

Mason Road

Mason Road is on the north side of Kidderminster off the main road out to Bridgnorth.

So named after Sir Josiah Mason.

One of Kidderminster's most famous sons has been commemorated with a permanent reminder of his rags-to-riches story.

(An English Heritage Blue Plaque has been installed at his birth place in Mill Street and is now a thriving Café Masala Restaurant).

Born in a carpet weaving family in 1795 Josiah Mason sold cakes, fruit and vegetables on the street from the age of eight in order to buy books to educate himself.

He went on to become a leading Industrialist of his time and never forgot his humble origins, funding many projects to help the needy.

He set up a college which later became Birmingham University

He was Knighted for his Philanthropy in 1872.

As a teenager he tried his hand at shoemaking, Baking, Blacksmithing and Carpet Weaving.

But his life took off when he moved to Birmingham in 1816

He finally found his niche when he went to work for a pen manufacturer and eventually brought the business turning it into the largest producer of pen's in England

He was also at the forefront of Electro-nickel plating, Copper smelting and India-rubber ring making and quickly amassed a great fortune.

As he was virtually self-educated and taught himself to write when he was a shoe makers apprentice, He was keen to use his wealth to help the less fortunate and in 1860 spent £300,000 establishing an orphanage at Erdington.

He had previously given a Dispensary to his home town and an Almshouse in Erdington and in 1880 spent a further £250,000 creating Mason College which was later incorporated into Birmingham University.

One of the houses on Mason Road is called The Cedars which is now Kemp Hospice but was known as Blackbrook Cottage.

This was the home of Thomas Lea in 1841. The first part of the building dates back to 1750/1760 and was the home of John Broom one of the carpet pioneers.

Dale.