

Adolph Wenger of The Priory

Adolph Henry Charles Wenger was born in 1877 in Shelton to Albert Francis Wenger and his wife Harriet. Albert was born in Lausanne, Switzerland and emigrated to England, where he was naturalised in 1893. He founded Wengers Ltd, of Etruria in 1900, which produced colours and chemicals for the pottery, tile and glass industries and were exported worldwide.

Adolph, the second of eight children, was educated at Newcastle-under-Lyme School and abroad. He entered the family business, ultimately succeeding his father as Chairman and Managing Director, and becoming one of the principal industrialists in North Staffordshire. In June 1902, he married Isabelle Lovatt, of Newcastle, and the couple went on to produce four children.

In 1911, he bought The Priory in Trentham, and its extensive gardens from the Duke of Sutherland and subsequently purchased a further 21 acres of land. The house, which stood behind the site of the Mausoleum on the Stone Road, was a late eighteenth century mansion. A ballroom and billiard room were later additions. The family's wealth and taste was apparent in the antiques, paintings and valuable collection of pottery which it contained. The magnificent grounds included a rose garden, tennis court and a summer house and the garage housed both a Daimler and a Rolls Royce.

Adolph was very active in the public life of the area; during his lifetime he served as a member of Trentham Parish Council and as a JP for Stoke-on Trent. In 1935 he was appointed High Sheriff of Staffordshire. He also served as the Vice- President of the North Staffs Chamber of Commerce. His interests included golf, motoring and foxhunting.

The Wenger family suffered from the widespread anti-German feeling which prevailed during the Great War due to its German-sounding name. Despite its position in local society and the fact that four of Adolph's brothers were on active service, the windows of their Etruria factory were smashed. Such was the family's unease at their situation, they were forced to issue postcards demonstrating their loyalty to King and Country.

Adolph died in 1954 and Isabelle in 1959.

Following her death the contents of the Priory were auctioned off and shortly afterwards, the building was demolished and houses were built on the site. Now only the gateposts remain, though the family name is preserved in Wenger Crescent.



The Priory, Trentham, 1948

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The Wengers Ltd Ceramic Colour and Chemical Works and the Etruria Pottery Works, Stoke-on-Trent, 1932

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Theodore, Noel, Dorothy, Leo and Edward Wenger—Sentinel Newspaper

Wenger War Service
 Adolph's brothers and sister served in the war. Col. Edward Wenger served with the 5th Bn North Staffs Regiment and was awarded a Military Cross in 1916. Theodore and Noel also reached the rank of colonel, in the Tank Regiment and the Royal Flying Corps. Leo was a petty officer with the Royal Navy Air Service. His sister Dorothy was a Red Cross nurse.



Wenger family: Albert [father], Adolph, Harriet [mother], Edward, Dorothy, Leo, Edward's wife Kate, Theodore, Eugenie and Noel—Sentinel Newspaper