

Business built on firm foundations

ONE of the headstones that still manages to stand out above the overgrowth at the old Lightcliffe Cemetery is the grave of Willie Brooke of Hill Top House, St Giles Road, Lightcliffe who was tragically killed in a railway accident at the Lightcliffe tunnel in August 1903.

Willie Brooke was one of the three sons of Joseph Brooke who was the founder of the Brookes' stone quarrying empire at Lightcliffe. It was Joseph who began commercial stone quarrying in the mid-19th century and it was known that Lightcliffe, Hove Edge and the surrounding areas were rich in stone beds. Joseph and his wife Grace had four children – Willie, Newton, Aspinall and a daughter Frances who died in September 1852, not yet one year old.

As the business began to take shape it was expected that Willie as the eldest son would eventually take over the day to day running of it. In January 1897 Willie, then aged 20, married Annie Sharpe, the daughter of Abraham Sharpe, a rope and twine maker in Brighouse and another successful businessman. Their first home was at Lane Ends Green which at that time was but a stone's throw from the company offices at the bottom of Kirk Lane, premises which most will identify as the home of another successful local business

The Cream Dress Agency.

On September 13, 1876 Joseph died which put Willie as the head of the family and effectively in charge of the business. His wife Grace lived on until November 1895 when she was interred in the family grave at Heywood Chapel in Northowram.

The close proximity of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway which had opened in 1850 was of great benefit to the company – appreciating the value of the railway in 1896 the company opened their own private railway system that ran between the quarries and stone preparation plants.

While the business was growing and expanding all the time the major turning point came in 1898 when credit must be given to the Brooke brothers for on March 30 of that year they patented the first successful non-slip concrete flagstone. By 1910 so successful was this new flagstone that more than 500 local authorities were regular customers along with many railway companies who all used this new stone for their railway station platforms. To manage this side of their business a new company was created 'The Nonslip Stone Company'.

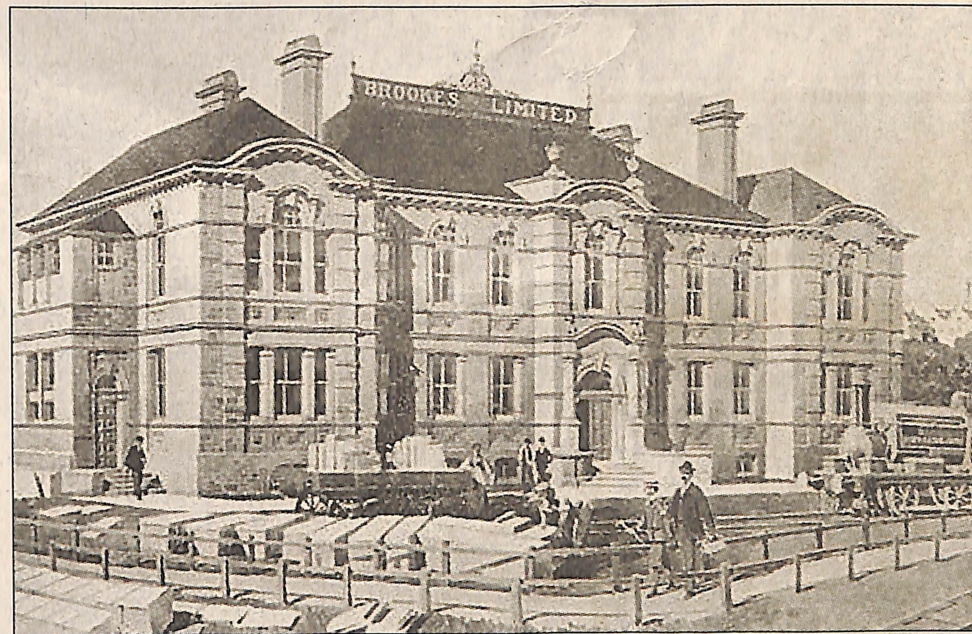
The stone waste chippings of Silex hard York stone were pulverised and reduced to their original state of sand. Since the crushing strain of this rock was 2,200 tons per cubic foot this figure will give some idea of the

type and strength of machinery required to crush the material. Having completed this process the granulated chippings and other ingredients were poured into moulds, the enormous hydraulic pressure of well over 2,200 tons was then applied and almost before the operation could be realised in the mind a solid slab was ready to be carried out to the maturing ground.

With further expansion into Guernsey, Wales and Scandinavia the company was re-registered as Brookes Ltd which incorporated both Joseph Brooke and Sons and the Nonslip Stone Company. It was this continued expansion that saw the need for a large headquarters to run what was becoming a highly successful international operation.

The original office was at Pearson Brow but it became necessary to move to the bottom of Kirk Lane in 1891 and then finally in to the new and prestigious office 'The Hall' as it was often referred to in those early days in St Giles Road in 1905. While the business came to an end in 1969 the magnificent office building stood until it was demolished in January 1999.

Sadly Willie did not live to see the move into the new offices. Following his untimely death it was then his younger brother Newton who became the head of the family and effectively ran the company. While only Willie's grave recalls his name in the



The magnificent headquarters of Brookes Ltd

Lightcliffe area the name of Newton lives on in a number of places – Newton Park, Hove Edge and the house called 'Fernside' which is situated off Knowle Top Road still bears his initials 'NB'.

I remember a story from many years ago about the house that its name 'Fernside' was taken from the Brighouse solicitors George Furness and Roberts. Following the death of George Furness

Newton Brooke purchased the house but years of mining in and around the Lightcliffe area during the nineteenth century had resulted in a serious problem of subsidence making the house uninhabitable.

This resulted in Newton and his new wife Edith had to take up temporary residence elsewhere and they chose the 'Craiglands Hotel' in Ilkley. After almost nine months the subsidence problems

were put right and enabled them to finally move into their new home albeit a little later than anticipated.

Aspinall Brooke the third son married his wife Rebecca and lived at 'Fenny House' Halifax Road, Hipperholme while Aspinall died in 1922 and Rebecca lived on to 1933 the house and contents were sold at public auction shortly afterwards.

A-LEVEL RESULTS

HOLME AND LIGHTCLIFFE HIGH SCHOOL

; f. Ali, bs, so; Q. Ali, bs, gs, so; N. Altif, person, bs, gs, so; M. assan, bi, ch; K. Baldwin, en, fs, gs, ss; B. Beevers, fs, ackman, fs, gs, so; P. Broadbent, gs, so; gs, ph.
gs, hi, ph; M. Corton, en, fs, gs; A. s, dt; R. Frley, el, gs, dt; H. Fern, cl, el, bs, hi dt; R. Greenwood, el, gs, ma, dt;

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• Visit to the Rhine Valley

B. Hasprey, bs, so, dt; S. Hatfield, en, fs, gs, so.

A. Healey, bi, ss; C. Hinchcliffe, so; B. Hodgins, ch, gs, hi, ph; S. Holbrook, a, el, gs; C. Hopkins, a, el, gs, hi; S. Iqbal, el, gs, so; J. Issott, bi, ma, ph; T. Kauser, el, hi; M. Khaliq, cl, el, so; M. Lund, ss; J. Marshall, a, so; L. McCready, gs, ss, dt; A. Malhuish, bi, ch, gs; M. Miljkovic, bs, cl, gs, hi; G. Moses, a, cl, gs, hi; L. Newby, bs, gs, dt.

C. Overend, a, dt; N. Patel, bi, ch, gs, ma, ph; F. Rashid, so; S. Ross, bi, cl, gs, ss; K. Rowley, bs, fs, gs, hi; J. Sheldon, bi, el, gs, dt; A. Sullivan, gs, ss, so; P.

Turner, gs, ss, so; B. Whiteley, gs, ss, so; M. Wilcox, gs, ss; G. Wilson, bi, dt; S. Wood, bi, gs, ss, so; I. Zareen, el, hi.

AS-levels

F. Ali, gs, N. Altaf, ph; T. Bailey, cl, gs; C. Clark, bi; M. Corton, so; A. Duquemin, bi; S. Gill, ma; B. Hasprey, gs; C. Hinchcliffe, bs, gs.

B. Hodgins, ma; S. Holbrook, bi; T. Kauser, ma; M. Lund, bi, gs, so; J. Marshall, bs, gs; L. McCready, bi; A. Malhuish, gg; J. Moorhouse, bi, gs, ph; G. Moses, gg; L. Newsby, so; F. Rashid, bs; P. Turner, bi; M. Wilcox, bi; G. Wilson, gs.

AVCE results

U. Akbar, bs, F. Ali, ict; Q. Ali, ict; E. Anderson, ict; M. Assan, ict; K. Ayub, ict; P. Blackburn, bs; P. Broadbent, bs; R. Farley, bs; S. Iqbal, ict; T. Kauser, bs; F. Rashid, ict; B. Whiteley, bs; M. Wilcox, bs; I. Zareen, bs.

HIPPERHOLME GRAMMAR SCHOOL

A-Levels

Shameen Akhtar, bi, ch, ma; Somia Ali, bs, hi, re; Sumera Bashir, bi, ch, ma; Rachel Bradley, l, bi, ch; Jodie Egleton, cl, a, re; Laura Hollies, el, bs, fr; Suhail Jamil, bi, ch, gg.

Louise Keane, a, el, re; Jenna Smith, bs, cl, hi; Jonathan Sykes, bi, ch, gg; Helen Tooby, l, bi, ch; Jamie Van-Bellen, bi, ch, ph; Jonathan Wilson, gg.

AS-Levels

U. Amin, a; J. Aveyard, el; E. Cameron, gm, bi, ch, hi; N. Christie, re, el, a, bs; t. Clarke, cl; J. Crosland, el, bs, mu, gg; M. Dean, gg, dt; L. Drury, el, cl, fr, gm; J. Duffy, el, bs, hi, ss; O. Hallett, cl; J. Hanson, el, a, bs, fr; B. Hawkins, el, ss; J. Holdworth, ict, fr, gg; R. Jamil, re, el, bs, hi; L. Mahon, re, cl, hi, gg.

J. McCann, el, cl, hi, gg; J. Moore, gg, dt; J. Morris, ch, ph; R. Pidgeon, gg; D. Ryan, re, bs, hi; M. Samples, ict, ch, ph, ma; K. Saunderson, el, ss; F. Scholefield, a, el, hi, ss; R. Smith, el, a, fr; M. Suchanek, ict, bi, ch, ma; J. Thornton, el, a, ict, bs; B. Tiller, ch, ph, hi; T. Turczak, dt; K. Wells, re, el, gg.

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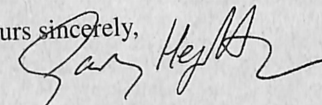
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Managing Director

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