

## **Stanley Works/Chapman**

J. A. Chapman Limited was a Sheffield firm founded in the 1860s producing high quality tools. Mr. James Arscott Chapman (1827-1891) began making braces in one cottage of the old Woodside Lane in Sheffield and packing them in the one next door. By 1925 as J A Chapman Ltd they were producing American-pattern Carpenters' braces, scotch, wagon, builders and other iron braces at IndustryTool Works, Woodside Lane Sheffield (19 2 5 Kelly's Di rectory).

The company was bought out by Mr. Norman Neill in 1936 at which time it was manufacturing planes and hand drills and braces and bits. Norman Neill (no relation to NeillTool also a Sheffield company) was made aware that The Stanley Works were looking to set up manufacturing in the UK either by a greenfield site or acquisition of an existing company. He went to Connecticut USA and sold his controlling shares to Stanley in 1936 for an undisclosed sum. There were around 70 employees at that time, and they were selling around £28,000 of tools per annum. Initially there was rapid growth with many products being manufactured until it all came to a sudden halt in 1939 when the facility was taken over for the World War II effort.

With this controlling interest in J A Chapman Company, Stanley established Stanley Works (GB) Limited in 1937 at the Sheffield manufacturing facility. The original intention was to manufacture hand tools for supply to the United Kingdom and one or two Commonwealth countries including Australia and New Zealand. This plan did not last long because later, renamed Stanley Tools Limited UK, the operation was supplying tools to over 60 different countries with half their production exported.

Sometime later, circa 1950, the company was purchased outright by The Stanley Works and the J A Chapman brand was removed from the product line. The halt in general sales in 1939 saw production expanded to meet armed services and essential requirements. Large quantities of primers and tracer-shells were manufactured. Every tank produced in Britain during the war had a No. 905 Stanley breast drill in its tool kit. Following the end of WWII export markets again commenced in ever increasing volumes Stanley had been represented in Australia by Messrs Slade, Allan and Company in Sydney and in New Zealand by Mr W A Johnson of Auckland, both since 1-913 until

the early 1950s. It was during the late 1940s that almost all Stanley branded hand tools arriving in Australia and New Zealand originated from England. All packaging clearly stated Made in England. The J A Chapman/ Stanley site at Woodside Lane Sheffield closed down in 2008 when all UK manufacturing was centralised along with the Ecclesfield plant at nearby Hellaby.

The product flow from the Sheffield plant clearly exceeded the volumes out of the USA following WWII

It was at that time that peak tool usage was taking place with a strong building program across Australia; right up until Stanley tool manufacturing took place in Australia 1963-2000. First in Tasmania by Stanley Titan Pty Ltd and after 1970 by The Stanley Works Pty Ltd in Victoria and Tasmania.

References: Graeme Plaw (*The Tool Chest HTPAA*)

The Legend of Stanley by Jeffrey L Rodengen 1996 Write Stuff Syndicate Inc

History of the Stanley Works 1853-1946 unpublished by the author  
Colin Rosekilly ex Stanley Tools UK