

An Overview of 'British Leyland' owned Foundries and other casting suppliers

All the divisions of 'Leyland' (Under all the various 50+ companies and names) required vast quantities of castings, both iron and aluminium. Leyland, at one time, owned three foundries;

Beans Foundries – Tipton
Wellingborough Foundries – Wellingborough
West Yorkshire Foundries – Leeds

Other foundries supplied castings;

Sterling Metals Ltd – Coventry
Carron Iron Works – Falkirk
Dartmouth Auto Castings Ltd - Birmingham

All dates should be treated with caution, various sources of information offer different dates to those quoted below!

Wellingborough Foundry

1853 – Established by Thomas Butlin & Company. East End Works, Cannon Street.
Telephone number; Wellingborough 3.

1867 – Irthlingborough Works built due to high demand.

1876 – East End Works fell into disuse.

1889 – Became 'Wellingborough Iron Company'.

1920 – Taken over by 'Stanton' part of United Steel.

1939 – Taken over by 'Stewarts & Lloyds' when 'Stanton' became part of 'Stewart and Lloyds'.

1947 – Irthlingborough Foundry acquired by 'Morris'.

1968 – Ownership transferred to 'British Leyland'.

1981 – Wellingborough Foundry closed and production transferred to 'Beans Industries – Tipton.

'Wellingborough' castings were identified by a 'W' inside a 'Diamond'.



Wellingborough logo.

Beans Foundry – Tipton

1926 – Founded by A, Harper & Sons and Bean

1918 – Started to make cars.

1923 – Into receivership and bought back.

1926 – Full control taken to 'Hadfields'.

1929 – Car production ceased.

1933 – Renamed 'Beans Industries'.

1956 – Taken over by 'Standard Triumph'.

1960 – Came under 'Leyland' then later by 'Austin Rover Group'

1975 – Renamed 'Beans Engineering'.

1988 – 'Leyland Group' broken up – Beans acquired by management buyout from 'Rover'.

1992 – Acquired 'Reliant' the car company.

1994 – In receivership due to debts of some of its subsidiaries, mainly 'Reliant' – then purchased by 'Eisenwerk Bruhl' a German company.

1997 – Renamed 'Bruhl UK' but suffered from financial problems. Management buyout for 2nd time – renamed 'Ferrotech', and became a large supplier of castings to 'Rover'.

2005 – Ferrotech liquidated when 'Rover' failed, and factory closed.

Beans castings were identified by a backward sloping 'B' inside a circle.

Ferrotech castings may have been identified by the two letters 'FF' although this is not certain.



Beans Trade Mark



Is this FF the 'Ferrotech' logo?

West Yorkshire Foundries

- 1938 – Established as 'Airedale Light Alloy Company'
- 1941 – 'Leyland Motors' step in to manage.
- 1946 – 'Leyland Motors' buy the foundry – name changed to West Yorkshire 'Foundries'.
- 1961 – Expanded to supply most major car producing companies plus 'David Brown' and 'IH' tractors.
- 1966 – New die cast foundry built.
- 1969 – Order books full.
- 1979 – Proposed new foundry.
- 1980 – 850 redundancies.
- 1981 – Two sites closed and workforce reduced to 230.
- 1986 – Sold to a German company 'Eisenwerk Bruhl'. The same company who purchased 'Beans Foundry', Tipton in 1994.
- 1992 – Acquired by 'VAW', now known as 'VAW Motorcraft Ltd'. (No information can be found on 'VAW')
- 1997 – Workforce increased to 700.
- 2002 – 'Norsk-Hydro' joined forces with 'NAW' – Renamed as 'Hydro Aluminium Motorcraft Ltd'.
- 2003 – Closure announced.
- 2004 – The vast majority of workforce leave.
- 2005 – Foundry closes.

Castings were identified by a 'W' with a 'Y' superimposed over the 'W'.



The logo can just be seen at the back.

Sterling Metals Ltd - Coventry

- 1907 – 'Sterling Metals Ltd' founded in Coventry, mainly for the production of aluminium, phosphor bronze and gunmetal castings.
- 1910 – Started to make cast iron cylinder blocks.
- 1922 – Obtained the British manufacturing rights to the casting process for Magnesium Elektron aluminium alloys which were 40% lighter than aluminium.
- 1929 – Amalgamation took place with the 'Birmingham Aluminium Casting (1903) Co. Ltd'. and the 'Midland Motor Cylinder Co' to become part of the 'Birmid' group of

companies. (See Dartmouth Auto Castings Ltd)

1939 – Sterling Metals erected a foundry in Attleborough, Nuneaton, through fear of enemy action which was well founded. Coventry received several devastating air raids because of its war industries, two thirds of the city's buildings were destroyed or damaged.

1942 – A new fully mechanised foundry was introduced in Nuneaton, especially for use with female labour.

1954 – New iron foundry was erected commencing in June 1954.

1986 – Stiff price competition from Spain and elsewhere led to talks of closure of the plant at Attleborough.

1988 – 'Birmid' sold 'Sterling Metals Ltd' to 'Blue Circle Industries Ltd'.

1990 – The production side was sold to 'Triplex Lloyd' of Smethwick.

1993 – 'Sterling International Technology' moved to Colliery Lane, Bedworth. (Now called 'Doncasters Sterling Ltd') – 'Doncasters Sterling' is one of the world's largest independent manufacturers of compressor and aluminium turbocharger impeller wheels and has a well established reputation dating back to 1907.

Castings were identified by a 'Three Spires' symbol with 'Stermet' written underneath. The three church spires depict the famous sky line of Coventry.



Sterling Metals

Carron Iron Works – Falkirk

1759 – Company established.

1760 – First blast furnace lit.

1773 – Received royal charter.

1805 – 'Carronade' light cannon designed – used to great success in the battle of Trafalgar'.

Not much is known or documented over the next 177 years, but they made pillar boxes and the famous red telephone boxes. During the industrial revolution 5000 people were employed. Amongst other things cast iron baths & range cookers were made.

1968 to 1981 – Front end and wheel weights cast for Nuffield & Leyland Tractors.

1982 – Company made insolvent and acquired by the 'Franke Corporation' – renamed 'Carron Phoenix'.

2014 – Today 'Carron Phoenix' still exists making sinks, taps and waste disposal products.

Castings were identified by a two crossed cannons with a phoenix above, 6 cannon balls are piled under the cannons.



Carron Iron Works.

Dartmouth Auto Castings Ltd - Birmingham

1915 – ‘Darcast’ founded under the name of ‘Dartmouth Auto Castings Ltd’.
1936 – ‘Birmid Industries’ formed incorporating eight other companies, two of which were ‘Dartmouth Auto Castings Ltd’ and ‘Sterling Metals’.
1950 – ‘Darcast Crankshafts Ltd’ started to make crankshafts.
1965 – A third foundry opened to produce shell moulded crankshafts. Dartmouth Auto Castings Ltd continued to make castings.
1967 – ‘Birmid’ Industries merge with ‘Qualcast’ to form ‘Birmid Qualcast’.
1988 – ‘Birmid Qualcast’ acquired by ‘Blue Circle’ – Foundries division sold off – ‘Dartmouth Auto Castings Ltd’ became part of ‘ThyssenKrupp’ until 2004.
2013 – ‘Dartmouth Auto Castings Ltd’ liquidated.
2014 – ‘Darcast Crankshafts Ltd’, now a subsidiary of ‘Cornwall Holdings Ltd’, still trading and supply crankshafts worldwide to most major automotive and tractor manufacturers.

Castings were identified by the word ‘Darcast’ contained within a four or five sided oblong. Birmid products identified by the word ‘Birmid’ contained within a diamond.



'Darcast' trade mark