

Glimpses of the Past

No. 7

by G. Toms

The Brush Mark

In all the Brush establishments the present-day Brush logo is familiar, and I suppose that unless one is particularly interested or curious enough it is so ubiquitous as to be accepted as part of daily life and pass completely unnoticed, or at least be seen but not be noticed.

It is true to say that the use of the Brush logo within the Hawker Siddeley rectangular box has been the most standardised form of marking the product, heading company notepaper, marking drawings, labelling departments and workshops, advertising and a host of other applications. This is because it was the first time that a fully-conscious effort, initiated by Hawker Siddeley in the mid-1980s, had been introduced in 1986 to promote a disciplined application of a particular image and with the full backing of a corporate identity instruction manual. Of course there is more to a corporate identity than an image, it must reflect reality to be truly successful.

Since the advent of BTR there have been some signs of local change in the use of the Brush mark, for example Brush Industrial Controls has devised a different one to suit its own purposes and this trend may grow as time passes unless BTR decrees otherwise, which at the time of writing appears unlikely. It does appear that BEM may be adhering to the 1986 logo for the time being, but how it arrived there is of some interest.

From the earliest years of a Brush company in Britain, and it is over a century ago, there appears to have been no conscious attempt to establish a trade mark or logo until the early part of the 1900s. For most of this period advertisements featured the standard or popular typefaces of the time, usually sans serif or block upper case and sometimes Gothic-inspired lettering. As for the products, lamps, dynamos and associated equipment, an engraved brass rating plate would suffice, with no particular theme



One of the first illustrative marks that Brush used was the 'Brush Britannia'. It is unlikely that it was ever used on electrical machines, rather on publicity material dating from just after the turn of the century to the end of the Great War.

other than to label the product. With rotating machines in particular, it became common practice by the mid-1890s, if not earlier, to cast the company title in plain block lettering in an arc around the vertical face of endframes, so for many decades the indelible imprint of THE BRUSH ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING CO. LTD. held sway in this manner. Often this was supplemented by a cast brass rating plate bearing the company title, sometimes abbreviated to BRUSH, serif and sans serif versions being concurrent.

By 1898 the title was being applied to the few steam locomotives then being built, on a cast brass maker's plate. Steam turbines also received a brass plate together with another name, for many years. This was the BRUSH-LJUNGSTROM era and the form of marking varied over the years.

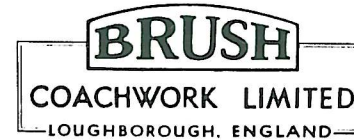
During the early years of this century the first pictorial image of Brush appeared, mainly on advertising material and letterheads. This was a device that featured Britannia, in seated pose, in the manner of the obverse of the pre-decimalisation penny, complete with Un-



By the 1920s Britannia had disappeared and a Brush monogram had been introduced instead. This monogram was versatile inasmuch that it could be applied to most materials, from castings to paper. Although probably not the first monogram, it was the first standard one and the forerunner of today's, by adaptation and development.

ion flag-decorated shield and trident. She was superimposed upon a circular garter suitably inscribed with the word BRUSH, a shamrock, a rose and a thistle – all very patriotic and in concept perhaps inspired by a similar device of the London & North Western Railway. Above this device the legend Falcon Works appeared, and below Loughborough and Leicestershire. Surprisingly, the Falcon motif did not seem to feature. Certainly the name had been used to identify products, as indeed it has in more recent decades. The bird certainly glowered at travellers on the railway, it was associated with tram-cars and appeared on aircraft produced during the first world war. Perhaps Brush wished to have a more national image and develop local ones within it in the products. Britannia faded from the scene during the first world war, a portent of the times?

It may be at the time of that conflict, or just afterwards, that the seeds of the present-day logo were planted. The word BRUSH in upper case, serif form started to appear generally, contained within an enclosing line with three straight edges and the upper edge curving upwards



(Top) The next monogram lasted from circa 1937 until the mid 1960s, and was an adaptation of that of the 1920s. It did not supplant the latter completely until the early 1950s and did not prevent 'homespun' monograms or logos occurring from time to time, (witness some of the rotating machines of the period still operating within BEM).

(Bottom) The attractive layout of the Brush Coachwork Logo, dating from 1938.

gracefully. Within this enclosure there were also the words ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING and to complete the title the curved line was broken to incorporate THE and the baseline was broken to allow CO LTD to be included. It may well be that the curves of the logo were inspired by the curvature of endframes of rotating machines, particularly the upper edge which would match the circumference of such components when the logo was cast into them.

By 1939 this logo was modified to retain the enclosure, unbroken, with the word BRUSH within. The word curved upwards in the form of an arch to match the profile of the enclosure, but its base was straight and parallel with the base line of that enclosure. It also retained its serifed letters, in slightly neater and more professional form. The old and new versions were used concurrently for a decade or so, until the former faded from

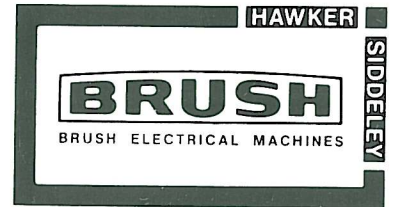


The first Brush Electrical Machines Ltd logo introduced 1971.

the scene. Brush Coachworks was almost the first to use the latter in 1937, incorporated into its own logo the following year when it became a company. The works certainly used the new logo and fitted it to battery electric vehicles in the form of a cast plate, but it was somewhat crude in presentation and looked very homespun.

The new logo lasted until 1966. It was modified by making the overall presentation flatter in appearance, less curved at the top, and the word BRUSH was now in sans serif form. About this time, the Hawker Siddeley title complete with dove and olive branch was replaced by the HS 'squiggle' as the underscore to the Brush title.

This basic Brush logo was incorporated into the Brush Electrical Machines Ltd title in 1971, the latter being an underscore to the former. This basic form in turn was enclosed within the Hawker Siddeley scheme during the mid-late 1980s and remains so. Other Brush companies have retained the Brush logo, sometimes now deleting the Hawker Siddeley appendages, but switchgear opera-



The last Brush/Hawker Siddeley logo introduced mid '80s.

tions have done the opposite, while retaining some of the features.

No attempt has been made to cover all the variations produced, indeed I do not know all of them, but the foregoing is a general description of a trend. Those who are retired may know more, whether from drawing office experience or shop floor experience with once-new products or repair machines. A chromium plated cast metal plate of the 1950s or early 1960s, complete with red background usually means a former demonstration machine, exhibition machine sold as such to a customer, or a large and prestigious machine, but this application sometimes had repercussions of an unexpected nature. A customer would sometimes demand such a plate for quite small machines, in addition to the standard form of stamped brass or aluminium rating plate, a more costly application out of proportion to the job!

Some of today's rating plates and nameplates are quite attractive, sometimes sporting red and black logos on a bright metal background and most prominent on some DAX generators.