

HOPE CEMENT WORKS 90th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

THE WORKS

STEP BACK IN TIME

Ninety years of Hope Cement Works in photographs

EARN WHILE YOU LEARN

How an apprenticeship could be the start of a career in engineering

A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

The future of the Cement Works and its impact on the Hope Valley







WELCOME TO THE WORKS

This year marks the 90th anniversary of the first cement works opening at our Hope site. It's been many things to many people since then: a place of employment, a place of opportunity, a place for technological advances, a place full of family and friends, a familiar face, an iconic landmark, a blot on the landscape, a trailblazer in industrial design, a place to enjoy hobbies and a place to encourage debate. But one thing is for certain, for nearly a century Hope Cement Works has been an intrinsic part of the lives, communities and landscapes of the Hope Valley.

This anniversary edition of *The Works* magazine is a celebration of the past, present and future of Hope Cement Works. It's a chance for you to see what goes on behind the works gates and find out what we have planned for the future.

We hope you enjoy it!

Photograph:
Hope Cement Works in 1960

News



... and views!

Edale photographer and film maker Sam DeVito was tasked with capturing Hope Cement Works for our 90th birthday. He discovered that beauty can be found in the strangest places.

"I've driven past the works countless times," Sam told us, "and had always wondered what went on behind the gates. As an artist, I was worried that I would find its industrial nature uninspiring, but I couldn't have been more wrong – the works is strangely beautiful, from the light streaming into huge, high-ceilinged workshops, to the weathered kilns, the textures in the quarry and the pale tones of the concrete buildings. But most exciting were the views out of the highest parts of the site to the Hope Valley beyond. I was so pleased to be able to capture the beauty of the valley landscape from the unique vantage point of its most famous building."





A warm welcome at the Earle's Club

There are changes afoot at the Earle's Club, the social hub at Hope Cement Works... and we want you to come along and see what we're up to!

The Earle's Club is a hidden gem in the Hope Valley – where else can you find a bar, a bistro, party rooms and a gym in such unusual surroundings? And it's all open to the public.

The Kitchen Canteen is going from strength to strength under new Head Chef John Parsons and his team. The talented restaurateur has brought his own spin to the menus, offering delicious dishes a mile away from the usual canteen fare, from Eggs Benedict in the morning, to miso ramen, Thai green curry and homemade falafel for lunch. "I want to keep things fresh, healthy and surprising," says John. "This is no ordinary works canteen. My ethos is the same as it would be if I was running a top restaurant." The canteen is open to the public from 9am to 2pm Monday to Friday for breakfast, brunch and lunch.

If John's wonderful food isn't enough, stop for a drink at the Earle's Club bar, run by popular Club Manager Sarah. But it's not all eating and drinking! Become a Sports Club member and you can burn the calories at the Worx gym and attend classes run by Kerry, or maybe take a turn around our 9-hole golf course, try your hand at sailing on one of our sailing ponds or land a catch with our Fishing Club!

For more information on the Earle's Club, including opening times and membership fees, visit www.hopeworksclub.com

ALL ABOARD! NUNLOW RIDES AGAIN

The railway has always played an important part in the history of the Cement Works and continues to do so today. So it's with great excitement that we're welcoming home one of the works' earliest locomotives for our 90th birthday (and, coincidentally, her 71st!). *Nunlow* was delivered to G & T Earle's Hope Cement Works in 1938 to operate its single-track branch line. Named after the hill that was excavated to become Pindale Quarry, *Nunlow* was used alongside another engine, *Winhill*, to bring in 350-tonne trains of coal, gypsum and other goods and take out 21 vans of bagged cement. She was deemed as surplus to requirements in 1968 and was put up for sale.

Nunlow has been restored to her former glory by the Bahamas Locomotive Society in West Yorkshire. Society Chairman, Keith Whitmore, said of the restoration, "We are delighted that *Nunlow* will be returning home for her 71st birthday. It is hard to imagine that such an attractive loco spent her entire working life in industry and not on the main line, which I think shows the vision that Earles had in not only having a hard-working loco, but also in taking pride in the works and the setting in the Peak District."



BREEDON AT HOME IN HOPE

This summer we're not only celebrating Hope Cement Works 90th birthday, but also the end of our second year under the ownership of Breedon Group plc. It's been a strong start, with shared values and goals easing the transition. We asked Tim Billingham, Business Director at Breedon, to reflect on the company's first two years in the Hope Valley.

"This is Breedon's first venture into cement," he told us, "but we've hit the ground running at Hope and have been impressed by the sense of togetherness, collaboration and shared responsibility we've discovered on site. Breedon is all about good business, and thanks to the skill and experience of the workforce at Hope, we can get on with what we're good at, knowing we can rely fully on the managers and their teams on site to keep things running smoothly. Hope Cement Works is a world-class plant, and that is testament to the people who work there. Looking to the future, Breedon is fully invested in the works at Hope as an integral part of the business. We are also committed to the Hope Valley landscape, which is so important to the success of Hope Cement Works. We will be carrying on the impressive conservation and restoration work already in place throughout the site."

THE RESTORATION

*Hope Cement Works' Quarry Manager **Keith Rowland** explains how efforts to conserve, encourage and restore ecology on the Hope Valley site are developing*

"There is no getting away from the fact that, for the last 90 years, Hope Cement Works has drastically changed the landscape and ecology of its corner of the Hope Valley. But we are unique in our commitment to restore the landscape as quickly as we alter it. In the 1940s, under the guidance of renowned landscape architect Geoffrey Jellicho, the Works became the first industrial site in the UK to have a major restoration scheme built into its plans for the future. Jellicho's plans are still a vital part of our tenure here in Hope – we have a responsibility to give back to the land we have called home for so long. Our restoration projects are already bearing fruit. Hadfields Quarry, the original part of the limestone quarry in the late 1920s, is fully restored and managed by Derbyshire Wildlife Trust as a nature reserve on our behalf. One of our two shale quarries is now being restored to nature, planted with woodland and other habitats. We are pursuing a strategy of grassland planting around our main limestone quarry, creating grassy rollover slopes to contain the impact of the works on the landscape (see main picture opposite). And our fishing ponds made from former clay pits are flourishing. Working with ecology and wildlife experts, we have seen huge increases in biodiversity on site in recent years. Peregrine falcons, kestrels, meadow pipits, skylarks, deer, stoats, brown hares, ravens and numerous butterfly and insect species have all made their homes in the wilder parts of the Cement Works site. The progressive restoration work here is very much an ongoing project, but it has been a real privilege to see how much we've achieved so far."



The Bigger Picture

Thanks to its beautiful Peak District setting, Hope Cement Works may well be the most photographed industrial building in the country. Local landscape photographer Stephen Elliott has a unique perspective on this much-captured landmark: he worked there for nearly 40 years. He tells us his view on the Works and its place in the landscape

Photography: Stephen Elliott





**Let's get straight to the point.
Hope Cement Works – blot on the
landscape or Hope Valley icon?**

For me, it's just a part of the landscape. It's always been there in my lifetime, just as it has for most people who live here and I couldn't imagine the Hope Valley without it. That said, there's definitely something attractive about the colour and shape of the buildings when you see them from a distance – I can't put my finger on it, but they sit in your mind.

I know that some visiting photographers still see the Works as an eyesore, but for me the knowledge of opportunities it has given to the local workforce and the links it has worked hard to make with neighbouring communities have positively affected the way I view the site when I'm taking photographs.

You've seen the Works from both sides. Do you think being a former employee has made you more drawn to include the Works in your landscape photography?

I worked at Hope Cement Works for 39 and a half years – I started as an electrical engineering apprentice at 16 – so the Works has been an important

part of my life. I worked there as my interest in photography took off and and the buildings, their workings, size and texture, began to inspire me. I particularly loved photographing the Works at night (with my manager's blessing, of course!), when I got to see everything lit up from the inside. I felt privileged to get to see views of the Cement Works no other photographers did.

Since I retired two years ago, I do find myself regularly including the Works in my landscape photography. I just know it so well. There's also a shared view among many local landscape photographers that the buildings are a valuable focal point to shots of the Hope Valley, and they add context and scale.

How has the appearance of the Works changed since you started taking photos of it?

There have been huge efforts over the years to make the Cement Works buildings blend into their beautiful environment. Trees planted around the site have made a big difference, as has the end of dust emissions from the Works chimney. From a distance, the general outlook is now green, rather than grey!



What are your favourite views of the Cement Works?

The classic shot of Hope Cement Works taken from Mam Tor is a perennial favourite, but many of my best photographs have been taken from Pindale. Being closer means capturing the buildings, the chimney and the workings on site in more detail, but still in the context of the Hope Valley. I've been up there before dawn, at night-time, in the sun, the snow and during the fireworks and I've never tired of it.

What tips would you give other photographers hoping to capture the Cement Works at their best?

As is always the case with landscape photography, it's all about the light. I've taken shots of the same subject a thousand times, with the same composition, and I've had a thousand different images as the light is always changing. The 'Golden Hour' around dawn and dusk is a great time to take photographs as the light, shadows and textures make everything more dramatic. Then, of course, there's the famous inversion, when low cloud fills the Valley, often with just the Cement Works visible from a higher vantage point, such as Mam Tor. I wish I had a guaranteed way of being able to tell when an inversion is likely to happen, but I still find myself setting my alarm for the early hours of the morning, taking a peek outside the window and making a decision whether to grab my camera bag and head out before dawn breaks or crawl back to bed!

You can see more of Stephen's work and purchase prints at his website, www.stephenelliottphotography.co.uk











Rita!

Queen of the preheater

Rita Simpson is a key member of the hard-working Support Team at Hope Cement Works. We asked her what it's like being a woman in a workplace full of men. Her answer? "No one notices any more – least of all me!"

Rita Simpson remembers her first day at Hope Cement Works clearly. "I saw the chimney and the size of it all and just thought, 'What have I done?!'" she says, laughing. Arriving as part of a contractor team, she had been warned that the industrial cleaning work she would be doing was really "a man's job" and "might be too heavy" for her, but her determination to get the job done saw her through that first day and many others after that. Fast forward seven years, Rita is very much a fixture at the Works, the idea that she couldn't hold her own in a predominantly male workplace long since forgotten.

Today, Rita works in the Support Team, keeping the arteries of the Works clear of blockages. It's a vital

job – perhaps the most important on site – and certainly one of the most dangerous, but she takes it all in her stride. "There are risks, of course," she says. "We're dealing with temperatures of over 800°C so we need to watch out for thermal burns, chemical burns and pressurised material or flames blowing back at us, but the operation is controlled to the tiniest detail and our safety is everything. I'm never scared – only excited!"

Luckily, by her own admission, Rita isn't worried about getting dirty and was never that fussed about looking glamorous. "My work outfit is special," she laughs. As well as thick, flame-resistant Nomex overalls, Rita has to wear big foundry boots, a pigskin coat, gauntlets, an air-fed



helmet and a battery pack for her daily clean of the preheater, a job that can take hours.

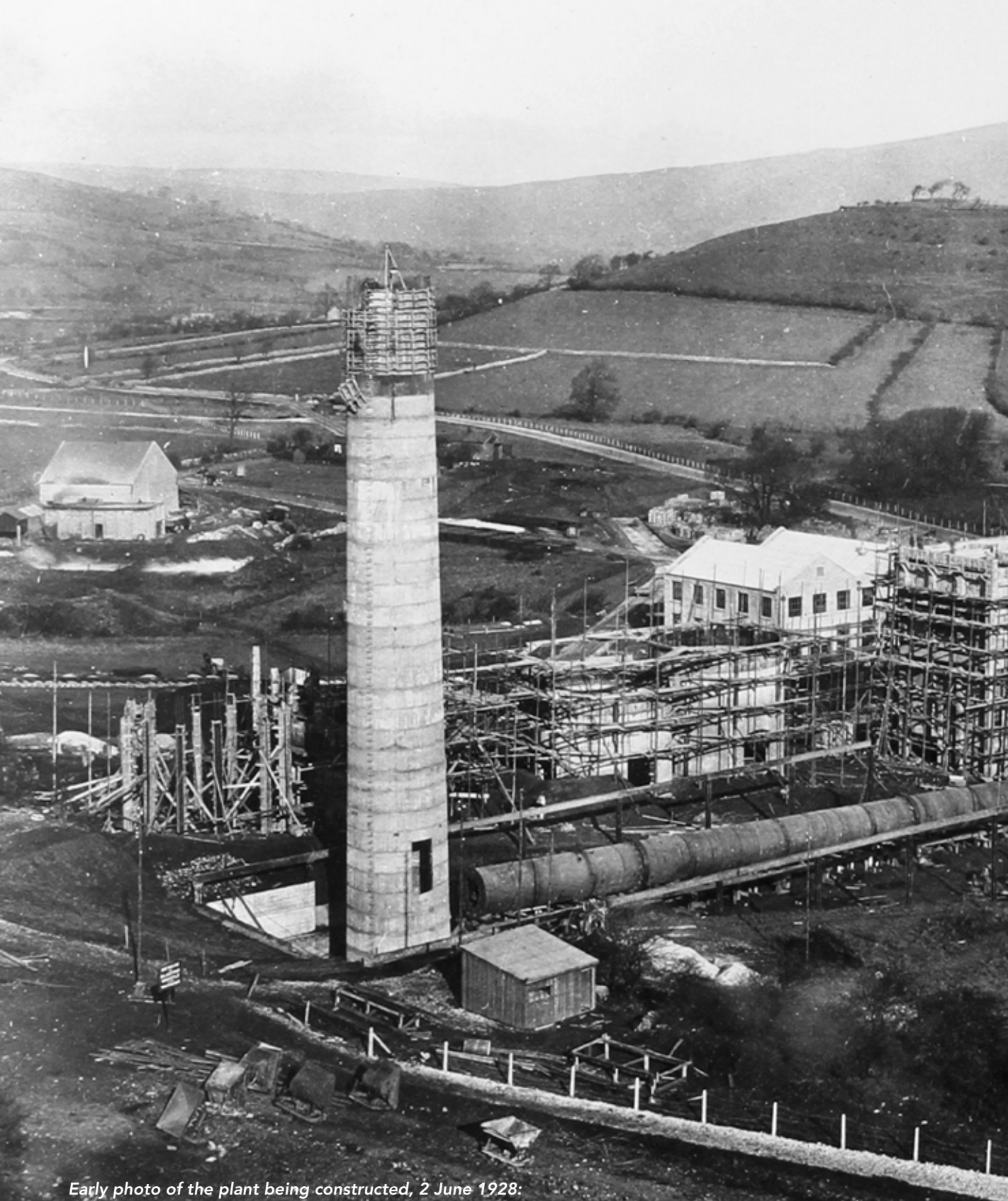
Despite the demands of her job and the high proportion of men to women working on site at the Works, there is no question that Rita is accepted by her co-workers as an equal. But there were a few eyebrows raised when she arrived in 2012. "I was assured by the contract company I worked for that I wouldn't be treated differently, just because I was a woman," she says. "But I definitely got the impression that some of the men didn't think I'd last long. There were a few comments in the canteen and a couple of well-meaning colleagues would offer to do the bits of my job they didn't think I could handle. But I was determined and stubborn and wanted to show my supervisors how capable I was. They soon realised I wasn't going anywhere!"

Rita originally came to work on a temporary basis to help with family financial commitments. She knew the contractor was looking for people and, as she tells it, "a job's a job." Dig a little deeper though and it turns out that landing her job at the Works may have been rather more serendipitous. Rita grew up in Buxton and her father worked at Tarmac. "When I was young I used to

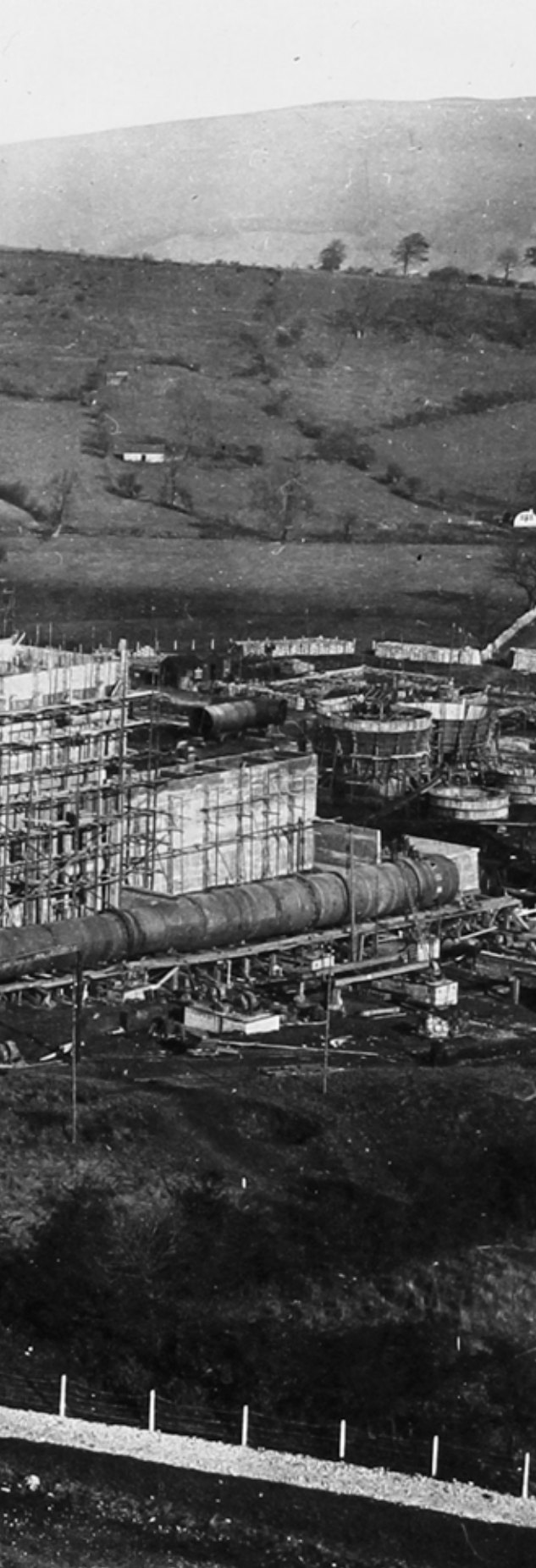
go with my dad to watch explosions at the quarry," she says. "I loved it and told my teachers at school that I wanted to work with quarrying and blasting as a career. But I was told that it wasn't suitable and that I wasn't intelligent enough for engineering – I got steered towards cooking and typing instead."

It's perhaps little surprise then that Rita has grown to love this job so much. And the welcoming environment of Hope Cement Works has certainly helped too. "It really does feel like a family here," she says. "I think there's a real will for me to be successful, which makes me feel so supported." In January 2019 Rita was finally made a permanent Breedon employee, a change that she says felt like a Christmas present. She is ambitious to improve and rise through the ranks and can see herself staying at the Works long into the future.

And what advice would Rita give to any girls wanting to follow in her footsteps? "Give it a go!" she says. "My friends laughed at me when I first came to work here and I know not all of my co-workers thought it was the right decision to bring me on board at first, but if you are prepared to work hard and stay determined, you will love it as much as I do."



Early photo of the plant being constructed, 2 June 1928:
the construction of Hope Works' first kiln (the long horizontal tube) and chimney, which was 150ft-high when completed.



Picturing the past

With 90 years of history under its belt, Hope Cement Works has an archive full to bursting with memories of the site and the people who have worked here

When you ask people to describe their time as employees at Hope Cement Works, one word crops up time and time again: "family". And, as we all know, where there's family there are photo albums. Works archivist Malcolm Andrew has been given the task of collating the thousands of old photographs, magazines, drawings and diagrams of the works that have amassed over the last 90 years, found in office cupboards around the site, kept in attics by former employees and donated to the works by local families. Malcolm is passionate about the history of the buildings and engineering, but believes that peoples' memories are just as important. "When Hope Cement Works is gone, the archive will be all that's left to remind people of the huge part this business played in the lives of local families and the local community," he explains. We asked Malcolm to delve into the archives and choose just a few of his favourite photographs to celebrate the works' birthday.



Left, from top to bottom

Workmen in quarry, 1928 This very early quarry photo shows a group of workmen and boys standing next to one of the quarry rail trucks. The quarry faces were all dug by hand using pick and shovel; **Wagons ready for the off, 1970** A typical early morning shot in the works yard, the very distinctive Yellow wagons with the Blue Circle logo on the side and two drivers probably discussing their destinations and the best routes to get there; **Family day out, autumn 1949** A works trip to the Blackpool Illuminations for workers and their families: 120 people boarded the train at Hope for a four-hour journey direct to Blackpool. According to the employee magazine, *The Pelican*, the day was blustery and wet!



Right, from top to bottom

Foden truck, 1950 One of the G & T Earle Foden wagons slowly trundling up Mam Tor, probably taking its bagged load to Manchester via the A6; **Family Fun Day, 1969** Fancy dress competition entrants at one of the many Family Fun Days at Hope Cement Works. Games were arranged for the children, including sack races, wheelbarrow races, three-legged races and donkey rides. The event even had its own 'Miss Blue Circle'; **Ladies in the paper bag factory, 1947** Before the Second World War, the paper bags for Hope cement were made in the South of England, but during the war it was thought safer to make the bags on location at Hope: 33 ladies worked in the bag factory, and many were wives and daughters of employees.





Opposite

Chimney demolition, 18 May

1971 This 430-ft chimney had been built in 1949, but was demolished when the current Hope Cement Works site was built. Local schoolchildren were given the afternoon off to watch the chimney fall and sat on hillsides around the works to get the best views. Lieutenant Colonel Gerald Haythornthwaite was chosen to press the firing button. He had reportedly opposed the building of the chimney in 1949, so took great delight in seeing it fall!



Right, top to bottom

Hadfields Quarry Workmen, 1927

Hadfields stone quarry was a working quarry in Hope prior to G & T Earle building their cement plant; ***Quarry scene, 1947*** Two electrically operated navvies load the small rail trucks, which were then pulled to the crusher house by a 250-volt locomotive; ***Day gang on top of a newly built silo, 1938*** In 1938 four new silos, with a total cement storage capacity of 1635 tonnes, were constructed, with two teams of men working day and night shifts to complete the build. This photo shows the day gang on top of the final silo.



THE APPRENTICE

In 2016, the strong, well-established apprenticeship scheme at Hope Cement Works was recognised as world class by two of the biggest engineering institutions in the UK. Today, over 45 full-time employees at Hope have come through the scheme and many more have completed apprenticeships elsewhere. We spoke to five of them to find out why becoming an apprentice is such an invaluable first step to a career in engineering.







Daniel Hobson

Electrical Engineering Apprentice

Daniel comes from Stoney Middleton and his Dad has been contracted at Hope Cement Works for many years, so the Hope site was always a fixture growing up. As a young person interested in electrical engineering, Daniel was keen to get started in the industry because, as he points out, "there aren't that many opportunities to have a go at home!" Luckily, there are plenty of opportunities to work with electrics at Hope.

After a couple of weeks' work experience at the Works, Daniel applied for the apprenticeship scheme after sixth form and embarked on the interview and assessment process. "Dad had always told me it was a great place to work, so he was really pleased when I got my apprenticeship," Daniel says.

Three years into the scheme and Daniel has had experience in all aspects of the electrical department and is looking forward to a career at the Works. "I've learned so much and everyone has been really happy to help me along the way," he says.



Paul Groves Shift Fitter

Paul began work at the Cement Works as an engineering apprentice in 1971. He'd always had a passion for anything mechanical – he'd been stripping motorbikes and building go-karts from a young age – and he knew engineering was the only career for him. He had two apprenticeships to choose from but, as his uncle pointed out, "They'll always need cement, Paul," so he chose the Works, under then owners Blue Circle. He's now the longest-serving Hope Cement Works employee that started as an apprentice.

"The best thing about being an apprentice is the variation in your job," says Paul. "You never feel the work is repetitive because you're always trying new things and working in different areas of the business with different people."

In his 47 years at the Works, Paul has seen huge changes in technology, health and safety and in the work culture – most notably a move away from employee self sufficiency towards a much more team-based strategy. But some things always stay the same. "The craic between the lads is still the best," Paul smiles, "and the apprenticeship scheme is still a great way to get into the industry. The opportunities to learn are endless and the Works is full of long-serving employees, like me, who have invaluable experience to pass on to new apprentices."



Harrison Winters Engineering Apprentice

Close to the end of his second year as an apprentice at Hope Cement Works, Harrison is almost halfway through his apprenticeship, with the option of further learning at college or university once the four-year scheme is finished.

Always a huge mechanics enthusiast, working on bikes, cars and trucks from an early age, Harrison approached the Works for a week's work experience while he was still at school and learned about the apprenticeship scheme then. "I knew I wanted to work in engineering, so choosing the apprenticeship over sixth form at school or college wasn't a difficult decision," Harrison says. "I'm so glad I did it – lots of my friends are still deciding what they want to do, but I'm already two years into my career."

Harrison's managers say he stood out in the apprenticeship application process as someone really passionate about engineering – he brought an ABS brake system project he'd been working on to his interview! – and it's that passion and hard work that Harrison believes are key to making a success of your apprenticeship. "It's all definitely worth it," he says. "If you put the work in, there are so many opportunities here to learn about all aspects of engineering, and so many people who want to share their knowledge and support your ideas."



John Mulryan

Maintenance Manager

Like so many of the apprentices that have passed through the gates of Hope Cement Works, John grew up with a passion for tinkering with anything mechanical – tractors, cars, motorbikes, steam engines (he still has plenty of ‘ongoing projects’, including a 1966 Lambretta and miniature steam engine). Wanting to start a career in engineering, but unable to find the perfect job, John studied engineering in Buxton for a year before applying for an apprenticeship at the Works in 1992.

From a nerve-wracking first interview (“I was so nervous I could barely answer the questions, but I brought some of my projects in a KwikSave carrier bag and they loved them”) and a four-year engineering apprenticeship, John’s career has gone from strength to strength. He worked on site as a craftsman for a number of years, before moving into project engineering – he worked on the Heathrow Terminal 5 building and on different projects around the UK, all while working for previous owner Lafarge. On top of that, he decided to go back to university to study for a degree, eventually returning home to the Peak District so he could continue his studies at

Sheffield Hallam University, while working at the Hope site.

John is now Maintenance Manager, heading up the Cement Works’ talented team of engineers. It’s a role he loves. “It’s such a privilege to be able to build a team here with all the right skills and passion to really make a difference,” he says. “I’ve grown up with a lot of the people who work on site and it’s great to be able to get on with my job and never have to worry that my team will do anything less than their best.”

In 2017 John achieved professional recognition from the Institute of Mechanical Engineers by achieving Chartered status – a testament to Hope Works’ commitment to the professional development of their workforce.

Even at a time of cutting edge technology and advances in automation, John believes that there has been no better time to be an apprentice at Hope. “You’ll learn so many transferable engineering and life skills that will help you in the future – whether that’s here at Hope, or anywhere your career might take you”



Daniel Roberts
Engineering Reliability Manager

Daniel began his career at Hope Cement Works in 1994 as an electrical engineering apprentice. He applied for several apprenticeships, but he knew the scheme at Hope Cement Works was Gold Standard and particularly diverse in terms of the skills, experience and opportunities he would be offered. He finished his apprenticeship and took the option of further learning, sponsored by the company, with a Foundation Degree at Leeds University.

Today, Daniel coordinates the apprenticeship scheme at the Works, offering many more young people the same opportunities as he had. He's passionate about the benefits of "earning while you learn". "The apprenticeship scheme at Hope Cement Works is globally recognised and apprentices come away with a huge range of transferable skills that they can use across many engineering industries," he says.

Daniel is involved in the ongoing mentoring of current apprentices, and works alongside local colleges developing bespoke courses to complement the practical, on-site elements of the four-year scheme. He's rightly proud of the scheme's 98 per cent retention rate and would like to see more young people considering the apprenticeship route into a career in engineering. "We know the amazing opportunities our scheme can offer," he says. "We need to make sure that future engineers know the opportunities are here, waiting for them."

WANT TO BE AN APPRENTICE?

What kind of applicants are we looking for?

Ideally the apprentice will be enthusiastic, self-motivated and well organised, with a genuine interest in engineering and how things work.

When can people apply?

Usually apprentices would be 16–24 years old; however, there is no age limit and older apprentices would normally be on the higher-level schemes.

What qualifications should applicants have?

They will have five GCSEs at Grade 5 or above (Grade C), including maths, english & science.

What does the application process involve?

Application is via the careers section of the Breedon website. Interviews are normally a two-stage process: an initial interview and aptitude testing, narrowed down to a final, more detailed interview and site tour.

What apprenticeships are available?

Breedon as a company offers apprenticeships in various areas, however the Cement Works offering is predominately in engineering.

Is it a good idea to apply for work experience first?

Work experience with us would be beneficial to understanding what would be involved in an apprenticeship with us, although this is not essential. What is important to us is how the candidate can demonstrate their passion for engineering during the interview process, perhaps through a relevant part-time job, hobby or school project they can tell us about.

When is the next apprenticeship intake?

The 2020 intake process will start in March 2020.

All applications should be made online.

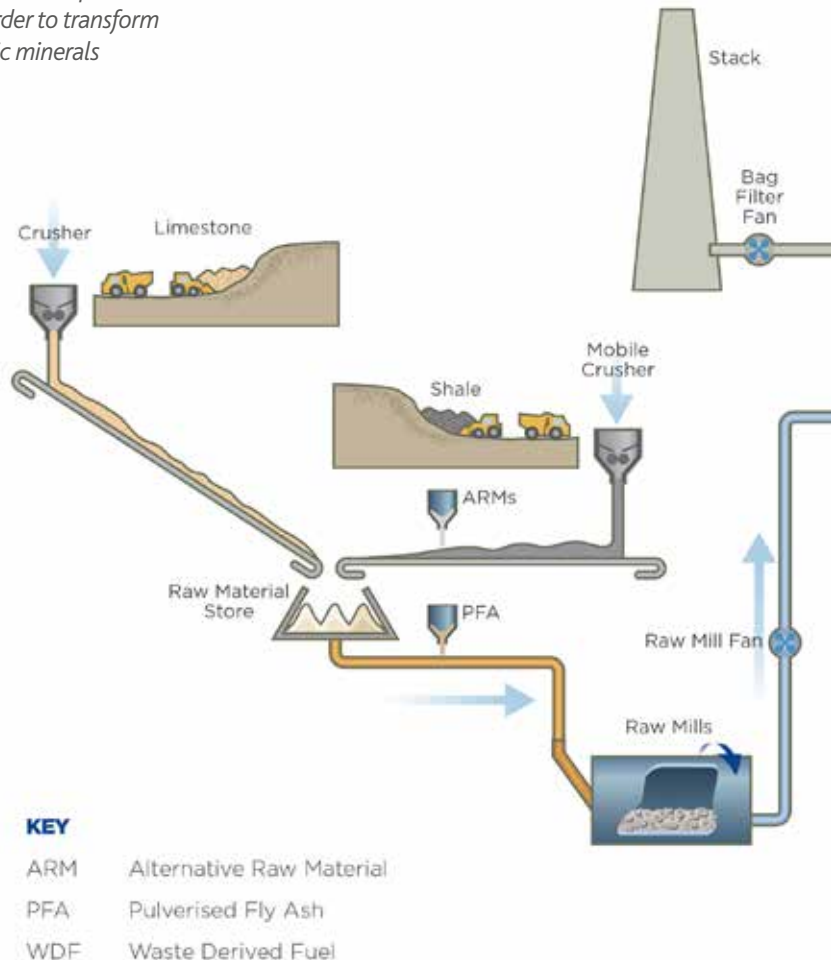
For more information, visit www.breedongroup.com/careers

THE SCIENCE BIT

Cement manufacturing is a complex high-temperature process, which requires close control at every stage in order to transform naturally occurring rock into a range of synthetic minerals

HOW WE MAKE CEMENT

- 1** Two raw mills blend and crush the raw materials to a powder so fine it will pass through silk
- 2** The material is further blended in aerated storage silos to improve consistency
- 3** The powder is heated up in the preheater tower from 80°C to 850°C using the hot gases from the kiln. The heating is done in just four 1.5 second bursts
- 4** The kilns are heated to 1450°C degrees to partially melt the raw materials together and produce a new type of rock called clinker, using both coal and waste-derived fuels (over 35 per cent of the heat supplied to the kilns comes from waste-derived fuels)
- 5** Two cement mills crush the clinker and blend it with other materials, such as gypsum and limestone, to produce the grey powder we all know as cement



NUMBER CRUNCHING

70 million

Tonnes of clinker produced since 1929, the largest amount of any UK cement plant ever

900,000

Tonnes of waste used as raw materials since 2000

1 million

Tonnes of cement transported to our depots by rail each year

45,000

Number of homes that could be powered by the electricity used at the Works each year

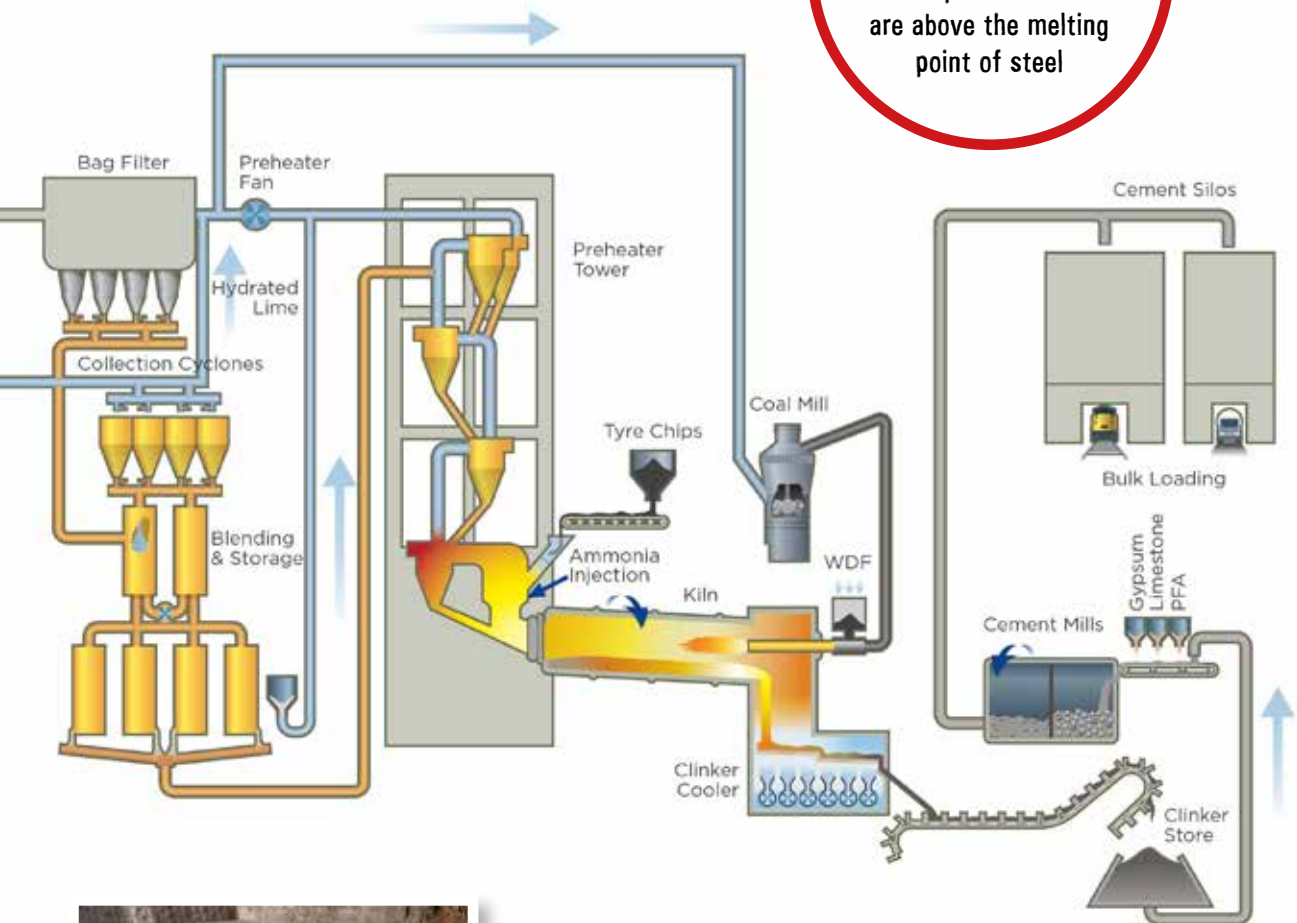
Up to 1.5 million

Tonnes of cement produced at the Works per year – 15% of UK production

13,000

Total number of trees planted on site since 2003

Each kiln is lined with 70,000 heat resistant bricks: the temperatures inside are above the melting point of steel



FIVE FACTS

ABOUT OUR LIMESTONE QUARRY

- 1 The limestone is 330 million years old
- 2 It consists of 13 faces, with a total length of 4.5 miles.
- 3 We use around 275 tonnes of explosive per year.
- 4 We blast around 100 times per year.
- 5 On average each blast produces 20,000 tonnes of material.



Hope Cement Works

Our Legacy

*Ed Cavanagh, Works Manager,
looks to the future of the Cement
Works – its resources, its place in
the community and the environmental
legacy it hopes to leave behind.*



As Hope Cement Works celebrates its 90th birthday, my role as Works Manager is to look to the future: to our ongoing place in the community, to the longevity of the resources available to us and to our responsibility to the landscape and ecology of the Peak District. Our history is a huge part of the Works' story, but our legacy will be the measure of our borrowed time in the beautiful Hope Valley.

Our success as a cement works depends on geology and location: the interface between the two raw materials we require for production – shale and limestone – is ideal. The Peak District is also a strong base for distribution, with good access to the north of the UK and the Midlands. However, our consented survey of raw materials – that is the land we have permission to quarry – has limited longevity and decisions are being made as to our future on the Hope site.

Our optimum outcome would be to stay in our current location. We value the strong links Hope Cement Works has made in the Hope Valley over the last 90 years and have committed investment with the intention of remaining here. Geologically, there is a vast excess of raw materials beyond our existing quarries, which would give us scope to extend our tenure in the Valley. But any decision to increase the area we quarry will always take account of the impact such an extension would have on the local community, landscape and environment, as well as its implications for the wider Peak District and beyond.

We are currently in the initial stages of consultation with the Peak District National Park Authority, having made a pre-application for extended quarrying rights, working towards an actual application in the next 12 to 24 months. We have a good, positive and transparent relationship with the PDNPA and have worked hard to adhere to our existing agreements with them. Nevertheless, we recognise that applying to them for an extension to our current quarrying rights

will be a lengthy and intricate process. We hope that by working closely with the PDNPA, environment and wildlife bodies and local community groups, we can reach an outcome that will benefit everybody.

With this in mind, our ongoing commitment to the Hope Valley landscape and ecology has never been more important. There have been changes in recent years that are immediately obvious – extensive landscaping and tree planting around the Hope Cement Works site, coupled with the almost complete cessation of dust emissions from our chimney, have turned the site from grey to green and helped the surrounding landscape absorb the site a little better.

There are also plenty of ways in which we have been working to conserve and heal the Hope Valley environment that has served us so well for 90 years. An important part of our legacy will be land restoration – turning the land we have quarried back to nature once we have finished with it. Restoration works have been underway for a number of years already, with one shale quarry already restored to woodland, marshland, pond areas and species-rich grassland. Working with the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, we have made huge investments in planting, quarry face restoration and wildlife conservation and are already seeing wildlife biodiversity increasing dramatically as a result. Any plans to extend our quarrying remit will include increased efforts to restore and improve the landscape around us.

There is no getting away from the fact that Hope Cement Works is an industrial site, with costs to the environment both locally and globally. However, perhaps thanks to our position in one of the most beautiful corners of the world, we strive every day to manage the impact we are having in a responsible and constructive way. We hope our legacy in the Hope Valley will be one of community and employment, but also one of restoration, conservation and gratitude for the landscape we have called home for nearly a century.

The last laugh

As the longest-serving employee at Hope Cement Works, John Millen has more memories of life on site than most. We asked him to cast his mind back and tell us a few stories of times past. He didn't disappoint...

"I'm Bradwell born and bred – 'Strong in the arm, thick in the head', they used to say. My dad worked as a lorry driver at the Works and when I was young I'd duck down under his dashboard to be able to get on site and watch what was going on. I was planning on going to catering college, but I got a summer job at the Works to earn some money when I was 15 and never left.

"I worked as a Packer, filling bags of cement – ten-hour days, six days a week. We'd sit on a tractor seat welded onto the floor and work the packing belt with pedals. If you fell off your seat you'd be carried off by the belt and end up at the bottom. The packing machine was an old German model which we'd have to fix with rubber bands – we couldn't get proper spare parts because we'd blown up the factory in the war.

"Before 1974, when safety rules came in, people would work in bush hats, bobble hats, even berets – one lad had sore feet from carrying round hundredweight bags of cement and came into work wearing carpet slippers. There was a steady stream of casualties being driven into the Hallamshire Hospital. When I started, the managers' chauffeurs used to drive them in company cars, but

after a while the company decided to buy its own ambulance instead.

"The canteen was run by seventeen ladies, had its own vegetable garden and offered hot, stodgy food that really filled you up. Breakfast was at 9am – we'd hear the horn and go to the canteen. At 9.10am the horn would go again and it would be time to go back to the job! We'd all get a free pint of milk every day to keep the dust down (there weren't any dust masks when I started), and in summer we'd get orange juice with a salt tablet to keep us hydrated. Unfortunately, the salt tablets meant the toilets were extra busy on those days.

"Because we were on the packing machine, we never saw the quarry. No-one ever saw the managers either, unless they were in trouble. The managers would wear suits and eat lunch in their own dining room, with wine. They had a button to press so the cooks knew when they were on their way and lunch would be ready for them when they got there.

"Hope Cement Works has been my life. So many of my friends worked here and I've got so many memories. I've got no plans to leave – I'll get my 50-year plaque in a couple of years and just keep going."



In 2012 John received an award from the Mineral Products Association for his exceptional personal contribution to health and safety practice over the years



