

Kings Bromley Historians 2015

The First Creamery at Kings Bromley Wharf

The Guide to the Contents of Lichfield Record Office, 1999 has an entry D4363/I, D4566 "1885-1892: records of milk sales and other records". I asked one of the very helpful staff there if they could locate these records for me, and she returned after a while with a very dirty box full of dusty and sooty papers. She had somehow managed to determine that it was this one, out of a row of other uncatalogued boxes - all deposited from the records of Solicitors Hinckley, Hodson and Co. of Lichfield - that I would be interested in. She was right.

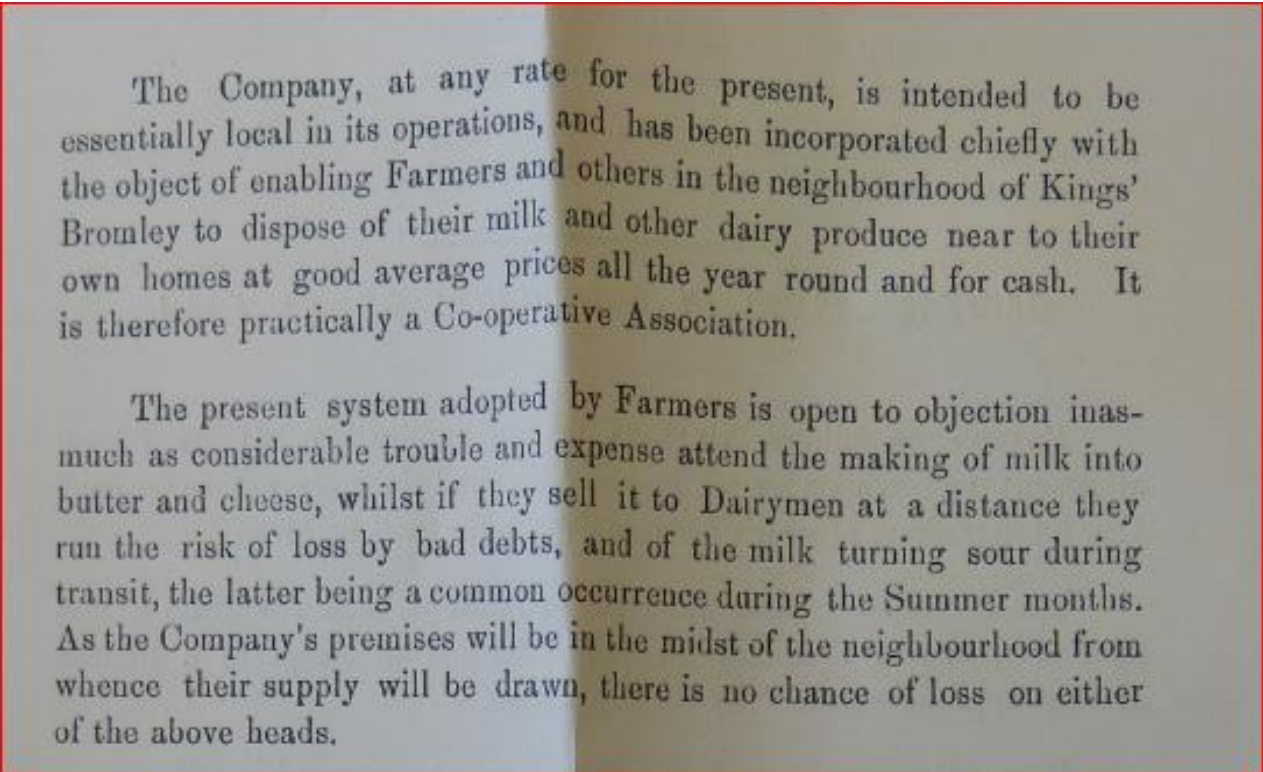
These documents recorded the history of the first Creamery to be established at Kings Bromley Wharf.

A handwritten minute book recorded a meeting held at the Royal Oak Inn Kings Bromley on Tuesday 4th of November 1884. In the chair was Mr. George Fox of Elmhurst Hall, also present were Colonel Henry Bagot Lane of Kings Bromley Manor - the Lord of the Manor, and twenty other men, mainly farmers and tenant farmers from Kings Bromley and the surrounding Parishes. The minutes state:

"[It was] proposed that a Dairy Company upon a limited liability principal (sic) be established. Carried unanimously. Resolved that the tenancy of the premises at Kings Bromley Wharf shall be arranged for if The Railway Company will let them on satisfactory terms"

From here things moved on quickly. A prospectus for the Company, the 'Trent Valley Dairy & Produce Company Ltd.' was issued in December. It was to be capitalised by the sale of 60 shares of £5 each. The Directors were: George Fox, Colonel Lane, Hon. Frederick William Anson of Orgreave, Arthur Fox of Lichfield, E. Averill of Woodgate Farm, Kings Bromley, R. Taylor of Alrewas Hayes, W. Bowering of Binns Farm, Lichfield and Charles Sutton Wilkinson of Hoar Cross. The bankers were to be Lloyds Barnetts & Bosanquets of Lichfield, the Solicitors Hinckley, Hodson & Co and the secretary, pro. tem., was Edward Averill.

The prospectus set out clearly what the company meant to achieve:



The Company, at any rate for the present, is intended to be essentially local in its operations, and has been incorporated chiefly with the object of enabling Farmers and others in the neighbourhood of Kings' Bromley to dispose of their milk and other dairy produce near to their own homes at good average prices all the year round and for cash. It is therefore practically a Co-operative Association.

The present system adopted by Farmers is open to objection inasmuch as considerable trouble and expense attend the making of milk into butter and cheese, whilst if they sell it to Dairymen at a distance they run the risk of loss by bad debts, and of the milk turning sour during transit, the latter being a common occurrence during the Summer months. As the Company's premises will be in the midst of the neighbourhood from whence their supply will be drawn, there is no chance of loss on either of the above heads.

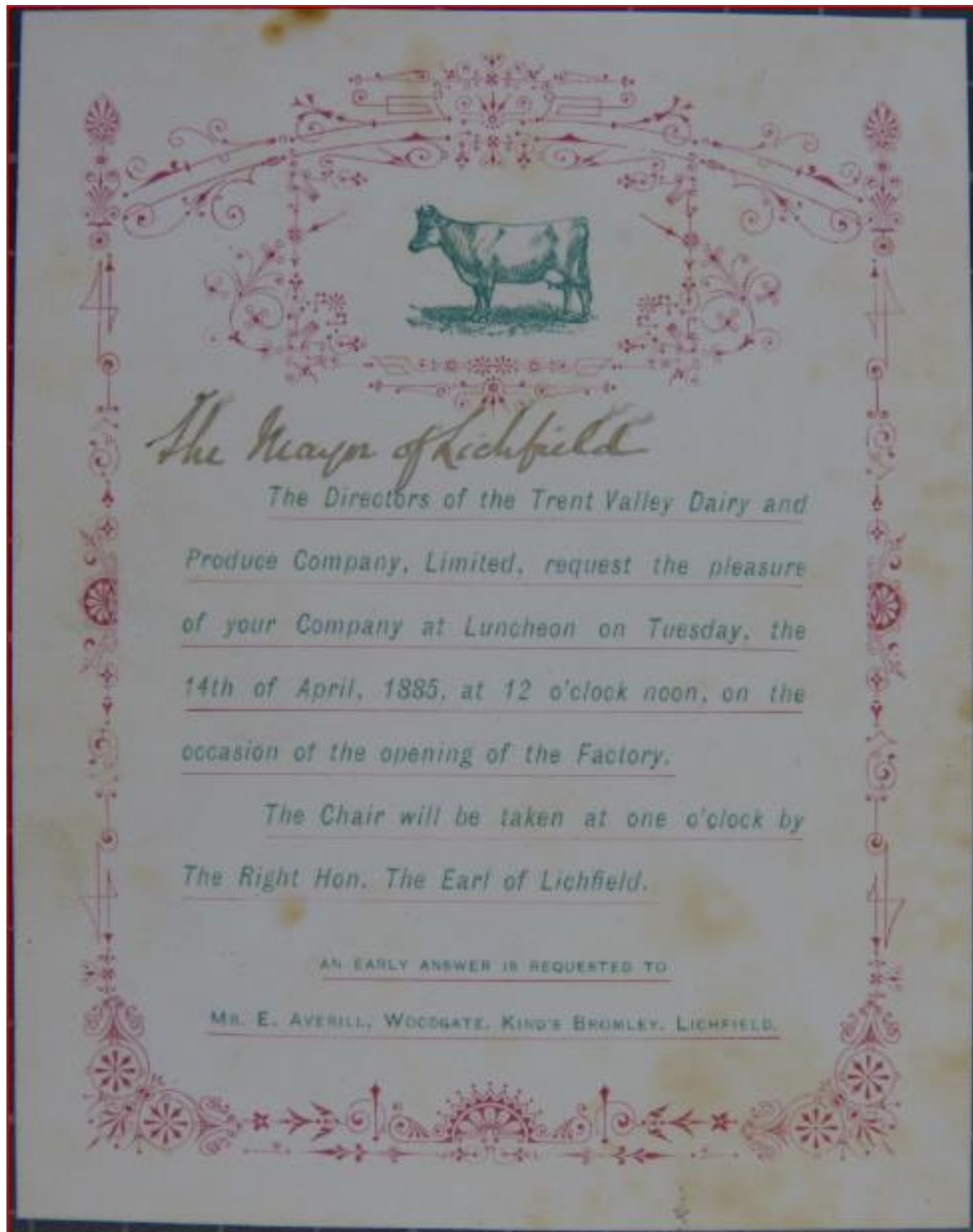
In order that business may be commenced without delay the Company have secured the tenancy of the Warehouse and premises (including Dairyman's Cottage), at Kings' Bromley Wharf, where a similar business has been carried on, at the small rent of £26 per annum. The produce of milk in the shape of the separated milk, cream, and butter will find a ready sale in the neighbouring Towns and also in London at very remunerative prices, and it is estimated, after paying all expenses, that like the Aylesbury Dairy Company, the Company will pay largely remunerative dividends. The Company will deal in all sorts of Dairy produce and eggs, and in addition to the business of a Dairyman, the Company by their Articles of Association, take power (which they will exercise or not as may from time to time be found expedient) to purchase, breed, and deal in, cows, cattle, pigs, poultry, and other live stock. In purchasing milk the Company will give the preference to shareholders.

From the interest taken by the Right Honorable the Earl of Lichfield, Mr. George Fox, of Elmhurst Hall, Colonel Lane, of Kings' Bromley Manor, Colonel Cecil Lane, The Honorable Mrs. Meynell Ingram, of Hoarcross Hall, The Honorable F. L. Wood, Mr. Edward Averill, of Woodgate, Kings' Bromley, and other gentlemen of influence, the prospects of the Company are most encouraging.

The background to the setting up of the Company is the Great Farming Depression which lasted from 1870 until the First World War. This was caused by free trade. Following the repeal of the corn laws in the 1840s, tariffs on imported agricultural produce had been removed. The decision had been made that Britain was becoming a manufacturing and commercial country, rather than a farming one, and therefore it was more important to provide cheap food for the rapidly expanding industrial working class than it was to support British farming. The effects were not felt immediately, due to the rapidly expanding population and the time taken to create the international infrastructure - for example the vast corn fields of N. America, beef ranches of S. America and sheep farms of the Antipodes and the rail and shipping networks required. Nevertheless, by the 1870s food prices had collapsed.

In view of this local farmers needed to concentrate on what could not be provided cheaply from abroad, and perishable milk and cream were ideal products. Kings Bromley was perfectly placed because, from the railway sidings at Elmhurst Crossing, milk and cream could be transported rapidly to London, Birmingham and elsewhere.

The local dignitaries were invited to the factory opening. This is the Mayor's invitation:



1885.

1885.

Trent Valley Dairy and Produce Company,
LIMITED.

MENU.

ROAST, BOILED, AND SPICED BEEF.

ROAST VEAL AND CHICKENS.

VEAL CAKES.

HAMS.

TONGUES.

LOBSTER SALAD.

JELLIES.

BLANCMANGE.

BAKEWELL PUDDING.

CHEESECAKES.

TOASTS.

THE QUEEN AND THE ROYAL FAMILY.

THE BISHOP AND CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE.

THE AGRICULTURAL INTEREST.

SUCCESS TO THE DAIRY COMPANY.

THANKS TO THE EARL OF LICHFIELD FOR HIS PRESENCE.

The log books for the following years show that produce was being sent all over the country: for example on Sept. 29th, £3 4s. of goods were sent to Huntley and Palmers of London, this being a daily shipment, there being another of £3 14s. 8d on Sept. 30th. Milk was transported to the factory by horse drawn wagon from nearby farms at Woodgate, Riley Hill and Orgreave, but also from as far afield as Hoar Cross.

Unfortunately by May 1891, the company was in difficulty, as can be seen from this statement:

The Trent Valley Dairy & Produce Co., Limited.

General Balance Sheet.

31st MAY, 1891.

LIABILITIES.			ASSETS.		
	£	s. d.		£	s. d.
To Authorised Capital, 2000 Shares of £5 each	10000	0	0	By Paid up Machinery at King's Bressley	184 7 6
To Capital Issued, 844 Shares of £5 each	4220	0	0	" Debt at Birmingham	186 0 0
Loss calls in Arrears	287	13	0	By Stock-in-trade at King's Bressley	149 7 6
				" " " Birmingham	319 11 0
To Ready Trade Creditors	2382	5	11	By Stock Debt at King's Bressley	233 0 2
" Lloyd's Bank, Limited	285	1	11	" " " Birmingham	527 20 3
				" Debt Lichfield	2 13 10
				By Preliminary Expenses Account	228 7 10
				" Cash in hand at King's Bressley	29 0 0
				" " " Birmingham	44 7 11
				By Balance from 30th Nov., 1890	266 17 8
				" Add Loss for Half-year ending	282 1 7
					372 19 0
					2987 13 2
	2974	0	4		
	2987	13	4		

Corrected as Correct.

July 2nd, 1891.

R. EVERILL,
Secretary.

July 2nd, 1891.

CHARLES F. WAGNET, F.C.A.,
Auditor.

I have examined the Books and Accounts of the Trent Valley Dairy and Produce Company, Limited, and hereby certify that in my opinion the foregoing Accounts truly set forth the position of the Company, on 31st May, 1891.

The Trent Valley Dairy & Produce Co., Limited.

REVENUE ACCOUNT.

For Half-year ending 31st May, 1891.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
To Balance, 30th November, 1890	3690	17	8	By Sales of Cream and Butter	1272	13	4
" Stock on hand, ditto	650	19	5	" ditto Separated Milk	213	10	8
" Milk purchased	1219	3	0	" ditto New Milk	583	12	0
" Cakes, Cream, etc.	340	17	0	" ditto Cheese	134	10	4
" Pigs purchased	18	0	0	" ditto Butter	4 14 1		
" Wages and Salaries	103	4	0	" ditto Whey	2 17 0		
" Horse Feed	17	0	9	" ditto Cream, Cakes, etc.	220	4	11
" Pig Feed	9	3	0	" ditto Pigs	52	4	9
" Coal, Oil and Candles	31	1	0		2471	20	10
" Stationery, Printing and Advertising	9	4	8	By Dividends received	15	2	0
" Repairs and Renewals	26	2	8	" Stock on hand, 31st May, 1891	319	11	8
" Rent	27	0	0	" Balance Forward, Decr 30th			
" Discounts and Allowances	20	2	8	November, 1890	269	17	4
" Bank Interest and Charges	24	10	0	" Add Loss for Half-year ending	282	1	7
" Carriage and Freight	184	19	8	31st May, 1891	372	19	0
" Local Expenses	4	0	0				
" Packages, etc.	14	14	0				
" Sundries	18	19	2				
" Analysts' Fees	3	2	0				
" Depreciation of Plant	31	0	0				
" Written off Preliminary Expenses, &c.	10	0	0				
" Bad Debts	50	0	0				
" Loss on Birmingham Depo.	21	10	1				
	210	17	0				
	210	17	0				

This shows a loss of £282 1s 7d. for the half year to 31st May.

In the London Gazette of Sept. 2nd. 1892 there was the following entry:

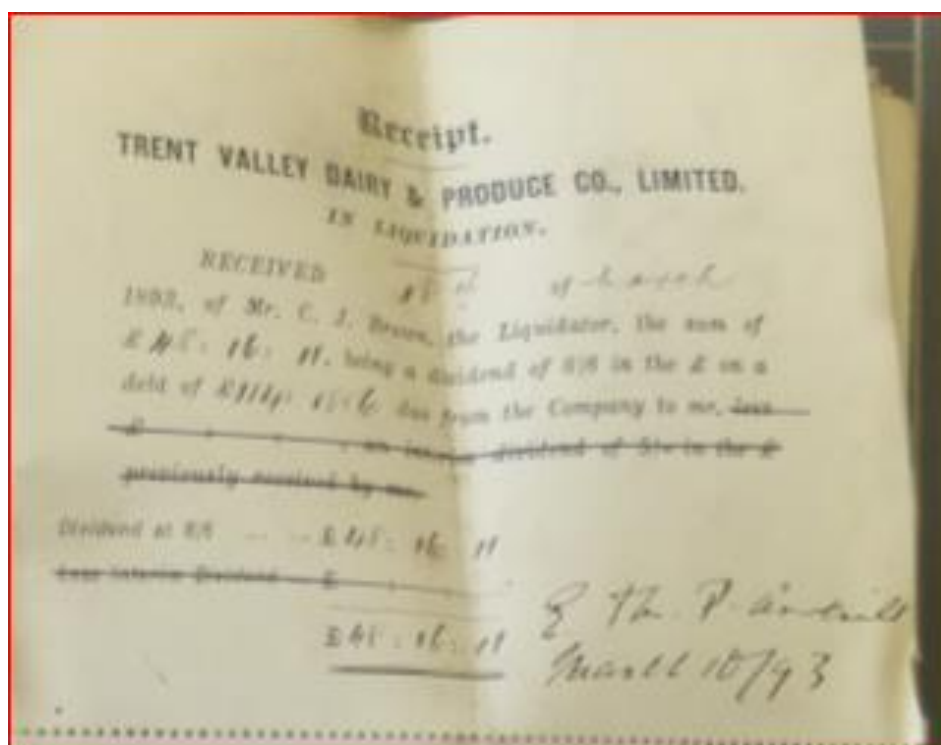
Trent Valley Dairy and Produce Company Limited

At an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Members of the abovenamed Company, duly convened, and held at the offices of Hinckley, Hodson and Brown, Bird St., Lichfield in the county of Stafford, on the 25th day of August, 1892, the following Extraordinary Resolutions were duly passed:-

1. "That it has been proved to the satisfaction of this meeting that the Company cannot, by reason of its liabilities, continue its business, and that it is advisable to wind up the same, and that the Company will be wound up voluntarily.
2. "That Christopher James Brown, of the City of Lichfield, Solicitor, be and is hereby appointed Liquidator of the Company for the purposes of such winding up"

HINCKLEY, HODSON, and BROWN, Solicitors

The creditors, as can be seen from this receipt, received 8/6d in the pound.



The company therefore only lasted seven years. The problem though seems to have been with the management of the company, rather than with the basic business idea, as Kelly's Trade Directory for 1896 lists the following business at the Wharf: Edwards F.C. Limited (Charles H. Boden, Manager) wholesale milk dealers, The Creamery. So it appears that Edwards Creameries bought up the factory, and this business lasted there well into the 1930s, eventually becoming part of United Dairies.

For nearly forty years the Creameries was the largest single employer in Kings Bromley Parish. The idea of a creamery taking milk from local farms, processing it, and delivering cream all over the country, was a sound one. In another document the history of Edwards Creameries will be set out. A.S.H.