



Brush Making in Bletchley

Bletchley's oldest large-scale industry



Beacon Brushes

Brush-making is Bletchley's oldest large-scale industry and at one time, over 300 men and women worked in its three firms: James Root & Son, M.A. Cook & Sons and Beacon Brushes Ltd.

How did it start? It is thought that a Thomas Ives came to the town from Manchester. His small works in Tavistock Street was responsible for the growth of three Bletchley factories.

About 1880, Harry Cook was manager at the Tavistock Street works. Later he started up on his own in a nearby house, and subsequently erected buildings on Victoria Road. In 1901 the firm became M.A. Cook & Sons, the senior partner being Harry Cook's widow – Mrs. Mary Anne Cook. In 1926 Jack Cook and his sons, founded Beacon Brushes.



M. A. Cook staff



Beacon Brushes



Roots workers at Tavistock Street works



M. A. Cook staff

Also in the 1880s, James Root, who had a business in London, purchased the original factory in Tavistock Street.

In the early days, all brushes were made by hand. One of the earliest machines used at M.A. Cooks was an oil engine made at the Denmark Street foundry.

