

COCKER BROTHERS OF SHEFFIELD

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I have recently made a great purchase on ebay. Buying what I thought was simply a QV 3d rose plate 5, I found when I received it, that the reverse had a private underprint. And it turned out to be one that was previously unreported – “COCKER/BROS..”. The stamp is cancelled X00 which is almost certainly 700 for Sheffield.



Cocker Brothers Ltd, Sheffield is well known for having used another private underprint (SG Type 10), which is shown below. That underprint is only recorded on later 1d plates and combined with the use of the title “Limited” would date it’s use from 1875 to 1880. However the 3d rose plate 5 was put to press in December 1867 so this new underprint almost certainly predates the Type 10 underprint.

The company was established in 1752 in Sheffield as Samuel Cocker & Son. By 1854 the directories show Cocker Brothers (successors to Samuel Cocker & Son). The company was a manufacturer of steel, files, saws, wire etc., with their factories being at Nursery Wire Mills & later at the Fitzalan Works, both in Sheffield.

1875 - 1880



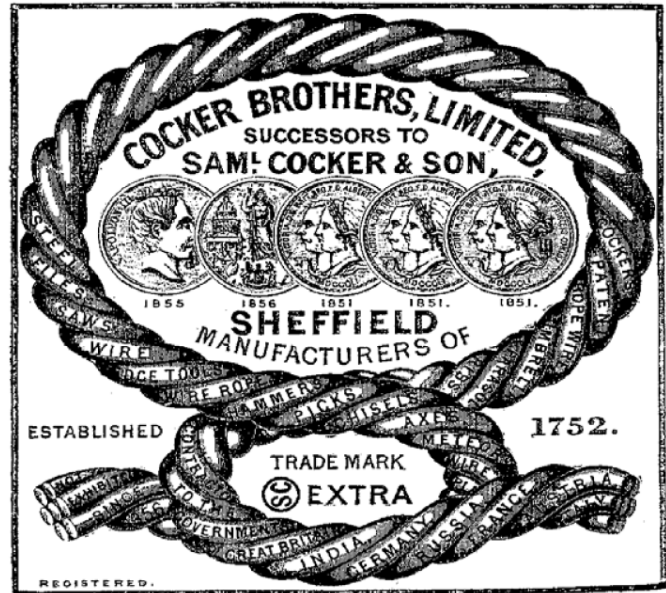
Type 10



The company was incorporated as Cocker Brothers Limited on 17 Apr 1875 for the purpose of purchasing and carrying on the established business of Cocker Brothers, Steel, File, Wire and Tool

Manufacturers and General Merchants at works in Nursery Street, Sheffield, and at the Navigation Works, Sheffield Park, Sheffield.

In 1888 Cocker Brothers Limited acquired the business of Marriott and Atkinson Limited, Merchants, Steel Converters and File and Knife Manufacturers, Sheffield, along with their Fitzalan Works. The company was acquired by Woodhouse and Rixson (Holdings) Limited in 1972. Woodhouse and Rixson Limited merged with Johnson and Firth Brown Limited, Steel Manufacturers, Sheffield, in 1987 to form Firth Rixson PLC. Firth Rixson PLC merged with Forged Metals Incorporated, Steel and Alloy Manufacturers, California, United States, in 2003 to form Firth Rixson Limited. In 2010 this company continued to operate works and offices on Meadowhall Road, Sheffield under the ownership of a United States private equity firm.



Having started by using private security underprints, the company seamlessly transitioned into the use of perfin dies with perfin die CB/S - C0920.03 being introduced in 1880. Another die CB/S - C0920.04 was probably used by the company for a short period but its home made appearance probably explains why the die didn't last long. Two other perfin dies were probably used by the company C.B/S - C0930.01/02 which were used up to the 1920's but the company seems to have abandoned perfin use at this time.

