


Daniel Doncaster & Sons Limited

Birley House, Wadsley Bridge, Sheffield. S6 1ET. Telephone 0742 345261. Telex 54113.



Daniel Doncaster was apprenticed first to William Wilde, a filesmith, in 1771 for seven years. He never completed his apprenticeship with William Wilde for after three years, in 1774, he was re-apprenticed to George Smith, a filesmith, for four years.

On 29 May 1778, seven years after first becoming apprenticed, he was granted his Freedom by the Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire and had assigned to him the Mark  to mark his files.

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Presumably he did mark his files, although there is no proof that he did.

In 1808 his eldest son, William, was apprenticed to him for seven years.


In 1815 William must have continued working with his father but never took out his Freedom from the Cutlers' Company. There was no need; his father had the Mark.



DIRECTORS: Richard Doncaster, (Chairman), I. D. Balchin, B.Sc., G. G. Baldwin, M.A., C.Eng., M.I.MechE., M. Bennett, C. J. Davies, Dip. Met., D.M.S., J. F. Duckenfield, F.C.A., N. A. M. Eastwood, M.A., C.Eng., A.F.R.Ae.S., P. L. Lewis, A.I.M., A. T. Shadforth, B.Sc., D. Smith, J. R. Williams, A.I.M.

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Daniel had started converting c1817. Possibly John, his second son, went into that side of the business. Steel converting was not an apprenticed trade and did not need a Mark.

Leader's history of the Cutlers' Company records a John Doncaster, son of William, of Okley, Finningley, as being apprenticed to Daniel, filesmith, in 1796 for seven years. This John cannot be traced from family records, nor his father William. But the dates assume that Daniel was the Daniel who obtained his Mark  in 1778. No other Doncasters are recorded.

Daniel died in 1819 and presumably William carried on using the Mark, joined by his brother John and the converting business. Sheffield directories record William and John as file manufacturers, and steel converters and refiners in 1821.

John died in 1825 and in 1829 William was joined by the third and youngest son, Daniel. Perhaps Daniel followed John as the steel converter, in partnership with William, the filemaker.

The partnership did not prosper and in 1833 it was dissolved. It looks as though the two brothers disagreed, disproving the point that 'you don't have to like someone to work with them'.

The Sheffield directories indicate that Daniel went his own way with steel converting and merchanting.

William stayed with files, but kept the door open for other products for on 24 April 1834 the Mark was surrendered to the Cutlers' Company by Jane Doncaster (widow of Daniel), Henry Doncaster (brother of William), and Daniel Doncaster, so that it could be assigned to William to be "stricken, impressed, or engraved, upon his goods, wares or manufactures". He received the Mark on 30 May 1834 but we don't know that he ever marked his goods.

William retired about 1837. There is a Sheffield street register recording William and Daniel as file manufacturers, steel converters and merchants, but this might only have been a carry over record.

A directory records William as "Gent of High House" in 1837.


(High House was directly opposite Nether and Upper Slack Forges which are now Doncasters present Sheffield works).

Presumably filemaking stopped when he retired, except possibly as part of the business which Daniel continued as a merchant. The file business finally disappeared about 1940 when Daniel Doncaster & Sons sold a subsidiary, Waterfall & Barber, to William Parker of Ecclesfield.

In 1860 the Cutlers' Company widened its scope to include 'manufacturers of steel'. Daniel did not apply for Freedom nor ask for a Mark.


But he may have used William's.

In 1875 a compulsory Registration of Trade Marks was formed which may have prompted Daniel to write against his father's Mark these words:

"Certificate of Trade Mark  granted to my father by the Cutlers' Company 1778. DD 2/23 1875". He was establishing his right to the Mark even though it was still registered in the name of William who had died in 1862.

How Daniel got his father's original Mark from the Cutlers' Company we don't know. Presumably he also had William's 1834 Certificate, for that had not been surrendered.

The Mark does not seem to have been used since William's retirement in 1837. Neither Daniel who retired in 1872 nor Charles, his son, who carried on the business made application under the new laws.

Daniel and Charles both died in 1884 and a few years later on 12 August 1887 under a new Merchandise Mark Act, Daniel Doncaster & Sons, Merchants & Manufacturers, made application, probably at Samuel's instigation, for the Mark  claiming it was an 'Old Corporate Mark'. It was granted in respect of 'steel'.

From then until today, the Mark has been periodically renewed in the name of Daniel Doncaster & Sons, for "steel: machinery of all kinds and parts of machinery (except agricultural and horticultural and their parts); and metal goods not included in other classes".


R. T. Doncaster

DANIEL DONCASTER & SONS LTD ... 1778 - 1978

There are three major phases of the company growth. These phases overlap but are always complementary. They were conceived by men who were always looking ahead and yet moved from the base in which they worked.

Each development coincided, or was consequential with, a social era of change and was in no way innovative. It was not necessarily early in the cycle but made use of existing expertise and knowledge. Individual products or processes might be new but the basic industries were well established.

<u>Phase I</u>	..	1778 - 1840	Filemaking	Daniel I William
<u>Phase II</u>	..	1830 - 1910	Steelmaking	Daniel II Charles I Samuel
<u>Phase III</u>	..	1895 - 1978	Forgemasters	Charles II Basil

Filemaking was started by Daniel I who was granted his Freedom and Trade Mark  on 29th May 1778. He was self employed and was followed by his oldest son, William, who later extended the business activities.

Steelmaking stemmed from Daniel II, the third son, who started independently as a merchant and importer of Swedish iron, which was converted into steel. Eventually William joined with Daniel II and the file business declined.

Merchanting and steel converting was added to by Charles I with steel melting (c 1870) and Samuel continued this into the twentieth century.

Just as converting was closely related to cutting tools, so steel melting was related to forging; first as a secondary process for ingots and then to produce forgings (1898). This stemmed from Charles II and was supported by Basil.

These changes were prompted by social change and growth.

In 1778 - 1830 the need was for hand tools and agricultural cutting implements; files, knives, scythes, sickles, and the like. Converted bar was ideal for these products and later on as a base for steel melting. The local trade of cutlery, for which Sheffield was famous, grew from these processes.

In 1860, engineering was well established and better quality steel was demanded for machine cutting tools and a variety of tool steel engineering products. The crucible process supplied such material.

By 1895, transport had developed to require shaped articles in reasonable quantities. A forge was no longer just for ingot reduction or tool steel bars. The era of die forging was taking over from the blacksmith. During the twentieth century transport in all forms and capital plant for industry led to sophisticated and specialised forging equipment.

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