

Stacey Hill Snippets

Salmons and Sons of Newport Pagnell – a short history

Joseph Salmons, the founder of the company, was born in 1794, at Dropshore in Bow Brickhill parish. After his parents moved to Sherington just three miles away, Joseph was educated at a Lace School in Priory Street, Tickford End, Newport Pagnell. Close to Joseph's school was the wheelwright's shop of Francis Warr and it was probably here that he subsequently started his apprenticeship as a wheelwright.

On 18th January 1822, Joseph married Jane Fermeadows at Wellingborough, Northampton. There soon followed two children, and in the baptism records Joseph is listed as a wheelwright living in Tickford End.

In 1835 the Tickford Estate came onto the market. This was purchased by Thomas Atterbury, a wealthy farmer and carrier from Woburn. Part of the Tickford estate was subsequently sold on by him and Joseph secured a parcel of land adjacent to the property he was already renting in Tickford End. From here he carried out trade as a coach maker, possibly making carts and wagons for Atterbury. It is unclear when Joseph first established his carriage works, but it would be reasonable to assume it was in the 1830's. The property in which Joseph rented came up for auction in 1844 and he was able to purchase it. He promptly demolished the old works and built himself a house fronting Tickford Street and around the house he built new workshops.

Joseph's two eldest sons soon followed him into the coach building business. Sarah, his eldest daughter, married local brewer William Hipswell, of Olney, and later their sons provided financial assistance to the business through loans and mortgages. Another daughter married a local builder who carried out much of the factory building for Salmons.

After the death of his wife in 1867, Joseph took his sons Thomas and Joseph junior into partnership, and in 1869 placed an announcement in Croydon's Weekly Standard to the effect that this had taken place, and the firm would now become Salmons and Sons.

The 1871 Census reveals that the company employed 18 men and nine boys. Salmons were renowned for their dog carts which proved so popular that the company was described in Harrods Royal County Directory of 1876 as 'Makers of the Celebrated Dog Cart'.

At the age of 82, on 15 December 1878, Joseph died peacefully at his home in Tickford Street. During his lifetime he had established a major coach building business in England and beyond. Salmons and Sons went on to be among the first coach makers to build the new motor carriages, and the completion of their first car body was reported in The Bucks Standard of 24 December 1898. The car was built on a Daimler chassis for Mr. Walter Carlisle, the local MP. The chassis was purchased through Arthur Mulliner of Northampton, the main agent for Daimler at the time, and arrived at Newport Pagnell by train.

As orders for motor carriage bodies increased, Salmons desperately needed even more workshop space. A wheelwright and cart builder's premises in the High Street was purchased and this eased the situation. The production of horse drawn carriages moved to

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these premises. However, as demand for these dwindled, production ceased and the premises was used for the manufacture of hand carts and wheelbarrows. The High Street premises became known as the Salmons Barrow Works. It finally closed in 1939.

The production of motor car bodies continued for many years at the Tickford site, however with the advent of the Second World War car production ceased at the works and the remaining representatives of the Salmons family resigned as directors in 1940. They later sold their interests to Ian Boswell and the company began trading under a new name - Tickford Ltd.

In 1954 the factory was sold by Ian Boswell and a new era of car production developed – the famous Aston Martin marque, but that is another story.

Further reading: 'Salmons & Sons, the Tickford Coach Builders' Dennis Mynard, The History Press Ltd, 2007.

