

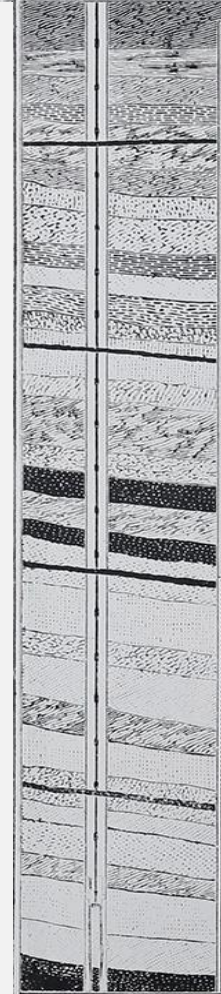
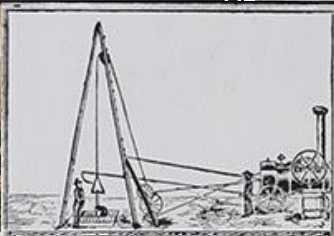


Who was John Thom?

John Thom was born 31st July 1859 at Kilsyth, Stirlingshire.

His father Charles Hemming Thom was a Mineral Borer. John was the eldest out of six children and started out as a stone mason in a local quarry.

They lived in Kilsyth which is on the main route between Glasgow, Falkirk & Edinburgh. Like most townships the Canal brought economic benefit in the late 18th Century, main industries included: farming, weaving, mining and light engineering. By the time John married Mary in 1890 aged 30 he had become a boring contractor like his father. At some point between 1890 & 1901 John and his brother Donald moved from Scotland to Patricroft, to establish their own company.

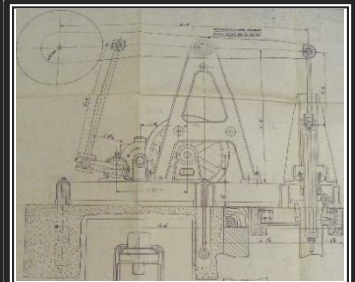


The relationship between Murgatroyd's and John Thom Ltd possibly began with the purchase of an horizontal Steam engine to drive the beam pump. In 1929 Murgatroyd's ordered its first electric pump from Canalside works 18th June. It was installed in 1932 as No.1 pump. This was a completely new design which would be able to work alongside the existing steam pump and innovation had moved on from steam to electric. Drawings for the pump show the technical details and modifications over the course of production. In 1947 another pump was ordered; however, it took six years for it to be installed, with revisions & repairs made in 1954. The likelihood for the delay is that John Thom was employed in war work, goods were under government control, supplies low and transport restricted. After the war, Murgatroyd's secured permits to build the Elworth plant. As Murgatroyd's expanded their operations, it was decided that the brine supply would come via a pipeline from Brooks Lane. Therefore, a third pump was required in 1949, via Thomas Matthews of Pendleton Manchester. Murgatroyd's hired John Thom to locate the brine stream and drill a borehole straight into it, which proved problematic but successful. They also carried out Geological trial boreholes in 1966, we know this through an interview with pump man Jack Ashley & existence of a cine film showing bore holing techniques.

Patricroft in Eccles is on the Liverpool & Manchester railway, Bridgewater Canal & River Irwell. Predominately the industries were cotton, silk & weaving mills. There was a machine works & foundry which produced steam locos and munitions, built by Scottish engineer James Nasmyth & Holbrook Gaskell in 1836, the works continued until 1989.

Sir Edwin Alliott Verdon Roe, born in Patricroft 1877, was the founder in 1910 of the Avro Company, one of the world's first aircraft manufacturers, and the first Englishman to make a powered flight in 1908 at Brooklands.

The area had good transport links, with iron & engineering works already in place. A good central location to take advantage of Cheshire and Lancashire mining, water and brine extraction industries.

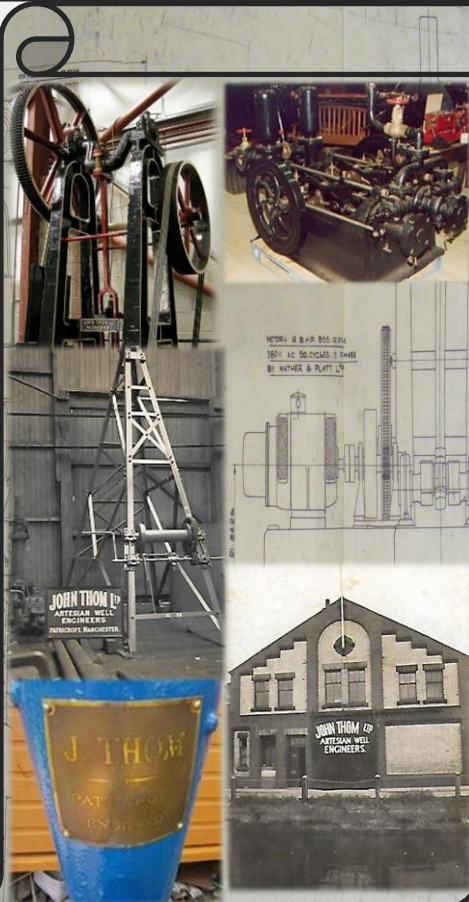


Murgatroyd's Deep well pump No 1

John Thom Ltd of Canal Works

From a newspaper advert in 1901 the company is well established, working on Government contracts with a wide range of products. John describes himself as an Artesian well-boring, tool & pipe maker, they also exported to Australia.

In 1901 the families lived at Canalside where they also worked. Donald is rarely present during the census so he may be established elsewhere. John remains in the area as an engineer employer. In 1903 John moves his family from the working centre of Patricroft to the outskirts at Monton Green. An agreement is recorded between John and Sir Humphrey Francis de Trafford for a plot of land in Newton Street with buildings intended to be used as engineers' workshops for manufacture of drilling, well sinking and other hydraulic plant, and machinery with plan. Yearly rent £7. 15. 8. In 1909, Donald's son Stuart enters the business remaining at Canalside while in 1911 John Thom resides at a larger house in Half Edge Lane.



Artesian Pumps

In 1918 John Thom at Patricroft was registered as making Artesian well tools & pumps. Due to the Great War the business diversified into head stocks for lathes, gear for transport wagons, shell heads, stampings in brass. Advertised as engineers & tool makers, pumps compressors and borings for minerals, oil, water etc.

The company were bound to be affected by the war. Records show only fifteen employees, all male, working in one workshop. However they had premises at Monton Green, Newton Street and probably a London office as the company were listed in the Trades Directory.

The company advertisements through time reference John Thom but with different middle initials, it is thought that this may be a marketing tool to identify where customers have seen the advertisement.

John Thom died on 19th Feb 1925. Mary his widow was left £10,305 6s. 8d. This equates to £423,125 in today's value, the company passes to John Hemming Thom.