

## Research into John Brogden and Sons

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My interest in John Brogden, his businesses and his family stems from the shared surname; we are not known to be directly related. Because of his entrepreneurial activities as a railway pioneer, he has attracted the interest of several railway historians. This is fortunate for students of his family history for there appears to be a great deal of information available. In this paper, I set out the sources known to me, along with a family tree. The genealogy of John Brogden has not to my knowledge been published, other than in brief outline, and the following family tree summarises the information currently available from various sources, especially Leslie Gilpin (on the railway aspects), Leonard Higgins (on the South Wales enterprises) and John Brogden of York (on the genealogy). I am very grateful to these researchers and to the several others who sent me their notes. There is much to do to verify and clarify the details and to find out more about John Brogden's ancestors and successors. Some of the story can be found on the website: [www.brogden.info](http://www.brogden.info) and as more information comes to light it will be added to the site.

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The story of John Brogden (1798 – 1869) is of an energetic entrepreneur who progressed from being the son of a Lancashire farmer (who progressed from tenant farming to owner-occupancy) via horse breeding, street cleaning contracts in Manchester and London, constructing and promoting railways, mining and iron production in Staffordshire and South Wales, other civil engineering projects at home and abroad (including Holland, Australia, South America and New Zealand) and forming in 1846 a trading partnership with several of his sons that was very successful for several years. All this was achieved without formal training as an engineer although he did receive grammar schooling in Clitheroe. He seems to have had the knack of choosing his workers well and of being well trusted by his backers. Smiles (1872) writes of his energy, drive and daring. Even allowing for Smiles' Victorian hyperbole, John Brogden's funding and construction of the Ulverston to Lancaster railway with its difficult route around Morecambe Bay (a project which the great George Stephenson contemplated but did not proceed with) marks a high point in his career. It enabled his own iron ore to be transported more easily from Barrow and paved the way for Barrow's prosperity. John Brogden's is not quite a *rags* to riches story but it is a remarkable one, never-the-less.

John's death in 1869 preceded the company's decline in fortunes but the high levels of borrowing to finance expansion began to be problematic when the expected profits from the New Zealand enterprises, the depression in the iron and coal industries and expensive litigation, some within the family itself, took their toll. In fact, cash flow may already have become a problem before John's death as his will provided for delays in the payments of his daughters' inheritances for five years. In the event, the younger daughter had to sue the brothers to gain her dues.

John's second son, Alexander (JP; MP) had become company chairman. By 1878 the South Wales interests were in receivership; the company was dissolved in 1880 and two of the sons filed for bankruptcy in 1884. Fourth son James rescued the Brogden's reputation in South Wales after the bankruptcy by continuing to work with his wife Mary on the development of Porthcawl as a port and town. The Brogdens are remembered fondly in the area, including in street names and the Brogden Hotel. There are also commemorative street names in the Manchester area, such as Brogden Grove in Sale.

The fifth son, George, being too young to join the partnership when it was established, later made his own way as a successful civil engineer and colliery owner and was thus not drawn into his brothers' downfall.

John Brogden had seven grandchildren and four of these were males to carry the surname forward. It has not yet proved possible to find any male great-grandchildren. Grandson Arthur seems to have had no children; James had a daughter, Edith; Duncan Dunbar, who spent a few years in the army in India and died relatively young, appears not to have married; George Alexander Reynard who became a family doctor in Southampton, may be the G.A.Reynard Brogden who married in 1894 (there can't be many Brogdens with the name Reynard) but we do not know whether there were any offspring. For the moment, it would appear that the branch of the Brogdens that produced John Brogden and his enterprising sons, had run out of male heirs by the end of the 1930s.

Of the female lines, little is currently known, other than through the descendants of Samuel Budgett who married John Brogden's elder daughter, Sarah Hannah. His agreement to act as a trustee to John Brogden's will brought him financial disaster. His descendants, Robin E Brogden Budgett (see note on last page) and David A Budgett have maintained a strong interest in the John Brogden history.

Mike Brogden  
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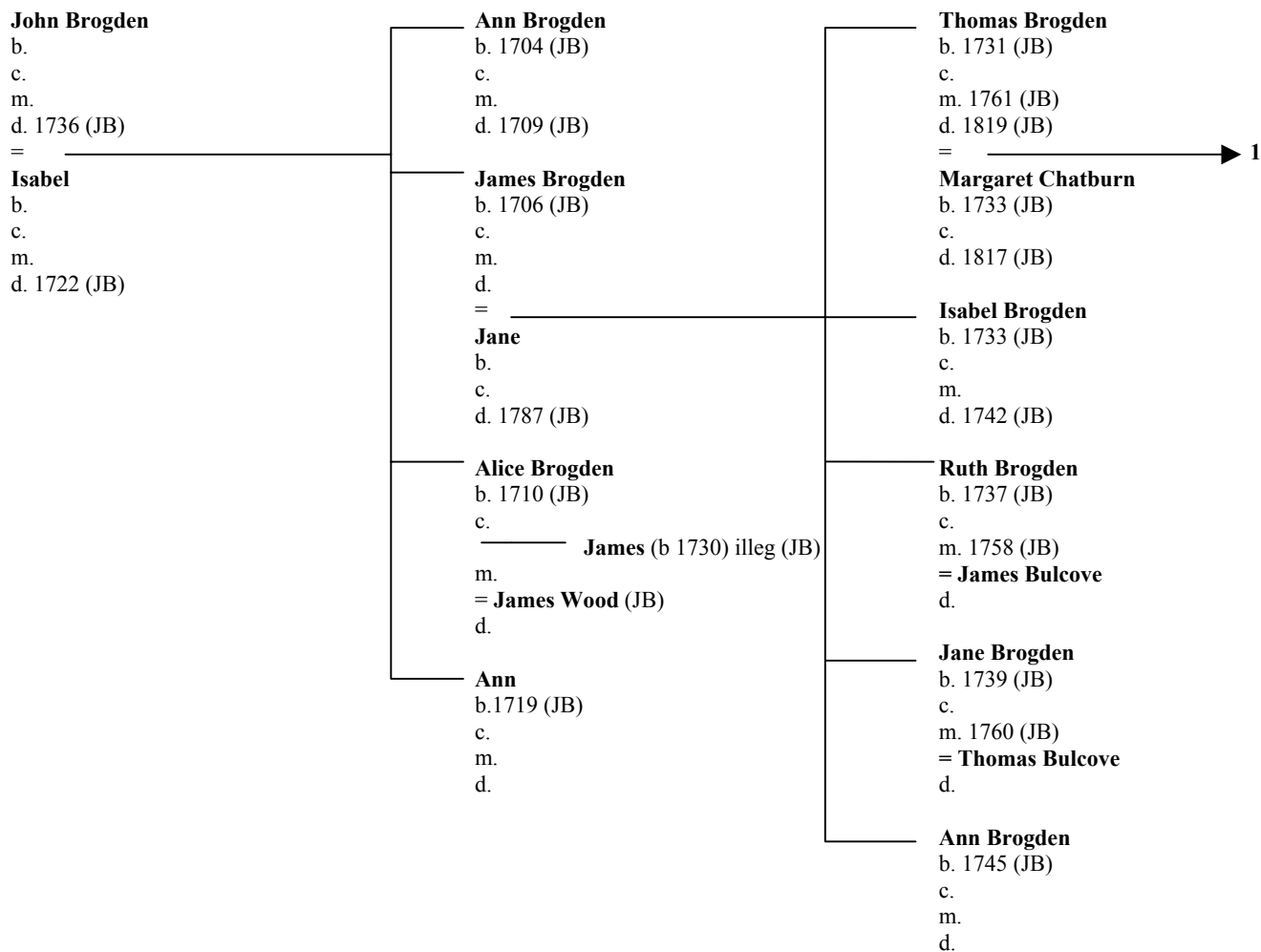
## List of Sources

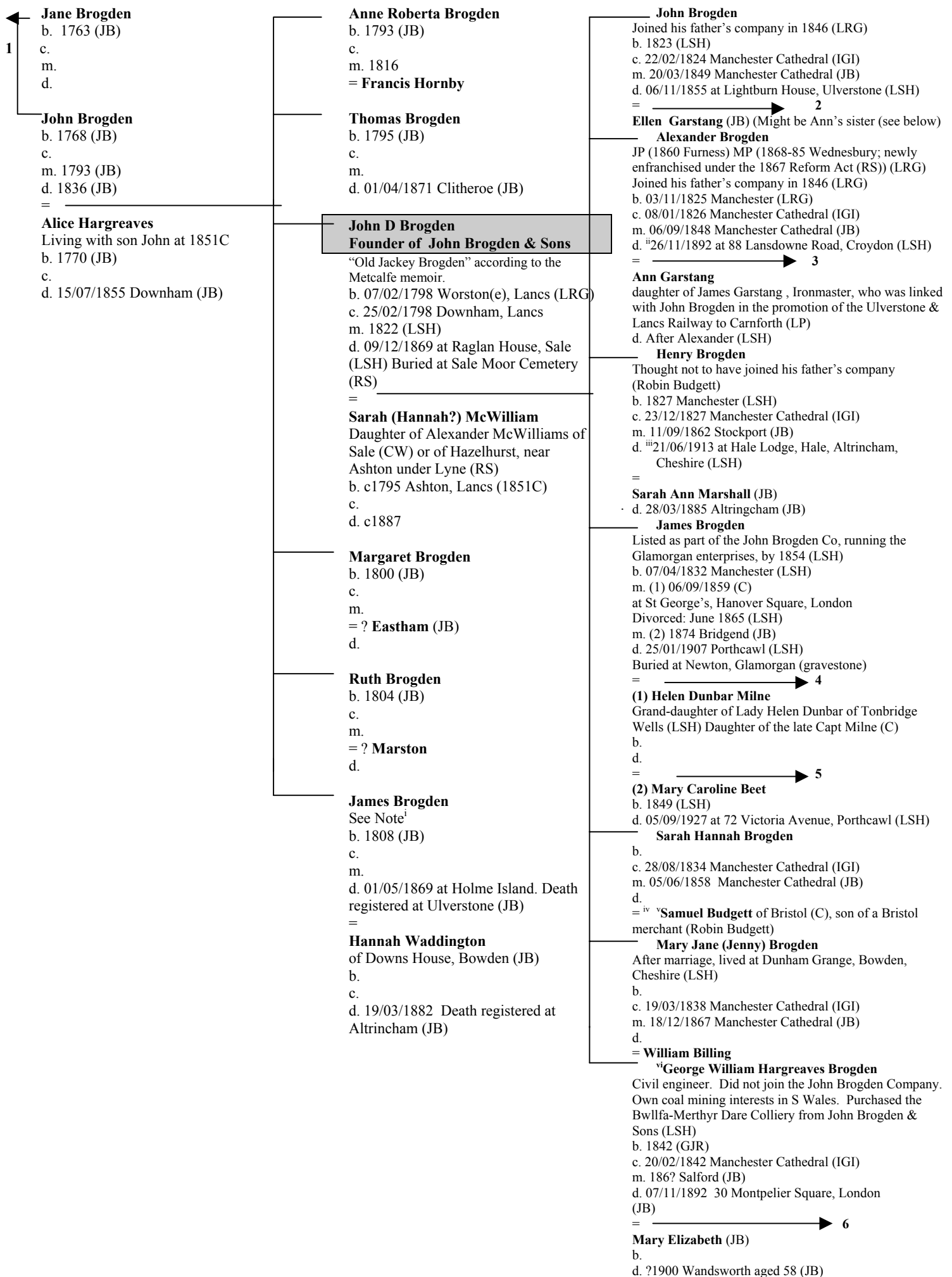
Author	Date	Title	Publisher	Notes
Arnold R	1981	The Farthest Promised Land	Victoria University Press	English immigration to NZ; Ch 1 on the 'Brogden Navvies'
Brogden J	Various	Unpublished genealogical studies		John Brogden (of York) has gathered a considerable amount of genealogical info on Brogdens in the UK
Budgett REB	1995	The SS John Brogden		Note compiled by Robin Budgett on the collier owned by John Brogden & Sons and which operated out of Porthcawl
Cambrian	Various			Newspaper published in Swansea
Dixon F	1972	The Manchester South Junction & Altrincham Railway	Oakwood Press	pp 8-9 on John Brogden & the Altrincham branch
Flint G		Sir Robert Price; in Glamorgan Historian Vol 11		Sir Robert Price sold his iron & coal company to John Brogden & Sons
Gilpin LR	1988	John Brogden of Manchester; in Cumbrian Railways Vol 3 no 15		John Brogden's successful expansion
Gilpin LR	1989	The Bustling Alexander; in Cumbrian Railways Vol 4 no 6		Alexander Brogden's role and the collapse of the company
"Gratiano"	1907	A Bit of Furness History Recalled	Barrow News: 20/01/1907	Largely a summary of Smiles (below) but with more info on the railway construction
Higgins LS	1968	Newton, Nottage & Porthcawl (from Prehistoric times to 1950)	Gomerian Press	pp 80 – 84 on the Porthcawl Docks & the Brogdens
Higgins LS	1964	The Rise & Decline of Porthcawl Dock; in Mariner's Mirror, Vol 50 no 4		pp 323-326 on the Porthcawl Docks & the Brogdens. Mostly the same article as LSH 1968
Higgins LS	1974	John Brogden & Sons; in Glamorgan Historian Vol 10		pp 148-156 Substantial article and photos re Brogdens in Wales
Higgins LS	1978	The Brogden Pioneers of the Early Industrial Development in Mid-Glamorgan; Nat Lib Wales Journal Vol XX No 3 Summer 1978		pp 241-252 Most useful summary of the ups and downs of the company, plus information on the family members
		A Gazetteer of the Railway Contractors & Engineers of Wales & the Borders 1830-1914	The Melledgen Press	Notes provided by Eileen Gooch
	1914?	Annual Report of the Council of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society (Vol LVIII 1913-14)		Note on the life and death of Henry Brogden, son of John
Metcalfe T	1939	"What I know of the greatly respected Brogden family ..."		Memoir written by the head gardener of the Brocklebank family (in JB's possession)
Morgan A	1987	Porthcawl, Newton & Nottage	D. Brown & Sons	Several references to the Brogdens in the Porthcawl area
Morgan A	1975	Porthcawl: Its History & Development	Alun Morgan	Ch 9 on the Brogdens in Porthcawl
Morgan KE	1996	Around Porthcawl, Newton & Nottage	Tempus	Collection of photographs with some text & references to the Brogdens in Porthcawl
Morganwg D	1874	Hanes Morganwg (History of Glamorgan)	Jenkin Howell	pp 57-63 for list of mines owned by John Brogden & Sons
Newhill J	1994	Ashton & Sale in 1841	Ashton & Sale Historical Soc	Notes provided by Jacqui Taylor
Newhill J	2000	The Story of Sale 1806 - 1876	John Newhill	Notes provided by Jacqui Taylor
Pearson K	2002/3	Draft chapters for a book on Fell's railways		Several links with the Brogdens
Phillips E	1925	A History of the Pioneers of the Welsh Coalfield	Cardiff Western Mail	Ch 28 on the Brogdens
Popplewell L (Ed)		A Gazetteer of the Railway Contractors & Engineers of Northern England 1830-1914	?	Lists contracts awarded to the Brogdens (Notes provided by Eileen Gooch)
Rees GJ	1997	Tondu House: A History of Ownership and Tenants	GJ Rees	The house in Glamorgan: Ch 3 on James Brogden (1854-c1875) who is thought to have rebuilt it.
Smiles R	1872	Memoir of the Late John Brogden; reprinted from "Furness: Past and Present"	J Richardson: Barow in Furness	Extract from Richardson's 2-volume "Furness: Past & Present" Written with typical Victorian hyperbole.
Southern P	2002	Sale & Sale Moor	Tempus	Notes provided by Jacqui Taylor
Swain NV	1987	A History of Sale from the Earliest Times	Sigma Press	Notes provided by Jacqui Taylor
Western Daily Press	1886	Chancery Division: Billing v. Brogden		Incomplete press report of c23/02/1866 re Jenny Brogden's claims for her inheritance under John Brogden's will.
Wilks C	1903	The History of the Iron, Steel, Tinplate & Other Trades of Wales	Tyst Office Publications	pp 356-358 on the Brogdens in Wales

**Genealogy:  
John Brogden  
(1798 – 1869)**

Founder of John Brogden & Sons

The following abbreviations are used in the compilation of the family tree:  
**b.** born; **c.** christened; **m. &** = married; **d.** died; eg **1851C** census information  
**JB:** John Brogden's genealogical researches; **C:** The Cambrian (newspaper);  
**LRG:** LR Gilpin; **LSH:** LS Higgins; **TM:** the Tom Metcalfe memoir  
 (see List of Sources on page 2)





2

← **Arthur John Brogden**  
 Arthur and Nelly were taken in by Uncle Alexander when their father died in 1855 (TM)  
 After the “great loss of money, took to the church” (TM)  
 b. 05/04/1854 Ulverstone (JB)  
 c. 19/05/1854 Manchester Cathedral (JB)  
 m. 1876 St George’s, Hanover Square (JB)  
 d. 25/12//1885 Bucklands Hotel, Middlesex (JB)  
 =  
**Maria Augusta**  
 Widow of Revd Arthur John (JB)  
 Remarried a Capt Cameron in 1887 and went to India (TM )  
 ← **Mary Ellen (Nelly) Brogden**  
 b. 1856 Ulverstone (JB)  
 c. 29/09/1856 Manchester Cathedral (JB)  
 m. 1878 Ulverston (JB)  
 d. 1936 (JB)  
 = <sup>viii</sup>**Brocklebank** (JB)

3

← **James Garstang Brogden**  
 BA (Cantab) 1873; MA (Cantab) 1877 (JB)  
 b. 15/07/1850 (JB)  
 c. 30/09/1850 Manchester Cathedral  
 m. 1877 (JB)  
 d. 1885 (LSH)  
 =  
 ?

← **Edith Garstang Brogden**  
 b. 1878 Ulverston (JB)  
 m. 1902 West Derby (JB)  
 d.  
 =  
 ?

← **Ann Edith Brogden**  
 b. 1856 Ulverstone (JB)  
 c.  
 m. 1891 Wandsworth, London (JB)  
 = **Kensington** (JB)  
 d.

4

← **Duncan Dunbar Brogden**  
 Second Lieutenant in 1882. Served in Royal West Sussex Regiment in Malta and posted to India in Jan 1886 (LSH)  
 b. 12/01/1861 at Tondur (C)  
 c. 06/04/1861 at Glamorgan (JB)  
 m.  
 d. 1898 Brighton (JB)

5

← **Lucy Eleanor Brogden**  
 Remembered in Porthcawl as a breeder of dogs. (Robin Budgett)  
 b. 1875 (JB)  
 c. St George’s, Hanover Sq (JB)  
 m.  
 d. 16/02/1954 at Rose Cottage, Philadelphia Road, Porthcawl (LSH)

6

← **George Alexander Reynard Brogden**  
 BA (Cantab) 1890; MB (Edinburgh) 1899; MD (Edinburgh) 1904. Captain in Royal Army Medical Corps in WWI. Of Shirley Road, Southampton in 1936 Medical Directory (JB) The Metcalfe memoir says that “Georgie” Brogden became a doctor.  
 b. 1865 Hampstead (JB)  
 c.  
 m. ?1894 Oldham (JB)  
 d. 30.07.1946 Leeds (JB)  
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 ?

## Notes

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<sup>i</sup> John's brother James became residential manager of land properties in Ireland (see Smiles 1872, page 10) in which John Brogden speculated and was a director. James' will dated 1868 (copy in JB's possession) gives his address at the time as Galtree Castle, Tipperary (now in the Irish Republic). It lists substantial bequests to his wife, brother, nephews and nieces indicating that he was a man of substantial means but without offspring of his own. Galtree/Galty Castle is mentioned as a Brogden family property in the Metcalfe memoir where they visited for the "shooting."

<sup>ii</sup> The Times of 29/11/1892 reported his death "under distressing circumstances. ... On Wednesday he was sitting by the fire and in attempting to stir it he fell forward against the grate, receiving severe burns to which he succumbed." "An inquest by the Croydon coroner returned a verdict of accidental death." The report refers to his 18 years as an MP but not to his career with John Brogden and Sons.

<sup>iii</sup> The Annual Report of the Council of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society (Vol LVIII 1913-14) describes Henry Brogden as "FGS, M Inst ME" ...elected a member of the society on 2 April 1861; educated at King's College, London; spent a year in the locomotive works of Messrs Stephenson & Co (Newcastle) where he "developed a liking for shop work;" had "a very complete workshop" at home; was the engineer for the high level bridge at Stockport, for the Llynvi and Ogmore Railway in S Wales, the Tondy Iron Works and Collieries and "other important works." Refers to John Brogden and Sons of "London, Manchester and South Wales" as amongst the "foremost railway contractors of the day" and carrying out "many important railway undertakings, not only in England, but in South America, Australia, New Zealand, Holland and other countries." "Mr Brogden was not the kind of man who makes history; retiring and unobtrusive, he filled his life with all sorts of hobbies ... a valued friend to those who had the pleasure of his acquaintance."

<sup>iv</sup> Samuel Budgett's descendent, David Budgett, in correspondence with JB in the 1980s, says his father "received some of Henry Brogden's things when he died."

<sup>v</sup> Samuel Budgett was a trustee in John Brogden's will for John's younger daughter Jenny. When she sued for her inheritance, Samuel was required to pay and to do so, he was forced to sell his share of the family wholesale grocers'

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business. Thus an innocent relative by marriage was drawn into the financial problems of John Brogden's sons. (Information from a conversation with Robin E Brogden Budgett; 2003) (See note below)

<sup>vi</sup> Robin Budgett was given the extra first name of Brogden in recognition of the influence upon his family not of John Brogden's disastrous will but of John's youngest son George William whose great interest in engineering led Robin's ancestors to become mining engineers. Robin has also given his son the Brogden accolade. (Information from a conversation with Robin E Brogden Budgett; 2003)

<sup>vii</sup> Mr Metcalfe, whose parents worked for the Brogdens, became head gardener to the Brocklebanks and wrote in 1939 a 12 page memoir, "What I know of the greatly respected Brogden family." The original document is in the possession of David Budgett who passed a copy to JB. Contact with David Budgett has recently been restored it is to be hoped that he will not mind that the memoir has been added to the Brogden website. The Brocklebanks had considerable shipping interests until relatively recently when they were bought out by another shipping line.