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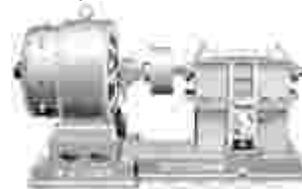
## FURSE EARTHING – 100 YEARS EARTHING EXCELLENCE

To stay in business for 100 years is truly a great achievement, but to do it in a century that has seen such unprecedented social and technological change is almost a miracle. Yet through all that the century could throw at it, including two world wars, Furse has remained a constant force in an unpredictable world.



It started in 1893 when **William Joseph Furse** (*pictured, left*) acquired the premises and steeplejacking business of Joshua Till on Burton Street in Nottingham. Starting with one employee, Mr Furse improved and expanded the business. Recognising at an early stage the growing importance of electricity, he diversified into electrical installation, and opened a workshop in Goldsmith Place for the manufacture of switchgear and components.

The next seven years to the turn of the century saw a relocation to Traffic Street, and the further development of the business into a multi-disciplined engineering concern, adding **lift** and theatre equipment manufacture and installation to its existing activities.



The first quarter of the new century including the years of the Great War 1914-1918 saw a continuation of the company's growth with electrical installation subsidiaries opened in Manchester and London, and a steeplejacking branch also in Manchester. The company was incorporated in 1912 as W J Furse & Co Ltd with the founder as chairman, and his sons W F Furse and H J Furse as directors.



In 1926 **Furse Wholesale Ltd** was set up as a subsidiary of the main company, to handle trade sales of electrical equipment. In 1927 the Refrigeration Division was formed to sell the 'Frigidaire' range of products.

William Joseph Furse died in 1937. His son W F Furse became group chairman and Managing Director.

Throughout the **Second World War**, the company was heavily involved in war work which fuelled considerable growth.

By the early 1950's Furse was ready to expand again, and new offices and stores were built at Wilford Road for the Steeplejack Division. This was followed in 1954 by relocation of the foundry from Traffic Street to Wilford Road.



In 1958 the company was acquired by E V Industrials Ltd, who in turn sold their interests in the organisation to **Crown House** in 1967. The following years under Crown House were a stable, but not uneventful period.

Furse Electrical Contracting was merged with other interests within the Crown House Group to form Crown House Engineering. In 1972 the refrigeration division was closed down, and the following year, Peerless Engineering was acquired.



Mr J K Furse, the last member of the Furse family to be connected with the company, retired in 1977.

Also in that year, Furse Power Products Ltd (formerly Furse Wholesale Ltd) was merged with other interests to form National Electrical Supplies Co Ltd later becoming Best and May, and now Senate.



The later 1980's and early 1990's were a turbulent time for Furse. In 1987, the organisation changed hands twice, as first Coloroll Plc and then Thomas Robinson Group took control. Coloroll had taken over the whole of the Crown House Group in order to obtain its tableware interests. The engineering companies within the group were quickly sold on, with Furse finding a buyer in the rapidly growing Thomas Robinson Group, based in Derby.

Robinson's saw the need to create three separate companies from the three divisions of W J Furse and from January 1988, Lift Division became Furse Lifts Ltd, Steeplejack Division became Furse Specialist Contracting Ltd, and Engineering Division retained the original company name of W J Furse & Co Ltd. Theatre Products was sold off to CCT in the following year, but Thomas Robinson commenced a £2m programme of investment in the rest of the Furse organisation including a new computer system, production equipment and building improvements. Furse Lifts Ltd was acquired by Thyssen Lifts and Escalators, the UK arm of a German based company.

At the beginning of the 1990's the UK slipped into recession, and the fortunes of the Thomas Robinson Group changed for the worse.

In June 1991 W J Furse & Co Ltd and Furse Specialist Contracting Ltd were acquired by **East Midlands Electricity Plc**, a UK regional electricity company.



EME afforded W J Furse their full support and encouraged the company's ambitious investment program in new and improved manufacturing facilities.

Since 1998 Furse have been a part of the Thomas & Betts corporation. Thomas & Betts, based in Memphis, USA, are a world leader in the supply of electrical components. [CLICK HERE](#) for the Thomas & Betts web site.

Over 100 years after the firms inception, the Furse name continues to be synonymous with innovative engineering and management success, and stands as a tribute to its founder.