

## Open meeting 12<sup>th</sup> February 2026 on "Portland Works"



Paul Iseard kindly returned to the RVCG to give another talk to an audience of about 40 people on the Portland Works. The story started with Robert Moseley who was born in London in 1847 but by 1856 was making scissors in Sheffield. He obviously did well as by 1879 he commissioned the building of the very impressive Portland works on the edge of Sheffield in countryside (now by Bramall Lane Football stadium). This was at a time when more and more industry was moving away from the rivers like the Rivelin and using coal powered steam to drive machinery. The rooms with forges at the new works had no window as they were too hot, whereas other parts of the factory had extensive and large windows as lighting generally was poor. Moseley's manufacture of cutlery went from strength to

strength even exporting to Australia and New Zealand. The company also produce silver holloware of great quality. Harry Brearley and Ernest Stewart used the Portland Works to develop their ideas of stainless steel with the worlds first stainless steel blade being produced at the Portland Works in 1914. This was originally called rustnorstain and hygienic steel among other things.

The works saw a major fire in 1939 which was the start of its decline. Export duties imposed by the US in 1952 hit the company's export market and Moseley's was wound up in 1968. Between 1968 and 2013 the Portland Works was rented out to various trades with no investment so the fabric of the building declined. Def Leppard used rooms in the building for practicing as Portland Works had forging rights so neighbours could not complain about the noise!

When the building was threatened with turning into apartment, a local group formed and fund raised to save it. This was helped by its Grade 2\* listing. In 2013 it was bought for £400,000 and since then volunteers have been working hard to restore it. The Portland Works now boasts 37 tenants ranging from engravers, artists, gin producers to Hackers and Makers.

Monthly tours are held for visitors and an annual open day. Visit the Portland works website (<https://www.portlandworks.co.uk/>) for details and for further information on how to support this project.

Mark Bateman