

Forman Bros. Ltd Engineers & Road Haulage Contractors, Branston

William Watson Forman started working self employed in Branston near Lincoln in 1890, contracting for work operating and repairing road and agricultural machinery. Research shows traction engine and sets for threshing corn, also wood wheeled trailers with steel rims for hauling building materials, industrial machinery were purchased.

In 1904 William Watson Forman rented Stonefield House with some land, stables, a blacksmiths shop and a granary used for wood working until about 1917 when he purchased it.

The two sons William Watson Forman and Harold Forman worked in the family business, in 1920 William Watson Forman senior died.

The two sons formed a partnership based at Stonefield, they expanded the company building offices and large sheds suitable for steam engine boiler repairs, a one hundred and fifty ton hydraulic press for fitting solid rubber tyres.

Power for lighting and electric welding was supplied by a H 22 Ruston diesel engine, the sheds were bought from Scampton Aerodrome and reassembled on the site, steam wagons from Robey, Clayton with solid rubber tyres and trailers, also first world war Leyland petrol lorries were acquired.

In 1929 a six wheeled Sentinal and trailer with electric lights were used to carry bricks from Bracebridge Brickyard to Cranwell college for the foundations, sugar beet to Bardney, and road repairing materials.

The 1930/1933 Road Traffic Acts were the death knell for the steam waggon.

Petrol and later diesel lorries replaced steam, a new challenge, as electric starters were not fitted. All engines had to be started with a rope and two men, wet engines would not start from cold.

Land was bought from a farmer to build a large shed complete with inspection pits, loading docks, warehousing facilities for food stuffs storage and workshops.

During the thirties many haulage firms were bought out in different parts of the country, to allow more economic and flexible operation, some were operated as depots at Saxilby, Anwick, London and Birmingham, others had the licences transferred to head office at Branston, at one time a fleet of 80 vehicles were in operation.

All the traction engines and agricultural tractors were sold in the nineteen thirties.

1936 Forman Bros. Limited was registered a Limited company, during the war years vehicles engaged with the Ministry of Defence but on the cessation of the war most haulage companies were nationalised but Formans resisted and remained a private company.

Harold Forman died 1955 and William Watson Forman 1956. William Watson's sons William and Frank and Harold's son Gerald carried on a Directors.

Large multi wheeled specialised Leyland and E.R.F tractors and trailers were put into service when legislation permitted, bulk flour from mills to biscuit factories throughout the U.K. Lincoln to 'Jacobs' Liverpool was a regular run, trailers with lifting equipment for one ton bags and liquid tankers for delivery from L & K Saxilby to the farms, bulk potato hoppers delivered to Smiths factories.

The fifty ton Mack recovery vehicle was a familiar sight through Branston in the gold lettering and Forman Bros Limited red livery.

Driver and mechanic training was an important part of the operation, it was necessary to bring in staff with special skills, some lived in company houses others settled locally. These activities carried on for many years, successfully coping with customer and political demands.

In 1985 it was decided to go into voluntary liquidation, vehicles and trailers where applicable were Ministry of Transport Tested and sold off, the offices and premises situated off the Sleaford road Branston were put up for sale.

Frank Forman IEng MIRTE