



## NICKS AND COMPANY, CANADA WHARF, BRISTOL ROAD, GLOUCESTER.

Timber Importers, Saw, Planing, and  
Moulding Mill Proprietors.

THE business carried on under the style of Nicks and Company has been familiar to the trade in Gloucestershire and the surrounding counties for nearly three-quarters of a century, having been established in 1840. The Firm was originally Jno. Forster and Company, being subsequently successively changed to Heane and Nicks—Nicks, Hooper and Baxter—and finally to Nicks and Company—the last change being made about 1870. The present proprietors are Messrs. Albert Buchanan, J. F. Hooper, A. E. Buchanan, and J. W. Barnett.

The yards originally occupied by the Company were in High Orchard, the removal to the present premises being made in 1870. Here they have the advantage of an excellent location, facing Bristol road and extending back to the canal, where they have ample wharfage. The railway facilities are also all that could be desired, private sidings extending throughout the yards. Their premises cover an area of approximately seven acres, every foot of which is required for the storage of timber, for the mills, and for the creosoting works.

Messrs. Nicks and Company's yards are in every respect as well-arranged as any in the country, every provision having apparently been made to handle the rough timber and the finished product quickly and economically. A noticeable feature of the yard equipment is an elevator on the canal side, specially designed and constructed to automatically convey railway sleepers, of which the Company handle large quantities, from the water to that part of the yard in which they are to be piled. This elevator lifts the sleeper blocks from the water, and conveys them to the saw, where they are cut, and thence to the piles where they are stacked and dried preparatory to being creosoted. The premises are also provided with a power-driven gantry running the full length of the yard, for the purpose of landing, loading and stacking log timber.

The saw, planing and moulding mill is compact and well-arranged, containing log and deal frames, circular saw benches, planing and moulding machines, and other wood-working machinery. Railway lines extend through the mill, and from it to all parts of the yard.

A special feature is the creosoting plant, which is the largest and most complete in the county, being modern and up-to-date. Their creosoting tank is constructed to hold seven and one-half loads of timber at a time. After placing the timber in the tank a vacuum is created, when the creosote is admitted and forced into the timber under heavy pressure.

For the past twenty-five years Messrs. Nicks and Company have devoted a great deal of attention to creosoting timber, particularly for railway bridges, sleepers, sheds, fencing, wood-blocks, and the like, and it has become widely adopted for a number of purposes, as it has great lasting advantages over the plain or painted wood.

Creosoted wood shedding is now extensively adopted by practical agriculturists as an effective covering for cattle, hay, implements, &c., saving the expense of thatching, and costing less than stone, brick, or galvanised iron sheds. They are also warmer and more healthy for cattle, the carbolic acid in the creosote acting as an excellent disinfectant against disease.

Creosoting also gives the wood a permanent brown colour, thus saving the periodical expense of tarring or painting. As a preservative its value is unquestioned, as it renders the wood wholly impervious to moisture. The Company

issue a special descriptive price list giving prices for their creosoted woods, both those in stock and cut to order.

In addition to the above speciality, they do a large and varied trade, importing almost every kind of deal and timber for building purposes direct, converting it in accordance with the requirements of the trade.



## WEBB & SPRING, RYEFORD, NR. STROUD.

Importers and Manufacturers of English  
and Foreign Timber.

THIS business was established in 1832, by Mr Thomas Webb, at Ebley, half a mile from the present location at Ryeford, near Stroud. It is gratifying to know that throughout the several changes which have occurred in the personnel of the Firm the business has shown a steady increase, having now become one of the most important of the kind in the district.

Everything in and about the premises now occupied gives evidence of progressive management. They cover an area of approximately three acres, lying between the Stroudwater Navigation Canal and the Midland Railway, adjoining both. The receiving and shipping facilities are all that could be desired, a private railway siding entering the yard at both ends, and extending its entire length.

The various buildings are modern and well arranged, and afford every facility for prompt and economical production. They include a large saw and planing mill, extensive sheds for storage, carpentering and fitting shops, workmen's mess room, stables, offices, and other buildings. The saw and planing mill is in point of both arrangement and equipment particularly commendable. The main portion of the building is 100 by 58 feet in dimensions, with numerous other buildings. The railway siding runs directly through the building, and several ganties and swinging cranes have been provided to facilitate the handling of the timber. The mechanical equipment is thoroughly up-to-date, comprising eight circular saws, several band saws, a rack bench, and all necessary machinery and appliances.

During the past few years the several buildings and the mechanical equipment have been materially enlarged and improved to meet the requirements of a growing trade. Among the important recent improvements was the erection of a new boiler house and stack and engine of the most approved type, furnishing power for additional machinery.

Messrs. Webb and Spring carry a large stock of both foreign and English timber, though they make a special feature of the latter, carrying a sufficient quantity and variety to meet any demand, while their facilities ensure prompt execution of any special order. In addition to supplying builders and contractors with the ordinary supplies, they cut out staves, fellies, shafts, spokes, chair seats, plane woods, etc., doing a large trade in these and similar lines. They also make farm and other gates, railway fencing, etc., having a special department for that class of work.

The Firm have achieved much more than local reputation, and it may be said with perfect accuracy that but few, if any, similar concerns in the county are more widely or favourably known. They receive frequent important orders from Bristol, Cardiff South Wales, Birmingham, Wolverhampton and the North, London and other large centres, as well as from this immediate district. For the London trade they make a large quantity of coffin boards, being one of the very few firms in the country who make a speciality of this work.

## DRAKE AND COMPANY, NAILSWORTH, NEAR STROUD.

Manufacturers of Umbrella and Walking  
Sticks.

IN May of last year the business carried on under the firm name of F. A. Drake, manufacturer of umbrellas and walking-sticks, was purchased, and is now controlled by Messrs. S., W., J., and H. Walker.

All of these gentlemen, as mentioned in another article in these columns, are also members of the well-known firm of W. Walker and Sons, manufacturers of hosiery. Taking the two industries into consideration, they are among the leading manufacturers in the Stroud Valley, and have done a great deal to add to the prosperity of the industrial classes.

Owing to the want of capital, Mr. F. A. Drake's business, although it had been established for some years, had not been able to make much headway. Immediately upon taking over the business the Messrs. Walker Brothers made preparations to carry it on on a much larger scale, entering into active competition with the leading firms in the country. The result has been more than gratifying, and during the past year the business has been increased to many times its former proportions, while the number of hands has been multiplied four-fold. At this writing, arrangements are being made to largely increase this number.

The works occupy a wing of the building formerly known as Playne's Mills, in which the hosiery factory is also located, a doorway connecting them. This arrangement makes it possible for Messrs. Walker Brothers to personally supervise both industries. As in the case of the hosiery factory, very extensive alterations have been made to the interior of that part of the building devoted to stick-making, and new machinery has been installed throughout. At present not fewer than seven large rooms are used in the various departments of the works, and other departments are being added almost constantly.

When the business was originally established it was to manufacture but one kind of umbrella sticks—the carved black sticks which were once, and are still, so popular with certain classes of buyers. Messrs. Walker Brothers have added to this line the manufacture of all kinds of umbrella and walking-sticks, making a special feature of the better qualities. In their warerooms may at all times be seen an enormous quantity of rough woods which have been imported from almost all quarters of the globe—Congo and Cherrywood from Austria, Ebony from Africa, and Furze, Beech and other woods from various parts of this country.

The manufacture of umbrella sticks is by no means the simple process it is usually supposed to be. Each stick must pass through many hands, and usually a number of machines, before completion, and one can scarcely imagine a greater contrast than that between the rough, twisted, and gnarled stick as it is received and the shapely and highly-finished article as it is sent out. Some of the operations—such as hand-carving, gold and silver mounting, etc.—require a high degree of skill. The work is thoroughly specialised, each operative performing but one operation, and thus gaining the necessary quickness and skill. Each operation is also confined to a separate department of the building.

The Company's sticks find their way to almost every part of the world. Although the industry has already reached considerable proportions, there is every indication that it will continue to increase at an even greater ratio. In building up the business from its former condition Messrs. Walker Brothers have practically added a new and important industry to the county's long list.