

## JOHN JAMES, IRONMASTER

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The production of iron was an important industry in the Forest of Dean as it was in other parts of England. Many of the Ironmasters of the late 18th and early 19th centuries left little evidence of their activities. They invested heavily with money, energy, optimism, long hours and detailed effort, but most of their written records were destroyed, the buildings, machines and processes they developed were demolished or replaced by successors and their names often virtually forgotten.

Some of the Forest of Dean's iron industry and its ironmasters is documented in Cyril Hart's *The Industrial History of Dean*. John James of Lydney is mentioned there, but his true contribution as an ironmaster to the Forest of Dean's iron and tin industries in the early 19th century has not been fully recognised. This paper attempts to bring together all the details of his efforts in developing the three sites at which he worked: Redbrook, Lydney and Parkend.

### At Redbrook c 1803 - 1819

By 1804 John James was working the Lower Redbrook Tin Plate works with William Cowley (Coley, or Coaley). David Tanner had bought the former Copper Works there in 1790. Some of the buildings had already been changed to iron working but Tanner invested heavily in converting the site to a modern tin plating works, building a new rolling mill, furnaces, tinning and finishing shops. The transformation was largely completed by December 1798 when Tanner was made bankrupt. The partnership of David and William Tanner with William Cowley and Henry Hathaway formed in 1793 (for 21 years) to manufacture tin plates ceased. William Cowley of *Cowley Hathaway and Company* was granted a new lease from Christmas Day 1798 for 21 years (to 1819) at £700 p.a. (1).

In the 1793 partnership William Cowley was to *devote his whole time to the carrying on and conducting the said co-partnership*, while Henry Hathaway was to *undertake the rolling and tinning branches* (2). William Cowley had previously acted as clerk or agent to the Purnell family business at Fromebridge Mills, Gloucestershire (3). He appears to have held a similar managerial role at Redbrook dealing with the office aspects of the work, while Henry Hathaway managed the technical aspects of tin plate production. Both Cowley and Hathaway appear to have continued working together between 1798 and 1801 but in that year Henry Hathaway signed an agreement to build and repair works at Kidwelly (4). By this time Lower Redbrook tin works should have been fully converted and capable of producing finished tin plate in quantity.

David Tanner's real estate was held by his assignees in bankruptcy. On March 25 1801 the original assignees were discharged and the creditors were to appoint new ones and sell the estate (5). James Greene Esq. was appointed new assignee on 3 August 1801. On 28 July 1802 Lower Redbrook works was offered for sale (6). The description of the works prepared for the auction sale makes clear that it was the freehold of the works which was for sale, with Mr. William Cowley as tenant. There appears to have been no sale in 1802, as new assignees in trust continued to be appointed and the site was sold in lots by them in 1823.

The first mention found so far of John James at Redbrook tin plate works was in a complaint by William Cowley and John James *possessed of a certain tin works in the parish of Newland* that since before 1 Jan 1804 Thomas Devey Whitwick, Gent., had diverted water from streams

which should supply the tin works and *prevented them from working of their tin works in so ample and beneficial a manner as they had theretofore done* (7). It appears that William Cowley's tenancy continued and he was joined by John James at some point between 1801 and 1803. In 1803 William Cowley was described as *of Stourbridge* (8). John James was the effective manager on site, if not Cowley's partner or tenant. His arrival can probably be safely narrowed down to late 1802 or early 1803. John James and his wife Elizabeth had seven children of whom six were baptised in Newland church between 1803 and 1813 according to the Newland parish registers. The first of these, Elizabeth, was baptised on 22 October 1803. She was their second child. The eldest, Thomas Pearce James, probably born in 1802, was baptised elsewhere and probably before the move to Redbrook. John James himself gave his own birthplace as Bristol (9).

Comparatively little documentary evidence has been found of John James' activity in Redbrook. The family lived in the manager's house at the entrance to the works. In 1802 it was a *commodious Dwelling house for the use of the Manager with a Garden, Stable and every other necessary convenience* (10). In 1823 it was described as 'Messuage, Garden, Orchard formerly occupied by John Wright, since John James, now vacant', and in 1825 as the dwelling house at the works *formerly in the occupation of John Wright, since of John James and now of Whitehouse* (11). An 1848 'View of the Works' shows a substantial house (12). He does appear to have become recognised as the more important of the two partners. In 1824 the works was described as *the Copper Works Company, since of Messrs James and Cowley* and in 1825 as *occupied by .... David Tanner and the said John James successively as a tin manufactory* (13).

#### **At Lydney 1814 - 1847**

David Tanner had also leased Lydney iron works from the Bathurst family in 1775, but sub-let it in 1789 to Thomas Daniels, John Fisher Weare, John Scandrett Harford and Thomas Daniels the Younger all of Bristol, then in 1790 to the Pidcock family of Stourbridge.

In 1810 the Pidcock family offered for sale their lease of the works, but it was withdrawn at auction (14). By 1812 negotiations with a prospective successor, Mr Waters from Carmarthen, were long drawn out. Mr Waters had objected to taking the stock of iron still at the site. Discussing this with Charles Bathurst on Oct 3 1813, John Pidcock wrote: *I recommended Mr. James of Redbrook to apply to you for the old iron which I told him I thought you would let him have at the valuation and also give him permission to work them up at Lydney; this is a nice (chance/man) of business whose lease at Redbrook will shortly expire, and I think was he to taste the convenience of the Lydney works he would be a very likely person to take those in with the Redbrook, ...* (15). Negotiations with Mr Waters continued, but on Oct 23 1813 Mr Tovey, Mr Bathurst's solicitor, wrote: *Mr James has agreed to work up the stock* (16). In November further difficulties arose between Bathurst, Pidcock and Waters. On 29 November 1813, John Henzey Pidcock, George Pidcock and John Pidcock assigned their Lydney interests to the Rt. Hon. Charles Bathurst. At the same meeting the site was conveyed to Thomas Estcourt for the remainder of the 99 years of Tanner's lease, in trust for Charles Bathurst and his executors (17). On October 1 1814 the property was leased by John James, ironmaster, granted by T G Estcourt Esq. for Right Hon. C B. Bathurst Esq. (18). John Pidcock's suggestion had brought the desired result.

Initially, the Redbrook works, concentrated on one site, modernised by Tanner, fully equipped for and producing tin plate, might appear the more convenient of the two sites. The principal advantage of Lydney was immediate access to the River Severn at Lydney Pill. This avoided the seasonal shallow draught of the Wye above Brockweir and the necessity of trans-shipment. The three sites at the Upper, Middle and Lower Forges at Lydney, though some two miles apart,

were linked by 'Pidcocks' Canal' or 'The Cut', along which barges carried materials from one site to another, and by the tramway along the Lyd valley which offered further advantages. The Pidcocks had invested in machinery at the Lydney sites, which were equipped to roll iron sheet. There is no evidence of them providing for the tinning processes, but rapid changes in the methods of the production of iron and steel including improvements in machinery resulted in existing plant becoming quickly out of date. The Cowley lease at Redbrook would expire in 1819, still six years away when John Pidcock was writing, but perhaps too soon to consider substantial investment in new machinery there.

There are a few indications of John James' activities at the Lydney works.

When John James' lease was about to come to an end in 1844 Jacob Sturge of Bristol was commissioned to make a full report of the condition of the works (19). A Covenant in the lease had required all buildings and machinery to be repaired and left in good condition. The report lists the fixed machinery at each site, the cottages and ponds, and compares it with what was there in 1814.

We know from this comparison that John James had made little use of the **Upper Forge**. The original machinery remained in use with little addition. It was still a forge worked by water wheels. At the **Middle Forge** all Pidcock's machinery for drawing bar iron had been taken out and *new and more effective machinery* substituted. The old machinery remained in the yard. Water wheels still provided the power. A rolling machine and two foundries appear to have been in use in 1844. At the works called in the lease the **Lower Forge and Rolling Mills** there had been more change. In 1844 there were 4 water wheels for a Rolling Machine, Blowing Machine, Cold Rolls and a Hammer. There appear to have been only two wheels in 1814, one for the hammer and the other unspecified, but probably for the Rolling Mills of the 1814 title. Sturge noted that the hammer wheel remained *but much more has been added by the lessees*. John James appears to have extended the Rolling machines, and there were now *Rooms for Tinning the plates, Annealing Rooms, Workshops, Carpenter's Shop*.

The major investment reported by Sturge was the **New Mills** *which have been newly built by the lessee in the last 20 years*, (i.e. since 1824). They contained:-

- A large water wheel driving a Rolling machine
- A Blowing machine
- A Forge Hammer wheel
- A 60 Horse Engine with Shaft to work when water is short
- A Puddling House with 3 fires

This machinery all belonged to the lessees.

In 1841 Lydney Middle Rolling Mill had been described as containing 2 pairs of tin plate rolls driven by a water wheel in winter, assisted by a steam engine in summer. It was capable of converting 20 tons of bar iron weekly and the site was worth £40 (20). Another inventory, of 1845, signed by, among others, William Hathaway, 'clerk to Messrs John James and son, Lydney', lists all the items of machinery considered the property of the Bathursts remaining from 1814 (21).

It appears that within the first ten years James adapted the Middle and Lower Forges at Lydney to a full tin plating works, on the lines of those he had left at Redbrook. To do this he installed new rolls, foundries, wheels and tin shops. After 10 years he felt the need to expand further and added a new Rolling Mill at New Mills.

John James' lease was about to end in 1844. Jacob Sturge recommended a new, low, rent of £310 pa. be asked of any new tenant and urged a fresh arrangement with the present tenant at this rent. He remarked: *there is little competition for a Manufactory of this nature and the improvements which have taken place in machinery undoing the works of older date, of less value.* Certainly most machinery remaining from 1814 was now obsolete and some of John James' improvements out-dated. John and Henry James of Highfield, iron masters, did take on a new lease on 17 January 1845 for 12 years, part of the remaining unexpired 99 years (22). They surrendered it 24 March 1847. The Allaways took it for 14 years.

This new lease included: *Use of the water course from Lydney Park heretofore directed from its original course by John James.* This was probably to provide additional water power for the new water wheels at the Lower Forge.

The 1839 Lydney Tithe Map includes detailed drawings of Upper and Middle Forges, showing the locations of buildings and houses in relation to the ponds and streams; in less detail the New Mill, near the present Norchard Railway entrance, and also the Lower Forge. The latter is shown supplied by two streams, the one to the east is Pidcocks Canal, that to the west from Whitecross gathers the water from Watery Lane, which previously powered the Whitecross iron furnace, no longer in use by 1810, and another stream from Lydney Park. The stream from Lydney Park was probably the one he diverted to join the furnace stream.

Details of the changes in production over time may be traced through the occupations and movements of the workmen. There are no remaining works records of employees. However, baptismal records of Lydney St. Mary's Church give the father's occupation. Census records of 1851 give the places of birth of parents and their children. The different places of birth of successive children in a family can show how families moved to different places of work. Names recognised from these lists can be found in the 1841 census and also in Marriage records. From a combination of these it is possible to identify the first record of a family in Lydney, (though they may have moved earlier), their occupation, place of birth and last place of work. At Lydney 1813-1821 all relevant baptisms were to forgemen (8) or smiths (2). In 1821 the word 'tin' appears, [Fig. 1].

The presence only of forgemen until 1821 then the appearance of tin workers gives further support to the suggestion that in 1814 John James had come to an iron works, which already rolled black plate and by 1821 had introduced the processes for coating those sheets with tin. It is likely that he continued production at the Lower Redbrook site until the end of the lease there, (Dec 1819), that from 1814 to 1819 he continued production at Lydney using the existing machinery, processes, products and workforce, while adapting the buildings for tin plating, and that when the Redbrook lease ended skilled men came straight from Redbrook to the new tin shops.

The Redbrook works did not have a new tenant until the new owner of 1823, Philip Jones of Llanarth, let it to Benjamin Whitehouse and his son from 25 March 1826 (23). In 1823 the Manager's house was vacant and some of the property remained in a 'dilapidated state' (24). When John James moved out the workmen may have had little alternative but to follow him to the jobs he could offer.

It is possible to identify men and their families who moved to Lydney from Redbrook, either born there or at Framilode, some of whom had probably moved to Redbrook with Coaley and Hathaway. Those named were still at Lydney in 1851. That census includes 8 men of Framilode born families and 14 from Redbrook born families, all over 30, all working at Lydney.

The inventories show that the Lydney works included 18 houses for workmen. Some of these would have been occupied by existing employees in 1814. John James built another 3 houses at New Mills and by 1826 two of the workmen, Richard Protheroe and John Jenkins, were living in the 'Factory', a row of 8 cottages recently built into the shell of a former factory building alongside the Pidcock's Canal. They were joined by William Hazard by 1827 and John Birt by 1836. This was owned by the Bathurst family but in almost continuous occupation by tin workers in the 19th century (25). To attract skilled men houses had to be available.

### **At Parkend 1824 - 1853**

John James' next business enterprise was to join the proprietors of the **Forest of Dean Iron Company**. In 1824 Moses Teague formed the company with William Montague of Gloucester and Benjamin Whitehouse of Monmouth and Redbrook. John James joined shortly after. The aim of the company was to exploit Teague's discovery of a method of making good iron with coke made from local coal, using a furnace at Parkend. The furnace had been bought by John Protheroe of Bristol in 1807 and in 1824 he sold it to his nephew Edward Protheroe of Newnham. Edward Protheroe secured a branch from the Severn and Wye tramroad, built 1810-20, and requested the Office of Woods' permission to use the water from the Cannop water course to power the furnace. In 1824 he leased the furnace and various iron mines to the Forest of Dean Iron Co (26). In January 1825 permission was received to create the Lower Cannop pond (27). From the pond dam a one and half mile long leat carried water to a wooden aqueduct over Brookhall Ditches, then under the road to a massive undershot waterwheel 51' in diameter, 6' wide, weighing 60 tons, of which the components were cast in William Montague's foundry in Gloucester. From 1802 this company had been producing fine quality castings from Forest of Dean ore from Cinderford and Parkend. The foundry was continued by Charles Montague until closure in 1865 (28).

The same company purchased iron and coal mines. In 1825 William Montague and John James purchased equal shares (undivided moieties), as claiming through or under a Free Miner, to China Engine, Dun Pit Mine Level, Tufton Mine Pit and Dark Hill Mine Level, as lessees for a term of 1,000 years, from 18 Jan. 1825, granted by George Stephens, a Free Miner. John James also bought Park End Deep Level, as lessee for 1000 years, from the same Free Miner at the same date. William Montague and Moses Teague had already bought a third part share in Foxes Bridge and Kensley Water Pits (29).

From 1826 Montague and James were the only partners. Heavy investment continued. By 1827 a second furnace was built. The existing water supply gave inadequate power. In that year the works had stopped twice and men had been discharged (30). A 90 HP steam engine was added in 1828 to supplement the water power, and the Upper Cannop Pond created in 1829 (31). 1829-32 saw a period of depression in the iron trade. The furnace was built against the hillside, so that access could be gained to the top of the furnace for charging with raw materials, but the Severn and Wye tramroad ran between the furnace and the hillside. Access to the furnace top therefore had to be by a bridge from the hillside to the furnace. Into the sides of the bridge was built accommodation for the furnace men. By 1841 there was progress. Of the eight cottages under the Bridge six were occupied. Of the two furnaces, one was at work, powered by water in summer, steam in winter, one melting Finery (refinery). There were 4 good houses for workmen, a stable, beer house, counting house, agent's dwelling, carpenters' and smiths' shops and sheds. Output was increasing: it averaged 60 tons a week in 1840, then 70 tons a week in the half year ended 21 February 1841 and had reached 101 tons in the week ending 21 February 1841 (32). To further supplement the water supply a request was made for license to use the water flowing down the Bickslade, Darkhill and Drybrook valleys, NW of the furnace. This

was granted to *pass through iron pipes laid down in 1826... for 23 years from Michaelmas 1843, as long as Messrs Montague and James remain tenants... paying £1 p.a.* (33).

After William Montague's death in 1847 John James obtained all Montague's interests, bought the iron works from Edward Protheroe from whom they were previously leased and ran the Parkend Iron Works in partnership with Charles Greenham, his son-in-law as manager, then partner (34). It was at this point that he relinquished the Lydney works.

The Parkend iron works was growing in size and output and with it the consumption of coal and iron from local mines, and the use of the local tramways, but the village of 'Park End' was still small. Its principal building was Whitemead Park, the residence of the Deputy Surveyor of the Forest of Dean for the Crown, since c. 1808 Mr. Edward Machen. St. Paul's church had been consecrated only in 1822. It stood on the hillside east of the village, built to serve Yorkley, Pillowell and Whitecroft as well as Parkend, and so at a point where roads or tracks from those villages converged. There were few other houses, and many of the local cottages were scattered encroachments within the woodland, often at the sites of small coal mines. As part of a more vigorous approach to the management of the woodland, particularly the enclosure and creating of plantations, the Office of Woods was purchasing and demolishing many of the encroached cottages (35). The growth of mines and iron works, was therefore to some extent dependant on bringing in skilled men from outside the immediate area, and ensuring there were places for them to live. The 8 houses under the bridge, the agent's dwelling and four good houses for workmen seen in 1841 on the property of the Iron Works were part of this provision. Most of the land in the immediate vicinity was owned by the Crown. Mr. Protheroe, who also owned the principal collieries at Parkend, had built 30 houses in Whitecroft for his men. They were alongside the track which ran between the two villages and parallel to the tramway. They were pulled down when the New Road was built on the line of the former track c.1904 (36).

On July 31 1847 John James wrote seeking permission to build workmen's cottages on behalf of Mr. Montague and himself, *being entitled to gales and Mine Works in the Forest of Dean, requesting a lease for 31 years of one and a half acres on the open green or marsh ... at its eastern end nearest to the bridge at Parkend ... for the purpose of erecting cottages and making gardens thereon for the use and convenience of the workmen employed at the said Iron and Mine Works, and the want of such Cottages is at this time very severely felt by the workmen.* Edward Machen was unsupportive. The proposed site was far too near his residence at Whitemead Park (37). John James had proposed the houses to be for miners (iron) or colliers because the mines were leased on Crown land and legislation permitted the grant of land for cottages in those circumstances. The iron works were on private land. 'The Marsh' appears to have referred to the areas alongside the stream and part of the present cricket ground.

On September 7 1847 John James wrote again to Mr. Machen suggesting a site to the north east of the Marsh, between the new Turnpike Road and the water course leading to the Stampers. He intended to build cottages like those erected by Mr Jackson near his collieries. [These were at Moseley Green]. The new turnpike was the Parkend to Blakeney road built in 1841 (38). The site would have been that of the later Hughes Terrace built for the Saw mills in 1859 (39). Mr. Machen must have still opposed the plan.

#### *James to Machen*

*I have today walked over all the open ground within half a mile of Park End Iron Works and find on the Eastern side of the Brook that every situation is so irregular on the surface or so steep, or so near Old Coal Workings as to render them objectionable; but on the North East End of the Marsh, between the New Turnpike Road and the Water Course leading to the*

*Stampers there is a piece of open Ground, wet in Winter, but which is capable of being drained and is further from and more out of view from Your House, that will suit our purpose and I hope will not be objectionable to yourself or the Commissioners.....*

*I am Dear Sir*

*Yours very faithfully*

*John James*

*P.S. I called at your House this Morning  
and at the Inn in Lydney on my return here  
but was unfortunate not to see you.*

*7 Sept 1847*

After a delay of four years, John James was again writing a more urgent letter in 1851, in which he also mentioned the Tin Works he proposed to build at Parkend. In rapid response Mr. Machen wrote two letters to the Commissioners of Woods, one objecting to the cottages, the other objecting to the Tin Plate Works. He noted that a similar application for cottages was made 'some years since' and not agreed to, and that the industry was in some distress at the moment with men in less than half work. The Tin Works was to be built on 'Mr. James own freehold' so the Crown could not prevent it, but he expected the smoke, noise of hammers, and smell to be a draw back on the comfort of Whitmead Park for his successors (40). [He resigned in 1852 but was recalled briefly in 1854.] He also doubted whether the Commissioners had the power to grant permission to build the cottages as neither the iron works nor the tin plate works, for whose employees they were intended, were built on Crown land. On 30 Sept, the Commissioners agreed the legislation did not allow them to lease land for this purpose for the iron works employees.

John James was again seeking land for the houses.

*Lydney Feb 5th 1851*

*To the Honorable Commissioners  
of Her Majesty's Woods etc  
Honble. Sir*

*I beg leave, respectfully to apply to Your Honorable Board, on behalf of my Copartner Mr. Charles Greenham of Lydney and myself, being entitled, by purchase, to Gales and Mine Works in the Forest of Dean, to grant us a Lease, for 31 Years, of a Piece or Portion of Land to the extent of an Acre and a half near the Iron Works at Parkend, in which I am interested and near to which, on a piece of our own property, within the Forest, it is our intention to erect at considerable Expence, some large Buildings and Works for the purpose of manufacturing Tin Plate, which will necessarily employ many workmen and others, and be a means of consuming many thousand of Tons of Coal, the produce of the Forest annually. Not having sufficient space on our own Land to build cottages for numerous workmen, we are induced to request this favour at the hands of your honorable Board for that purpose, or, we shall most cheerfully purchase such a Portion of Land, if it may be sold to us. An early reply a convenience will be highly esteemed, by Honable Sirs.*

*Your Faithful & Obedt. Servt.*

*John James*

The Tin Plate Works were 'in building' when the 1851 Census was taken, but no mention was made of new houses. On March 26 1853 John James wrote again to the Commissioners informing them that he had *just completed the erection of some Iron Forges and Rolling Mills, and Tinplate Works at Parkend, in her Majesty's Forest of Dean, closely adjoining to the Blast Furnaces ... a considerable number of workmen will be employed .... and much of the produce of the Forest will be consumed in the Works* (41). He was now asking for another acre of land

on which to deposit ashes and cinders from the tin works, proposing an old quarry near Brook Hall Ditches, east of the Severn and Wye railway. This was agreed. It appears that despite Machen's objections and after his departure the Office of Woods granted James and Greenham's request to build houses. According to Anstis, once the construction of the tin plate works was under way James and Greenham took out a 31 year lease on some Crown land just north of the works and built 24 houses on it for their workers. The houses were three storeys high and had six rooms each, and because they were laid out in two blocks of twelve, roughly at right angles to each other they became known as the Square (42). They were more spacious than most Forest cottages and suitable for large families. A smaller number of houses built in a similar style next to Lydney Tin Plate works survive with the date stone of 1852. T & W Allaway were the tenants there from 1847.

Having built the Parkend Tin Plate Works, John James did not operate it but sold it. He was 80 years of age in 1853, the year the building was completed, and died in 1857. By 1854 the Tin Works was owned by Samuel Ries, who became rapidly insolvent and the mills were bought by T & W Allaway in 1856 (43).

The surviving letters bring us close to John James as a man, his persistence and energy. In his 70s, he was travelling from Lydney to Parkend, walking the surrounding land, calling at Whitmead Park, trying to find Machen at Lydney Inn, then at home sitting down to write a letter, signed with a firm hand. He was highly active in the business. He was still writing in 1851 aged 78. His persistence was rewarded.

### **At Home**

Before building New Mills John James appears to have built himself and his family new houses, suitable to a successful iron master.

Sometime before 1839 he had purchased 15 acres of land in Lydney on the north side of Highfield Road, extending from opposite the present Catholic Church to the line of the old road to Allaston. It included Fox Field (TM 589, 6.24 ac.), Highfield Meadow (TM 592, 5.0.39 ac), the roadside margin (590) and two houses, Highfield (now The Rocklands), in which John James lived with his family, and Highfield Cottage, (later Highfield House) (44). Of Highfield the Victoria County History (VCH) said 'It was built about 1820 perhaps for the Ironmaster John James who was living there in 1839 (45). Both houses are now Listed Buildings, The Rocklands, *grade II, a large detached villa in grounds, c.1820, of painted stucco with a stable: Highfield House, Grade II, a detached dwelling, c.1820. Good sandstone ashlar over plinth, with eaves band, box eaves with moulded cappings, all in Ashlar. Two storeys, 3 windowed, 12 pane sashes, with stone cills, plain sandstone lintels, central 6 panel door under slightly pointed 4 centred arch and decorative fanlight. A very elegant facade, set at an angle to the road.* Members of the James family occupied both. A small cottage to the east was occupied by the groom in 1851.

Of the seven children born to John and Elizabeth James, 4 were boys, 3 girls. The eldest, Thomas Pearce James, died in 1835 aged 33 (46). He and his wife had two daughters who died in childhood, and a son, Thomas Mansfield James, who died in India in 1860, a Lieutenant in the 42nd Royal Highlanders, aged c.26 (47). At his son's birth in 1834 Thomas Pearce James was described as 'Iron master', so had been working with his father. His widow, Harriett, was at Highfield Cottage in 1851 and 1871.



John H. James, the second son, was baptised on 5 December 1806 at Newland. He graduated at Oxford in 1828 and became a clergyman. He married Elizabeth Wilberforce, daughter of William Wilberforce. In his biography of William Wilberforce, William Hague wrote, *All of William's surviving offspring, except William, were soon dependant on church livings, because his surviving daughter, Lizzy, had married a curate in 1830.* The curate was John H. James. Lord Chancellor Brougham in 1831 ... *had secured the parish of Rawmarsh near Rotherham for Lizzy's husband. In summer 1832 William Wilberforce's daughter Lizzy was suffering from a severe chest infection. She died soon after he arrived at his son Samuel's house on the Isle of Wight* (48). Born in 1801 she was a few years older than her husband. They had no children. In 1836 John officiated at the marriage of his brother Henry in Gloucester and in 1865 at that of his niece Agnes Fanny Greenham at Lydney. John H James remarried, to Theodosia Mary Tennant of Little Aston Hall, Staffs, a granddaughter of Lord Yarborough. They had a son, John Charles Horsey James who went to Australia (49). The Rev John James retired from the living of Avington, Berks, to Lydney and died in 1886, the only one of the sons to outlive his father (50).

In 1845 the new Lydney lease had been made to John and Henry James (51). Henry was the third son, baptised in 1808 at Newland, and described as 'Iron master' by 1837. On 4 May 1836 he married Elizabeth Montague at St. Mary de Crypt, Gloucester. The officiating minister was his elder brother John H James. The marriage linked the families already partners in industry. Henry and Elizabeth had two sons and four daughters, the sons Henry Montague born c. 1837, and Montague baptised 1843 (52). Henry Montague was working at the Parkend Iron Works in 1866 when he wrote confirming a wish to renew a lease for 22 years for water from the Stampers and giving the death of Charles Greenham as reason for some delay (53). His father, Henry James, had died in his later 40s, before 1857 when a monument to him was erected in Lydney St Mary's (54). This family was living in Highfield Cottage in 1838 and 1845.

His eldest son dead in 1835, another a clergyman, and the fourth son dead as an infant, his business partner William Montague dead in 1847, John James turned to Mr Charles Greenham for a new partner. Charles Greenham was the husband of Frances, John James eldest married daughter. They were married at Lydney in 1829 by licence but the five children, two sons and three daughters, were born in Yeovil, their father's birthplace. By 1851 Charles, Frances and their eldest son Henry were living with John James at Highfield, and Charles Greenham was 'Ironmaster' and his son 'clerk in the Ironworks.' After his grandfather's death in 1857, Henry was 'Ironmaster' by 1861, and in 1871 also 'Magistrate Co. Glos'. His father Charles had died in 1866. Henry Montague, nephew, and probably also working at Parkend, lived with them in 1861. Charles, then Henry Greenham, had continued the management of Parkend Ironworks after the death of Henry and John James.

John James left his estate to trustees, from whom Rev. John James purchased Highfield. He died 16 December 1886 aged 80. His will written 10 September 1879, proved 15 January 1887, left his Highfield estate to trustees, consisting of his wife, Theodosia Mary, her brother-in-law Rev. Alfred Kent, her nephew Sir Vernon Rycroft, and Guy Brian. All except the latter had died by 1895. An additional trustee Mr. M James was appointed 20 June 1896. John Charles Horsey James died 3 February 1899. On 25 Aug 1902 the trustees had sold part of the land, Foxfield, for £1,300, to George James and Mary James (who appear to be no relation to John James' family). Montague James of Kingslea, Honiton, Devon, Lieutenant Colonel in the Indian Army seems to have bought the rest. This was Montague, son of Henry and grandson of John James, baptised 1 September 1843, by 1902 aged 61.

None of the James family remained in Lydney. Prosperity from success in business did not prevent the deaths of several children and grandchildren when still young and a career in the army in India carried off grandsons. Three of John James' grandsons made a career in the army. Thomas Mansfield James, only son of Thomas Pearce James died in India on 26 September 1860, aged 26, as Lieutenant, 42 Royal Highlanders, Charles J. Greenham, 2nd son of Charles Greenham, died 21 February 1886, aged 43 in Lahore, buried in Peshawar, as Lieutenant Colonel, 2nd Battalion Wiltshire Regiment, 99th Foot. Montague, 2nd son of Henry James was Lieutenant Colonel in the Indian Army in 1902, living in Yeovil (55). The family were following the conventional 19th century career pattern of family business, church and army.

### Conclusion

John James came to Redbrook Tin Works by 1803 when he was about 30. He moved to the Lydney Works in 1814 and remained there until 1847. He was at the Parkend Iron Works from 1824 until his death in 1857 aged 84. During those 50 odd years of his working life spent in the Forest of Dean he brought into successful production the newly developed Redbrook Tin Plate Works which David Tanner had been forced to abandon because of bankruptcy. He leased Lydney Iron Works, installed new machinery and facilities to increase the output of rolled iron sheet and began to plate it with tin. At Parkend he became the sole owner of iron furnaces, coal and iron mines and briefly of a new tin plate works. Parkend grew to be a hive of industry. There the iron works, tin works, the Square, at Lydney the New Mills, all built by him, have now gone. The houses he built for his family and the memorials and windows they erected to his memory in the south aisle of Lydney St. Mary's Church still remain. Many of the family names of the men he employed to make the boxes of tin plate to ship down the Severn to Bristol still survive among their descendants in Lydney and Parkend.

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**Figure 1 Occupations of workers at Lydney iron works recorded at the births of their children 1813-25.**

1813	John Davis	forgeman	
1813	John Jordan	Blacksmith	
1816	George Jarrett	forgeman	
1816	William Everson	forgeman	
1818	John Jones	forgeman	
1819	William Burgum	forgeman	
1820	George Hinton	forgeman	
1820	James Protheroe	forgeman	
1820	John Sandford	smith	
1820	Richard Ward	forgeman	
1821	William Whittington	forgeman	
1821	John Cam	forgeman	
1821	John Pugh	forgeman	
1821	Thomas Saunders	tin man	
1823	William Beard	tin shearer	(born Framilode)
1824	Richard Jones	tin sorter	(born Newland)
1824	William Hazard	tin shearer	(born Bristol)
1825	Samuel Holder	tin moulder	

**Figure 2 Family Tree for John James**

