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A Family in the Trade: the Bayley family of Wrexham and Oswestry

Historians of the book trade will already be aware that the book trade is often a family business with printing, bookselling, publishing, and newspaper firms passed on from father to son, from husband to wife. One example of such a family is the Bayley family of Wrexham and Oswestry, Baptist by religion, who can claim at least three generations involvement in newspapers. It began in the mid-nineteenth century when three brothers – William, Charles George, and George - were apprenticed to Richard Hughes, proprietor of the Welsh-language publishers Hughes a'i Fab.

1. WILLIAM BAYLEY (d.1871)

William was Richard Hughes's first apprentice and then went on to establish his own bookselling, stationers and printing business in Hope Street, Wrexham. Together with his brother George, he co-founded the monthly *Wrexham Registrar* (Wrexham's second newspaper) in 1848 but his involvement with the newspaper ceased when it became the weekly *Wrexham Advertiser*. His involvement in the Wrexham Free Press Newspaper company (publishers of the *Wrexham Free Press*, 1870-1873) poses the question of a possible disagreement with George. He died in Wrexham.

2. CHARLES GEORGE BAYLEY (1817-1902)

After his apprenticeship with Richard Hughes in 1830 and having helped elder brother William establish his printing office in Wrexham, Charles George moved to Oswestry (some 13 miles south of Wrexham) in 1842 to open a Newsagents and a Glass and China Dealership. When George died, he became a co- proprietor of the *Wrexham Advertiser* and in 1893 when the company of Bayley & Bradley was formed to run the *Wrexham Advertiser* he became Managing Director. Charles George served as Mayor of Oswestry in 1871 for the Liberal party. He died in Oswestry.

a) Charles William (d.1924)

Charles William did not have a career in the book trade, a fact which may have angered his father as in his will Charles George left his estate to be divided equally between George Robert and William Arthur, with Charles William having ten shillings a week for life. He was employed as a Commercial Traveller and a Theatrical Manager. He died in Walton-upon-Thames.

b) George Robert (1853-1926)

George Robert was initially intended for a career in the law and he became articled to a London solicitors' in the 1870s. He worked as an auctioneer before becoming a printer and newsagent in Church Street, later Willow Street, in Oswestry and was a director of Bayley & Bradley. He died in Ashford, Middlesex.

i. *Frederick Arthur*

Frederick Arthur served in the Liverpool Regiment in World War I and reached the rank of captain. He saw service in France and was awarded the Military Cross.

ii. *Elizabeth A*

iii. *Cyril Gordon*

Cyril Gordon was employed on the staff of the *Eastern Daily Telegraph*

iv. *Dorothy M.*

c) William Arthur (1860-1925)

William Arthur began his career working as a stationer and printer in Wrexham in his father's business. In June 1889 he became assistant sub-editor of the *British and Foreign Confectioner* and the *London Observer*, and then joined the *London Evening News and Post* in October. He went on to become the London manager of the *Cork Constitution* and undertook city work for the *Liverpool Daily Post*. His forte was advertising, not news reporting (although he described himself as journalist in the 1901 census). He joined the *Daily Graphic* in 1891 as manager of the advertising department, a position he later held at *The Car Illustrated* before becoming a director of the company. He was a prominent figure amongst the Welsh community in London and he founded the Denbighshire Society in London and held the post of Secretary until his death. He died in Kent. No children.

3. GEORGE BAYLEY (1821-1863)

Having co-founded Wrexham's second newspaper, the *Wrexham Registrar* in 1848, George went on to establish Wrexham's first weekly newspaper, the *Wrexham Advertiser*, in 1854. In 1857 he became a Liberal member of Wrexham's first town council, He edited the newspaper until his death at the early age of 42. His newspaper was continued by his wife Selina (d. 1901), brother Charles George, and George Bradley.

a) Selina (died young)

b) Sarah Louisa (d.1938)

Sarah Louisa does not appear to have had any involvement with either her father's newspaper or Bayley & Bradley.

c) Ada (d.1925)

Ada's husband, David T Morrison became the joint Managing Director of Bayley & Bradley in 1914. They both died in Wrexham.

d) William Charles (d.1901)

William Charles was apprenticed to the *Oswestry Advertiser*, and then worked as a newspaper reporter in Newtown, Montgomeryshire, before following in his father's footsteps by editing the *Wrexham Advertiser* until 1895/6 during which time he was Chair of the Wrexham Liberal Association. He emigrated to South Africa where he became editor of the *Queenstown Free Press* before opening a store in Mpotula, Cape Colony, where he died in 1901 of typhoid. He was buried at the Baptist

Mission Station in Mpotula and his death was acknowledged on his parents' gravestone. He had one son.

e) George Robert (d.1936)

George Robert was articled to Woodhall, Minshall & Thomas, publishers of the *Oswestry Advertizer*, and was later employed on the *Liverpool Mercury*, *Manchester Guardian*, and Tillotson's of Bolton, and also worked as a printer and lithotype operator. He was also a director of Bayley & Bradley. He died in Blackpool.

There has been confusion about the relationship between George and William: Ifano Jones' *A history of printing and printers in Wales to 1810* states that they were father and son and Eiluned Rees' *Libri Walliae* refers to a William Bayley having a shop in Hope Street, Wrexham in 1842, the business being continued by his son George. I would suggest that the father of the three Bayley brothers was called William and that he was also involved in the book trade and has consequently been confused with his son William. I plan to undertake further research into this family and hopefully untangle the "William problem" (none of the three brothers obituaries makes reference to their parentage) and extend this family's involvement in the book trade beyond three generations.

My thanks to Nick Lambert for information about his wife's great-grandfather Charles William Bayley.