

Benjamin Bray Murrell (1840-1920)

Like his brothers, Benjamin was born in Wivenhoe. He was born on the 24th April 1840 while his parents, William & Eliza, were still living on the High Street. Benjamin went to sea in March 1854 and again like his brothers he was taken under his father as a 'lad' on the *Fanny* for a year. He started his apprenticeship on the *Verda* under a Captain Milburn before completing it on the *Fanny* under his brother Joseph. He then sailed with his father on the *United* (the 1861 census shows him as a mate under his father on the *United* as a Ship at Sea) and William Bacon on the *Esperanza* as Mate, gaining his Masters Certificate (CN 25232) on the 3rd May 1867. He went on as master of the *Fanny*, *Verda*, *Hilda* and *J M Lockwood*, this latter ship belonging to J H Murrell & Co. Benjamin had been appointed Marine Superintendent to Otto Trenchmann & Co by 1891 and formed his own shipping company, Benjamin Bray Murrell & Co, which purchased the S.S. *Armenia* from William Gray in 1898 trading under the name of Armenia Steam Ship Co. of West Hartlepool. The steamer was sold in 1913.

Benjamin married Annie Eliza Heath in August 1871 in Wivenhoe. Annie was the eldest daughter of Charles Heath, Oyster merchant of Colne Willow, Park Road, The couple had six daughters; Annie Edith (1873-1925), May Heath (1874-1876), Lillian Maud (1877-1920), Minnie Sarah (1879-1880), Daisy Heath (b1881) and Frances (b1883) all born in Wivenhoe and one son born, Joseph Benjamin (1884-1885) in Hartlepool The 1881 census shows the family living on the High Street in Wivenhoe, in 1891 and 1901 they are shown at Neon House, Grange Road, Stanton. The 1894 Whellan's Directory lists 'Murrell, Benj.Bray, Shipowner (JHM & Co), Grange Road'. By the 1911 census the family had moved to Heathlands, 24 Clifton Avenue, West Hartlepool.

Eliza died aged 41 in Hartlepool in 1887 and is buried at Spion Kop Cemetery. Benjamin died, aged 79, in Hartlepool on 12th August, 1920.