

Ancon[®]
BUILDING PRODUCTS

Celebrating 130 Years

1882 - 2012



THE QUEEN'S AWARDS
FOR ENTERPRISE:
INNOVATION
2012

Building On Strong Foundations

2012 is a major milestone for Ancon. Not only does it mark 130 years of continuous operation – a significant achievement for any business – it is also the year when our innovative thinking, technical excellence and focus on customer service have been rewarded with a very rare accolade - a Queen's Award for Enterprise.

This booklet has been published to document our history, so our story is not forgotten as time goes by, and to celebrate our achievements.

As one of the longest established steel fabrication companies in Sheffield, Ancon is an integral part of the Steel City's rich industrial heritage. Today our operations in England, Wales, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, Australia and the United Arab Emirates, are continuing to build on those foundations. We are a major manufacturing force in the global construction market, supplying an ever expanding range of high quality fabricated steel components.

Our success is due in part to the way we manage our company; putting customers first; focussing on innovative sustainable solutions; committing resources to continuous improvement projects; utilising the latest lean manufacturing and waste minimisation techniques; and, crucially, developing a culture of care that makes employee health and safety our top priority.

But most of all, our success is due to people. Our employees who strive to provide excellent service throughout the organisation; the design professionals who specify our products to meet their demanding construction requirements; our customers who continue to choose high quality Ancon products above all others, and our trusted community of suppliers.

I would like to extend my thanks to you all for your continued support. It is because of you that Ancon is a company with a remarkable past and an exciting future. A company that can look back with pride and look forward with enthusiasm.

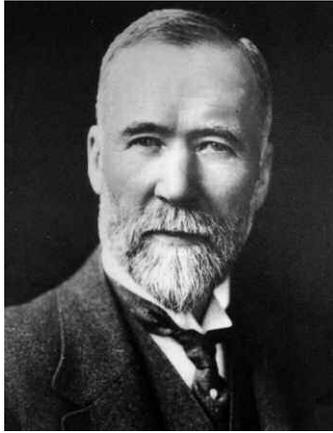
Stuart Maxwell
Managing Director



Ancon Building Products

Celebrating 130 Years and Still Going Strong

Ancon Ltd, trading as Ancon Building Products, is one of Sheffield's longest-established businesses. The firm's history dates back to 1882 when George Clark, a great Sheffield industrialist, founded a steel fabrication company. The Ancon name came much later when George Clark (Sheffield) Ltd merged with another Sheffield business, Ancon Stainless Steel Fixings, in 1992 to become Ancon Clark.



manufacturing agility. These corporate strengths have ensured that the business continually adapts to new and varied market demands.

The firm's founding father, George Clark, was born on 15th April, 1857, in Newton-on-Trent, North Lincolnshire. George grew up in the country and worked as a farm-lad. After talking to two steelwork managers who came to Newton to fish, it is said that despite his love of the country he was "fired with a desire to come to Sheffield". From his humble origins George Clark became a well-known and much respected Sheffield figure. He represented

Today, Ancon Building Products continues to thrive. It employs 380 people at three UK manufacturing sites and overseas operations in Austria, Germany, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates and Australia. The company designs and manufactures a wide range of steel products for the Construction Industry, primarily to support and reinforce masonry and concrete, and supplies a variety of construction sectors including housing, commercial and infrastructure.

Ancon's head office, a 70,000sq.ft purpose-built facility, is still located in Sheffield and actually stands just half a mile from George Clark's former factory at Crescent Steelworks on Warren Street.

Throughout its 130 year history, the values which underpin the company's success have been innovative product design and

Nether Hallam on the City Council for 30 years and was made a magistrate in 1928.

George Clark came to Sheffield in 1875 to work for the Midland Railway Company. It was a good time to work for the railways and an even better time to come and find ones fortune in Sheffield. In 1801 there had been around 60,000 inhabitants, and by 1901, the population had grown to 451,195. This phenomenal growth was founded on steel production, and the manufacture of steel products for which the Victorian age had an insatiable demand.

Above: Founder, George Clark. **Below:** Staff of George Clark (Sheffield) Ltd circa 1920s. (Source: www.picturesheffield.com).



By 1882 George had founded his own business in the steel industry. His first products were shovel plates cut from sheet, reflecting his interest in the need to improve farming methods by producing better tools. The demand for sheet, mainly for agricultural tools was so great that by 1908 George Clark had a steel mill at Penistone Road. His business grew rapidly and by 1912 two further mills had been established at Penistone Road: the North British Steelworks and subsequently the Middlewood Rolling Mills.

Always a man given to improving manufacturing techniques and increasing efficiency, George's first patented invention was a revolutionary machine which reduced the amount of scrap produced in the blanking out process.

As well as producing sheet and tools for agricultural purposes the company also supplied the cutlery market. Blanks were produced for table knives, before the company developed its own range in the 1930s. The design was developed and patented by Douglas Clark, George's son.

Company founder George Clark died in 1936, aged 79.

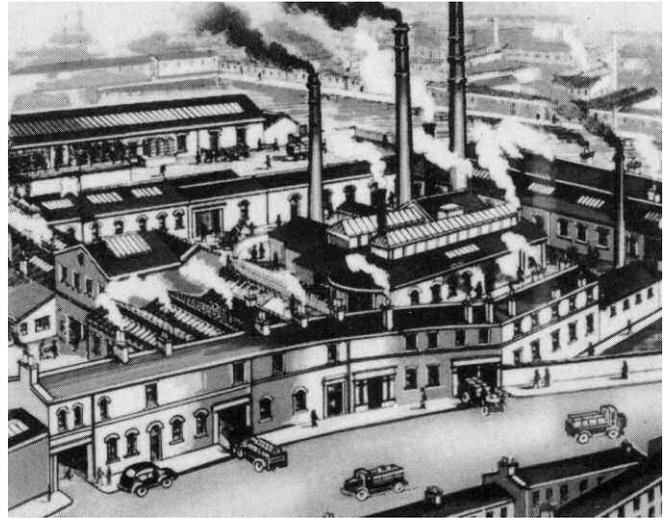


The Clark cutlery, known as 'Voluto', was unique and years ahead of its time. It was manufactured from one piece of stainless steel making it faster and easier to produce, stronger, more aesthetic and more hygienic. In 1935, the company was awarded a medal by the Royal Sanitary Institute.

Unfortunately, the 'Voluto' workshops were bombed during the Second World War and the patent was sold, taking the business in a new direction.

The post war years saw many changes at Clarks. As the traditional markets, such as shovel plates began to die away with the development of mechanical earth-moving equipment, new markets were sought.

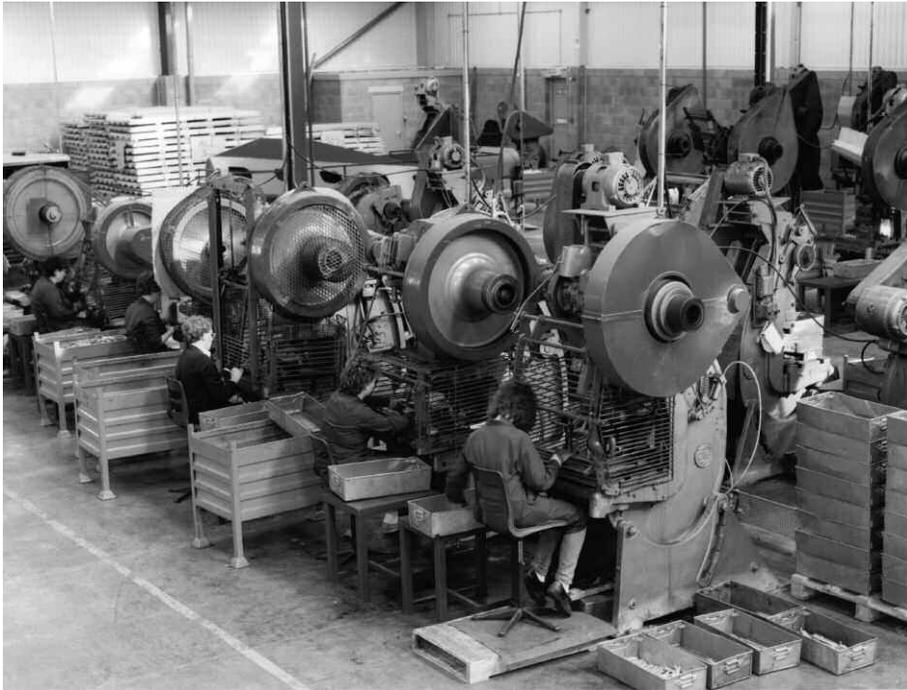
In the mid-1960s George Clark shared premises with Walter Spencer and Company and in 1972 they briefly merged to form Spencer Clark Metal Industries Ltd. Walter Spencer and Company had occupied a site at Crescent Steelworks on Warren Street since 1901 – an area of land adjacent to the River Don which had seen considerable industrial development during the nineteenth century – and it was here where the company now moved, just around the corner from Ancon's current site at President Way!



The business began to explore new sophisticated stainless steels and superalloy steels, and started to target the Construction Industry; firstly with reinforcing bar before diversifying into cavity wall ties and brickwork support systems. New manufacturing facilities were established in North Wales to service demand. The company developed a very high tensile stainless steel ribbed bar. It became popular both home and abroad, being used to reinforce the walkways around the famous Sydney Opera House.

Left: Clark's Voluto cutlery. **Above:** Walter Spencer and Company's Crescent Steelworks site. **Below:** Reinforcing the walkways around the Sydney Opera House.





built facility on President Way in 1997 and has expanded its footprint twice since, taking additional space in adjacent buildings, as well as relocating its factory in Wales to larger premises in Deeside.

New overseas sales operations in Australia and the United Arab Emirates were acquired as a result of a merger in 1997 with Leeds-based CCL Systems. The acquisition of a Swiss business, Plüger & Partner, a fellow expert in working with stainless steels, followed in 1998.

Ancon's Austrian business was founded in 2002, followed by a German subsidiary in 2006. The company continues to expand its international sales network and now has distributors as far afield as USA, South Africa and Russia.

This bar also proved ideal for remedial construction work, particularly on high rise concrete buildings. Amongst the buildings restored using this high strength bar was the Queen's Head public house on Pond Street – the oldest standing building in Sheffield.

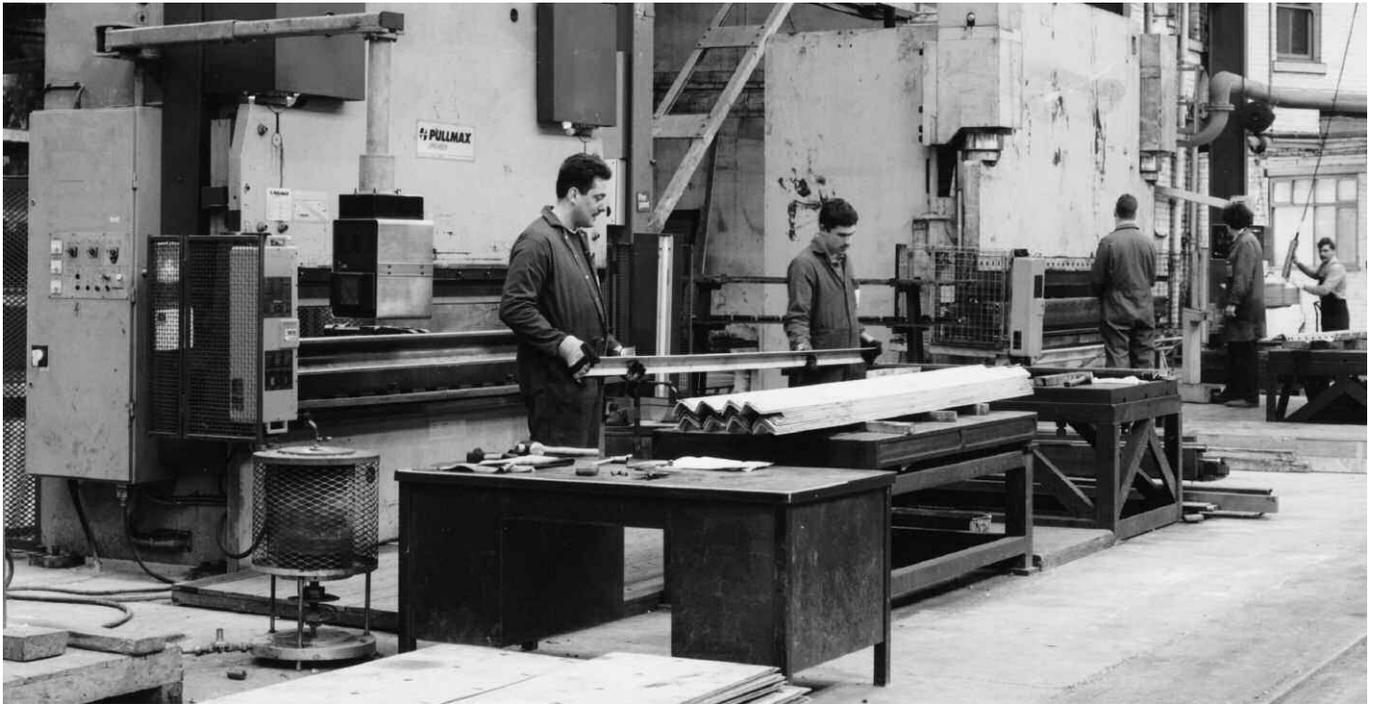
At around the same time (1971), on the other side of the city, Ancon Stainless Steel Fixings, was founded. George Clark and Ancon competed head-to-head for some time, with a similar range of products, before merging in 1992 to become Ancon Clark. The company continued to expand both through organic growth, and through a number of mergers and acquisitions. It moved to its current purpose-



Meanwhile, Ancon's contribution to Sheffield life has not just been industrial. In 1998, Ancon manufactured and donated two 'Salmon of Steel', designed by local artist David Mayne, which mark a stretch of water known as Salmon Pastures on the Five Weirs Walk along the river Don.

Top left: A view inside the George Clark factory in North Wales, circa 1985. **Left:** New signage at the Olive Grove Road site after the merger of Ancon Stainless Steel Fixings and George Clark in 1992. **Above:** David Mayne's 'Salmon of Steel' manufactured by Ancon for the Five Weirs Walk.

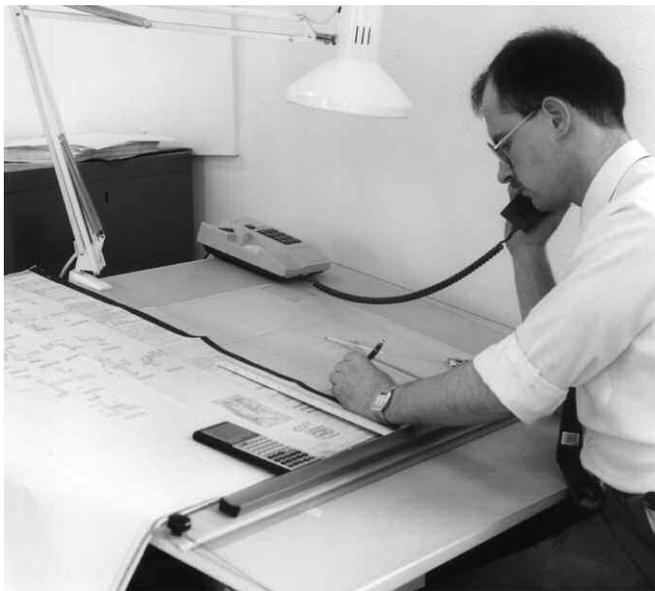




In 2004, Ancon donated technical resources and materials to the restoration of Sheffield's iconic Cholera Monument. Built in 1835 to commemorate the 402 Sheffield victims of the great Cholera epidemic of 1832, it had been badly damaged by severe gales and a lightning strike in 1990. Ancon's contribution helped stabilise and preserve the monument for future generations.

Since 2008, Ancon has been recognised as a Business Language Champion for its work with secondary school children in England and Wales. Students visiting Ancon gain an understanding of the essential role that language skills play in today's global business environment – and are encouraged to keep learning beyond secondary education.

Ancon still cuts, welds, forms and punches stainless steel, just like it has for many years: however, the equipment used has changed considerably. Laser cutting and robot welding were introduced in 2000.



Operational Excellence is the driving force behind the efficiency and ongoing improvement of the company's processes. Encompassing the latest Lean Manufacturing and 'Six Sigma' principles, an operational excellence programme helps to continuously improve the quality of products and reduce waste,

Top: Manufacturing in the 1980s. Left: At work on the Drawing Board at George Clark, late 1980s. Above: An overview of the Ancon Office, Olive Grove Road, early 1990s.



operating costs and delivery lead times. The everyday implementation of process improvement tools and continuous improvement methods means Ancon is well positioned for sustained growth, keeping it at the forefront of the steel fixings industry.

Ancon continues to develop new products which meet the Construction Industry's sustainability agenda by improving the thermal performance of buildings, eliminating on-site safety concerns and accelerating the rate of construction. The firm uses the properties of steel to its full advantage in order to optimise the use of other construction materials like concrete and insulation, and facilitate more efficient construction processes.



In 2012 on HM The Queen's birthday, Ancon was honoured with a Queen's Award for Enterprise in Innovation. This is considered by many to be the ultimate business accolade. Winning organisations must demonstrate significant advances in commercial success through innovation, combined with the highest levels of corporate excellence. The award confirms that Ancon is one of Britain's most successful businesses with not only a long history but also a very bright future.



Top left: Laser cutting at Ancon. **Above:** Ancon directors: Josie Welburn, Stuart Maxwell and Peter McDermott. **Centre:** In 2012, Ancon won a prestigious Queen's Award for Innovation for its ground-breaking lockable dowel system used in post-tensioned concrete buildings. **Below:** Ancon Head Office, President Way, Sheffield.





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