

# **A SHORT HISTORY OF WILLIAM COULTHARD AND CO. LTD, CARLISLE.**

## **THE FIRST 100 YEARS.**

*By Graham Brooks*

### **INTRODUCTION.**

William Coulthard and Company Limited is a well established Carlisle business which has existed in many guises. Starting as a mill and mine furnishers they branched out into the building and plumbers suppliers market, became a producer of both diecast items and diecasting machines, and also lubricators.

### **WILLIAM COULTHARD EARLY LIFE AND CAREER.**

William Coulthard was born in December 1835 and was baptised at St Cuthbert's, Carlisle on Christmas Day 1835. He was the second child of John and Ellen Coulthard, who had married at Annan on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1833. They must have moved to Carlisle shortly after this date because their eldest child Mary Ann was baptised at St Mary's, Carlisle on February 16<sup>th</sup> 1834. At that time John is described as a servant living in Rickergate. By the time of Williams Baptism he is described as a husbandman and living in Lowther Street.

During the 1830s the family had 2 more children Matthew and Martha who didn't survive childhood. By the time of the birth of the second son to be called Matthew on 20<sup>th</sup> February 1840 the family had moved to John Lane, Caldewgate but John was still described as a husbandman. By the time of the 1851 census the family is complete with the birth of Joseph on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 1844 and John born 20<sup>th</sup> July 1848 (an earlier son called John had been born 5<sup>th</sup> October 1846 but had died 25<sup>th</sup> April 1847) and are living at 4 James Row, Caldewgate, the father is described as a carter. William aged 15 by then is described as a scholar. The place of his schooling is not known but Shaddongate was dominated by Peter Dixon's cotton mill where possibly his elder sister Mary was working as a reeler. The Dixons had established their own school in Caldewgate in 1836 and it is possible that William was educated there.

There is a tradition as stated in his obituary that William became a school master, however, at the time of his marriage on 9<sup>th</sup> June 1860 to Annie Johnston he described himself as a clerk in a cotton mill. But on his return for the 1861 census he is living with Annie at 22 Shaddongate and describes himself as both a clerk and a teacher of evening school.

William must have impressed as a clerk, for in the next 10 years not only does he start a family but by the time of the 1871 census he is a manager at Peter Dixons Shaddongate cotton mill. The decade between the two censuses was not all happiness for William. Annie and William had had two sons - John born in 1861 and William George born in 1863. Their third son Colvin was born on 29<sup>th</sup> April 1865, but died on 10<sup>th</sup> July at 10 weeks of age and then Annie died 11 days later on the 21<sup>st</sup> July 1865 from consumption.

William remarried in 1866 to Isabella Johnstone the widow of Thomas Bryden who had died in February 1865. They went on to have a further six children.

William whilst living in Carlisle was active in the community and was amongst other things, the secretary for the Carlisle Penny Readings.

By February 1872 William had left Dixons when Mr F P Dixon took over the management of the mill. This was a time of change at Dixons with a large number of handloom weavers in 1871 being replaced by 600 power looms. William moved with his family to Annan where he took over the management of the newly refurbished mill of Foster and Company in Port Road Annan. The family moved into a house at Douglas Place, Annan near the mill. Shortly after William left Dixons the company went into liquidation in July 1872.

The mill originally had been built in the 1820s as a two storey mill, in the 1850s it had been taken over by Montgomery and Waugh who had improved the mill and added another three storeys. The latest owners Forster and Co. had only just taken over the mill. Adverts in the Carlisle newspapers in January and February 1872 state that the mill was requiring workers for all aspects of the trade. The advert in the Carlisle Express and Examiner of the 10<sup>th</sup> February 1872 tell people to apply to the manager, but no name is given. It contained 16,000 spindles and employed 110 people.

His diary for 1877 survives and shows William travelled regularly to Liverpool usually by train but occasionally via the steamer from Silloth to buy raw cotton, and in the opposite direction to Glasgow to sell the final product. Whilst in Annan he became active in Annan Literary Society, taking an active part in a number of debates.

Entries in his diary suggest that his brother Joseph was also employed at the mill in Annan, whilst his brother Matthew was employed in Carlisle at Carrs Biscuit Factory. He arranged apprenticeships for his two eldest sons. William George was apprenticed to the grocers Caie and Pools of Annan and John was apprenticed to David Thompson and Sons plumbers of Barwise Court, Carlisle during 1877.

However, disaster struck at lunchtime on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> September 1878, when a fire started in number 5 Mule room on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor when a small pair of bevel wheels on a cross shaft driving a pair of mules became hot and started a fire in the box covering them. This ignited the cotton fly waste that is thrown off in the process of spinning. This occurred at 12.30 pm. The mill was not 'fireproof' with floors of dry wood saturated in oil. Despite a large tank of water in the attic with pipes to each floor with a large brass tap on each floor and a supply of buckets and hoses, the floor gave way in a short time and the machinery dropped in to the floor below.

Portions of other floors then collapsed and within an half hour all of the mill was on fire and the roof collapsed before 2pm. The main building was completely destroyed, up to 7000 lbs of cotton in the mixing room was saved and the fireproof blowing room was left unaffected, as was the engine house.

William had only left the mill about 15 minutes before the fire and he rapidly returned and with the help of Mr Forster the owner had helped to organise an attempt to save the mill. The damage amounted to £12 – 14,000 of which only 50% was covered by insurance. Due to the poor cotton trade it was decided not to rebuild the mill. Mr Forster changed the building into a premises for dyeing wadding and cotton wool.

William didn't stay in Annan and had returned to Carlisle where he was living at Murrell Hill, Carlisle and lists his occupation as cotton mill manager at the birth of his youngest child Colville Kinmount Coulthard on the 15<sup>th</sup> June 1879.

### **THE FORMATION OF THE COMPANY.**

The reasons for William to start his own business of mill and mine furnishers at 25 Castle Street in 1880 are not known. Certainly with his experience as a cotton mill manger he would be well placed to run that part of the business. The family had by then moved to Abbey Street, Carlisle.

Kelly's Cumberland Directory for 1891 lists him as Coulthard W & Co Mill and Mine Furnishers, engineers factors, oil, asbestos, india- rubber and leather merchants and he is listed in the 1891 census as a mill furnisher still living at 38 Abbey Street.

By the time of the 1897 Kelly's Directory the firm had expanded into the neighbouring premises 27 Castle Street. Expansion continued and in 1899 his son Colville Kinmount joined the business and they purchased new premises 13, 15, 15a and 17 Lonsdale Street, Carlisle, in 1900 for £2,700 and William moved into part of the premises to live. The 1901 census shows William as a mill furnisher and belting sales. His son Colville is also listed at the same premises with the occupation of mill furnisher.

William died at Lonsdale Street on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1906. The business passed in to the hands of Colville Kinmount, and his brothers William George and Thomas James Coulthard. William George had been trading under his own name as W G Coulthard Ltd.

William George Coulthard was listed as a commercial traveller in the 1891 census and living at 38 Abbey Street. This could be the same William listed in the 1884-5 A B Moss's Carlisle Directory as a traveller at the same address. When he became a member of the freemasons in 1894 his entry in the register has his address as Stanwix and his occupation as a mill furnisher. The 1901 census has him living at 4 Compton Street and still described as a mill furnisher. By the 1911 census he was living at Rothay, Wetheral with the occupation of Mill Furnisher and Engineer factor and an employer. He died in September 1920.

Thomas James was listed in the 1911 census as a worker in the Mill Furnishing business and living in Stanwix. He was married on the 26<sup>th</sup> September 1906 to Emily Sutcliffe at Halifax when he described himself as an engineer. By the time of the christening of their son James William Donald Coulthard in 1909 they are living in Stanwix and he describes himself as a mill furnisher.

Colville had married Mabel Atkinson on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1906 and moved out of the premises in Lonsdale Street to live at 6 Chiswick Street, Carlisle, but on the death of his mother Isabella he moved back to Lonsdale Street, moving out to 6 Howard Place in 1926. Their first child William was born on 25<sup>th</sup> February 1907 and their second son Thomas was born on 1909. Both sons would go on to play a role in the business.

The company was incorporated on January 24<sup>th</sup> 1920 with Colville Kinmount, William George and Thomas James Coulthard named as the first directors. William died shortly after this and Thomas died in 1934. Thomas Coulthard is shown on the incorporating documents as living at Pebbles in the Scottish Borders.

### **RIMMINGTON BROTHERS, CARLISLE.**

Rimmington Brothers was started in 1878 (Other references says 1884) by George Ord Rimmington at 6 Abbey Street, Carlisle, as a general mill and engineers furnishing business. 6 Abbey Street was a 3 storey 15 room 17<sup>th</sup> century house with buildings also facing on to West Walls.

They were listed in Kelly's 1891 Cumberland Directory as Oil Merchants, Engineer Factors and Mill Furnishers and dealers in iron tube and fittings, bolts, nuts and India rubber and leather merchants and had expanded to 2 & 6 Abbey St. Further expansion had taken place by the time of the 1897 directory when their address was given as 6 Abbey St, Botchergate and 9 & 11 West Walls.

Their stock in 1914 is listed as Lubricators and Lubricants, Power Transmission, General Engineers' Furnishings. They were Agents for Nugent's Patent Pendulum Crank Pin Centre Oiler. At the time of his retirement Rimmington Brothers had increased their business to include Importers and Crank Pin and Crosshead Oilers and Oil Filters. They were the patentees of Rimmington's Asbestos Lapped Jointing Rings, now expired and Proprietors of "Sterling " Brand (Registered) of Machinery Belting.

Coulthards acquired the Rimmington Brothers business on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1920 when they paid £1250 for the goodwill of the business of mill and mine furnishers at 6 Abbey Street, Carlisle also the stock in hand, office and warehouse furniture, stationary plant and fixtures. The directors of Rimmington Brothers are shown as George Ord Rimmington and H E Watson.

It would appear that they kept the lubricator business, as in 1922 they were still listed as lubricator specialists distributing Madison-Kipp lubricators, Manzel oil pumps, Nugent's oiling devices and the sole UK agents Federal Graphoiler.

### **MECHANICAL LUBRICATORS.**

One of the problems with early machinery was that lubrication of moving parts such as pistons etc. had to be done manually. This required either the manual application to moving parts with all the hazards that that entailed as are reported in the press of the time or the frequent stopping of the machinery to allow lubrication.

The early 20<sup>th</sup> Century saw two companies develop in the USA to become major producers of lubricating systems which were to play an important part in the development of Wm. Coulthard and Co. Ltd. These were Madison-Kipp and Manzel Brothers.

Madison-Kipp was formed in 1898 by Oliver G Kipp a machinist from Illinois who invented a mechanical force feed lubricator based on his original valveless pumping principle. He and a partner established the O G manufacturing company in Rochelle Illinois to make and sell his invention. The new lubricator was a major advance over previous products allowing for automatic lubrication of steam cylinders on farm tractors and power units. In 1902 the fledgling company merged with Mason Lubricator Company to become Mason-Kipp Manufacturing Company and all operations were moved to Madison, Wisconsin.

Oliver Kipp died in 1904 and in 1905 the company name was changed to Madison-Kipp Lubricator Company. Thomas A Coleman became Company President in 1908 and by 1914 Coleman and his family assumed ownership of the company and in 1919 changed the name to Madison-Kipp Corporation.

By 1917 they dominated the market in lubricators with 66% of steam and gasoline farm tractors being equipped with Madison-Kipp parts.

In the 1920s they expanded into the die cast business when they had difficulty acquiring parts for their other products. In 1930 they produced the first real high speed pneumatic air grinder, which forms a later part of the story.

Manzel was formed by two brothers Charles W and Adolph W F Manzel and were registered at 46 & 48 Broadway, Buffalo New York in 1903. By 1910 they were operating from what they claimed to be the largest plant in the USA devoted to the manufacture of force feed oil pumps.

Rimingtons had formed a separate company British Manzel Oil Pump Company by 1910, at 139 Lowther Street, Carlisle. Coulthards must have come to an arrangement for the lubricator part of the business, because in 1926 there was a major sales drive with the Maddison-Kipp lubricators, when William Coulthard made a series of calls on the major steam engine manufacturers in the country. The company did not however acquire the name British Manzel Oil Pump Company until 1<sup>st</sup> November 1932 when they paid Mr H E Watson, the sole proprietor £400 for the goodwill and stock.

The takeover of Rimington Brothers still left significant competition in the Carlisle area. They listed themselves in the 1931 Kelly's Directory as Mill and Mine Furnishers, Asbestos Agents, Engineer Factors, India Rubber Merchants, Leather Merchants and Oil Merchants. The same directory also listed the following companies trading in the same commodities:

Johnston and Bulman 31 Lonsdale Street, Carlisle

Couling S W, 55 Blackfriars Street Carlisle

Northern Mill & Mine Furnishing Co. Annetwell St, Carlisle, owner A J Crawford.

Roy and Nixon, Crown St, Carlisle.

### **FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS**

By 1921 they had acquired the UK sole agency for the Fairbanks weighing machines and a range of other products.

Increasing business meant larger premises were required and on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1925 they moved into Crown Works, Crown Street,

PLEASE HANG UP FOR REFERENCE.

# WILLIAM COULTHARD & CO., LTD.

*“Sterling.”*

TELEGRAPHIC CODE:  
“MARCONI  
INTERNATIONAL.”



VIEW OF NEW PREMISES.

TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS:  
“TRY.” CARLISLE.

TELEPHONE NO.:  
104 CARLISLE.

MERCHANTS AND MANUFACTURERS OF  
RAILWAY, MILL, AND COLLIERY SUPPLIES,  
ENGINEERS' TOOLS AND MACHINERY,  
OIL, RUBBER, LEATHER, AND ASBESTOS GOODS.

**CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

IN consequence of the rapid expansion of our business in spite of the general depression, we have been compelled to remove into larger and more commodious premises, and our new address, on and after 1st September, will be:—

**CROWN WORKS,  
CROWN STREET,  
:: CARLISLE ::**

WHERE ALL COMMUNICATIONS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED.

TELEPHONE—104 CARLISLE. TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS—“TRY.” CARLISLE.

These Works are within 2 minutes' walk of the Citadel Station, Carlisle, have a floor space of 32,000 square feet, and are fitted with all the appliances necessary for the economic and rapid handling of our materials.

We fully appreciate the gratifying support we have received from our patrons hitherto, and we hope that by means of our increased efficiency we shall continue to merit the confidence of our Customers, and to render them even better service in the future.

September, 1925. WILLIAM COULTHARD & Co., Ltd.

**Fig 1: Advertisement for the move to Crown works.**

Carlisle, which were rented. The property also included a number of shops on Botchergate which were sub-let. They described their business as merchants and manufacturers of railway, mill and colliery supplies, engineer's tools and machinery, oil, rubber, leather and asbestos goods. Interestingly the plumber and builders merchants were not mentioned on the publicity material.

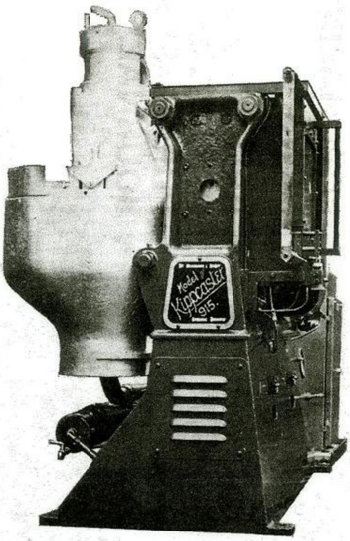
The Crown Works had been built in 1909 for McCumskey Brothers. They were a firm dealing in rags, ropes, and hare and rabbit skins trading from 60 Botchergate and 17 Collier Lane, Carlisle until they had the Crown Works built on Crown Street, Carlisle. The building is a five storey red brick building with large windows on all floors. It had a floor space of 32,000 ft. designed by Henry Foxall. The senior partner George Patrick McCumskey had died in 1923 and the business was closed.

Family tradition suggests that the building and plumbing departments were introduced into the business when Colville Kinmount entered the business and that during the First World War the company supplied a large amount of building materials especially – guttering - to the government when they were building the armaments factory at Gretna.

However, the first local advert for plumbing merchants occurred in 1929 when they describe themselves as selling sanitary fittings, ranges, heating apparatus and all plumbers requisites. They had been producing catalogues for the local plumbing business from before this date with the earliest example, seen to date, dated 1927. The building supply side of the business is first advertised in 1931, which mentions showrooms in the Crown Street premises for bathrooms and kitchens with special reference to fireplaces and solid fuel cookers. From this point the building supply business started to dominate the local adverts suggesting a change in the direction of the business.

During this period Colville's sons both married, William Coulthard was married in 1929 to Jane Ann Johnston and their son William Colville was born in 1934. Thomas married in 1932 to Ruth

**KIPPCASTER  
DIECASTING MACHINES**



Automatic or Manual  
Over 40 years of diecasting experience  
**WM. COULTHARD & CO. LTD.**  
Durranhill Road, Carlisle CA1 3NS, England.  
Tel: Carlisle 21418      Grams: "Kipp Carlisle"

**Fig 2: Advertisement for kippcaster machines.**

Hodgson Studholme and their son Jeremy Ian Coulthard was born in 1935. Both of these sons were again to join the business later in life.

By 1934 Madison-Kipp had appointed Wm Coulthard and Co. as sole agents for England for their die cast machines. These were originally imported from America, but in 1938 at the suggestion of the Ministry of Supply, they started to make a range of pressure diecast machines themselves under the Maddison-Kipp name. They also set up their own diecasting department making castings for other people.

By 1937 the directors were William and Thomas Coulthard, both had joined the company direct from school. They had a number of supply contracts with various government departments and an export trade with Australia, Africa, France, Poland, New Zealand, Canada and the US A. During the Second World War the Company came under government control through the Ministry of Supply in 1940.

In 1943 the company was under pressure when Thomas Coulthard was called up. A significant fight took place to keep him in the company as he was the head of the diecast department and they had a number of government contracts including supplying aluminium alloy castings for compressor blowers for Creed & Co Ltd, East Croyden, Surrey; binocular bodies and insert plates in aluminium for Wray Ltd, Bromley, Kent. They were also supplying die cast machines to other companies for the war effort. The die cast machines in the Crown Street Works continued to be operated by men during the war due to the perceived danger from the hot metal. But a large number of women were employed during the war to trim the castings and this employment continued after the end of the war.

Colville Kinmount Coulthard died in 1943.

The end of the war saw further developments and in 1949 they acquired the agency for Elmes Engineering works of American Steel Foundries of Chicago. Their new range of diecasting machines, under the tradename of Kippcaster, had greater pot capacity capable of holding up to 150 lbs of zinc. The models included 15B, 115B, 215B, 315B, and the 415B. The 215 was the fastest and most popular model being a fully pneumatic, displacement plunger type machine. Other machines in the range included the 4, 5 and 8, they were capable of handling standard zinc, lead and tin die cast alloys. There were also high pressure machines the 400 and 450 available for die casting brass and aluminium. They were capable of producing 8 of the smaller Kippcaster

machines per month and one of the larger 400 types. The die casting and engineering department were employing 49 men and 23 women at this time.

On Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> May 1949 the company received a visit from John Freeman MP the Permanent Parliamentary Secretary for the Ministry of Supply. He visited both the Crown Street works and the new site under construction at Durranhill.

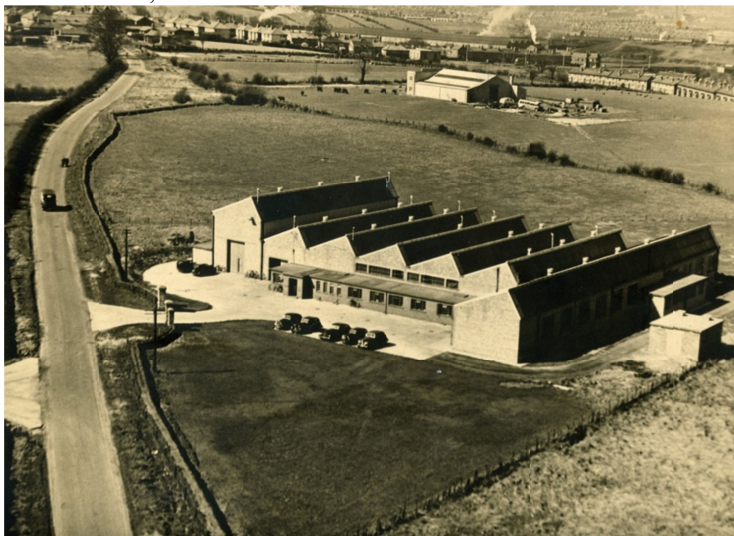
### **DURRANHILL SITE.**

The premises at Crown Street were not suitable for the production and use of the heavy machinery and were becoming too small for all the departments. At the end of the Second World War they purchased an area of land at Durranhill, Carlisle, which had already been earmarked as a potential Industrial Estate by Carlisle City Council, and built a new factory for the production of die casting machines and for producing castings for other companies, which opened in 1949.

The original plans were passed in 1946 to designs by George N Danson of 54 Lowther Street, Carlisle. It was designed as a 7 bay building. Each bay was 25 ft wide by 100 ft long and was lit by north facing roof lights. The first bay was labelled assembly bay with a higher roof at 26 ft 6 ins and was fitted with a 15 ton overhead electric crane. The other six bays were the same height of 15 ft and were in order from the assembly bay, stores with a two ton overhead hand crane, machine shop again with a two ton crane. The next three bays were labelled trimming and the final bay was castings again with a two ton crane.

A single storey flat roofed outshoot was to be built in front of bays three to six which along with the adjoining 30 ft of parts of bays four and five were to be drawing and account offices with associated rooms. Single storey toilet facilities were also provided on each side wall.

Although these plans were approved by the City Council new plans were submitted in May 1948. These kept the basic design of 7 bays but altered the layout of the main offices, and allowed offices for the foreman in bays one and three, the addition of a boiler room to the



**Fig 3: The Durranhill factory in 1951 just after opening.**

front of bay seven and a staff canteen and kitchen to the rear of bay seven. The original plans recommended that the walls should be constructed from cavity concrete blocks, but the factory was built with 11 inch cavity brick walls.

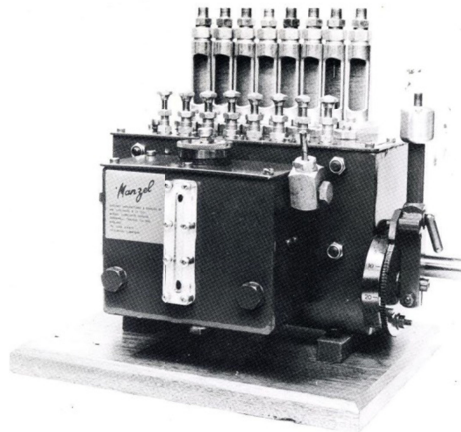
An independent application was also submitted to build a separate building to the side of the assembly bay to house a garage, grinding shop and paint store.

It was soon found that the new premises were not sufficient for the trade and in 1951 an application was made to build a flat roof extension behind bays six and five, the trimming shops, to provide a washing shop and tool shop. Also an application for a flat roofed grinding shop to be added to the side of the assembly shop behind the toilet block.

The diecasting department carried out castings for a number of companies over the years. They produced aluminium and zinc alloy castings under the name "Carlcast" for the building and plumbing trades, castings for Meccano and the turbine blades for Rolls Royce's RB211 engine.

By the 1950s they were describing themselves as machine tool builders and pressure die casters, also builders and plumbers merchants at Durranhill and Crown Street works. This period also saw another change in the business when in 1955 they started making Manzel lubricators themselves under the name of British Manzel Oil Pump Company, rather than just selling imported items.

The British Manzel Oil Pump Company name was dropped in 1960, they traded in oil pumps after that as William Coulthard & Co Ltd, Manzel Division. These were supplied to British built ships and gas and air compressors. They also became distributors for Penberthy's range of injectors, ejectors and jet pumps.



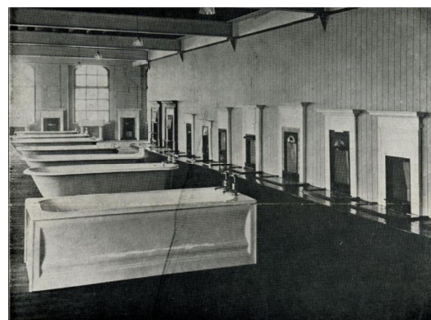
**Fig 4: typical model D Lubricator for large marine diesels.**

A development in the early 1970s was a mini-lube system dispensing continuously a total of only 1 pint per month.

The Company introduced a pension scheme for the male employees in 1960 and for female employees in 1961. A new lease on the Crown Street premises was signed in 1961 at £1000 per annum. By 1976 the Duranhill site covered 38,000 square feet and consisted of the engineering department employing 80 people, the diecast department with 60 employees.

#### **BUILDING AND PLUMBING DEPARTMENT.**

The 1950s and 60s was a time when the plumbing and building department was under pressure. Competitive pricing to local plumbers was introduced and Mr Reid was employed as a representative for the plumbing department. Despite the competition there was a need to expand the building and plumbing department and a quote for a new bulk warehouse at Durranhill was acquired and built with part of the building and plumbing supply business moving there.





**Fig 5: A view of the bathroom section of the Crown Street Works.**

Despite these competition problems in July 1962 Coulthards purchased a builders merchants at 53-55 Washington Street, Workington. (£2500 property, goodwill £300 stock £4752). The layout of the Crown Street premises was altered in 1963 giving better access to the yard and moving the showrooms to different floors. A new lease was agreed in 1965 on Crown Works. During this period a new development occurred with the opening of an automotive department.

Further developments in the building and plumbing departments occurred in 1968 with the purchase of the building leased from Mr Sibson in Washington Street, Workington allowing alterations to give a new store and showroom. Plans were also developed to move all the building department to Durranshill, which would allow the yard at the Crown Works to be used by the automotive department.

The Company purchased the Crown Street and Botchergate properties in October 1975, previously they had been owned by members of the family, and a new showroom opened at Crown Street. These showrooms were an approved centre for the National Fireplace Council and they qualified as an authorised National Federation of Builders and Plumbers Merchants Home Improvement Centre, the only one in the area at the time.

William Coulthard died on Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> January 1976 and Joint Managing director Thomas Coulthard was appointed Chairman and Managing Director until his retirement in 1979, leaving their sons William Colville and Jeremy Ian as the directors of the Company.

The 1970s saw major changes in the plumbing and building supply trade with the introduction of the DIY Superstore. This had an effect on the business and the company wrote to its plumber and kitchen fitting clients in March 1981 outlining new terms and conditions due to the fact that the majority of bathroom and kitchen fittings were now sold directly to the client through the DIY stores. They moved to a net pricing system for sanitary and brassware. They were looking to introduce a kitchen design service and would need trade customers to fix kitchens on their behalf.

Despite these changes the Crown Street premises were eventually closed in 1985 and sold to Carlisle Glass. The building and plumbing department continued for another 2 years at Durranshill but was sold to Crossley-Ferguson in 1987.

So at the end of the 1980s the company were situated on one site at Durranshill running a diecasting business for a range of clients and an engineering department making and supplying a range of diecasting machinery, lubricators and associated machinery and equipment.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.**

I would like to thank William Colville Coulthard for initiating this paper and allowing access to the family and business archives.

