughout. Among those present at the opening were Alfred Darby II, the two MPs for the Borough of Wenlock, Dr. Matthew Webb, father of the channel swimmer, and Dr. Benjamin Kennedy, headmaster of Shrewsbury School. Several Darby family portraits were on display at the opening. The building consisted of a lecture hall, a library, a reading-room, an art room, and a residence for a librarian.

In 1850 the place of the Darbys in local society was vividly illustrated by celebrations which heralded the birth of a son to Alfred Darby and his wife, which closely resemble many contemporary celebrations held on the great landed estates in Shropshire. A procession of nearly 4,000 employees, all wearing pink and white scarves, went on a route which encompassed the whole of the district where the Darbys had mines and ironworks.

It was headed by two men on horseback, one of them Benjamin Poole a dwarf, and the other the celebrated Horsehay Giant, William Ball, who weighed over 40 stone, and had to be lifted on to his horse by a specially erected crane.
At Horsehay a meal with 15,140 pound of meat (19 bullocks and 42 sheep) was consumed, with 1,700 loaves and 1,000 gallons of ale, brass bands and banners lauding the achievements of the Darbys were prominent features of the day. In the week following further celebrations took place including a tea party for a thousand children, a dinner for supervisory employees and a grand ball.

*(continued over)*

**SOURCE 14 continued**

The Darbys were by no means the only important ironmasters in Shropshire. Perhaps none of them individually could match the powerful amalgam of piety and business acumen which characterised their partner Richard Reynolds, nor the intellectual brilliance and scientific zeal of William Reynolds, nor the ceaseless drive and boundless entrepreneurial skills of John Wilkinson. Nor were the Darbys the only iron-makers in Shropshire to provide good quality dwellings for their work people, and to take an interest in their education and recreation. The Darbys were unusual because over five generations they made important contributions to the development of the iron industry in Great Britain, and remained throughout this period active in the management of their works, and in the life of the communities in which their work-people lived. It was not until the fifth generation of the family to live at Coalbrookdale that they turned away from Quakerism to the Church of England, and began to acquire landed estates, the traditional marks of success for English entrepreneurs.

At most company villages there is a memorial to the founder. At Saltaire, Sir Titus Salt stands on a plinth within sight of his mighty mill and his model town. At Akroyden, Sir Edward Akroyd can be seen alongside the fashionable Gothic church of the quasi-medieval village in which he housed his workers. Even at Bourneville there is a discreet bust of George Cadbury in a niche in the wall of the Quaker meeting house. To the Darbys no such monument is necessary. The iron-working communities of Coalbrookdale and Horsehay, and the many surviving products of the Darbys' works, among which the Iron Bridge is pre-eminent, are sufficient memorials to the achievements of a most remarkable family.

## SOURCE 15

**Notes by Helen Edwards, Assistant Curator, Museum of Iron.**

**Historical evidence**

The sources for Coalbrookdale in the eighteenth century tend to be legal documents or letters/diaries which were written by a particular section of society (literate and with enough money and leisure time to afford to do this). In the nineteenth century other sources become available (for example, Royal Commission reports, census returns, diaries written by working people).

Comments by the workers in the nineteenth century are not necessarily evidence of worsening conditions or a less caring management. It may just be evidence that workers were more politically aware and better educated, and therefore could put forward their opinion in a format that has survived.

History needs to be seen in the context of the times, for example, Victorian society was paternalistic. The reports on working conditions were themselves part of a wider paternalistic philanthropy.

**Interpretation**

All interpretation is selective. Curators will to some extent base their interpretation on personal interest or knowledge. Funding and sponsorship may also influence interpretation.

Museums need to attract visitors and so interpretation is trying to please many different user groups (for example, families,retired people, school groups). The need to attract school groups in particular can influence interpretation because of the need to fit in with the national curriculum, hence a concentration on the nineteenth century. However, museum displays are expensive and not upgraded that frequently, so the displays may lag behind curriculum changes.

**Museum of Iron**

Museums are essentially about objects. There are relatively few objects which relate to the Coalbrookdale Company in the eighteenth century, but a great many for the nineteenth centruy. This will have an impact on interpretation. Social history is often sidelined because of the lack of relevent objects to tie in with society.

*(continued over)*

**SOURCE 15 continued**

**The Darby Houses**

Both are a recreation of what Curators think the houses may have looked like. These recreations are based on evidence (architectural, archaeological, pictorial, and from similar buildings in the locality and elsewhere). Many of the items within Rosehill House are family pieces, but may have been used in any of the Darby family properties and are not specific to Rosehill House.

## Additional notes to Sources

**Source 7 page 25**

[1]. Since Christine Vialls' book was published in 1980, new evidence has come to light which proves the following:

Abraham Darby I built Dale House and not the Grange. Rosehill House was formerly known as the Grange.