SIR JACOB BEHRENS & SONS LIMITED



THE FIRST ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS



Jacob Behrens from a Daguerreotype 1844

Sir Jacob Behrens & Sons Limited are happy to be celebrating their 150th Anniversary.

Sir Jacob Behrens was born in 1806 in Pyrmont in the small principality of Waldeck which lay between Hanover on the North and East, and Westphalia on the South and West. The Behrens family had for some generations traded as textile merchants, but at the time of Jacob's birth the Napoleonic wars were raging and normal trade was severely restricted; so much so that in that year his father's partnership with his brothers was dissolved.

Jacob's earliest memories were of war and playing soldiers. He vividly remembered the drama of his Uncle Sam, an officer in the Hanseatic Leaguers, who was wounded in the leg and captured with a boat hook while trying to swim to safety. It had cost him a small fortune — 7 louis d'or — to be taken by carriage to a prisoner of war camp. However he escaped dressed as a woman, and walked halfway across France and Germany, living in hiding for a few days in woods around French occupied Pyrmont before returning to his regiment. When peace came — and it is interesting to mention that General Blücher stayed at the Behrens home for a few days rest on his triumphant return from Waterloo — the family moved to Hamburg. Business prospects in that active city appeared better as did the educational opportunities.

Young Jacob had what seems today an unusual education. He was taught by the family tutor, a theological student of the Reformed Church, assisted in French by an emigré Jesuit abbé, in English by a shipwrecked Scottish sailor, and in mathematics by a competent teacher. His knowledge of languages was to prove enormously valuable later on in life.

Much to his regret however, Jacob had too soon to give up full-time for part-time education, as his father needed his help in the business. He travelled great distances around Germany, first with his father and then alone, on horseback with patterns packed in a large fur, a pair of pistols in a holster and his clothes and linen in saddlebags. However, as the family fortunes improved he took to a trap, then he took a coachman with him, then to a second horse and finally he used his father's old carriage with post horses.

Jacob Behrens made his first visit to England in 1832, travelling by the latest invention — a paddle steamer — from Hamburg to Hull, thence by river boat to Selby, by canal to Knottingley and by coach to Leeds, which took all day. The England he saw excited him; development here was extraordinarily vigorous, while Germany was standing still. He came to England again the following year and it was in 1834 that he settled in Leeds, renting a small warehouse and engaging three warehousemen, thereby effectively establishing the firm "Jacob Behrens". He called on Mr. Beckett and opened an account with Beckett, Blayds & Co. — a bank subsequently amalgamated with the Westminster.

In 1838 he moved to larger premises in Bradford, and was in fact the first textile export merchant to be established there. Meanwhile, his brothers Louis and Rudolf had joined him and it was in 1840 that "Jacob Behrens" was established in Manchester when Louis moved there to start the export of cotton goods. Louis was soon joined by another brother Eduard. Bradford in those days was an overgrown village with no cabs, no water supply till 1842, and no railway till 1846—the coach journey to London took twenty-six hours.

It was not long before the firm, which was founded to export textiles to Germany, flourished and was soon trading with Belgium, Holland and Italy and even further afield. In the 1860's the scope had increased to include China and Japan and many other distant countries. Jacob's brother Rudolf retired in 1864, Eduard died in 1866 and in 1870 Louis, having four sons, left to start his own business. So Jacob was on his own again, but not for long, for happily in 1871 Gustav, his eldest son, entered into partnership with him—followed in due course by his other three sons.



Presentation Clock 1859

The plaque reads:Presented to
JACOB BEHRENS ESQ.**

By the men in his employ as a token of their high esteem for him as a kind and considerate Master and as President of The Benevolent & Contingent Fund Society founded through his kindness for their benefit – March 14th 1854

Bradford 14th March 1859

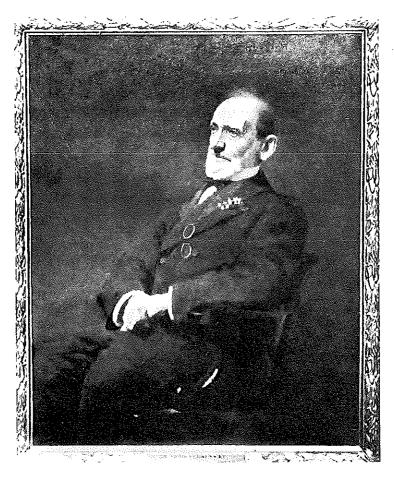
In addition to creating a substantial and successful business, Jacob Behrens gave most generously of his time and money for the benefit of the community. He was the driving force in forming the Bradford Chamber of Commerce, of which he was Vice-President for seven years and President for six; and he was Chairman of the all important Tariff committee for nearly forty years! It was this work which brought him into contact with Government Ministers and Officials, who soon spotted his talents and frequently over the years called for his advice. For example, he spent the whole of October 1860 in Paris during the final negotiations of the Commercial Treaty with France, the terms of which exceeded Bradford's best expectation. He was also closely on hand during the subsequent negotiations leading to the Commercial Treaties with

Belgium, Italy and Austria. There is no doubt that at times he roused the Government machine, for he was once described as "The Terror of the Foreign Office"!

Jacob Behrens worked tirelessly to improve local education and hospital services and to bring concert music to the City of Bradford. He found the Grammar School in a wretched state so he approached the Governors and indeed found them willing to listen to his proposals for reform. However, it transpired that the Governors were powerless to enforce any innovations upon the Headmaster. He therefore started a school himself and when the number of pupils grew sufficiently, he built in 1862 a suitable school-house at his own expense. However, following Forster's Endowed School's Bill in 1869, the opportunity arose to reform the Grammar School, He was appointed a Life Governor and was Chairman from 1877 - 1879, and the school was brought into the top-flight. In 1872 the boys from his school were incorporated into the "New" Grammar school and the school which he built subsequently became the Deaf and Dumb Institute. His views on education became known nationally, and were sought by Forster the Minister responsible for the Education Act of 1870, Jacob Behrens produced a memorandum which Forster considered so penetrating that he ordered it to be distributed during the passage of the Bill to all Members of Parliament. He was co-founder of the Bradford Royal Eye & Ear Hospital in 1857; he was Treasurer in 1860 and Chairman from 1866 until his death in 1889. His interests were far and wide for in 1870 he was awarded the Prussian Order of the Crown for his contribution to the relief of war distress in Berlin.



The High School built at the sole expense of Sir Jacob Behrens in 1862



From the portrait by Ernest Sichel, 1888. Presented by the Bradford Chamber of Commerce "to commemorate constant and valuable services."

In 1882 Jacob Behrens' public service was recognized when he was Knighted by Queen Victoria in Windsor Castle. On his death in 1889, it was written "He seemed only to exist to be of service to his fellow men".

Jacob's eldest son Gustav was a partner for no less than sixty-five years. He played an active role in the Manchester Chamber of Commerce affairs and had many philanthropic interests. Perhaps his greatest contribution to Manchester was in starting with two others in 1896 the Hallé Concert Society; indeed but for them the orchestra might not be in existence today. He gave many years to the Society and was Chairman from 1913 -1924. He also had the distinction of being a director of the Midland

Railway for no less than forty-five years.

Charles, Jacob's second son, was Lord Mayor of Manchester during 1910 - 11 and also had many philanthropic interests including hospitals and schools, and was later knighted for public work. Another son Harry, served on the Bradford Concerts Committee for twenty-six years, nine years as Chairman and was a Governor of the Bradford Grammar School for twenty-four years, being Chairman for nine years. The fourth son Fred, ran the London office. He had a flair for design and was an art connoisseur. His fine collection of prints was given by his nephew Frank to the Manchester City Art Gallery.

Of the third generation, four sons of Gustav became partners in Edwardian times, when the U.K. textile export trade reached its gigantic zenith. It was then said that Lancashire satisfied the home demand before breakfast, the rest of the day's production being exported! The Continental markets were of less importance and the Behrens' firm fought for its share of the vast eastern and far eastern markets. In addition to Bradford, Manchester, London and Glasgow, offices and staff were maintained in India and Shanghai and the telegraph departments were always busy, coding and decoding messages with the firm's phrase code. But the Rising Sun was above the horizon and Japanese competition was becoming a major threat.

The post World War I boom was followed by the inevitable slump which was of catastrophic proportions. Famous business houses collapsed and great fortunes were lost. Those were the years in which the partners had to pay a fortune for the doubtful pleasure of working! The 1930's became steadier and there were still sizeable export markets but with too many

Birthday address from the Bradford staff 1886



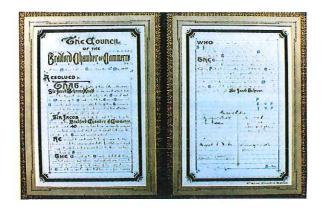
SIR JACOB BEHRENS KNIGHT

We the employés of your Bradford Firm desire to convey to you our sincere congratulations on this the 80th Anniversary of your Birthday. At the same time we earnestly hope that you may long be spared in the enjoyment of health and strength and those faculties which have raised you to your present eminent position.

And as a token of our great esteem and respect we beg you to accept this address with our hearty good wishes.

Signed on behalf of the employes JOHN HARDY.

Bradford 20th November 1886.



Bradford Chamber of Commerce 1889

THE COUNCIL
OF THE
BRADFORD CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE
at their Meeting held on
Wednesday the 1st May 1889

RESOLVED:-

THAT the death of their late colleague SIR JACOB BEHRENS KNIGHT is an event which has caused the deepest sorrow not only to the Council and the Members of the Chamber, but to the General Community Commercial and especially to his fellow Townsmen expressed by the universal regret envinced in their attendance at his Funeral on the 26th of April.

Sir Jacob may truly be said to have been the founder of the Bradford Chamber of Commerce, and for nearly 40 years he has been unceasingly occupied in promoting every good object which might best serve the interests of the Town and neighbourhood.

He seemed to exist only to be of service to his fellowmen but the various Charitable Institutions he loved to support will be best acknowledged by those existing in the town of Bradford.

The Council of the Chamber feel that they have lost a friend and adviser, and without any desire to depreciate the good offices of many of his coadjutors in the Council they must confess that few, very few, remain.

Who can so effectually supply the place which Sir Jacob ever occupied in promoting every work which might directly or indirectly advance the Commercial prosperity of the Town in which he so fortunately resided.

The Council in conclusion, beg to offer their warmest sympathy with the members of his family assuring them that his Portrait so recently presented to the Chamber will during this and future generations be a perpetual reminiscence of our dear departed friend and an incitement to the remaining and future Members of the Council to follow as far as possible in the footsteps of the late Sir Jacob Behrens.

Henry Mitchell, President John M. McLaren, Senior Vice P. G. Hoffmann, Junior Vice P.

Reinhard Cohen
Richard Fecht
E. Wall
F. Willey
F. Willey
Thos. Arthur Duncan
James Burnley
Charles Stead
Herbert A. Foster
Wm. Oddy
E. H. Wade
John Waugh

Charles Fawcett

ohen
Jno. Ambler
L. Fulda
Victor Edelstein
Duncan G. Law
James Gordon,
Treasurer
Edw. Priestman
S. Cunliffe Lister
George Hodgson

John Darlington, Secretary. chasing the trade. The necessity of adjusting constantly to current conditions was exemplified by the Bradford House. Although actively trading in the United Kingdom, India and China, they took on staff to develop the South American, Belgian, French, Lithuanian and Scandinavian markets. They also ventured with success into the Top and Knitting Wool trade. Costs in those days were somewhat different; one traveller's note-book records twenty-five days spent in Norway and Denmark for £36.13s; also recorded was the price of 3s 6d C.I.F. Shanghai for a yard of the firm's best selling Worsted Panama "Bearpalma" brand. The Eastern markets were conservative but each demanded speciality qualities. The Manchester House shipped beautiful brocade poplins and shadow striped poplins - looking like silk - to China: various qualities of sateens — schreinered for extra sheen — to many markets: smart tussore suitings to the hot climates, beaverteens to the cooler foothills of the Himalayas, fine voiles and organdies to many Eastern markets: the list seems endless! All were splendidly prepared for the bazaars, some with gold blocked "face plaits", elaborate labelling and trade marks. Occasionally a small present such as a penknife was included with each piece. Sadly however 1939 saw the end of this once immense and fascinating export trade.

After World War II the textile industries played their part in exporting to earn precious foreign currency. In the 1950's market after market closed as country after country built its own textile industry. Many changes were inevitable. The third generation did not break with tradition. They actively supported the Chambers of Commerce in Bradford and Manchester. Edgar being President of the former in 1938 -40; and Leonard being appointed an Emeritus Director of the latter after he had served twenty-three years on the board. Edgar also had the Chairmanship of the important National Wool Textile Export Corporation from 1942 -58, a time when exports were vital to the nation. Hospitals too they served: Harold the Eye and Ear Hospital in Bradford, Frank for many years the Crossley Hospital, and Edgar the Duke of York Home in Bradford which he helped to found and was for a time Chairman. He was also Chairman for forty years of the Craig Convalescent Home for Children, a role his son John has taken over from him. Both Edgar and Leonard served on the Courts of Universities, Edgar in Leeds and Leonard in Manchester. The brothers were brought up at Holly Royde. Withington, and when Frank moved in later life, he gave it to Manchester University. It is now known as Behrens House, Holly Royde College. The cause of music was served by Edgar's Chairmanship of the Bradford Music Club, while Leonard served on the Hallé Concerts Committee for over forty years, seven years as Chairman. Leonard held many high offices including the Vice-Presidency of the Liberal Party Organisation: in the United Nations Association he was at one time a World Vice-President. For their public services, Edgar and Leonard were awarded C.B.E.'s and Leonard later a knighthood.

Of the fourth generation, David Hughes was a member of the Cotton



Centenary Address

SIR JACOB BEHRENS & SONS Bradford - Manchester 1834 - 1934

The Staff gave to the Partners an address of appreciation and good ninetieth Anniversary.

Since then we very much deplore the deaths in 1925 of Sir Charles E honoured position in the commercial and public life of Manchester Frederick Behrens, whose charm, artistic tastes and business remembered by all who knew him.

We now express our sincere congratulations on the occasion of the and rejoice that the Senior Partner, Mr. Gustav Behrens, is still w and his interests unabated after seventy-two years of active business which he has directed the policy of the Manchester House. He may pride on a life spent largely in helping others; on his untiring work in Thrift and Music, and on his zealous service for forty-five years on railway company. In all he has done he has followed his father's h and it is indeed worthy of note that over the span of a century the I Senior Partners, Sir Jacob until 1889 and since then his eldest son,

As in 1924, four of Mr. Gustav's sons are associated with him in the F taking their part in upholding its high traditions.

We congratulate Sir Edward Rhodes, who became a partner in Ma completing fifty years' valued service.

With esteem and affection the Staffs in Bradford and Manchester their hearty good wishes for the future prosperity of the Firm.

March 14, 1934.

LIST OF THE BRADFORD & MANCHESTED STAFF 1034

MANCHESTER		STAFF 1934	
Wharton, Wm.	1874	Alker, James L.	1916
Kellett, James	1876	Gaunt, W. M.	1916
Parker, Jesse	1878	Sowden, George A.	1916
Stansfield, L.	1883 1885	Stapleton, E.	1917 1917
Ashton, A. J. Coulson, Bern. C.	1886	Chambers, R. Bilsborough, J.	1917
Ashworth, W. H.	1890	Walker, Percy	1918
Chadwick, A.	1893	Mason, Harry	1918
Rhodes, Wm.	1893	Kinnibrugh, R. F.	1919
Booth, Frank	1894	Baker, Harry	1918
Mahler, P.	1894	Desmond, John	1919
Bovingdon, E. W. Hodgson, Claude A.	1894 1895	Fitzgerald, A. L.	1920 1920
Sharrock, Chas. E.	1895	Laidlar, Wilfrid Hopwood, Arthur	1920
Locking, A. P.	1900	Bennett, A.	1920
Leathley, L.	1901	Haworth, J. D.	1920
Paersch, Leonard	1901	Parry, Harold	1920
Chubb, Arthur	1901	Mahler, Cecil A.	1920
Blackburn, Samuel	1902	Browne, A. K.	1922 1923
Watson, Herbert W. Northwood, T. G. P.	1903 1907	Riddiough, F. H. Thorp, Fred	1923
Mather, E.	1907	Farnell, Stanley	1923
Slater, Andrew	1907	Ashworth, Edward	1923
Gilderdale, J.	1907	Harrop, R.	1924
Wrigley, H.	1907	Hopwood, Harry	1924
Armitage, W.	1907	Storr, W. J.	1924
Thrush, Percy	1909	Whitaker, Harold	1924
Etchells, Norman Mullins, B.	1911 1912	Fairbank, Jack Brown, A.	1924 1924
Garbutt, Denis G.	1912	Smith, Ernest	1924
Gaze, Jos. H.	1912	Moss, George	1924
Paterson, S.	1913	Napier, K.	1924
Yates, Leonard	1913	Robinson, P.	1924
Holdsworth, H.	1913	Mee, Eric D.	1925
Gidley, Alfred	1913	Palfreeman, D. C.	1925
Thompson, Fred Dawson, William	1913 1914	Gleave, G. B. Wood, J. Douglas	1926 1926
Nuttall, J. Leslie	1914	Bovingdon, L. H.	1926
Rudd, J. W.	1914	Shephard, Edith	1926
Holdsworth, Gilbert	1914	Wilson, John	1927
Hellas, Alphonse	1914	Kenyon, Ada	1927
Steuart, W. W.	1916	Rhodes, Geoffrey W.	1927
Firth, Mrs. M.	1916	Broadley, Albert	1927 1927
5. 8		Wilson, F. H. Jones, F.	1927
		Newbound, R. A.	1928
		Wilson, M. B.	1928
odwill upon the Firm's		Yates, G.	1928
		Hudson, Robert	1928
s Behrens, who held an ter, and in 1933 of Mr.		Wilson, Olive	1928
ter, and in 1933 of Mr.		Thomson, C. R. W.	1928
s ability will long be		Brook, W. S. Carter, N.	1928 1929
		Clancy, N.	1929
the Firm's Centenary,		Sneath, T. H.	1929
with us, his mind alert ess, during sixty-four of		Edmondson, A.	1929
ay well look back with		Hamlett, Mabel L.	1930
in the cause of Health,		Ibbotson, Mrs.	1930
on the Board of a great		Heynemann, R.	1931
s honourable example,		Hirst, Douglas Hill, Cyril	1931 1931
e Firm has had but two		Ratcliffe, George	1931
n, Mr. Gustav.		Bonilla, Marguerita	1932
e Firm, and are actively		Wood, R. B.	1932
ng ng u ngawa		Sutcliffe, S.	1932
Manchester in 1911,	on	Scarry, I. M.	1932
-		Kettlewell, R.	1932
er offer to the Partners		Phipps, B. D.	1932 1932
2 20 0		Wilson, A. S. Webb, Pamela	1932
James Kellet		Rhodes, Eric	1933
Jesse Park	er		0.000.000

Board for seven years: for many years he was a Director of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce and was several times Chairman of the Textile Converters Association: also he was on the management committee of Cheadle Royal Hospital for twenty years. John Behrens has since 1972 been Chairman of the Bradford Trademen's Homes - a group of forty-five homes for the elderly and since 1971 he has been President of the Country Wool Merchants Association. He was appointed a Magistrate in 1970.

From the outset the partners and directors have been descendants of the founder, with the exceptions of Sir Edward Rhodes, who was a partner in the Manchester business for some years, and Gilbert Holdsworth who served the company well as a director for twenty-seven years.

The present board is:-

Chairman

G. David Hughes

Great grandson of the founder

Managing Director

John S. Behrens

Great grandson of the founder

Great grandson of the founder

Great grandson of the founder

Assistant Managing Christopher D. M. Great great grandson of Director Hughes the founder

The Company's Head Office is now Chepstow House, Manchester and the Bradford section is at Ravenscliffe Mills, Calverley, Yorkshire.

From Manchester the company markets very extensive ranges of printed and coloured woven cotton and mixture fashion fabrics for lightweight apparel; also cotton and mixture cloths for workwear and jeans. These cloths are in due course made into garments and are sold to the public through the large chain stores, mail order houses and other retail outlets, or worn by industrial and service personnel. A comparatively small quantity of fabric is sold to the public by retailers. The Bradford section specialises in the design and production of fine worsteds and mohair panamas for export to the Far East, Millions of garments made from Behrens cloths are being worn every year at home and abroad.

During the last one hundred and fifty years vast changes have taken place. It is far easier to pose than to answer the question of why this old enterprise is still enduring today when most of its competitors have fallen by the wayside during the devastating contraction of the trade over the past seventy years. Could it be that the founder's example of vision, industry and integrity has not been forgotten? He came to England to provide his customers with the products and service which they demanded. Today the company is extremely fortunate in having talented and dedicated managers and staff: the managers travel extensively overseas not only to sell, but also to study the latest trends in fashion. To anticipate demand by producing the right fabrics with the right designs and colourings at the right time needs exceptional skill. So today great endeavours are being made to maintain the objectives for which the firm was founded.

May present and future generations long continue to succeed.

Abbreviated Tree showing the relationship of the present directors to the Founder

