

150th ANNIVERSARY

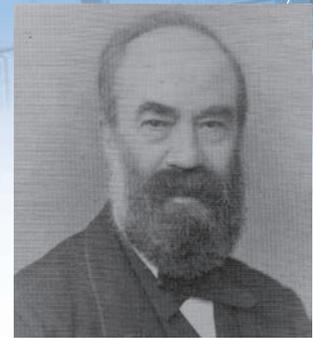
Where it all began...

"We are delighted to be celebrating our 150th anniversary this year. The William Kenyon business was founded in 1866, in the North West of England which was then at the heart of the global textile industry. The company has always manufactured ropes but has also, in its long history, been involved in many industries across many countries.

One of its longstanding strengths, which continues to be central to its success, has been its willingness to seek out opportunities to trade with other businesses all over the world. It was exporting rope products by the 1880s and it established its first factory overseas, in France, in 1899.

The business has been headquartered in the same town - Dukinfield, east of Manchester - since it began and it has remained in the ownership of the same family, spanning six generations. We have amassed a wealth of archive material during the century and a half of the company's existence. Our records include a fascinating photographic collection. A small selection of pictures has been reproduced here to provide a glimpse into the company's early years and to introduce some of its memorable moments to a new audience."

Piers Kenyon
Managing Director



William Kenyon

William Kenyon was born in 1822 in the village of Hurst, a district of Ashton-Under-Lyne 6 miles east of Manchester. His father was a weaver in the rapidly expanding cotton industry and it was not long before a young William was working as a 'cutlooker and bookkeeper' in a mill in Dukinfield.

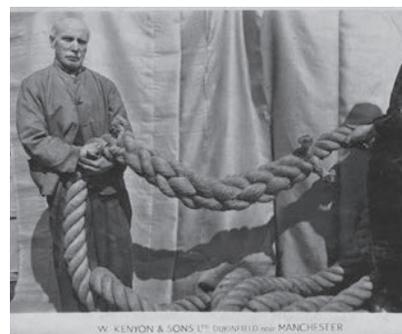
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The first ropes...

The first ropes made by William Kenyon & Sons were for use in industrial power transmission. These impressive cotton driving ropes were shipped to factories in the UK and abroad, and our people would travel to the customer's location - wherever it might be - to splice these huge products onto powerful rope drives. The images below and overleaf give an idea of the challenges involved in handling this vital component of industrial activity.



By the mid 1880s the company's turnover was about £10,000.



Success depended on the quality of William Kenyon's splicers. It was a job that required considerable skill.

Key moments in our history

From industrial expansion...



A rolling mill drive at Llanely steel works circa 1907. It used forty 237 foot ropes on the sheet steel drive and four 78 foot ropes to drive a compressor.



Endless driving ropes played a key role in industrial expansion into the 20th century.



The Chapel Field rope works in Dukinfield.



The original entrance plaque from Chapel Field rope works.



A paper mill equipped with one of the early William Kenyon carrier ropes.

...to royal visits and the summit of Mount Everest



Sherpa Tensing holding Kenyon rope on the summit.

The company's national reputation as a ropemaker led to regular requests from organisers to donate ropes for mountaineering and other expeditions around the world. The most famous of these was the first ascent of Mount Everest in 1953. We are proud to have made a contribution to this momentous feat.



Sir Edmund Hilary (right)

Later in 1953, Sir Edmund Hillary visited our factory and spoke to the people who had made his ropes.

On two occasions in years around our centenary in 1966, we were fortunate enough to host royal visits to Dukinfield.

In March 1964, the Duke of Edinburgh visited a number of companies in the local area.

The picture opposite shows him in our factory, seeing our rope production facilities at first hand.



In May 1968, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II visited the North West of England. Her tour of the region included a visit to our Dukinfield site. She is pictured above, being greeted by the then Chairman of the company, George Kenyon.

William Kenyon in the 21st century

Today, William Kenyon provides market-leading products and technical services that enable customers to maximise the threading performance of their paper and board machines.

The company remains at the forefront of carrier rope technology and the only supplier that can offer a complete package of carrier ropes, system design and equipment.

Thanks to many years experience and continual product development, Kenyons carrier ropes can meet the rigorous demands of today's paper and board makers. Simple to install and maintain, the rope threading equipment is precision engineered from high quality materials. The products offer reliability, durability and a rapid return on investment.

Customers all over the world rely on William Kenyon to deliver comprehensive rope threading solutions. The company has a worldwide network of local sales agents to look after customers whatever their location.

To complement the supply of carrier rope products and rope threading equipment, William Kenyon is also the only carrier rope manufacturer offering technical expertise dedicated to the design and implementation of rope systems on paper and board machines. Its technical sales team can provide advice on system design, supervise equipment installation, carry out troubleshooting surveys and deliver regular service visits.



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Where it all began

By the 1860s, as a married man with five children, William was determined to build a more secure future for his family in the wake of the Cotton Famine of 1861-1865. The American Civil War had cut off supplies of raw cotton causing mills to close and a great deal of social hardship throughout Lancashire.

When the war ended, William decided to set up as a rope maker in Dukinfield with the help of his teenage

sons, manufacturing a basic power transmission rope for driving machinery. He was 44 years old.

However, it was William's third son, also called William, who perfected the specialist rope for which the name of Kenyon became famous. In 1893 he invented the Kenyon Patent Interstranded Machine for producing this unique rope with its tightly laid cotton yarns that combined superior strength with excellent elasticity.

Carrier Rope Products



- Braided Carrier Ropes
- PI 3 Strand
- Carrier Rope Accessories

Rope Threading Equipment



- Pulleys
- Mounting Hardware
- Tensioners
- Carrier Rope Drives

Consultancy Services



- System Design
- Installation Supervision
- Troubleshooting
- Regular Service Visits