

A CENTURY IN STONE
1904-2004



This year will see Marshall's plc celebrate its centenary of becoming a limited company, a milestone worthy of celebration in any business. Within that century the market has changed beyond recognition, yet Marshall's has stood the test of time due to its innovation, determination and the quality of its people.

The growth from a small, family business carved into a Pennine hillside to a market-leading company has spanned some of the most significant dates in history, such as two World Wars and the Great Depression, as well as important advances for the industry, including the development of world trade, the introduction of Acts of Parliament to ensure safety and equality, and invention. The foundations of quality, commitment, customer service and innovation which characterised Marshall's beginnings are still at the heart of our business today. They are the foundations of the Company's vision and business practices which will ensure its success for the next hundred years.

Marshall's was established in Halifax, a small West Yorkshire town where glacial valleys created the natural, small communities which now form the district of Calderdale. A thriving textile industry was perfectly suited to an environment where rainwater captured in dense moorland, formed streams to supply the spinning of woollen mills and acted as a means of transport and power. The hills provided grazing ground for sheep, wool being an essential resource for the local industry.

Carboniferous rocks formed surface outcrops, overlaid in areas by more recent drift material, and was an ever-changing succession of sandstones, gritstones, shales and mudstones, much of which made ideal materials for building. The quality of the stone in Southowram, known as 'Elland Edge Flagrock', was excellent and highly workable because it was easily riven. Evidence is everywhere to the trained eye where these outcrops of natural stone have been quarried and responsible restoration has returned the land back to its natural beauty. More than one thousand quarrymen ('delvers') and masons were employed in the area which became the home of 'S. Marshall & Sons Ltd' in the early twentieth century.

The demand for new buildings to support the flourishing mill communities provided a healthy market for paving and walling products, whilst the network of roads required setts and kerbs. In the past hundred years, Marshall's product range and manufacturing capability has developed and adapted to the needs of its customers and has firmly established the Company as the UK's market leader. We are dedicated to retaining and consolidating our position and being the supplier of choice for commercial and domestic customers.

The last century has seen many people play a part in the Company's success and this publication is a sincere acknowledgement of every single one. It is a time to celebrate the contribution of all employees, suppliers and customers to the success of Marshall's plc and pay tribute to Solomon Marshall who laid the foundation stone of the business.

I hope that you find this document interesting and enjoy learning about the Company's history. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have helped to research our history, in particular Bob England.

John D. Marshall
Deputy Chairman

Top pressers



Artists impression of old Halifax



A CENTURY IN STONE

Solomon Marshall



Solomon Marshall (1847 – 1914) lived at Hove Edge, Brighouse, with his wife Sarah, who he married in 1870, and their nine children. He was a foreman at Pond Quarry, Brighouse, where he learned his trade and served as a Brighouse Councillor, reflecting his standing in the community. By 1895 Solomon could see that a living could be made from the quarrying business and decided to venture out on his own.

In the prospering Victorian era there was plenty of demand for building materials so Solomon worked land at Southgates and began quarrying for stone. Mining to a depth of sixty feet and working across an eight foot bed, the business served Solomon well.

On 21st March 1904, the quarrying business was registered as S.Marshalls & Sons Ltd, in accordance with the Companies Acts of 1862 and 1900, by Solomon and his five sons Hanson, Ernest, John, Wilson and Norman (Opposite page, bottom left). In those early years, Hanson who had followed in his father's footsteps as Councillor and Mayor of Brighouse, began buying land to sustain stone reserves for the Company.

The first land acquired in Southowram was at the site of the current manufacturing facility at West Lane in 1910. Here the stone was still quarried, then skilfully dressed into kerbs, walling, setts and paving.



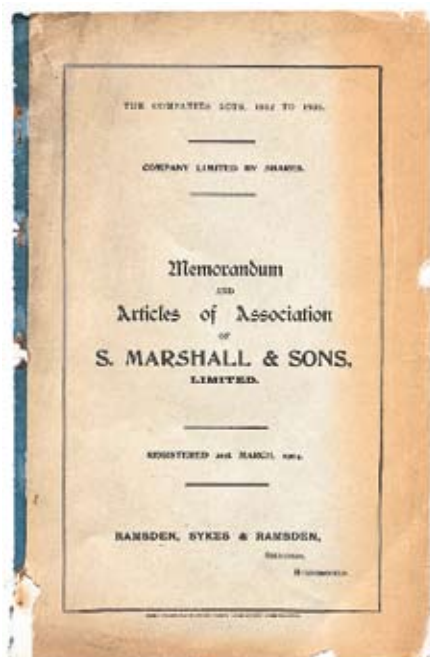
Douglas Marshall, 1935 (Left)

The family worked together to quarry the stone and they continued to prosper, selling to borough councils as far away as London, transporting materials by canal and railway. In those early days S.Marshall & Sons' reputation created a demand for export to places as far away as Hamburg.

Sadly, Solomon died ten years after the Company was formed but his grandchildren gradually came to work with their parents in the family business. Harold, Douglas, Geoffrey, Harry, and Herbert, all worked from the early age of fifteen. The Company now had a rich blend of new skills which would play an important role in the growth of the Company: Harold would become the Chairman, Douglas the Managing Director of the Concrete & Quarries Division, Geoffrey the Managing Director of the Engineering Division, Harry the Company Secretary and Herbert the Quarrying Director.

Strong competition meant that S.Marshalls & Sons constantly sought to make improvements to efficiency. A major advancement at the time was moving from steam powered to electric cranes in 1922, S.Marshall & Sons was the first company in Yorkshire to do so. The continued success of the Company led to expansion which included the acquisition of Brier Lodge from Hanson Freeman, a local land owner, a site that became the Head Office of the Landscape Division until 2003 and a key manufacturing site which remains today.

Articles of Association



Douglas Marshall with the largest landing produced, 1936

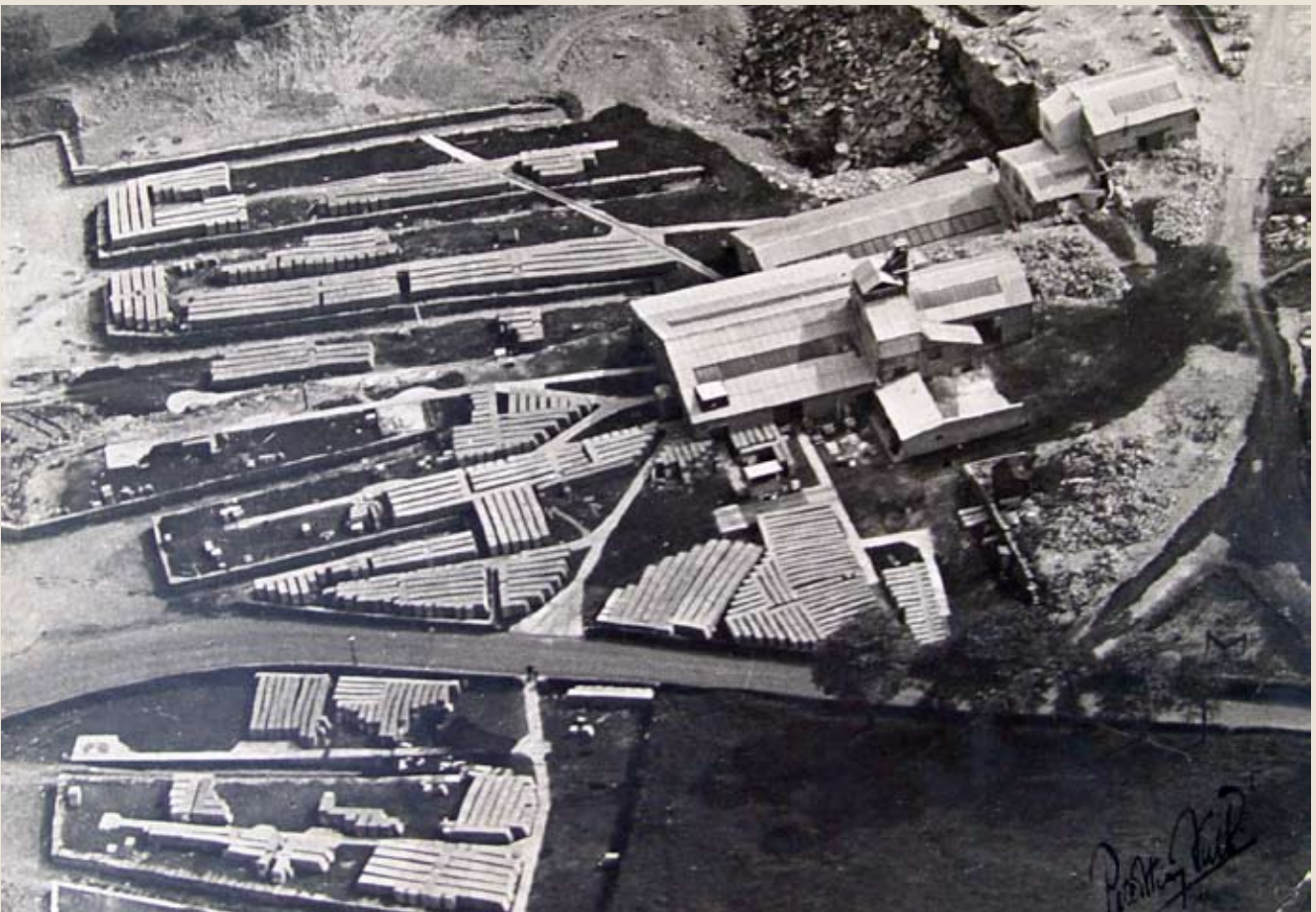




Douglas and his father Hanson looking at their first air drill, 1936



First flag press, 1937



Brookfoot works, 1939

By the 1930's the Company was working the land at Brookfoot and Cromwell sites, areas which were being developed extensively by electric crane and gangs of skilled masons. As resources in the area were finite, the Company began to look at ways of capitalising on its competitive advantage, which included its efficiency. The Company had introduced the use of compressed air to power its drilling, a significant step forward for a very labour-intensive industry and, again, the first company in the area to make this advancement.

At the time, the process of "winning the stone", as it was known, produced some waste, not only in the limiting way in which it could be quarried, as some of the stone had to be left to support the 'roof', but because so much stone could not be used once the masons had split the product into materials suitable for building. S. Marshall & Sons recognised this and began to sell the unused stone at a reduced price to Brookes, a competitor based in nearby Hipperholme, that used the unused stone in their concrete paving plant. Recycling became an important consideration and still remains so today.

When this agreement with Brookes came to an end, Harold and Douglas Marshall decided to purchase a flag press and began to crush the unused stone, mixing it with cement and water to create pressed flags. This was Marshall's first venture into manufacturing concrete paving.

Despite derision from other quarrying companies, this ingenious means of using unused aggregate material gave the Company a competitive edge and the concrete business grew. S. Marshall & Sons Ltd patented their new product, 'Marshallite Artificial Stone', on 1st June 1937 and production began at the Brookfoot site later that year.

S. Marshall & Sons were pressing moulded flags at a pressure of 1555lbs per square inch, as shown in the laboratory report from 1937 (below, centre). The test results impressed road engineers as it confirmed the strength and performance of the innovative, new product.

Certification of trademark



Test results sheet



Evidence of the first flags sold exists in the form of this cheque.





West Lane, 1954



First Halco-Stenuick drill

The onset of the Second World War saw an entirely male workforce depleted by service to the country and the building industry as a whole suffered. S.Marshall & Sons' production fell dramatically and its workforce was reduced to twenty-four. The Company survived under these conditions until the end of the war when, due to the demand for building materials, the Company had a strong opportunity to rebuild its business and the country.

In 1947 a second production site opened at West Lane producing lintels, steps and fence posts (above). The business grew rapidly through the development of methods of mass manufacture and a growing demand for concrete products as an alternative to natural stone. Capable of pressing and pre-casting concrete, the possibilities of broadening the product range gave the Company a significant edge over its competitors and offered another opportunity.

Another significant innovation in the post-war years would assure the Company's position as a leader. Herbert Marshall had made the acquaintance of a Belgian engineer during his service in World War Two, who had informed him about "down the hole" drilling equipment which would radically improve S.Marshall & Sons current operations. Consequently an agreement was signed with Stenuick Freres to manufacture 'Quarry & Waterwell' drilling machines, the beginning of Halco-Stenuick drills (left). These new drills were capable of drilling to a depth of 70 feet, way beyond what had previously been possible.

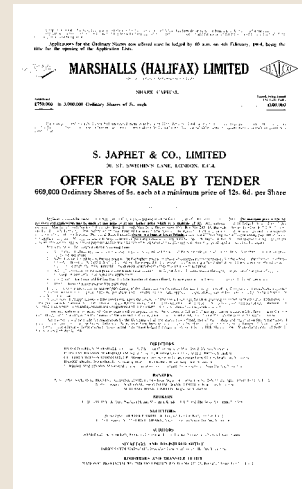
The advancement in drilling methods was not the only advantage to the business. Capability to manufacture Tungsten Carbide drill bits, which were highly demanded at a time of shortages and rationing, enhanced the Company's efficiency. This resource led to the establishment of an engineering division in 1948. The innovations and development of this division were fundamental in the development of the Company.



Birds eye view of Brier Lodge, 1956



Pennine Paving, 1955



Tender Document

The demand for an increasingly varied product range was met by the Company, developing products using mixed aggregates, colours and cement, the process giving S. Marshall & Sons a major advantage over many of its competitors. The successful ranges were due largely to the foresight of product development teams and the skilled workforce, and to an extent, to opportunity. The success of Marshalite Walling owes its inspiration to a broken flag. In 1952, the aesthetic of a broken flag which resembled a natural stone face and texture, inspired the development of a walling product that would grow in demand to over twenty million blocks per year.

The ability to replicate natural stone products and produce them to an exceptionally high standard is at the heart of the Company's success. In 1955, imitating the riven face of natural stone resulted in the development of another hugely successful product, Pennine Paving, the first wet cast concrete product which would dominate the garden market for many years. Both Pennine Paving and Marshalite Walling stimulated an interest in the growth of domestic garden design, a new market then but one which has seen staggering growth to its position today.

A further example of the Company's pioneering approach was the introduction of Screen Walling in the 1960's which introduced an original and imaginative decorative product to the market.

Such was the confidence in S. Marshall & Sons' manufacturing methods that additional investment would enable the Company to take the next, vital step forward. There was a thriving market for building materials but transport costs were high so S. Marshall & Sons planned to expand its manufacturing base nationally by making acquisitions closer to the sources of aggregates and highly populated areas. The decision was made to float the company on the stock exchange in 1964 with an original share price of twelve shillings and sixpence. The company was then known as Marshalls Halifax plc (above).

The Company acquired Stockton Stone & Concrete, Norton, and Wm Heaton & Co, Maltby, in 1969 and then Brookes a year later, based just across the valley from S. Marshall & Sons' original site at West Lane. The latter acquisition was a reflection on how far Marshalls had progressed, as Brookes had been a key competitor since 1904 with a major share of the market.

In 1972, due to a downturn in the home building market, Marshalls' concrete brick presses were stopped and it was decided to experiment producing block paving at the recently acquired Maltby site, which lead to another product diversification for the Company. Adding to its catalogue of 'firsts' the Company developed the Beany Block which combined drain and kerb in one unit. S. Marshall & Sons was also the first to automate edge stacking of paving and the first to use recycled water in the production process.

The 1980's saw property prices soar and growth in the DIY market which allowed for tremendous growth within the Company. It was a boom time for many industries and saw Marshalls' most rapid rate of growth, and the achievement of its goal, to become a national company. Strategic acquisitions saw the Company expand to include a network of manufacturing sites encompassing Clay, Natural Stone, Flag & Kerb, Block Paving, Drainage and many other domestic and commercial products. Expansion even observed the company buying factories in the USA.

CELEBRATING ITS CENTENARY

Marshalls' award-winning garden at RHS Tatton Park Flower Show, 2003.



Celebrating its centenary, Marshalls has grown far beyond what Solomon could ever have imagined, with five generations of the Marshalls' family playing their part in ensuring its prosperity and success and retaining the family values of which it is proud. A true testament to these values is the long list of fathers, sons, brothers and sisters that have shared Marshalls as a workplace and the long list of loyal employees that have completed 25 years service, or more.

In the 21st century, automation is key to our business for the effective production of the complete product range to satisfy demand for Marshalls' products. This differs greatly from the early days which was labour-intensive using hand-held scrapping hammers and chisels. One of the Company's most advanced production departments is 'Heritage Paving 3' at West Lane, a fully automated site, and the Maltby 'Service Centre' (Bottom left).

Marshalls plc today is the UK's leading manufacturer of superior, innovative natural stone, clay and concrete products, supplying the construction, home improvement and landscape markets. The Company provides the product ranges, design services, technical expertise, ideas and inspiration to transform and redefine landscapes and the built environment.

Operating as three divisions, Landscape Products, including Natural Stone, Clay Products and Emerging Businesses, the Company owns five quarries, operates twenty four manufacturing sites, together with twelve offices and service centres throughout the UK. As a major plc, Marshalls is committed to quality in everything it does, environmental best practice and continual improvement in health and safety performance for the benefit of its 3,300 employees.



Natural Stone Paving, Glaxo Smith Kline Headquarters, London



Maltby Service Centre 2004



BBC Media Village at White City, London

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