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HIGHLIGHTS

A New Name
A New Website
A New Vision
From the Archives
Events
Art & Photos

the CHaT magazine

CHRISTMAS 2019

CHANCE HERITAGE TRUST

the CHaT magazine

CHANCE HERITAGE TRUST

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Chance Heritage Trust

www.chanceht.org

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the CHaT magazine

... is a free and occasional publication aimed primarily at subscribers of the Chance Heritage Trust (CHT). Your contributions are welcome: please send articles, letters, thoughts, anecdotes to the Editor (editor@chanceht.org).

Photos are especially helpful! Please ensure these are photoed or scanned at high resolution (300dpi is suggested) for the optimum result.

Editorial CHaT

Hello and Seasonal Greetings. Welcome to the first edition of CHaT magazine, a free and occasional publication for anyone interested in preserving the industrial heritage of Sandwell and its environs.

To begin with, the main focus of attention was on the Chance Brothers glassworks but this has now expanded to many other endangered buildings in need of restoration and re-purposing. More news of this in future issues.

In this issue we deal with the three main topics that have surfaced and can now be revealed: the change of name to **Chance Heritage Trust**; the new website at **www.ChanceHT.org** and, finally, the conversion of the Trust to a **CBS** (Community Benefit Society). It can now be revealed that Shares will be available from 29th February 2020, with prices starting a just £20.

Although these subjects are quite heady stuff, as the name of the magazine infers we welcome contributions from anyone, whether it is in the form of words or pictures. Any interesting story will be considered for publication so please email editor@chanceht.org. If you have any pictures please forward them in the highest quality possible. Your input counts.

We hope you find this new magazine enjoyable – let us know what you think.

David Encill

Below: The Chance glassworks, c.1850

A NEW NAME

We still love the glassworks and there is a huge amount of work going on in the background to move this amazing project forward.

However, many of you know the Chance Glass Works Heritage Trust was set up with the intention of regenerating the Chance Glassworks and other heritage assets in Sandwell.

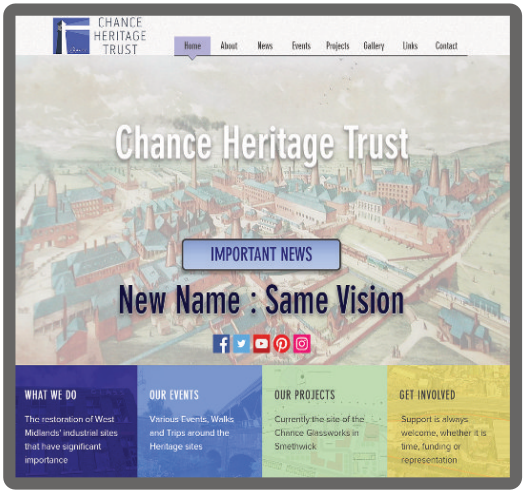
While we were updating our website, to avoid confusion and more effectively reflect that aim, the Trustees have decided to change the Trust's name to the **Chance Heritage Trust**.

The Trustees were very keen to keep the Chance name given its importance to the area and the significant contribution Chance Brothers made to the local community, which the new name continues to recognise and celebrate.

A NEW WEBSITE

If you didn't know already, then Chance Heritage Trust has a new website! Compatible with Computers and Mobiles.

Go to www.chanceht.org for more details.



Find us on: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest & Instagram

A NEW VISION

‘We want to create a vibrant environment for business and the local community. A place where people can work, live and play’

The Chance Heritage Trust is also converting to a Charitable Community Benefit Society (CBS). What does that mean we hear you ask? The Trust believe it is crucial for local people – and those further afield, to have the opportunity to be involved directly and have a voice in the future direction of the Trust.

The important point is that a CBS is owned and run by its members on a basis of **one member one vote** which means there is complete equality for each shareholder whether large or small.

Changing to a CBS is a really exciting turning point in the Trust’s future and we will be announcing more news on this and details of how to become a shareholder over the coming months!

What is a Community Benefit Society?

A community benefit society (CBS) is a relatively new entity, brought about by the Cooperative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014. A CBS is run mainly for the benefit of the community at large, rather than just its members. It must have an overall community purpose which reaches beyond just its membership.

Democratic decision-making is built into the structure of a CBS allowing YOU to have a say. The charitable CBS has all the tax benefits of a charity, but it can pay out interest on share capital, though not dividends on any surpluses.

The saving and restoration of the Chance glassworks was always about the community – and the community includes not only the past and present residents of Smethwick and the wider borough of Sandwell, but all the greater Chance family, of former employees and their descendants, fans of lighthouses around the globe, lovers of the Midlands and its industrial heritage, and glass aficionados worldwide.

Is your company interested in becoming a Corporate Partner?

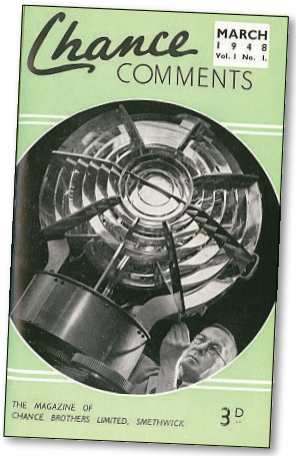
Please contact info@ChanceHT.org for more details

CHANCE COMMENTS, Sept. 1948

This page draws on the amazing amount of information that is available from the files of Chance Comments, the Chance Brothers' in-house magazine that ran from March 1948 (see cover, right) until 1964.

From the September 1948 issue we learn of a competition where the workforce was asked to judge their top six pressed glass designs from the twelve examples in the photo (below).

The prize for the first three winners was £5, £3 and £2; as a guide £1 is worth approximately £36 today.



Scan from Chance Comments courtesy Smethwick Heritage Centre

These patterns are all undocumented, but one example has been unearthed by a collector that bears similarities to Pattern B – see below.

Do you recognise any of these patterns? We look forward to seeing a photo if you have an example.

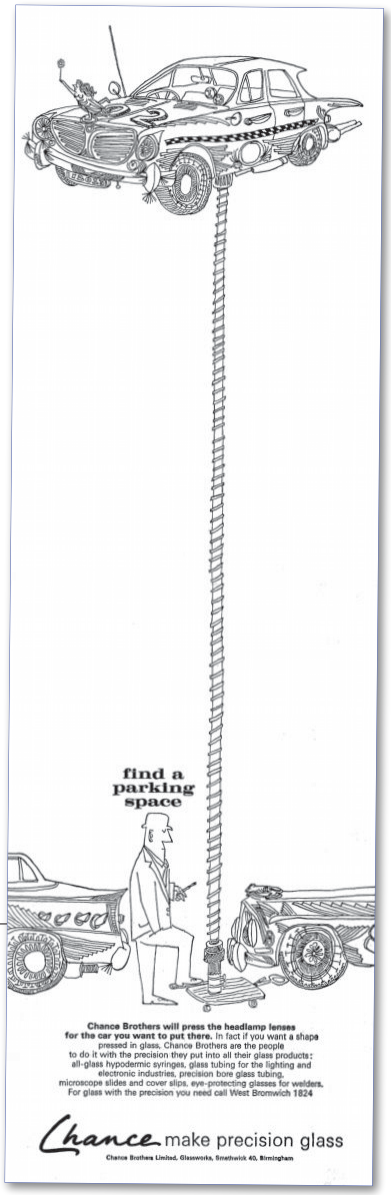
Courtesy Stuart Summers

FROM THE ARCHIVES

From the 1940s until the 1960s, Chance Brothers ran a series of adverts through *The Times* newspaper.

This particular one, dated 1964, is advertising the pressed glass headlamp lenses that Chance produced, with its most prominent customer being Lucas Industries.

Above: The moulds in action, with a finished lens at the front. The pressed glass lenses bore no identification marks apart from the Lucas brand name.

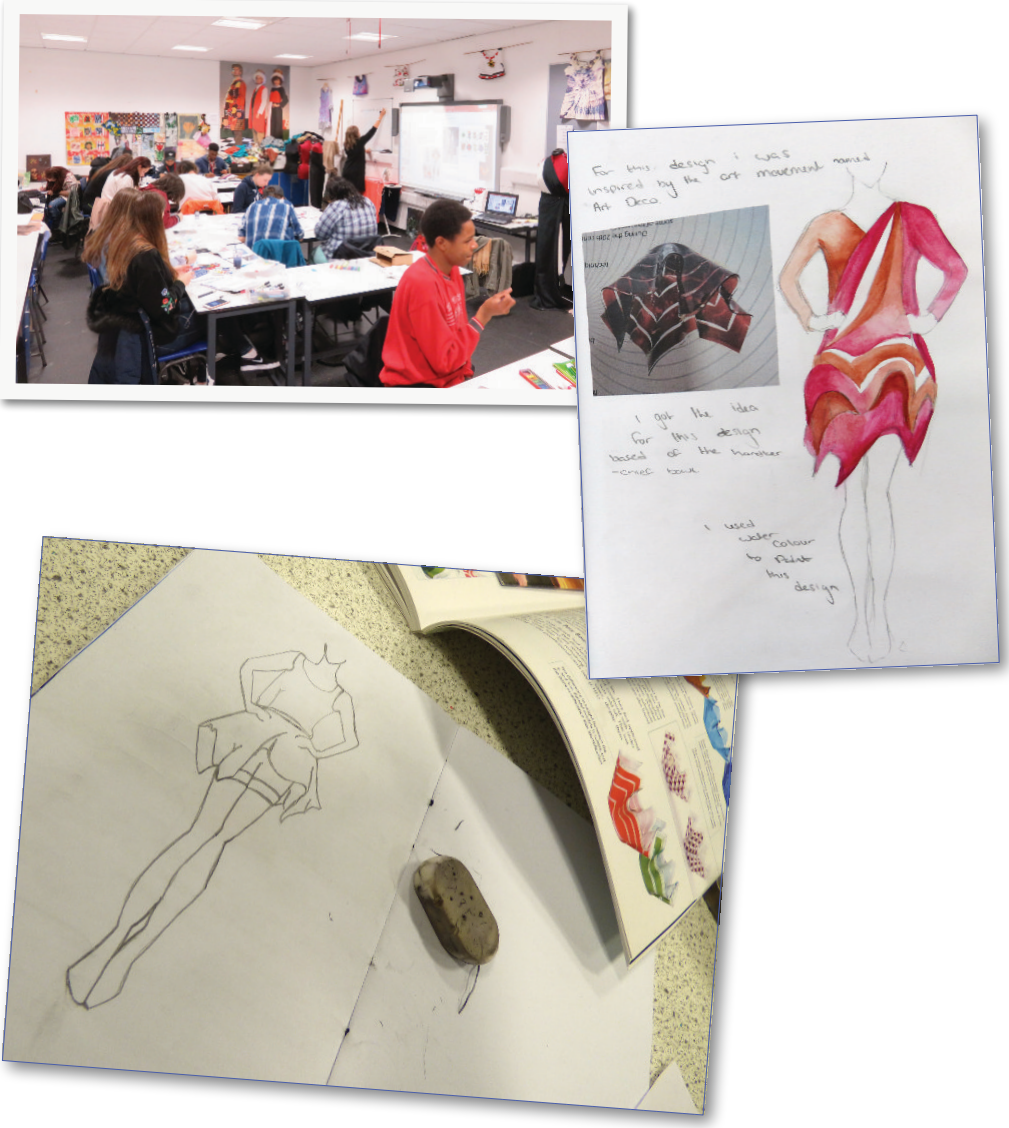


Below: Chance also produced the rear brake and indicator lights, here shown on an Austin A35.

ART

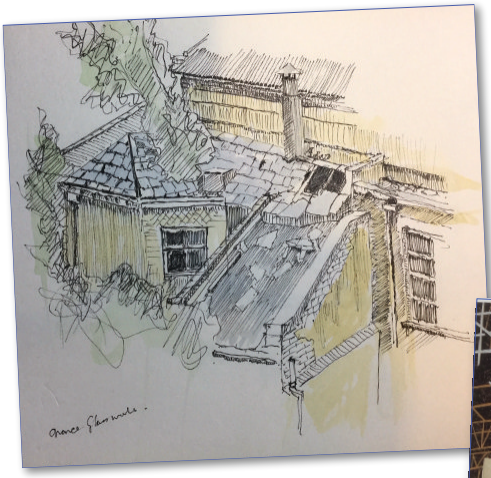
Following a brief given to young students at Bournville College of Art, with the inspiration being Chance Brothers, there were many highly original ideas to evolve. This is how students interpreted the humble handkerchief vase when applied to fashion!

See the next issue when lighthouses are re-imagined.



ART

From Andy Tromans of the Black Country Urban Sketchers came the following excellent sketches from around the Chance Brothers' glassworks.



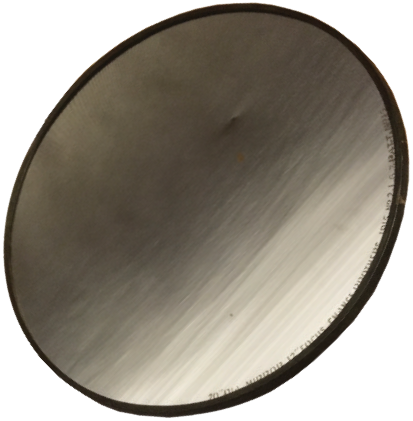
All images are © Andy Tromans

EVERY IMAGE TELLS A STORY

Since forming in 2015, the Chance Heritage Trust has received many exciting and highly regarded contributions in the form of artefacts and ephemera.

First off, **Louella Hudson** kindly donated letters written about her great-uncle Albert Wood (right in photo with his brother), a Chance Brothers' Lighthouse Engineer, when he died whilst working on the lighthouse at Little Quoin Island off Muscat after contracting an illness.

Next is a sample box donated by **Nick Cornbeam** whose grandfather was an architect. The box is complete with the original rolled plate glass samples, which were carried by Chance salesmen. These are highly collectable when the wooden box is included and what a fine example it is!



Another fabulous contribution was a huge 20in. (38cm) parabolic mirror dated 1915 that was produced by Chance for searchlights and donated by **Malcolm Anning**. This equipment was used during World War I to highlight incoming Zeppelins that would wreak havoc on London. During World War II the searchlights were used again, this time for spotting Luftwaffe bomber planes.

We also do not forget the late **Alan Taylor**, whose immense legacy came in the form of glass, apparatus and ephemera.

FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS

Smethwick Heritage Centre's exhibition of Chance Brothers material in the Chance Room at Lightwoods Park.

If you have news on any forthcoming exhibition related to Chance Brothers, please let us know and we will include mention on the website and in future issues of this magazine.

NEWS IN SHORT

The Trust is currently looking into the possibility of obtaining a grant to enable the completion of the **Chance Brothers Archive** that is currently held at Sandwell Library. With a bit of luck and a dollop of expertise from Henry Chance, it is hoped to reconcile and centralise many other Chance archives from around the country.

Wednesbury Museum's excellent exhibition of Chance Brothers' materials ran from August to the end of November.

Sandwell College's photo department did a project on Chance Brothers, for which there are sure to be plenty of photos.

A talk on the history of **West Smethwick Park**. A 125th anniversary celebration is also being planned.

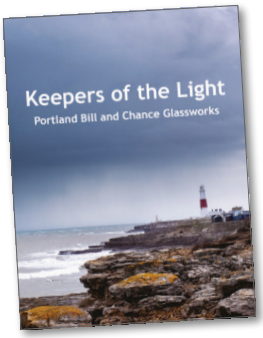
The recent book launch on Portland Lighthouse & Chance Brothers, **Keepers of the Light**, is worth a mention: the guys are doing another soon (see next page).

Chasing Chances was a "pop up photographic event" at Wednesbury Museum & Art Gallery organised by Leanne O'Connor, who can still be contacted if you have any information on Chance Brothers, particularly about female workers.

Given the Chance was a political installation curated by Beatfreeks' 'Don't Settle' young curators aged 16–25, in response to the Chance Brothers' glassworks factory in Smethwick.

This event came in November, sadly before this magazine was released, but we look forward to any Chance-related attraction in the future.

KEEPERS OF THE LIGHT

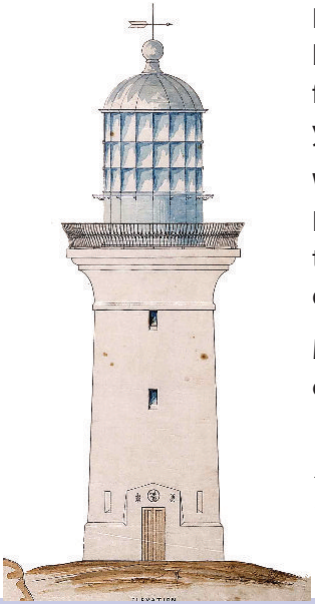


Recently, a fascinating new book was launched featuring the lighthouse at Portland Bill. Written and produced by two local artists, Brendan Jackson and Geoff Broadway, it tells the story of this iconic lighthouse – fitted with Chance optics, of course – and of those people who ran and maintained it.

For more information, click the following link:
www.brendanjackson.co.uk/work/keepers-of-the-light

Hardback 128pp, liberally illustrated with monochrome and colour photos. Priced at a very modest £12, it would make a great Christmas present – speaking of which ...

. . . A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM THE TRUST!



Finally, we would like to offer our best wishes to all our Chance friends, near and far. We also hope you all enjoy a wonderful New Year.

With the Share Issue agreed for 29th February 2020, the New Year is looking very rosy for the Trust as well. Keep looking at the website for more details: www.chanceht.org

Make sure you are registered with the Trust so that we canm keep you up to date with new developments.

Left: Montague Island Lighthouse
Courtesy National Archives Australia