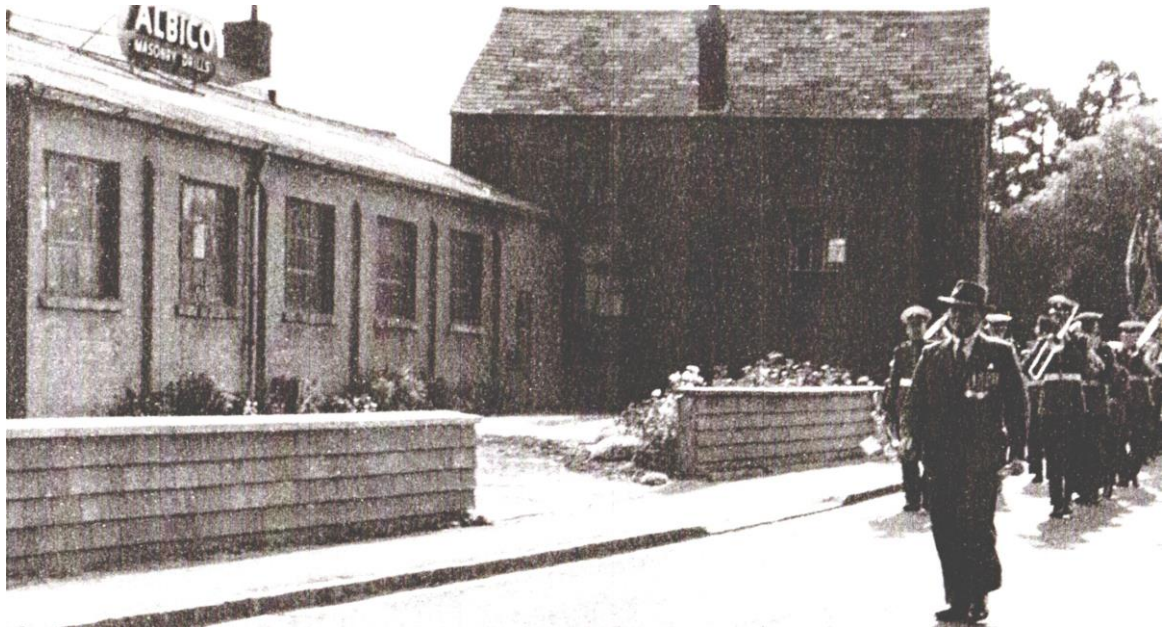


# **ALBICO**

## **(PRECISION ENGINEERING) LTD**



**BARBY LOCAL  
HISTORY GROUP  
FEBRUARY  
2025**



**ALBICO** was a company first registered on 5 January 1950.

Albico (Precision Engineering) Ltd (Reg. 476 841), private company registered January 5<sup>th</sup>. Capital £500 in £1 shares. Object: to carry on the business of manufacturers and hirers of and wholesale and retail dealers in precision parts and gauges for the hosiery, engineering and allied trades etc.

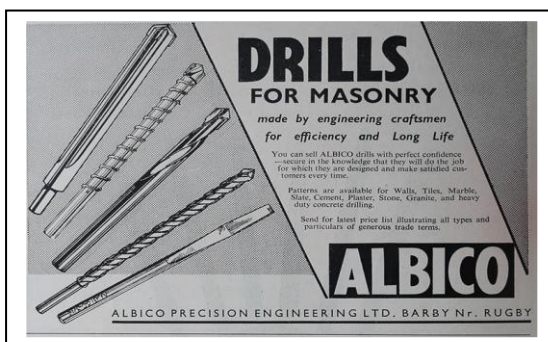
The first directors are Edward Allen, The Ship Inn, Braunston; Alec Bichener, Wolston House, Braunston; Albert Cotton, 1 Archer Avenue, Braunston. Secretary John A Goodacre, Registered Office London Road Braunston.

(In 1952 Albert Cotton sold his share to Edward Allen for £90.)<sup>1</sup>

On 9 June 1951 the company purchased for the sum of £50, land belonging to Emily Mary Hopkins, part of the land formerly occupied by the *Chapel Row Cottages* and now occupied by numbers 6 & 6a *The Green*. *Albico* later purchased extensions to the site, from Norman George Riley on 4 July 1956 and Cyril George Darby on 1 April 1957.<sup>2</sup>

In 1950, *Albico* had been searching for suitable sites on which to build a light engineering factory. On 23 August 1950, *Albico* put forward a planning application for the site of the derelict Barby cottages. The cover photograph of this article shows a march past by the British Legion, taken in the 1950s not long after the factory was built adjacent to the *Memorial Hall*. As well as the land purchased in 1951, 1956 and 1957, the factory occupied land abutting the *Hall*, purchased by Bill Cockerill and John Griffin on 25 September 1954 from the *Hall's* trustees. The name, 'ALBICO, MASONRY DRILLS' can be clearly seen.<sup>3</sup>

The drill bits appear to have been a major product of the company but whether they were of *Albico's* own manufacture or branded items is not known. They were not sold directly to the public but widely via retail and trade outlets, as confirmed by the following advertisements.



Above: [www.gracesguide.co.uk/Albico Precision Engineering](http://www.gracesguide.co.uk/Albico_Precision_Engineering)



Above: *Rugby Advertiser*, 6 March 1964

Agents required in Northern Ireland on exclusive area basis for the sale of Albico Masonry Drills to D.I.Y. Shops, Ironmongers, Tool Stores. Hardware. Builders and Plumbers Merchants: good commission and free hand.

*Belfast Telegraph*, 7 May 1960

ALBICO MASONRY DRILLS are on sale at the new ADDISON ROAD DEPOT OF ELLIS & EVERARD Ltd.

*Rugby Advertiser*, 12 August 1966

<sup>1</sup>NEW COMPANIES, *Rugby Advertiser*, 13 January 1950; LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICE, *Daventry & District Weekly Express*, 20 June 1952

<sup>2</sup>Barby Local History Group (BLHG), Deeds of 6a *The Green*

<sup>3</sup>Deeds of 6a *The Green*; BLHG P02/09

Although Masonry Drills was their prime business, *Albico* clearly had other interests. For example *Albico* was granted in 1954, a patent for a device to ease the maintenance of cylinder valves for internal combustion engines:

No. 714,929, by Albico (Precision Engineering), Ltd., Barby, Rugby, a VALVE-SPRING COMPRESSING TOOL

The company advertised for staff in local papers, but sometimes advertised further afield.

WANTED young women or youths for light engineering. Transport arranged. Write in first instance to Albico Engineering Ltd., Barby, near Rugby

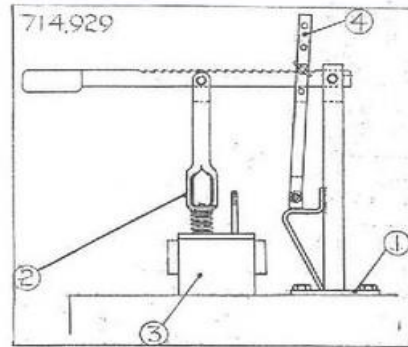
*Rugby Advertiser*, 25 September 1958

WANTED immediately, young lady for work in machine shop.— Apply Albico Engineering, Barby.

*Baxter's Agency*, 28 Priestgate, Peterborough  
H 129 8 May 1964

#### A VALVE-SPRING COMPRESSING TOOL

To hold valve springs compressed and at the same time to leave adequate room for the removal of the split collets, is the purpose of a useful garage tool shown in patent



No. 714,929, by Albico (Precision Engineering), Ltd., Barby, Rugby.

The tool is a permanent bench fixture, being bolted thereto by its baseplate (1). Attached to a swinging lever is a wide-spaced forked member (2), which can press the valve collar without obstructing access to the stem.

When the cylinder head (3) is placed in the position shown, the lever is pulled down to compress the spring, A34

Above: <https://archive.commercialmotor.com/article/12th-november-1954/68/a-torque-damping-device>

Edward and Florence Allen had moved from *The Ship Inn, Braunston*, to *The Croft, Kilsby Road, Barby*, and embedded themselves in the village community.

Employees from works in Barby, the Albico Engineering Co., were given time off with pay to attend the funeral of Rev. Richard S Mitchison.

BARBY MOURNS FORMER RECTOR, *Daventry & District Weekly Express*, 6 January 1956

On Wednesday last week at the invitation of the directors of the Albico Precision Engineering Ltd. The over 60s of the village thoroughly enjoyed a tour through the beautiful Vale of Evesham, stopping at Evesham for tea and a brief visit to the river in brilliant sunshine, and arriving home at 9pm. Hostesses were Mesdames Allen, Bourton and Jones.

ELDERS' OUTING, *Rugby Advertiser*, 5 June 1956

The Barby engineering firm of Albico paid all expenses for a coach trip and tea for the village's over 60's last Tuesday. The trip was organised by a director of the company, Mrs. E Allen. Thirty-two villagers had a coach trip to Oxford and this was followed by a river cruise to Abingdon where tea was served. The return journey was made via Thame, Aylsbury, Buckingham and Towcester and on the way home there was a drink, also on the firm, waiting for anyone who wanted it.

OUTINGS FOR OVER 60s, *Daventry & District Weekly Express*, 6 June 1958

When Edward Allen died in December 1964, he left his property to his wife, Florence, who achieved some notoriety locally as the boss of *Albico*.

# SHE BECAME BOSS OF A DRILL WORKS

A fortnight ago I wrote about the tendency of a Frenchwoman to take over her husband's business after his death, and remarked on the small number of women in this country who act likewise.

But the village of Barby has turned up trumps. Sixty-four-year-old Mrs. Florence Amy Allen, of The Croft, Barby, became boss of Albico, a firm of masonry drill manufacturers, after her husband, Edwin, died just 12 months ago. Mr. and Mrs. Allen started the firm together in 1949, when they lived at the Old Ship Inn at Braunston. Three years later, they moved to Barby, and after a short spell at the Old Hall, the firm was transferred to its existing premises. "We began with a couple of men, lathes, two presses and grinders. Now, there are 10 of us, but we all work as a team," said Mrs. Allen, a farmer's daughter from Leicester.

At the time of her husband's death, Mrs. Allen's son, Michael, who is 21, was serving with the Army. "I think if he had not decided to leave, and take an interest in the firm, I would have sold it, instead of taking over." She expects Michael to be ready to step into her shoes in five or six years time; at the moment, he's managing director.

Mrs. Allen appreciates the fact that her employees don't really think of her as The Boss. "They're never afraid to come and talk to me. We all work together, and this pays off in the end. I had a very good reception from the customers when I went round to them with the representative last year; they were pleased to know that I was going to keep the firm going." As far as other women in business goes, Mrs. Allen considers that providing they understand the work, there's no reason why a woman should not be as good a boss as a man. "After all, they're just as intelligent!"

## *Her interest helped*

"But it does depend on circumstances and experience," she added. "The majority of women prefer to sit back and run the home. And many husbands don't want their wives interfering in their work. But my interest in my husband's work always meant a lot to me, and it helped me after his death. She admits that without the help of such employees as Mrs. Joyce Belcher, her secretary; Mr. Reg Jones, "my right-hand man"; and engineer, Stan Herbert, she would never have kept going.

Mrs. Allen does not get much spare time—being a boss is a full time job. But she does enjoy gardening, and driving; "I do all the running about and fetching materials for the firm," she said.

And it looks as if Mrs. Allen will be busy for some time to come!

However, Florence Allen gave up the business in 1967. A new company, with some of the existing directors, formed Sumaloy Ltd, selling *Albico* products as well as other tools, such as 'standard and special tungsten carbide tipped tooling and high-speed-steel tools' which they would manufacture.<sup>4</sup> Florence died in 1982.

In 1970 *Albico* moved to Daventry.

Above: **SHE BECAME BOSS OF A DRILL WORKS**,  
*Rugby Advertiser*, 31 December 1965

<sup>4</sup> New Engineering Firm at Barby, *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 21 December 1967