

ARTHUR BALFOUR, 1st LORD RIVERDALE (1873-1957) Manufacturer of steel products and tools

Commissioned by the Company in 1936.

Arthur Balfour was born in London, the illegitimate son of Mary Fraser, daughter of a Scottish banker. He came to Sheffield in 1882 as an "orphan" with Mary Fraser and was educated at Ashville College, Harrogate, a Methodist school. He joined the Sheffield firm of Seebohm & Dieckstahl, crucible steelmakers, as a 15 year old office boy.

Established in 1865, the partnership of Henry Seebohm (1832-1895) and George F. Dieckstahl owned an 18-hole crucible furnace in Leadmill Street, Sheffield. Balfour's early business experience was in America, where he managed a foundry in Buffalo, before returning to take over from Schott as manager of in 1896. In 1899, he married Frances Josephine Keighley, daughter of Charles Henry Bingham, Master Cutler in 1894 and a partner in the local silverplate firm of Walker & Hall.

When Siebohm and Dickstahl became a limited liability company in 1899, Balfour became a director and was soon the sole head of the firm, which changed its name to Arthur Balfour & Co in 1915, possibly because of anti-German prejudice. A workaholic, a gifted salesman and a prodigious traveller, Balfour ran a typical family business - a Sheffield crucible steel firm, employing about 500 between the wars. The decline in family ownership at Balfour's was signalled by the firm going public in 1950 with a capital of £500,000.

Balfour became Master Cutler in 1911, one of the youngest holders of the office. He was created KBE in 1923, a baronet in 1929, and a baron in 1935. His son RA Balfour, the 2nd Lord Riverdale was Master Cutler in 1946 and the Hon. Mark Balfour was Master Cutler in 1969.

Other public positions

Arthur Balfour combined running his own firm with an immense burden of government work, the chief of which was his chairmanship of the Government Committee on Industry and Trade, 1925- 28.

Artist - Harold Knight, (1874-1961) RA, ROI, RP.

Harold Knight was born in Nottingham and studied at the Nottingham School of Art and then in Paris. He was elected a member of the Royal Institute of Oilpainters in 1906; the Royal Society of Portrait Painters in 1926 and an Associate of the Royal Academy in 1927. He finally became a Member of the Royal Academy in 1937.

The artist painted an identical portrait for the Balfour family at the same time.