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## *GlassCuts*

The informal email bulletin of the British Glass Foundation  
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### **SPECIAL FESTIVE 'PULL OUT AND KEEP' EDITION A Merry Christmas to all our *GlassCutters***

Our final scheduled edition before the festivities commence in earnest, and what a jam-packed stumper-bumper edition it is. Then again, what a year it has been out there in *Glassville*<sup>®GF</sup> ... can it get much better, one asks? Well, we remain optimistic that that by this time next year the shimmering opulence that is the Editorial suite at *GlassCuts Towers* may, just may, be relocated in a certain new purpose built facility somewhere near a canal. In the meantime, our grateful thanks for your support over the past twelve months - which has been fantastic - and a very Cool Yule to you all. Now let's see what we've got ...

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## Happy birthday and *muchos gracias*



*'First, the bad news. David Williams-Thomas is leaving the BGF. Now for the good news, David Williams-Thomas is joining the BGF. Thus its loss serendipitously becomes its gain.'*

Now, a sentence like that shouldn't be left unattended for too long, so let us quickly explain that on the 15<sup>th</sup> December David attained an age - no, we're not saying - whereby he felt he wished to stand down as a Trustee of the British Glass Foundation. Oh no! *Quelle catastrophe*. David's invariably sage counsel and consistently erudite contributions towards the day-to-day running of BGF from the outset have been considerable and, after recovering

from the surprise of the announcement, his fellow Trustees recognized the imperative to retain his services in some other way. *Et voilà!* It came to us in a flash.

Since its inauguration as a Trust in 2010, the British Glass Foundation has been seeking to appoint a person of *gravitas* within the world of glass and the wider world of commerce, who would act as a recognized figure for the Organisation as it grew and moved forward.

David Williams-Thomas is former Chairman and Managing Director of Stevens & Williams Ltd., which became Royal Brierley Crystal Ltd., world famous for its glass. Founded in 1846 the trading name of Stevens & Williams was used until 1930 when the company took the name of Royal Brierley Crystal to signify its appointment as the Royal British Glassmakers. David has extensive experience of financial management and is also a trustee of The Friends of Pershore Abbey. So, who better?

I think it is fair to say that when he accepted our invitation to become Patron of the BGF the sense of relief amongst us all was palpable. We are also unanimous in our belief that having David Williams-Thomas at our masthead will be a clear indication of how the British Glass Foundation has come of age. This is now our time and we will get the job done.

David Williams-Thomas assumes his Honorary role with immediate effect. Expect to see notices in the *meejah* sometime soon but, as always, we wanted loyal *GlassCuts* readers to hear about it first. Happy birthday David, and thank you.

## **IFoG 2015 update (1)**

On 3<sup>rd</sup> December last, in company with fellow Trustee Allister Malcolm, I attended the Ruskin Centre as part of the committee taking IFoG 2015 forward. We are henceforth the BGF representatives for the duration and we were delighted to confirm our ongoing support for this fine event that showcases the *Wonderful World of Glass*<sup>®GF</sup> to such spectacular effect. Part of our commitment will be to bring you all the news that is news as it happens. Allister and I can tell you already that things are taking shape and the programme is gaining traction, so watch this space for further developments. For the big picture click on [www.ifg.org.uk](http://www.ifg.org.uk)

## IFoG 2015 update (2) An appeal from *Da Management*

Here is an appeal - the International Festival of Glass is seeking sponsors. That's it. Just give them some money, no problem. Although if you really must know what's in it for you in return contact [patricia.russell@rmt.org](mailto:patricia.russell@rmt.org)

To h-encourage you to give generously, we have received this note from Igor the Axe-man, the BGF h-enforcer with the h-unspeccified speech h-impediment and severely limited h-intellect. He's tough, but he ain't too bright: *'Nah then you lot. Giv those luvverly folks at GoIF (Eh? Do you mean IFoG, you idiot? - Ed) lots of dosh. You woodn't want me to come round and break your baseball bat wiv my leg, wood ya? 'Ere, ang abaht, that don't sound right ...'*



### Hungary for information

From previous appearances in the pages of our modest little tome the name Peter Wren Howard is more usually associated with hi-spec developments in the furnace line but he does in fact effortlessly straddle the divide between cutting-edge technology and pure historical research. His latest contribution is a blinder and, whilst space in your fave-rave glass fanzine is always at a premium we reckon this deserves a full airing. Peter tells us:

*'Thank you for printing the old map in Glass Cuts 60, which I have printed off and checked out in detail, and its much more interesting than you realise. The glass cones that are drawn on a field marked as Stuarts are not at Hungary Hill as you suggest, but are actually bang on the site where Paul Tyzack got the very first successful coal fired glass furnace to run in Stourbridge in 1612, in a small area which is traditionally called Ravensitch. The place name is clearly marked on old maps but not on the one you have printed here.'*

*The area of Ravensitch can be located on modern maps as that area of the north bank of the river Stour that lies to the south of Stamford Road. It was until recently still known as Ravensitch by some of the older local people. Although not now in use for that area the name Ravensitch is still used as the name of a road in Brierley Hill. I did not know that the Ravensitch glass house survived as long as to appear on a map of this date.*



*Hungary Hill is on the other side of the river Stour to the South of Ravensitch. There were glass houses up Hungary Hill but I do not know the exact sites or dates, but they are not to be confused with the historic Ravensitch site, which in my completely impartial and objective opinion is where the industrial revolution really started, demonstrating that glass makers were well ahead in the game of achieving continuous coal fired furnace operation by over a hundred years.*

*By taking my scale as the distance between the bridge over the Stour to Amblecote as far as Coalbourn Brook (Webb Corbetts), and rotating the compass round the bridge, the distance to the cones drawn on the map is almost the same distance. This places the cones on Stamford Road right near where it is joined by Lickey Road and Mendip Road, just east of the civic amenity site, (the tip to you and me). It was on the north bank of the Stour that coal was easily accessible and all you needed to do to get a glasshouse going was to dig a hole in the ground. First you hit the black stuff and made a big pile of that, then you hit the white stuff which was Stourbridge fireclay, the highest quality plastic fireclay in the world, and from this you could make the furnace and the pots and you had already got the coal.*

As soon as Paul Tyzack sorted that out its no wonder they all started pouring into the area. It is very likely the whole of that section of the north bank of the Stour was wooded 400 years ago, and the name Ravensitch referred to its bird population.

Just to let you know that I am paying attention to *Glass Cuts*, and thank you for all the good work you do on it.' (Much appreciated - Ed)

With best wishes,  
Peter Wren Howard

OK all you history buffs out there; let's see who can top that lot. Ah, do I detect the sound of a gauntlet being thrown down? Usual address please; this one could run and run.

### Christmas *Friends* and frogs on wheels

My personal thanks to *Friends of Broadfield House Glass Museum* for their hospitality on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> December when they kindly invited me to address them, and my gratitude to those who extended me the courtesy of attending the splendid Cameo Room at Broadfield House to listen prior to us repairing *en masse* to the refreshment area for a quite magnificent repast.

I flatter myself that I made a half-decent contribution to a lovely pre-Christmas get-together, the report of which will be found elsewhere courtesy of Roger Noons. (*Many thanks for your kind words, Roger - GF*). But I can fair guarantee it will be a long time before a *Friends* presentation is again given by two pedigree pussycats assisted only by Yours Truly. What? I'm saying nothing more on that one, other than encouraging you to join *Friends* where in return for a modest annual subscription you can learn about this and the rest of their active social programme to your heart's content. [www.friendsofbroadfieldhouse.co.uk](http://www.friendsofbroadfieldhouse.co.uk)

I should also mention that I bumped into some lovely people here, none more so than glass enthusiast and *GlassCuts* reader Clive Manison who promised he'd pop something of interest down the electronic tubes when he got home. Sure enough, a few hours later and what should appear in my inbox but this tantalizingly cryptic note: '*Hi Graham, I promised you last night that I had a photo from the Webb Pattern Books that might be suitable for Glass Cuts. Here is one of the items produced for the Christmas market in 1880 ... when I have the time, I'll dig out some of the roller-skating frogs*' (!!! - Ed)



Roller-skating frogs? It just has to be *GlassCuts* for that one, chums. Can't wait. Ta, Clive.

## Watch this space, it's *Hot Stuff*

Richard and Sandra at Station Glass over in Leicestershire-ville often send out a 'round robin' to bring everyone up to speed and it is always a pleasure to hear their inevitably upbeat goings-on. Here is an extract from their latest, which also happens to neatly link in with the BGF and the efforts of a certain Trustee who happens to do a spot of glassblowing himself:

*We will be hosting the annual Hot Stuff event at the Station on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March when we will be joined by Allister Malcolm, the resident glassmaker at Broadfield House. The weekend promises to be exciting. Richard and Allister will make significant pieces as part of the British Glass Foundation's 'Celebrity Doodle' Campaign (see GCs passim). For those of you who can stay over it will be worth it as on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> the remains of Richard III (Research Dept: isn't he the one who recently got a car-park excess-charge fine for 7 million quid? - Ed) will return to the Bosworth Battlefield at the start of the journey to his final re-internment in Leicester Cathedral.*



These, as Sandra says, will indeed be 'significant pieces' for a significant event so put a reminder in your diary right now and see history unfurl for yourself. Station Glass, *az eny eeejut knose*, is based in the delightful Shenton Station, Dadlington Lane, Shenton Leicestershire CV13 6DJ. Full festive season details including opening times at [www.stationglass.com](http://www.stationglass.com)

## Money matters

*When I was young I thought that money was the most important thing in life; now that I am old I know that it is* - Oscar Wilde. You can't argue with Our Oscar. Usual address please.

*Please note:* In recognizing donors and acknowledging their support, *GlassCuts* generally will not reveal either the details of the donor or the amount donated unless the donor indicates otherwise or the circumstances are in the public domain or public interest. This does not preclude the possibility of details, including the amount donated and/or the donor's particulars, appearing elsewhere in BGF material.

## And finally ...

### Something understood

Although he died almost a decade ago H Jack Haden is still fondly remembered as a man of Stourbridge and local historian *par excellence*. Indeed, it could be said that if you wanted to know something about the area and Jack didn't know anything about it then what you were seeking probably didn't exist. Jack was an avid collector of, well, just about anything really, and I understand it took Fieldings Auctioneers several days even to catalogue his stuff, let alone sell it. Yep, they don't make 'em like Jack anymore and I could only dream in vain of ever knowing but a fraction of what he spent a lifetime cramming into his little grey cells.

So I couldn't help reminiscing fondly about the man when I visited the Webb Corbett Visitor Centre recently and Heritage Officer Ian Dury shoved my way a copy of Jack's *Notes on the Stourbridge Glass Trade* with the comment: 'Take a look at page 33'. So I did.

Published by Dudley Public Libraries way back in 1977 one might suspect much would be by now somewhat dated. But not so, and I was taken aback by the prescience of some of the Old Master's observations as he waxes lyrical, almost poetically, yet without descending to the maudlin. This typically pithy extract in particular:

*'To me it has long been a source of amazement and I might add regret that some examples of the work of great craftsmen and artists such as these have not been collected and housed in a place of honour somewhere in the Stourbridge district. I know that individual firms like to keep some fine pieces in their showrooms but I sometimes wonder if they would not serve a more useful purpose for the industry as a whole if they went on show together. If it is ever decided to establish a really worthy collection of locally made glassware it is to be hoped that there will be no bickering over where it shall be exhibited but that everyone will cooperate to stage a display which will be a credit to a fine old industry'*

Back at the head of this issue we celebrated the appointment of a man who will help steer the BGF forward in its endeavours to do precisely Jack's bidding. Yet to also reflect that somewhere in another less earthly world there is a man who may be looking down upon our humble efforts with the twinkling gleam of a 'told you so' in his sharp eyes is utterly compelling. Our task transcends any conscious choice or expression of free will on our part; quite simply, it just has to be done.

Whatever deity you choose to believe in, may He or She bless you at this festive time as, on behalf of the British Glass Foundation and the team here in the shimmering opulence that is *GlassCuts Towers*, I wish you a very Crystal Christmas and a Glassy New Year.



### **Dates for your diary**

#### ***Events & Exhibitions at Broadfield House Glass Museum***

[www.dudley.gov.uk/see-and-do/museums/glass-museum/](http://www.dudley.gov.uk/see-and-do/museums/glass-museum/)

See *Friends*, below

#### ***Events and Exhibitions at Red House Glass Cone***

[www.dudley.gov.uk/see-and-do/museums/red-house-glass-cone/](http://www.dudley.gov.uk/see-and-do/museums/red-house-glass-cone/)

20<sup>th</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2014

Santa at the Cone

***Elsewhere around the highways and byways of Glassville***<sup>©GF</sup>

9<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> February 2015, commencing 11:00am daily  
Halesowen Over-50s Club, Halesowen College, Whittingham Road B63 3NA  
Dr Kate Round: *Women in the Glass Industry*, an illustrated presentation (*featured GC60*)  
Visitors welcome; contact Vanessa Buffery 0121 602 7769 or [ybuffery@halesowen.ac.uk](mailto:ybuffery@halesowen.ac.uk)

21<sup>st</sup> March 2015  
Station Glass, Dadlington Lane, Shenton Leicestershire CV13 6DJ  
*Hot Stuff* including making pieces for the 'Celebrity Doodle' Campaign (*see feature above*)  
[www.stationglass.com](http://www.stationglass.com)

25<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> May 2015  
Various sites but focusing on Ruskin Glass Centre, Amblecote DY8 4HF  
International Festival of Glass and British Glass Biennale (*featured GC54*)  
[www.ifg.org.uk](http://www.ifg.org.uk)

14<sup>th</sup> March - 5<sup>th</sup> May 2015  
Pyramid Gallery, 43 Stonegate, York YO1 8AW  
Contemporary Glass Society. RIPPLES - Glass Inspired by Nature (*featured GC59*)  
[www.cgs.org.uk](http://www.cgs.org.uk)

25<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> May 2015  
Wordsley Methodist Church, Stream Road, Kingswinford DY6 9NP  
*Brunnell Astley* exhibition of contemporary glass.  
[https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B7TeOZSCgiNoREIJcHNCYm81bDZDUTZsbTBXUEp2OW84bzU0/edit?usp=drive\\_web](https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B7TeOZSCgiNoREIJcHNCYm81bDZDUTZsbTBXUEp2OW84bzU0/edit?usp=drive_web)

***From Friends of BHGM***

Events are usually held at Broadfield House Glass Museum unless otherwise stated. Costs vary as indicated. Further details from *Friends* direct. [www.friendsofbroadfieldhouse.co.uk](http://www.friendsofbroadfieldhouse.co.uk)

24<sup>th</sup> January 2015, 1:30pm  
*An afternoon at the 'flicks'*. A selection of movies; ice cream interval, tea and biscuits. £5.00

26<sup>th</sup> February 2015, 7:30pm  
*Vintage Fountain Pens and Writing Equipment* with Mark Hill. Bring a suitable item for free valuation. Cost £10.00

**Bulletin Board**

Since *GlassCuts* was last on air we have also been notified of ...

*Alan J. Poole's Glass Newsletter*, December edn.  
End-of-season issue with festive slant. Next out February 2015. [alanjpoole@ajpglass.co.uk](mailto:alanjpoole@ajpglass.co.uk)

*Balman Gallery 'email' flyer*  
Promoting art in various expressions, including glass. [www.balmangallery.com](http://www.balmangallery.com)

*Unknown* by Alison Kinnaird MBE. Exhibition touring throughout Scotland 2015-2016  
'The artist's response to the present state or conflict in so many parts of the world. Glass seemed to be the ideal medium ...' Details: [www.alisonkinnaird.com/unknown.pdf](http://www.alisonkinnaird.com/unknown.pdf)

More soon. In the meantime, Keep it Glass.

Graham Fisher  
Press & Publicity,  
pp British Glass Foundation  
[www.britishglassfoundation.org.uk](http://www.britishglassfoundation.org.uk)

#### The White House survey (featured GC58)

Please now spare few moments to click on <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/96BDTV7> and complete the survey form. Thanks.



These are the QR codes for the British Glass Foundation (left) and Virgin Money Giving (right).

Scanning with a suitably enabled mobile or hand-held device will escort you directly to the websites, where you can either browse the work of the BGF or make a donation.

Devices of recent manufacture will most likely already have the necessary software built in. Older devices may require a download, usually free. If difficulties are encountered, contact your provider and not, please, BGF.



#### Disclaimers 'n stuff

Some years ago I wrote a piece with a Christmas theme featuring Prince Xavier Moonstrut the 3<sup>rd</sup> who ruled over the mythical land of Spottyfacia. It's final paragraph went: '*Hallo Xavier*' said the elderly General, attired as usual in his white frock and angel wings. '*We're not all mad, y'know. I've been out all day selling Christmas trees and I've just got this one left. Where do you think I could stick it?*' So now you know, dear friends, why the fairy sits on top of your Christmas tree. Merry Christmas from all in Ward 6'.

In the unlikely event you may be intrigued as to how this stage of epic lunacy was attained then let me show you my analyst's report. In the meantime I thought we would give our *Disclaimer* a bit of a festive feel.

*GlassCuts* is the advent calendar of the British Glass Foundation. It is compiled by a team of androgynous snow-people (*what's the difference between snowmen and snowwomen? Snowballs*) and has no other function than to convey good cheer, celebrate the virgin birth (*didn't happen anywhere near Tipton, then? - Ed*) and maybe even say a bit about glass. Whilst every effort is made to ensure Good King Wenceslas gets his Christmas pizza deep-pan crisp and even, (*boom boom!*) no responsibility etc etc ... (*usual caveats apply*)

This email is sent to you via a team of reindeer on the basis that you appear on our list of those who worked out that the recently uncovered grave of thousands of massacred snowmen was in fact a field of carrots (*easy mistake to make - Ed*). However, if you do not wish to receive further *GlassCuts* then either bombard us with last year's stale mince pies or send us an email via a partridge in a pear tree marked '*we're walking in the air*' to [bgf@britishglassfoundation.org.uk](mailto:bgf@britishglassfoundation.org.uk). A brief indication as to why we have ended up spatchcocked on your plate would be appreciated.

I met a sweet little old lady at the cashpoint getting her Christmas pension. '*Can you check my balance?*' she asked. So I gave her a shove and over she went; no problem. In somewhat more charitable vein, BGF welcomes onward transmission of its cinnamon-spiced little missive to anyone you feel may be festively cheered. If you know someone who may appreciate it as that ideal last-minute Christmas gift then please feel free to forward it. Similarly, if you have anything you consider may be of interest to our fellow *wassailers* then send it to BGF at the usual address.

We finish with a practical tip for making the perfect seasonal pumpkin pie. First, take your pumpkin, then measure its circumference and divide by the radius. Serves 3, and there's always a bit left over. (*Pi - geddit?*) Now be fair, that one is clever. And you can tell its Christmas because the Easter eggs are on sale in Thornton's. Have a good one, all the same.

