

# LION FOUNDRY

## INTRODUCTION

East Dunbartonshire Council's Lion Foundry archive is considered by experts to be one of the best of its kind in the United Kingdom. It includes about 1,000 photographs and over 2,300 drawings, as well as administrative and corporate records. Together with a large collection of foundry patterns, held by the Council's museum service, it forms one of the most interesting single foundry resources in existence.

In 1880 an iron foundry was established on the north bank of the Forth & Clyde Canal at Kirkintilloch by the firm of Jackson, Brown & Hudson. The site was also adjacent to the Campsie Branch Railway, and was chosen with a view to receiving the delivery of raw materials by canal vessel and sending out finished products by rail. The firm was renamed "The Lion Foundry Company" in 1885 and became a limited liability company in 1893.

The firm soon gained a sound reputation for ornamental iron work, including gates, railings, lamp-pillars, weather vanes and finials for the tops of buildings, and ornamental rainwater heads. By the start of the twentieth century this work embraced many contracts for bandstands, shelters, verandahs, shopping arcades and other types of large-scale ornamental work. Between the world wars, the firm gained a reputation for architectural work, especially building-front panels for department stores and large public buildings of the type then fashionable.



After World War Two, the foundry's usual products were of a more prosaic type, and included keel blocks for ships, balance weights for fork-lift trucks, telecommunications cabinets, pillar boxes, and the familiar red telephone kiosks. It was still able to produce ornamental work, however, as for example a replacement set of gates for Hyde Park in London. There were insufficient orders for those new staples to keep the foundry going, however, and it closed at the end of 1984.