

SIR JOHN BROWN, (1816-1896) Steel manufacturer  
Given to the Cutlers' Company by Sir John Brown in 1871.

Born in Favell's Yard, Fargate, Sheffield in 1816, he was the second son of Samuel Brown, a slater. His education was in a garret-school, then apprenticed at the age of 14 to a local tool and cutlery merchants, Earl, Horton & Co. In 1837, his family was able to provide the £500 capital needed by Brown to become a partner in Earl, Horton. Brown's success as a traveller enabled him in 1844 to relinquish work as a merchant and expand into steelmaking.

In 1855, Brown, with other big steelmakers such as Charles Cammell and Mark Firth, moved into the Don Valley, where he built the Atlas Works on Savile Street. In 1858, he pioneered the manufacture of 'puddled' steel in Sheffield, which he used in railway materials and armour-plate and in 1860, he became the first Sheffield steelmaker to adopt (Sir) Henry Bessemer's steelmaking process.

By 1865, Brown produced about one-half of the UK's rail requirements and was the largest rail-maker in the world. The arms trade and demand for railways and engineering saw unprecedented growth. By 1870, John Brown & Co. Ltd. covered a 21-acre site, with some 4,000 workers and had a turnover of nearly £1 million. He left the firm in 1871, becoming disillusioned with the increasing power of outside shareholders. He became involved in the founding of the steel firm of Brown, Bayley & Dixon, and invested in Spanish iron ore mines.

In 1892, he left Sheffield for good and sold his mansion, Endcliffe Hall which he had built in 1863. The importance of John Brown's work for state security brought him a knighthood in 1867. He was Master Cutler in 1865 and 1866, elected twice as he spent much of 1865 abroad.

He died in 1896 in Kent but was buried alongside his wife at All Saints Parish Church, Ecclesall, near Sheffield.

### **Other public positions**

A Conservative and Churchman, Brown was elected to the Town Council in 1856, became an Alderman three years later, and finally Mayor in 1861 and 1862.

### **Artist - Richard Smith, (1818-1890)**

Painted in 1863, the portrait is a copy of the one that hangs in Sheffield Town Hall. Richard Smith was born in Sheffield and was a descendent of George Smith, who was Master Cutler in 1749. Smith exhibited at the Royal Academy when he was only twenty years old. He painted a number of well-known Sheffield figures and several can be seen in the Cutlers' Hall. (William Bragge and Charles Atkinson, Thomas Jessop )