

Samuel's Sundial



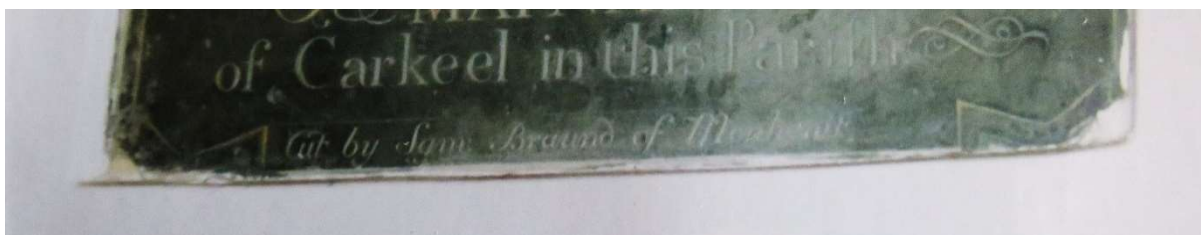
Samuel Braund, my 6x great grandfather, was born in Devon about 1716. He became a schoolmaster and moved to Menheniot in Cornwall. We only know that he was a schoolmaster because one of his pupils, James Chubb, became a Methodist preacher and was encouraged to write a diary. Most of the diary is about the sermons he preached and the people he converted but the first few pages are devoted to summarising his early life. In this account James Chubb says, *"I was being sent to Menheniott (sic) to learn writing, arithmetic, spelling etc.... I was writing and cyphering in 1763 at Mr Braund Menheniot."* The ecclesiastical visitations for 1745, the time of Samuel's arrival in Menheniot, mentioned that, *"There is a school house in the parish not endowed but the master died lately and a new one is but just come. The number of children at present*

taught is 27. There are some poor children to be taught to read by contribution amounting to £5 yearly."

We don't know where Samuel was educated, or why he decided to become a schoolmaster. In his twenties Samuel worked as a slate carver and it may be that this was something that he did alongside teaching, as he would have possessed the necessary literary skills. Samuel also served as Menheniot's parish clerk. Martin Johnson in his book *The Churchyard Carver's Art* (Elmcrest Publishing 1984) says, "people such as parish clerks and school teachers who had access to books and magazines, also did carving on a casual basis." There are several headstones in south-east Cornwall that have Samuel's signature carved on them. The earliest that has been found is Mary Martyn's in Calstock church, which dates from 1743.



Mary Maynard's Memorial in St. Stephen's Saltash



Samuel's Signature at the Bottom of the Maynard Memorial

In 1779, the churchwarden's accounts for St. Martin's, Liskeard, show that Samuel was paid £1 16s to carve the sundial that is now found over the church's porch. This would have used both Samuel's carving and his mathematical skills, as creating a sundial required a knowledge of gnomonics, if it was to be an accurate timepiece. Amongst many other fascinating bequests in Samuel's will he mentions, *"all my Arithmetic Books and Instruments to the same belonging, also my violin."* His obituary, in the *Sherbourne Mercury* of 5 September 1785, reads, *"Monday last died Mr Samuel Braund, clerk of the parish of Menheniot in Cornwall, a person not less distinguished by his singular talents than by the general worthiness of his character."*