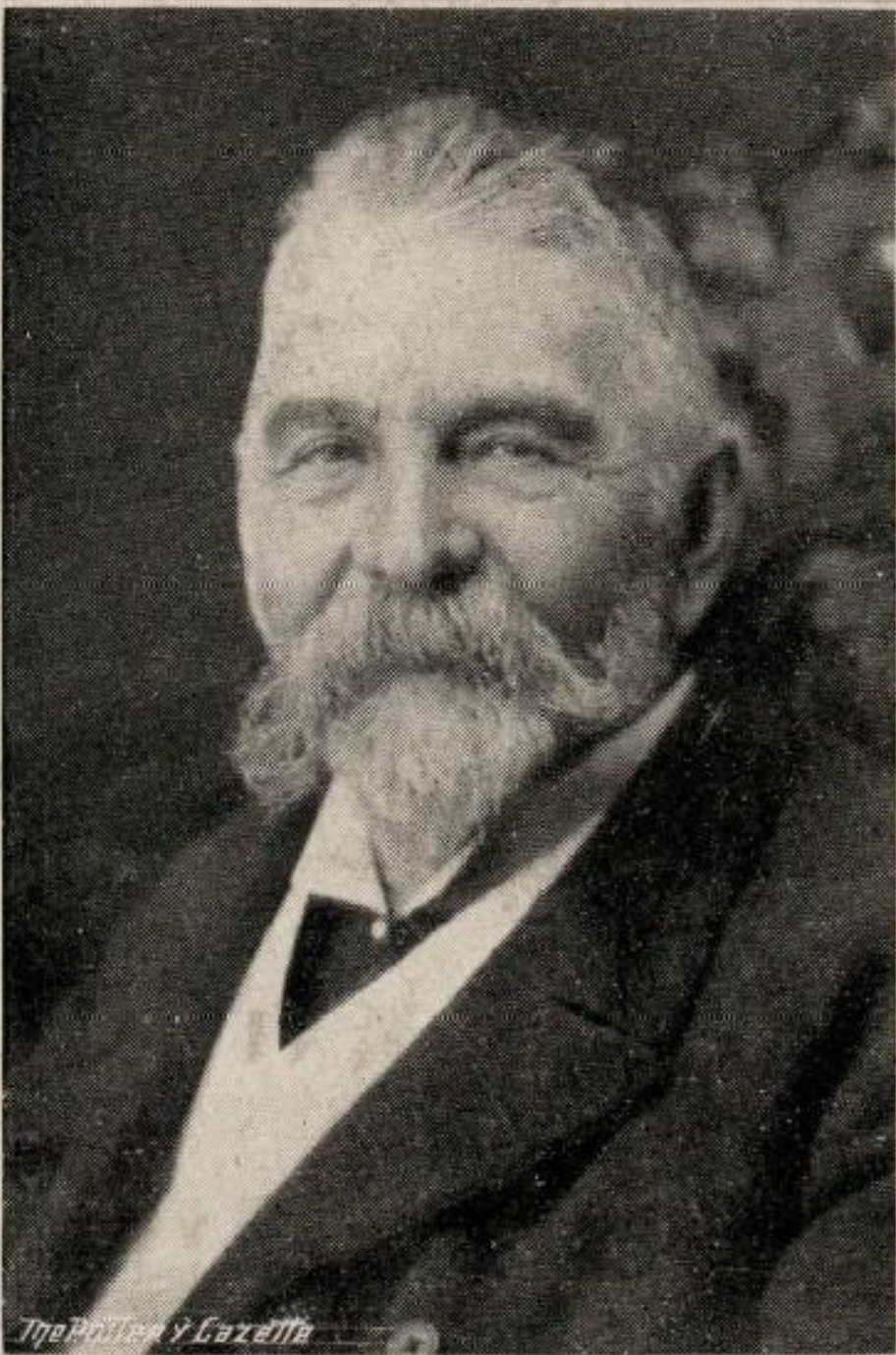




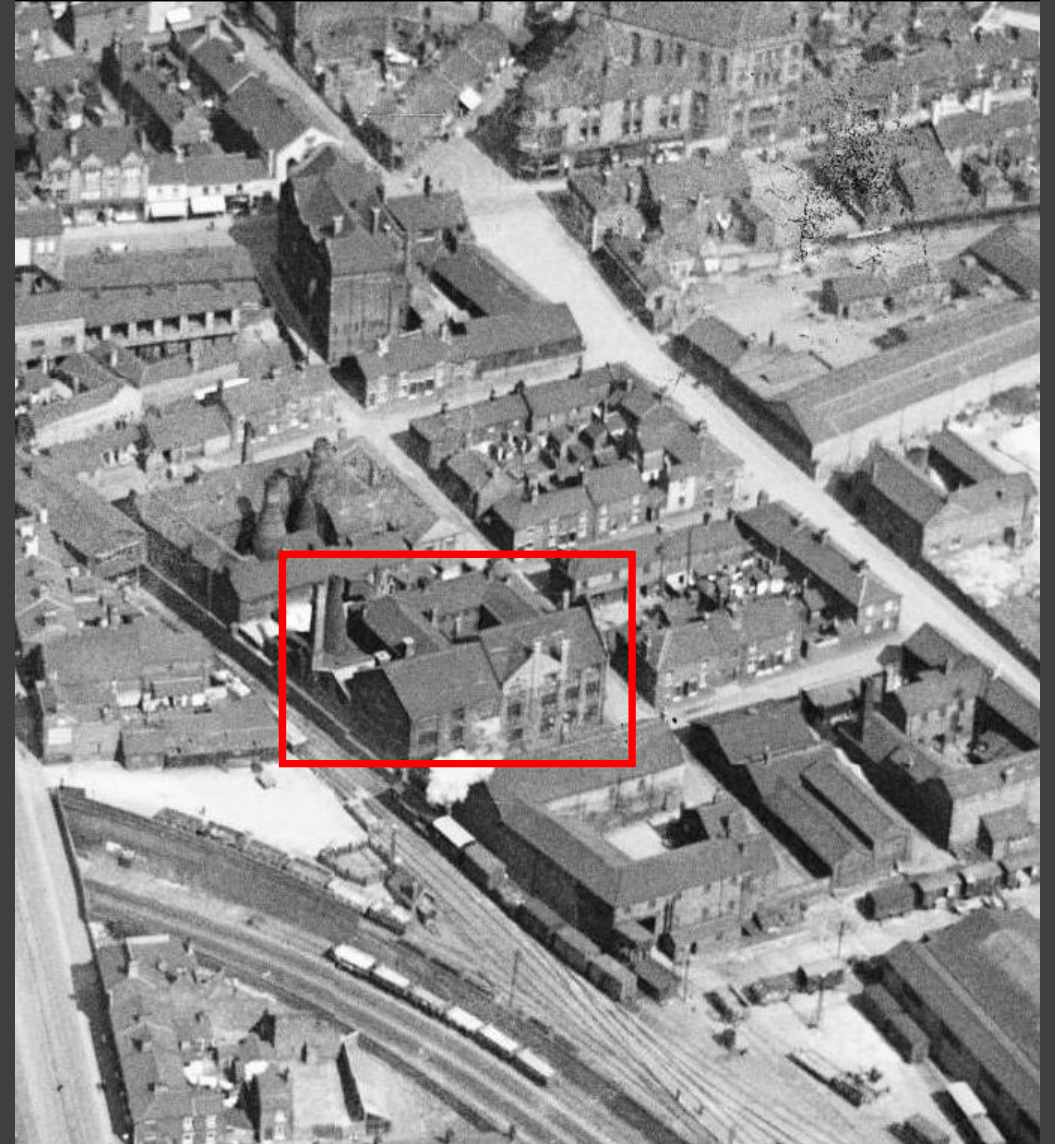
Adolph Wenger of Trentham - The business, the family and the Priory



Adolph's father, Albert Wenger was born in Lausanne, Switzerland on 2 November 1837. He emigrated to the UK in the 1860s.

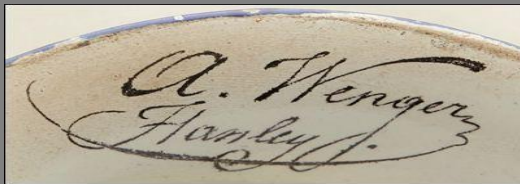
Albert married Harriet Heady and moved to Stoke on Trent. In 1870 he started a business at 281 Waterloo Road in Cobridge as a manufacturer and supplier of colours, oxides and glazes.

By 1877 the factory had relocated to Parker Street in Hanley, where Albert named his manufactory the Helvetia Works. Helvetia is the female national personification of Switzerland, where Albert was born.



Britain from Above - Detail from EPW028007 ENGLAND Etruria Road and environs, Hanley, 1929

Parker Street Works – advertisement, back stamp and samples of ware



Enamelled plaque



Tazza produced by A Wenger, Hanley in the Longwy style

An aerial photograph of a large industrial complex, likely a pottery or ceramic works. The image shows a dense arrangement of buildings with various rooflines, including several large, long, low-profile structures. Numerous tall chimneys are visible, some emitting smoke. A railway line runs through the lower right portion of the image. The overall scene depicts a significant manufacturing hub from the early 20th century.

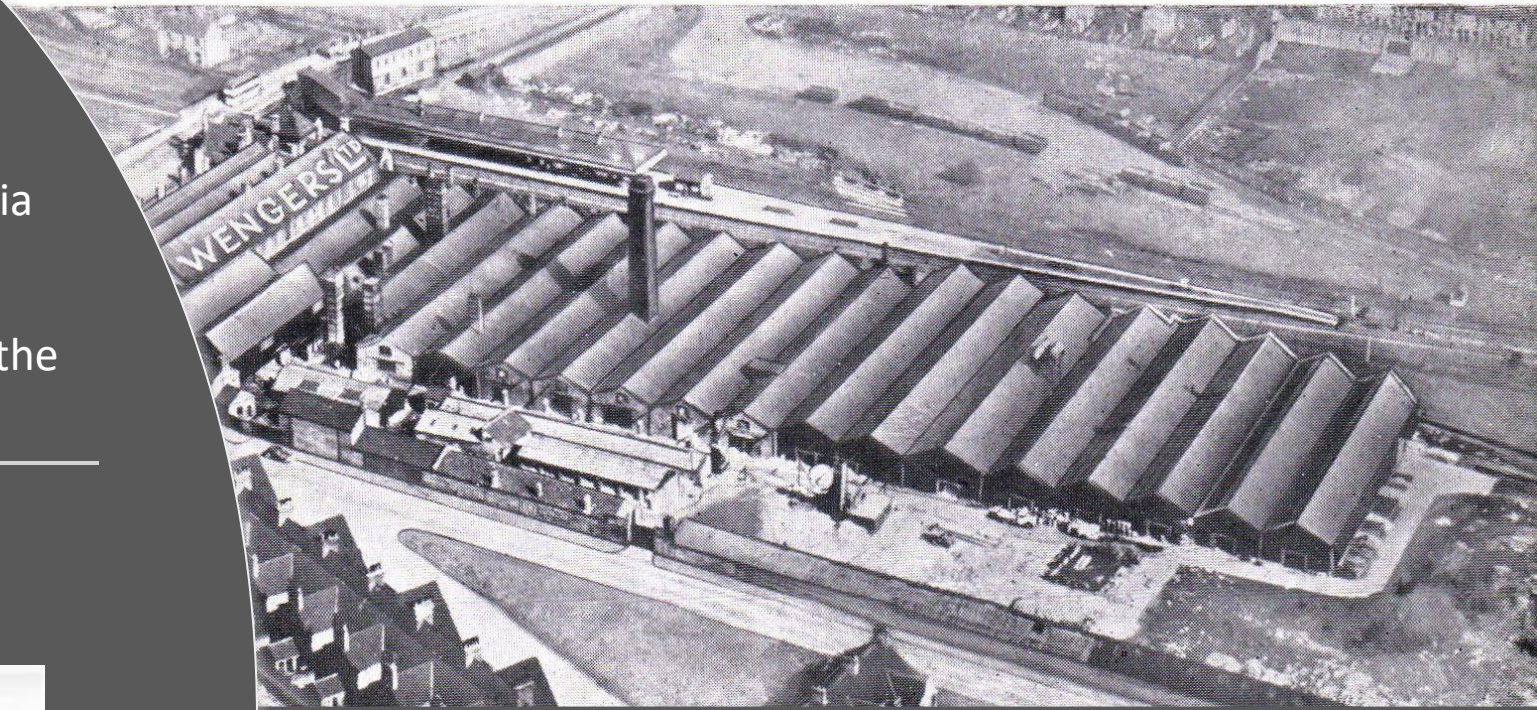
The company moved to Etruria around 1900
and developed into a successful manufacturer
of materials for decorating ceramic, glass and metals

Aerial view of The Wengers Ltd Ceramic Colour and Chemical works and the Etruria Pottery Works. <http://www/britainfromabove.org.uk/image/EPW038490>

Wengers Ltd Factory

Top right image shows an aerial view of the Etruria factory next to the station

Bottom right satellite image shows that some of the buildings still exist today



Above image by Bert Bentley shows Etruria Station adjacent to the Wenger factory



Adolph Henry Charles Wenger, born in 1877, was the second of Albert and Harriet's eight children. He was educated at Newcastle-under-Lyme School and abroad.

He entered the family business and ultimately succeeded his father as Chairman and Managing Director, becoming one of the principal industrialists in North Staffordshire.





Isabelle Wenger (known as Belle)
Adolph married Isabelle Lovatt, of
Newcastle in June 1902.

They lived in Fern House, Sidmouth
Avenue, Newcastle until 1911.



Britain from Above 1948_EAW016077

In 1911 Adolph bought The Priory – previously Trentham Vicarage - and its extensive gardens. The house, which stood behind the site of the Mausoleum on Stone Road, was a late eighteenth century mansion. The grounds included a rose garden, tennis court and a summer house. A ballroom and billiard room were later additions.

1924 Map showing The Priory in relation to the Mausoleum and Trentham Gardens





Britain from Above 1948_EAW016078



1924 OS map with current street map overlay

Aerial view and map of The Priory showing the surrounding buildings and the extent of its land

In 1914 Adolph purchased a further 21 acres of land surrounding The Priory. The boundaries were the railway line to Trentham Park Station to the north (behind where Werburgh Drive is now); New Inn Lane to the east; the Longton Brook and part of Longton Road to the south; and part of Stone Road and behind the Mausoleum to the west. Current roads are shown in white.

Household staff

Nine members of staff were regularly employed at The Priory to serve the Wenger family. These included a cook, a butler, two housemaids, a governess and a part-time seamstress. They lived in quarters on the north side of the house. A chauffeur and two gardeners lived at Paddock Cottages, off Longton Road and the estate's farmer lived at the farm. Other local residents were employed when required.



Harvesting on the Wenger estate in the 1940s
Bebbington collection



William Perrins, cowman, and one of
The Priory housemaids in the 1930s
Private collection

The Wenger family and World War One

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.



The Wenger family in WW1: Albert (father). Adolph, Harriet (mother), Edward, Dorothy, Leo, Edward's wife Kate, Theodore, Eugenie and Noel

Adolph's brothers and sister served in WW1: Colonel Edward Wenger served with the 5th Battalion of the 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.

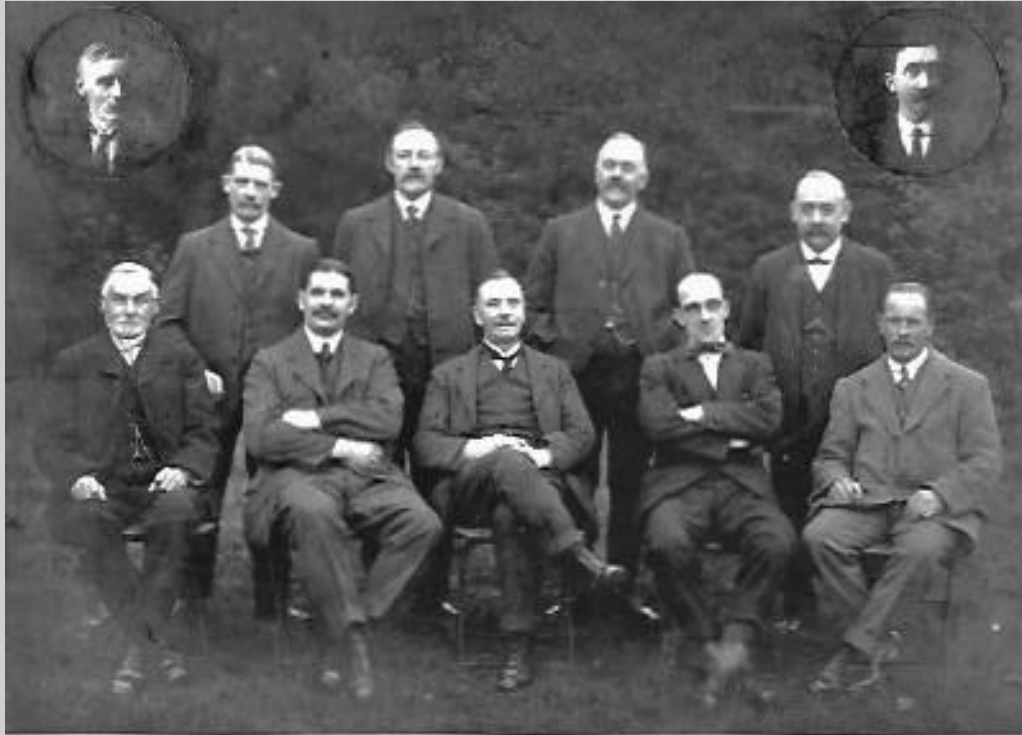
Leo was a petty officer with the Royal Navy Air Service and his sister Dorothy was a Red Cross nurse.



Adolph and Belle Wenger's four children in 1911:
James, Reginald and Violet, with Rita in the cart

Adolph in public life

Adolph was very active in the public life of the area. During his lifetime he served as a member of Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Council and Trentham Parish Council. He was also a Justice of the Peace for Stoke-on-Trent. In 1935 he was appointed High Sheriff of Staffordshire. His interests included golf, motoring and foxhunting



Trentham Parish Council 1922. *Courtesy Mrs T. Shunaham*
Seated back: H. Selwood, J. Sant, A.V. Reynolds, P. Chadwick.
Front: T. Holdcroft, A.H.C. Wenger, W.H. Stevens, J.E. Hood, E. Lancaster.
Inset: Left, F.J. Biddock JP. Right, J. Brooks.



Belle with Adolph in his High Sheriff regalia



The family Daimler



The family on holiday

Belle and public service



Mrs. J. A. Dale, the Organiser of the Stoke-on-Trent Branch of the Women's Voluntary Service, presenting a W.V.S. badge to the Chairman of the Trentham Hospital Supply Depot (Mrs. A. H. C. Wenger) when she visited Trentham Priory Working Party.

During WWII Belle was chair of the Trentham Red Cross and Hospital Supply Depot.

Meeting at The Priory for the duration of the war, the working party of local women produced 10,350 garments.

Of these, 5,958 were sent as comforts for the forces and prisoners of war and the remainder were used by hospitals and for people of liberated Europe.

The Sentinel reported that the supply depot had officially closed on 15 December 1945.

Fundraising events



Belle receiving a bouquet from Ann List in 1938

Belle and Adolph hosted many local events over the years, including garden party fetes, American Tea Parties and tennis tournaments in aid of the Trentham Nursing Association. On these occasions the gardens were open for visitors to inspect.



Belle and other ladies of the parish with Rev Grimes in the early 1930s



Competitors awaiting their matches in the tennis tournament, which proved a popular feature of the attractions at the American tea held at Trentham Priory.



James Wenger

Adolph's elder son, James, married Muriel Lefevre in 1935 and he joined his father in the family business. As a young man, James was well known as a breeder of Irish setters and he later became an important figure in the local Conservative party. On the 1939 Register they are living at Bury Bank House, Darlaston.



IRISH SETTER KENNELS AT TRENTHAM.

FOR several years Mr. James Wenger, of The Priory, Trentham, has been breeding and exhibiting Irish Setters. At the present time, his kennel consists of 15 dogs, nearly all young stock, and all bred with a definite knowledge of what is wanted in a Setter.

The kennels are ideally situated among beautiful surroundings, and one was particularly pleased to see the amount of space the dogs had in which to exercise themselves. I did not see any signs of a weedy specimen at all. Each dog came bounding along as though ready for a good day in the field.

Rattlin Abbot has won at Taunton, Exeter, Ormskirk, Southport, Liverpool, Whitley Bay, Chesterfield, &c. He has been best in show on three occasions, and in all claims 70 prizes, although he is only 17 months old. His litter brother, Rattlin Noel, has also won numerous prizes.

They were bred by Mr. Wenger and both have proved themselves efficient stock getters, Abbot being the sire of a very promising three months old puppy, and Noel the sire of a four months



The Irish Setter, Rattlin Abbot, owned and bred by Mr. James A. L. Wenger, Trentham Priory, Stoke-on-Trent.



old litter out of Rattlin Queen, who is a splendid type of brood bitch.

Exceptionally well bred with a long line of blue blood behind them, these puppies ought to go a long way.

Rattlin Matchbox is a ten months old puppy who has already won, and will certainly make a name for himself with maturity.

Rattlin Norah, two years old, a winner at each show exhibited including Edinburgh and Birmingham, is now being kept for breeding purposes, while a great future is predicted for Rattlin Christine, who although only seven months old, looks like making a good one. Present indications are that she will put the Rattlin prefix one rung higher.

Mr. Wenger has recently purchased a pair of 12 months old Pointer bitches, both winners, and one of these is already on a visit to another kennel.

Violet Wenger

Adolph's elder daughter, Violet, married the Rev. Ivo Knowles of Longsdon, in 1938.
In 1944 he moved to St. John's in Trent Vale and the family lived in the vicarage on Newcastle Road.



Reginald Wenger



Adolph's younger son, Reginald, studied medicine at Cambridge, qualified as a doctor in 1933 and on the 1939 Register he was working as a surgeon at Leicester Royal Infirmary.

In April 1940 he married a doctor named Margaret Dow and he later joined the Army.

In the 1950s the family moved back to Staffordshire, Reginald joined the family business and they settled in Standon.

Rita Wenger

Adolph's younger daughter, Rita is seen here in World War Two when she was a member of the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS).

She rose to the rank of Subaltern and was based in Southern England.

After the war, Rita returned to live at The Priory with her parents until Belle's death in 1959 when she moved to Somerset.



End of an era

For nearly 50 years members of the Wenger family occupied The Priory. Adolph died in 1954, after a short illness. Belle died in 1959, having suffered a stroke in 1953. 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. The gateposts to The Priory can still be seen on the path from the A34 to Coniston Place.

The family name is preserved in Wenger Crescent.



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Acknowledgements

EVENING SENTINEL, THURSDAY, JULY 15, 1943

TRENTHAM NURSING FUND EFFORT



Some of the supporters of the American tea held in aid of Trentham Nursing Association funds at Trentham Priory the residence of Mr. and Mrs. A. H. C. Wenger, on Tuesday. In the centre of the group are Mrs. Wenger, the Lady Mayoress of Stoke-on-Trent (Mrs. C. Austin Brook) and Mrs. Culverwell, with Mrs. Wenger's grandchildren —George Wenger, Isabelle Knowles and Heather Wenger.

Many thanks to members of the Wenger family who generously shared their family's photos and memories.

CREDITS

Graham Bebbington - who wrote about “Wengers and The Priory” in Trentham Reflections
Churnet Valley Books, 2005

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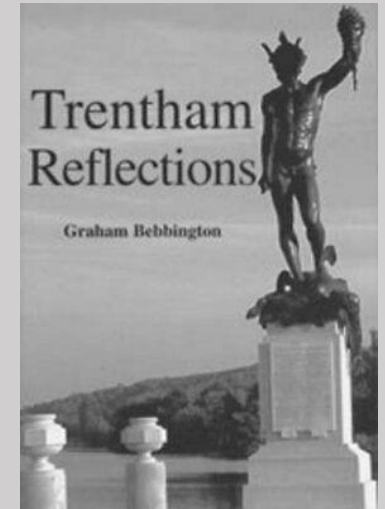
www.thepotteries.org/allpotters

<https://postcardsfromstoke.wordpress.com/>

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Maps from the National Library of Scotland <https://maps.nls.uk/>

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Research by Sarah Akhtar and Jan Barber
Compiled by Marilyn Vigurs



Trentham Heritage Project

