

## Knutsford u3a Family & Social History group

### Meeting Report - 11<sup>th</sup> February 2022

#### "The Three Brown Brothers"

The group found **Allan Jones's** talk most entertaining. However it has to be said that the billing was for three brothers and we were short changed, we only got to hear about one of these brothers. The narrator took us from Montgomery, the village in Wales not the Field Marshall, where John Samuel Brown was initially an ironmonger, to Swansea, the Norwegian fjords and Vladivostock. We encountered a lady bicycle thief, Agnes Chapman, who managed to get off that charge but not the one relating to her unpaid hotel bills. For this, her sentence was one calendar month of hard labour. The theft of JSB's bicycle appeared to be the trigger for developing his expansion into bicycle sales and later, into car sales, which Allan managed to make very interesting for us. John Brown's first father in law was captain of the sloop *Isabella Hart* and sadly died of typhus in Barrow in Furness.

The next phase of the tale continued in a nautical fashion, Allan regaling us with naval yarns about JSB's son in law (Cdr. York McLeod Cleeves, RNR) whose ship HMT Warwickshire was sunk by German aircraft off Trondheim, Norway on 30 April 1940. Astonishingly, the trawler turned gunboat was raised by the German navy on 1 June 1940 and commissioned by them as NKi09/Alane. She was sunk a second time, on 19 July 1943 near Narvik, northern Norway by the Soviet submarine S-56. To our consternation, this vessel continues to exist today in a museum in Russia's far east. Allan assures us that he has plenty to say about the second and third Brown brothers, so if there are half as good as JSB, we will be in for a treat, again.

Many thanks to Allan Jones for this amusing and informative tale.

Roger Brown