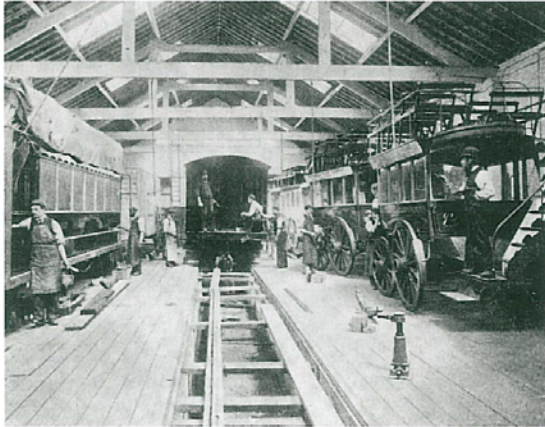


Glimpses of the Past by George Toms

No. 2. The Oldest Shop in Brush Works



1890

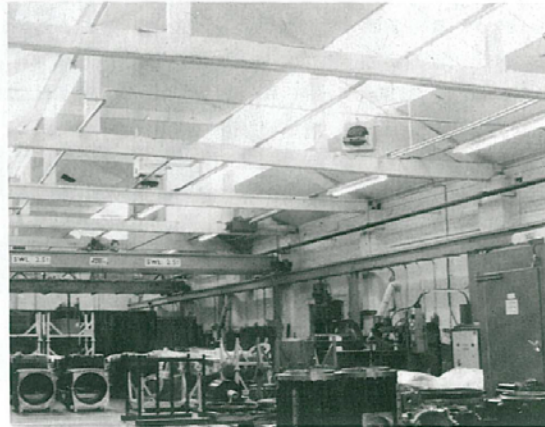
Brush Electrical Machines Limited occupies most of the oldest parts of the Falcon Works. That is the way history was unfurled and in some ways it does limit operations in the smaller shops, but generally speaking most of the shops are suitably occupied or undergoing a process of change.

The oldest surviving shop in the Brush underwent a change during 1990 when space was required in the old 11 Shop for the new Rapid Transit Module. In effect 11 Shop operations were moved into what was once 17/37 Shops, replacing the Detail Shop; Commutator Assembly and DC armature assembly. The 'Pink Room', not the subject of this account, was also occupied.

11 Shop is located between the yard outside the Control Centre and 'Pneumonia Alley', the main gangway linking 13, 18, 19 and 24 Shops. The oldest part of 11 Shop is therefore adjacent to 24 DAX Assembly Shop. The end nearest the Control Centre yard is self contained by means of what are now brick dividing walls and was originally the Tramcar Painting Shop dating from about 1878. The end adjoining 'Pneumonia Alley' also dates from about 1878 and was originally the Tramcar Erecting Shop. Two of the accompanying illustrations show the Painting Shop as it was in 1892, and as it is today in use as a core-building area for A.C. motors.

In 1884 the two shops were extended sideways and capacity was thus doubled in the process. The former outer brick wall of the Erecting Shop portion was demolished and cast iron stanchions installed instead, to give clear cross connection. The Paint Shop remained as it was and the adjacent counterpart partitioned also to keep a dust-free environment.

These cast iron stanchions were cast in the Falcon Works Foundry of 1864 (demolished about a hundred years ago) and bear the legend FALCON



1991

WORKS 1884. Few people have noticed this as it is on the blind side of the shop gangway. Some of the timber beams resting on the top of the stanchions are obviously re-used examples and have slots within them.

One of the 1878 Shops was the scene of festivities long ago when the annual works party was combined with the twenty first birthday celebrations of the eldest daughter of the Managing Director, Henry Hughes.

On the evening of Saturday, 30th August, 1879 there gathered Henry Hughes, his wife and their family of twelve children, together with employees and their wives of the firm, then styled Hughes's Locomotive and Tramway Engine Works Limited. Bouquets of flowers were set upon the tables and sirloins of beef, veal pies, pork pies, tongue, legs of mutton, ham and salmon, tea, coffee and beer were provided as refreshments. Dinner started at four o'clock and 250 people sat down to devour it.

After dinner there were speeches and presentations. Among the words spoken were the following: "... the engineering industries on the Continent and elsewhere had equalled those of England and now Englishmen must look about for cheaper and better means of getting out work to compete with other countries. What are wanted was that all should take a real interest in the work before them; the best and only way to insure that, was by piecework". Today we have similar parallels. Toasts, songs and recitations followed and then the tables were cleared away for dancing to take place. Outside there was a display of fireworks and several Montgolfier balloons were sent up.

Such then, was the harmony of the Falcon Works long ago. Those shops have seen much activity since then – do readers have their own memories? If so, we would like to publish them in a future issue.