

GB 0154 1978/217

Northamptonshire Record Office

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JAN 1979

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE RECORD OFFICE



Records of Lotus Ltd.,
Footwear Manufacturers, of
Holloways Industrial Estate, Weedon Road,
Northampton.

Accession 1978/217

Lotus Ltd. are the oldest shoe manufacturers in Northampton. In 1814, Thomas Bostock, a native of Heage, Derbyshire, moved to Stafford and set up in a small way as a boot and shoe maker. Later with his three sons, Thomas Bostock founded businesses at Stafford, Stone and in 1836, at Northampton and then, in 1840, he retired. His eldest son, Edwin, took over the Stafford factory, specializing in the production of women's shoes, whilst another son, Frederick, ran the factory at College Street, Northampton, making fine quality men's shoes.

In 1890, Frederick Bostock acquired a new factory in Victoria Street, Northampton, where he lived. This factory was extended several times on the site between Victoria Street, Newland and Ladys Lane in 1916, in 1921, when it became a three storey building, and finally a fourth storey was added which became the Clicking Room. The premises of the Eversley Commercial Hotel were also acquired for the employees canteen and staff shop.

In 1912, Frederick Bostock became the Managing Director of the private company, Frederick Bostock Ltd. In 1913, another factory was opened at Countess Road, Northampton, to produce the "Veldtschoen" shoe (the idea for this shoe came from South Africa, where they were originally worn to keep out ticks, but were also extremely waterproof). This type of shoe produced by Lotus Ltd. even today, helped to make the Company's name. Mr E.S. Perry was manager at this time of both the Contess Road and Victoria Street factories.

In 1919, Frederick Bostock Ltd. amalgamated with Edwin Bostock & Co. Ltd. of Stafford and Stone, to become Lotus Ltd. Henry Bostock of Stafford became Chairman, Frederick Bostock of Northampton became Vice-Chairman and the Managing Directors were Henry John Bostock and Frederick Marson Bostock of Stafford. Lotus Ltd. then became manufacturers and distributors of boots and shoes sold under the "Lotus" and "Delta" trade names. The factories still continued to be ran separately, with the Stafford and Stone factories making ladies shoes and the Northampton factories making men's shoes. (The Countess Road factory was closed in 1921). However, in 1940 the various factories of Lotus Ltd. were integrated, with the largest factory at Stafford becoming also a warehouse for the shoes made at the other factories.

When Frederick Bostock died, his son Neville Bostock, became the Managing Director of the Victoria Street factory and James Bostock became the Managing Director of Stafford. In c. 1950, James Bostock became Managing Director of both factories.

Records of Lotus Ltd.

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In 1952, the Company was taken over by a financier, a Mr. Wolfson who then sold it to a Mr. Rowlands who, in about 1970, sold the Company to Debenhams Ltd.

The Victoria Street factory was demolished during the early 1970's to make way for the Greyfriars Bus Station and between 1968 and 1973 the employees of Lotus Ltd. were gradually moved to a new purpose-built factory on the Holloways Industrial Estate, Weedon Road, Northampton.

Today, Mr. Marris is the General Manager of the Northampton factory, which produces high-quality men's shoes and ladies golf shoes, which have been exported to virtually every country in the world and sold in Britain through 4,000 agents, mail order firms and in high street stores.

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Lotus Ltd.

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| 1 | *Plan of factory of Frederick Bostock, Victoria Street, Northampton. | c.1904 |
| 2 | *Plan of factory of Frederick Bostock.Ltd., Victoria Street, Northampton. | Oct 1916 |
| 3 | *Plan of factory of Lotus Ltd., Victoria Street, Northampton. | 1952 |
| 4 | *Brochure and plan of factory of Lotus Ltd., Holloways Industrial Estate, Weedon Road, Northampton. | <u>July 1973</u> |
| 5 | *Volume of Articles of Association and related documents concerning Edwin Bostock & Co. Ltd., Stafford, Frederick Bostock Ltd. of Northampton and Lotus Ltd. | 1919 |
| 6 | *Costings Book:
Divided into categories of costings:-
a)Labour costs for each department, including non-productive labour costs.
b)Costs of nails for golf shoes, royalties and packaging.
c)Costs of materials for each department.
d)Warehouse allowances e.g. for exporting shoes, advertising, etc. and pricetable of shoe prices at factory and retail. | 1946-1951 |
| 7 | *Sheet showing profits and reserves of Lotus Ltd. | 1919-1938 |
| 8 | *A handwritten account of various jobs in the factory by T.S. Pettitt, an employee of Lotus Ltd. | c.1950 |
| 9 | *List of several types of insole stamps for men's shoes. | 3rd. Sept 1930 |
| 10 | *List of last names and numbers. | c.1930 |
| 11 | *List of bottom leather types - definition of "stuff" | 11th. Sept 1929 |
| 12 | *Revised list of tannage stamps, i.e. letters stamped on soles to indicate tannage. | 16th. March 1948 |
| 13 | *As above. | 6th. May 1949 |
| 14 | *List of last names and numbers for men's shoes. | - |

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| 15 | *Inventory of all plant and machinery, electric power and lighting installations, sprinklers, steam, gas and water piping, office furniture, fixtures, fittings, lasts, patterns, knives and utensils in each department of Lotus Ltd., Victoria Street, Northampton. | 14th. June 1941 |
| 16 | *Book of reports of calls made by D.W.T. Poole and E.S. Bates of Lotus Ltd.(on U.S.A. footwear dealers).
Containing loose lists:-
a)States of the U.S.A. and their capital cities.
b)Definite requests for "following-up" calls, with names of customers, date visited and date for next call.
c)U.S.A. split-up of territory between the representatives of Lotus Ltd.
d)American salesmen and the territories covered by each.
e)U.S.A. stock styles. | 1949 |
| 17 | *Xerox copy of instructions for stopping and re-starting factory machinery on Armistice Day for 2 minutes silence. | 11th. Nov 1920 |
| 18 | *Brochure containing route map of the British Alpine Hannibal Expedition. | 1959 |
| 19 | *Leaflet - "The Shoemakers" - a history of shoemaking through the ages and a brief history of Lotus Ltd. | - |
| | <u>Photographs</u> | |
| 1 | The Victoria Street factory. | 1929 |
| 2 | The Elephant Boots made by Lotus Ltd. for the British Alpine Hannibal Expedition. | 1959 |
| 3 | The demolition of the Victoria Street factory (2 views). | 1970's |
| 4 | A school party visit to the new factory, Weedon Road. | 1970's |
| 5 | Photograph album containing:
a)View of Victoria Street factory.
b)The office staff of Lotus Ltd.
c)Mr. T.E. Sharman, chief designer. | 1929 |

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Lotus Ltd.

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Photographs (cont.)

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| 5 | d) Mr. T.E. Biggs, General Manager.
e) The factory forge.
f) The wages department.
g) The clicking room.
h) the leather store
i) The factory from Newland
j) The printing room
k) The carpentry room
l) The finishing room
m) The general stores
n) Mr. L.N. Ogden, General Stores Buyer.
o) The making room (2 views)
p) The heeling section of the making room.
q) Mr. F. Bostock, Managing Director. | |
| 6 | The Victoria Street factory and wrought iron gates. | c.1968 |
| 7 | Framed view of the closing room, Victoria Street. | 1900 |
| 8 | Lotus Ltd. football team. | 1925 |
| 9 | Book of photographs of Lotus Ltd., Northampton and Stafford. | 1920 |
| 10 | Mr. James Bostock being presented with his 40 years long service medal by Mr. Godfrey Bostock. Left to right- Mr. Godfrey Bostock, Mr. Gilbert Bostock and Mr. James Bostock. | Jan.1961 |
| 11 | Left to right- Annabel Bostock and Elspeth Bostock (daughters of Mr. James Bostock), Mr. Godfrey Bostock and Mr. James Bostock. | 1953 |
| 12 | Portrait of Mr. Thomas Bostock 1777-1865, founder of the business | 1959 |
| 13 | Photograph of poster showing Edwin Bostock and Frederick Bostock. | c.1860 |

Catalogues

Kept for reference by Lotus Ltd. 1935-current

Miscellaneous

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| 1 | Letter re the mending of the roof of the Eversley Commercial Hotel, Newland. | 1927 |
| 2 | Letter from G. Pankhurst, steeplejack re examination of chimney shaft of Lotus Ltd. | 1921 |
| 3 | Obituary notice of Mr. H.J. Bostock | 28 Dec.1956 |