

# The Thursfield family - Potters, Surgeons and Land Agents

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Presumably impressed by the growing importance of the pottery industry in the Broseley area, Richard Thursfield a master potter of Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire, moved into Shropshire early in the eighteenth century, and established a notable family line of activity in many aspects of life at in the area at that time.

Richard Thursfield took over a pottery in Jackfield, and his son. John Thursfield, (1707-1760) followed in the industry, opening a new pottery in Posenhall. A coal mine was leased from the Forester family of Willey. The Thursfield family were associated particularly with the production of "Tickneyware" - a coarse pottery, often glazed black, which was used in the manufacture of mugs, teapots and large jugs known as "Black Decanters".

John Thursfield married Eleanor Morris of Broseley in 1726, and their sons. John and William Morris Thursfield followed in the family tradition. A profitable trade with America developed, but sadly William Morris Thursfield died in Philadelphia in 1783 while on a voyage to sell his wares in America. His pottery in Jackfield was taken over by Edward Blakeway, an ironmaster and former Mayor of Shrewsbury, and he was joined about ten years later by John Rose, founder of the Coalport China Works.

John Thursfield, a Quaker, is recorded in the "Universal Directory" of 1791 as being in charge of "two large earthenware manufactories in Benthall" and this probably refers to the son of William Morris Thursfield, since Williams brother John had died in 1789. The Benthall Pottery had been built by John the elder in 1772. In 1815 the Benthall Pottery was making common earthenware, and by the mid-nineteenth century was still producing the red and yellow wares.

The family had other interests besides pottery manufacture, and John Thursfield was one of the contributors towards the building of the Iron Bridge. In 1775 he is recorded as donating 10s.6d. - a tenth of the final total he offered - and he is recorded in July 1779 as a subscriber with one full share.

## Other Interests of the Thursfield Family

The "Universal Directory" (1791) refers to a William Thursfield of Broseley as a "Surgeon and Apothecary", an occupa-

tion in which the family became notable for the next hundred years.

In 1828 a William Thursfield was "Surgeon and Apothecary" in Broseley. Randall recounts that in the Cholera epidemic of 1832. Dr. Thursfield was "beaten or by the daughter of a patient he was visiting when she suspected that the medicine he offered would infect the patient with the disease rather than cure it. Doggerel of the day is quoted by Randall as:

*"The cholera morbus is begun  
And Dr Thursfield is the man  
To carry the cholera morbus on"*

In the 1856 "Court Directory of Salop" Richard Thursfield is described as "Surgeon and High Bailiff of Madeley".

Although the family were chiefly associated with Broseley some of the family moved away and in 1828 William Thursfield is listed in the Salop Directory as a surgeon in Hightown. Bridgnorth, and again in 1844. In 1863 "William Thursfield and son" are noted as surgeons in the Bridgnorth High Street.

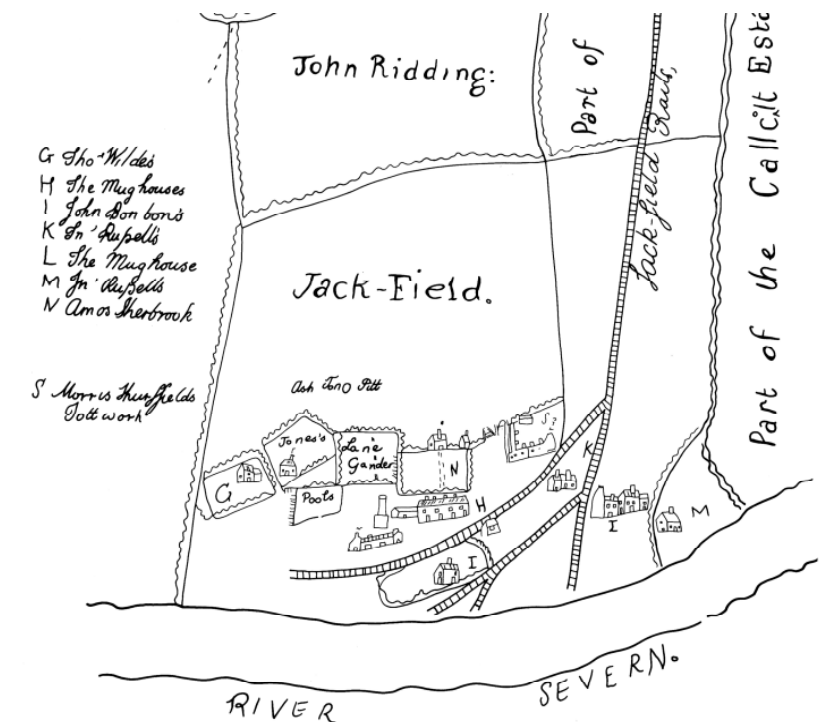
Surgery, however, was not by any means the only interest of the family, and in the 1856 "Court Directory of Salop" Richard Thursfield is described as "Surgeon and High Bailiff of Madeley".

The 1871 "Cassey's Directory" shows Greville Thursfield M.D. and Thomas Greville Thursfield. M.D. living in Broseley, and Randall describes these doctors as descendants of the "Pottery" Thursfields.

Where exactly did the Thursfields live in Broseley?

In 1881, Thomas G. Thursfield, Medical Practitioner, was listed as living at White Hall, Lower Church St., along with his wife, five children, a groom, governess, cook, 2 housemaids and a nurse.

A branch of the family became Land Agents to the Forester Estate in the eighteenth century, Thomas Thursfield married Anne Howells at Barrow in 1793, and their descendant Thomas Howell Thursfield was still listed as "Farmer and Land Agent to Lord Forester" in 1891.



Map from Broseley Estate Book showing Thursfield's pottery at Jackfield in the 1700s



White Hall the home of Dr Thomas G. Thursfield