

Hawley Collection Trust Newsletter

Winter 2017

SHEFFIELD PIONEERS – JOHN TASKER

Born in South Brent and christened in Ashburton, Devon in December 1818, John Tasker became a dealer in India rubber and guta percha and had a shop in Angel Street, Sheffield where he made and repaired shoes, galoshes and rubber goods.

In 1839 he formed the company Tasker Engineering, where he installed a generating station. He installed a telephone exchange at the shop and offered a service to other local shops. He built private exchanges for Queen Victoria at Windsor and Balmoral Castles and in 1878 he organised the first ever floodlit football match at Bramall Lane.

He purchased Portmahon Works and produced a range of grinding equipment, including heavy armour-plate grinders used round the world. His motto was “adaptability” and he was always full of ideas for the future.

The Telephone Company was bought by the National Telephone Company in 1888 and Sheffield Corporation purchased Tasker’s electricity generating undertaking in 1898. The company was trading in Blonk Street in 1900 where it remained until 1960. The company now known as Taskers UK Ltd continues to trade in Wincobank, Sheffield and is a contractor to many major companies.

AN UNUSUAL SATURDAY AFTERNOON

A visit to British Steel’s Scunthorpe Works enjoyed by Graham Dolan, one of our volunteer curators.

Arranged by the Appleby Frodingham Railway Preservation Society, this railway tour in two carriages circles the works twice, covering about 15 miles, and is suitable for everyone whether you are interested in industry, its archaeology or railways. Children can even ride in the engine cab after the tour!

For further details click [here](#)

WHAT’S IN A NAME?

Some confusing but amusing Sheffield tool and trade terms

High Speed Steel For making fast trains? Actually, a special alloy steel used in cutting tools. It does not lose its cutting edge when it heats up.

Nicker Pecker Nickname for hand file cutters; their hammering was likened to the sound of woodpeckers.

Sand Rat Affectionate name for a moulder, working in a foundry.



Stiddy and Devil A stiddy was the local name for an anvil used in the Sheffield tool and cutlery trades. A devil was used with the stiddy to straighten twisted blades.

Arseboard A wooden board slung from behind a tool grinder to serve as a seat. It extends forwards between his legs to the grinding wheel. His weight, when sitting on it, converts it into a powerful lever for pressing any objects to be ground, into the stone.

Mood The metal blank shaped or forged for a particular tool, a chisel for example.

Would you like to become a **FRIEND OF THE HAWLEY COLLECTION?** See website for details

GALLERY EXHIBITIONS

NEW - YORKSHIRE PUDDERS

An exhibition on the process and history of fine scissor-making in Sheffield



CONTINUING:

The Giant's Toolbox – an exhibition of oversized tools made for display

A - Z of Planes

UNIQUE!

A TOP TEN AT THE HAWLEY COLLECTION Selected by Ken Hawley

SMITHED HANDSAW PLATES - early 20th century, ex Francis Wood. Illustrating 'work in progress' in flattening, by hand, before grinding. Highly skilled work with anvil and hammer, worked cold.

JOINERS PLANE MAKING - The last handmade beechwood planes, anywhere, were made by Wm Marples, Sheffield in 1965. All the tools are in the Hawley Collection and are the only complete record of this once worldwide ancient and important industry, together with films at that time.

FOREIGN MEASURES - a box containing standards of length, from the mid 18th century, of every country in the world, in order to make boxwood rules, pre-metric, by Birmingham Plane Makers.

To be continued

VISITORS' COMMENTS

In 2016 there were comments from visitors from 30 different countries.

"The most interesting exhibition so far in the UK." FA Bolivia

"A wonderful collection!" JL Sydney, Australia

"My kids love it here, we come back at least twice a year." Mrs R, Hackenthorpe, Sheffield

"Making new discoveries of old skills, tools etc. each time we come. Fantastic progress since last year. We'll be back." B. Brighton

Website: www.hawleytoolcollection.com

You can now make a donation to help volunteers continue their preservation of the collection through Local Giving