

40 YEARS AT THE POTTERS WHEEL

A SHROPSHIRE CRAFTSMAN OF THE OLD SCHOOL

MR. R. WHITMORE, BENTHALL TO RETIRE

The Wellington Journal and Shrewsbury News, February 20, 1937

Seventy-Four years old Mr. R Whitmore, of Benthall Lane, Benthall, which is in the ancient borough of Wenlock, who has been engaged in the making of pottery-the oldest of the arts known to man-is shortly to retire, but not until he has completed his work in connection with the fashioning of Coronation souvenirs.

He is engaged at one of the oldest pottery works, established over 200 years ago, and some of the present employees are third and fourth generation descendants of Shropshire potters.

Although Mr. Whitmore is not a direct Salopian-he was born at Bilston he can be claimed as one of the Shropshire potters, for he has been employed at the Benthall Potteries for 53 years, and for over 40 years he has been at the potters wheel, one of the oldest of the potters tools.

Professionally, he is styled as a "thrower", and when a JOURNAL representative called at the works this week, Mr. Whitmore had just "thrown" a lump of clay on the wheel and with his deft fingers was fashioning the desired article-a Coronation beaker.

Fragile cups, bowls, exquisitely shaped ornamental vases, tea-pots ready for the process of "baking" were on his bench, and they were all request hand-made articles.

In conversation which followed, the JOURNAL representative was informed of special Coronation orders had been received for hand-made souvenir cups and beakers, and it is on this work that Mr. Whitmore is at present engaged. He was on similar work for the Coronations of King Edward VII. and King George V.

An Expert

Although modern methods have been introduced, Mr Whitmore is still engaged on the old treadle-worked wooden wheel, which was at the works long before his day. No one dare challenge him at "throwing" for he is an expert in the shaping by hands, and his work has gone to various parts of the British Empire and foreign countries.

An expert from Stockholm, when speaking on the subject in England recently said "The



THE OLDEST "THROWER" at Benthall Pottery, Mr. Whitmore has been employed at this works for over 50 years, and intends to retire after the Coronation.



CORONATION MUGS being made by hand at Benthall Pottery, Broseley which is over 200 years old