



## HIGHLIGHTS

War Memorial  
Centenary Rededication



## Chance Heritage Trust

[www.chanceht.org](http://www.chanceht.org)

CBS Registered No: 8180

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Toby Chance

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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 [editor@chanceht.org](mailto:editor@chanceht.org)

Photos are especially helpful! Please ensure these are photoed or scanned at high resolution for optimum result.

Photos are best sent as JPG or PNG, and without cropping if possible.

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Chance Heritage Trust

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### Front Cover:

*The Chance Brothers' War Memorial*

## Editorial CHaT

The main feature for this issue covers the re-dedication of the Chance Brothers' War Memorial, which is situated on the old school buildings at the entrance to Crystal Drive.

It was a healthy turn out with about thirty people attending and the weather was very kind to us, being sunny, warm and bright. A full report is given on pages 6–8.

A fascinating account is given by Mary Iles in Australia on one of the largest sheets of plate glass ever produced by Chance Brothers (see page 12 and 13).

The effects of Coronavirus are now in a stage of flux so it is difficult to forecast future events, particularly with an increase in infections always being likely. Henry and I have already been booked for a presentation at the Bournville Society on 3<sup>rd</sup> November and at the Friends of Dudley Archives on the 4<sup>th</sup> November (see News page), so hopefully these will still proceed as planned. Thankfully, unlike a bus, a third invitation didn't arrive at the same time.

Meanwhile, the Trust is still managing its affairs and progressing plans despite everything. News of the Share Issue will be given shortly, so if you are interested in supporting the Trust with its aims, then please follow the Facebook pages or subscribe via our website so that we can keep you informed.

As always, we are keen to hear from anyone with a news story, preferably with photographs although this is not essential. Any topic relating to Chance Brothers is welcome.

*David Encill*

**Last Minute News:** Some rather disturbing news came to our attention about someone using the Trust's name to falsely elicit items from eBay sellers – see back page.





## LIGHTHOUSES

### Point Cabrillo, USA

Laura Rogers writes on our Facebook page:

*On our recent July 4th 245th US Independence Day, I was privileged to show off and educate visitors about our beautiful 3rd Order Fresnel lens from Chance, installed in 1909 at the Point Cabrillo Light Station in Mendocino, California USA. Still operating as an Active Aid To Navigation, it's the highlight of a visit at our California State Park.*

*Our lens almost casts a spell as it turns and sparkles 24/7, no matter the weather. It shines the light over 12–15 miles of rocky shoreline on our part of the Northern California Redwood Coast.*

*The light is lovingly maintained by USCG-trained volunteers of the Auxiliary Flotilla Nº 86. And all of our Point Cabrillo Light Keepers non-profit members love it greatly, as I do. I know that we do our best to ensure the light will continue to function long into the future. And we are grateful to Chance Brothers for her excellent manufacture. Shining the light into darkness is always a good thing!*

See: [www.pointcabrillo.org](http://www.pointcabrillo.org) for more details



### McCrae Lighthouse, Australia

Also on Facebook was the announcement of a \$1 million (Aus) grant (approximately £540,000) from Heritage Victoria in Australia that was recently granted to the McCrae Lighthouse Restoration Project.

The current lighthouse was built at the Chance Brothers glassworks in 1874, transported to Australia and assembled in McCrae in 1883. This new restoration will return it to its former glory, both inside and out.

The Chance optic is a 3<sup>rd</sup> Order dioptric holophotel lens that was only decommissioned in 1994.

See: <https://bit.ly/3hLFDEH> for more details.

*Right: The McCrae lighthouse optics assembly could only be accessed by climbing up inside the central column*



### Chance Glass, As Seen On TV:

For a recent episode of [Flog It!](#) on BBC2, the Southwold lighthouse was visited, Series 12, episode 38, from 18mins 53 seconds. Details of this lighthouse will be featured in the next issue of CHaT

Channel 4 showed a one hour documentary [Big Ben: Restoring the World-Famous Clock](#), which included the replacement of the opal-flashed glass that was originally supplied by Chance Brothers for the clock faces – that's 324 pieces per face!

Lastly, Channel 5 ran a three-part series [Lighthouses: Building the Impossible](#) on three famous lighthouses.

Click the links to see the programmes online.



## CHANCE MEMORIAL CENTENARY RE-DEDICATION



On the 6<sup>th</sup> September 1921, the Chance War memorial was installed to commemorate those who had fallen during World War I. Following the end of World War II the plaque was altered to include those men who had fallen during this conflict.

On Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2021 a group of family members and invited guests held a rededication of the Chance World War One memorial, to celebrate the centenary of the first ceremony.

Fortunately, the weather was on our side and the entire ceremony was bathed in sun. The turnout was also good, with representations from the Chance family, the council – including the mayor – the Trust, the British Legion and many invited guests.

The proceedings started with the reading of Laurence Binyon's immortal lines from his poem, *For the Fallen*:

*They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them.*



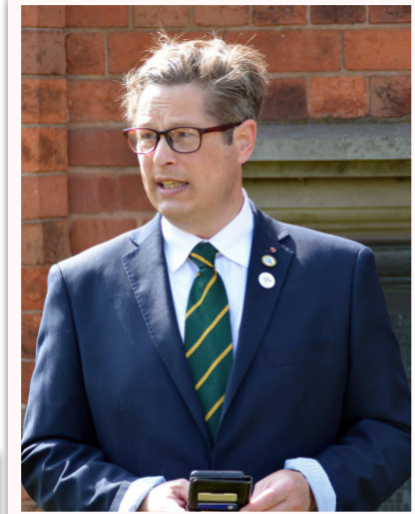
This was read by the flag bearer and President of the Oldbury British Legion, David Williams (*above*), which was followed by an excellent rendition of *The Last Post*, played by Jodie Birch (*right*).

Following an introduction from Henry Chance (*right*) who provided background information on the Memorial, wreaths were then laid by the Mayor of Sandwell, Mushtaq Hussain, Councillor Singh Gill and Bob Evetts, the chairman of the Friends of West Smethwick Park (*below*).



Sir Sebastian Chance (*right*) then spoke movingly of the family's personal sacrifice during World War One.

*Contd. over*







This was followed with a moving tribute by Katie Cave-Browne-Cave (*left*, a Chance family member) to her parents, who unstintingly supported charities of all types during their lifetimes. Katie bought along their original account book which showed some fascinating entries.

The proceedings were completed with Narinder Singh Rai reading the names of the fallen for both wars. Finally, Mark Davies, the Chairman to the Trust, gave us some background to the history of Chance Brothers and of the Trust itself.



*Above: Mark Davies chatting with Ray Drury, the Chief Engineer at Chance Brothers until 1976.*

*From the left: The Mayor's Consort, Mayor Mushtaq Hussain, Henry Chance, Sir Sebastian Chance, Councillor Singh Gill*



## MEET THE DIRECTORS

### John Montague

John is the Managing Director of Social Business Development.

Social Business Development works across the public/private and social economy sectors to establish value-led partnerships that can deliver scale, sustainability and improved social impact in the UK.

John has worked in the Social Business sector for over twenty years creating and growing social businesses and was for seven years a director at The Big Issue Group.

John is a non-executive director of a number of social businesses and charities across the UK. John is passionate about providing opportunities and support to areas of society that are being under-served by current public services.

With an engineering degree from Liverpool University John worked for Kier and then Mowlem and was involved in numerous construction projects across the UK. In 1999 John set up a construction social enterprise in the East Midland which grew to a £13m turnover before integrating into two social housing organisations.

In 2012 John joined Big Issue Invest and by 2013 was elevated to Managing Director for the TBI Group to strengthen and develop its infrastructure. John has a passion for Victorian engineering. Delivering value to individuals/communities that are not necessarily being supported and given opportunity, is a driving ethos for him.

John also holds a number of Trustee and NED roles for charities and Social enterprises across the UK and runs a small Consultancy that supports the development of Community and Social business.



## MICHAEL HARRIS



Michael Harris was still a student at the Royal College of Arts (RCA) when he submitted his design through a competition organised by Chance Brothers for RCA students in 1959. He then became a tutor at the RCA in 1962 before leaving in 1968 to set up Mdina Glass in Malta. He moved on to found Isle of Wight Studio Glass in 1972 when the political situation in Malta became unpredictable, but he returned to the Maltese island of Gozo to form another art glass company in 1989. This venture was sadly cut short when he died in 1994, although his legacy has survived and all his companies still produce high-quality hand-crafted studio glass to this day. The photo (left) was taken at the time of Michael's graduation from

the RCA.

Although Harris' contribution to the Fiesta ware range was only two patterns, commercially they were both highly (arguably the most) successful and were seen on a wide variety of shapes and sizes.

### Calypto, 1959

Initially launched at the Blackpool Gifts and Fancy Goods Fair in 1959, Calypto, which was named after the eucalyptus leaf, was another design that endured. Like Swirl, it started life as a "Deffa" print and then later was applied by silk-screen printing. Calypto was still being produced by Fiesta Glass Ltd until about 2000, along with the more luxurious gold-patterned variant that only appears to have been produced after 1970.

*Left: A rare 7-in. tall Blue Calypto opal-flashed handkerchief vase.*

*Right: The imposing "Giraffe" Carafe decorated with Calypto.*



### Anemone, 1965

Harris followed on from his success with Calypto with the Anemone pattern in 1965, this time as a private commission. Anemone was one of the first full-colour prints that could be successfully fired onto glass without dulling the reds.

The pattern was produced exclusively for Chance Brothers by Johnson Matthey.

The Anemone pattern proved very popular in Japan for a few years, with exports amounting to £10,000 per month (over £100,000 today) to a single company in Japan. This would come to a sudden halt when it was believed that the company found an alternative home-brewed example in Osaka.



Another outlet was to South Africa in 1974, where a single order amounting to £16,500 was taken – approximately £170,500 today.

Anemone was another pattern that endured and was also sold by Fiesta Glass Ltd from 1981 for several years.



*Above: A publicity photo for the Anemone range that was used for the newspaper report of the £16,500 sale to South Africa.*

*Left: A scarce powder bowl decorated in Anemone.*



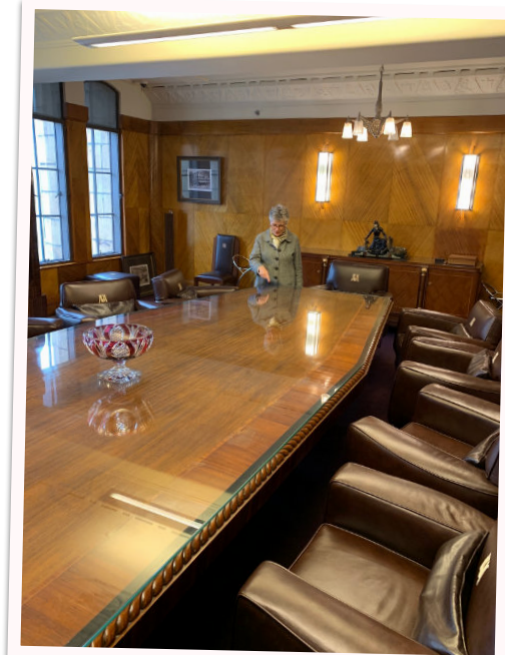
## AN AUSTRALIAN TABLE

Mary Iles from Australia kindly contacted us about an extraordinary sheet of glass that was made by Chance Brothers in 1932. Mary writes:

*I am Sir Hugh Chance's granddaughter and Toby and Sebastian Chance's first cousin, so a dedicated Chance glass lover. I have lived in Australia since 1973 and it is amazing what you can turn up when you look!*

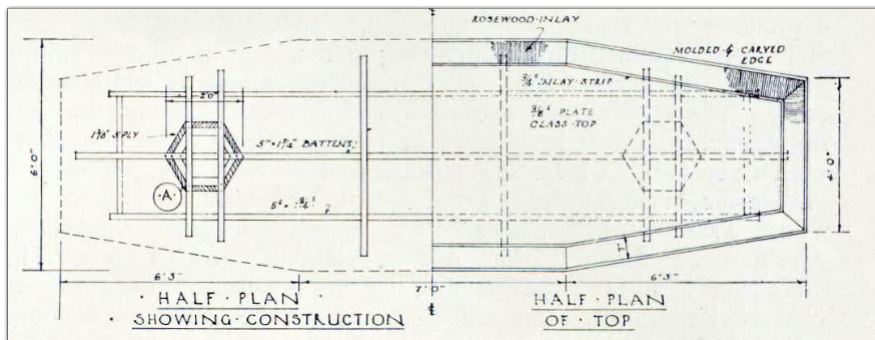
*I have recently discovered a piece of Chance glass in Melbourne, Australia. A 5.95-meter piece of plate glass weighing 320kilos for the board room table at the Manchester Unity building which was shipped out on a floating bed of molasses.*

*When the building was under construction in the 1930s, the glass was lowered to Level 11 through the ceiling as it was too big to fit through any doorways or windows. It has survived all of the building's refurbishments and cannot be moved because it is too big!*



Mary Iles seen at the head of the table

*A drawing of the table top as it appeared in Building magazine, 12<sup>th</sup> September 1932*



The magnificent Manchester Unity building has a mixture of Art Deco architecture with Gothic influences

*The table base was built in situ from Australian timber, but the glass had to be imported from Chance Brothers as there was no Australian manufacturer who could make such a huge piece.*

*The building was the most quickly constructed building in Australia at the time. This was largely due to the Depression. Labour was cheap, workers lined up at the building every day seeking work and construction continued twenty-four hours a day in three, eight-hour shifts.*

The exact overall dimensions of the plate glass are 19½ × 6-ft. (5.95 × 1.83m) and ⅜-in. (9.5mm) thick, weighing approximately 700lbs (317kg).

An interesting factoid found on the Manchester Unity website:

The site of the Manchester Unity Building was first bought in an early land sales for the price of £35. In 1928, MU IOOF paid £335,000 for the site, making just one square foot worth more than the whole block had cost originally.

## ACQUISITIONS

### Chance Commemorative Menu, 1951

One very hard to find item of Chance memorabilia is the 1951 glass-faced menu was kindly donated by Rod Ross, whose grandfather Gilbert Ross was the Harbour Engineer at Blyth from 1924 to 1954. Thanks Ross for a very generous donation.

It is believed that only 500 were ever produced for the centenary of the Lighthouse Department, held at the Savoy Hotel. The guest list was so large that it had to be spread over two nights.

The beauty of this item is hard to visualise with just a single photo, but the ruby cover is screen printed in gilt with an image of Sir James Timmins Chance, and the rear printed in white on signal-green glass with an image of the first "modern" lighthouse, the ill-fated first Eddystone lighthouse of 1697.

The two colours, ruby and signal-green, are the two tints used for signal navigation lamps.

Sadly, within three years of the celebratory dinner, the Lighthouse department was closed during Pilkington's period of "rationalisation".

### The Farley Family

One very interesting piece of news came from Peter Farley, who informed us that not only was he born in Spon Lane, but actually in one of the cottages that feature in the 1857 illustration, adjacent to the old school buildings.



Peter's family have a long history working for Chance through several generations.



## NEWS & EVENTS

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> November, Henry Chance and David Encill will be presenting a talk on the history of the company to The Bournville Society. Hot on the heels of this, a talk is to be given to the Friends of Dudley Archives on the 4<sup>th</sup>. We are, of course, in the lap of the Gods concerning any spike in Coronavirus infections!

One interesting fact is that Bournville Society's Secretary, Elizabeth Shutt, is related to the original founder (Thomas Shutt) of the British Crown Glass Co. This company immediately preceded Chance Brothers and was formed in 1814.

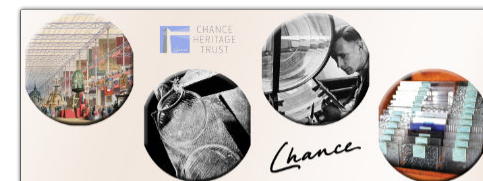
### Facebook Pages

Due to the previous confusion that arose from the two very similar Facebook pages, this has now been addressed as follows: we now have three pages each having very identifiable banners:

All matters relating to collectable items, whether glass or not, can be [found here](#):



For any topic of historical interest, which could also include some collectables, then please [see this page](#):



Finally, the page relating to Chance Heritage Trust topics, such as news about the site, regeneration, funding, and such, is still at [its original place](#):



Do you have any news you would like to include? Please contact us: [info@chanceht.org](mailto:info@chanceht.org)



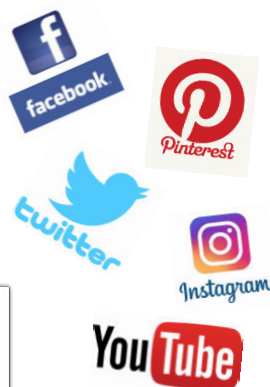
# UPDATES

## Social Media

Plenty of new activity on our new Facebook pages!

Please see the previous page for details of the changes to the new pages, which are designed to target specific areas of interest relating to Chance Brothers and the Trust.

If you like the pages, then please 'LIKE' them: your support is appreciated!



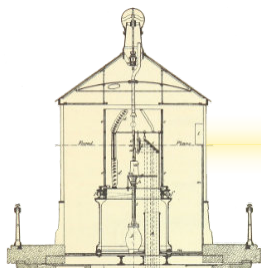
Management of these pages is now carried out by a team of people: Mark Davies, Henry Chance, Narinder Singh Rai, David Encill and Stuart Summers.

## WARNING!

It has come to our notice that someone has been using the Trust's name to falsely elicit items from eBay sellers.

We take a very dim view of these actions and we will take further action should it be repeated.

If you spot anything that looks suspicious we would be grateful if you could email [info@chanceht.org](mailto:info@chanceht.org) with the seller's reference.



Do you have an interesting story to tell? Mail me at [editor@chanceht.org](mailto:editor@chanceht.org).

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