

## **Forgers mark their war effort 100 years on**

It's almost a century since British forging companies met in Birmingham to unite for the war effort, and their trade association will mark the historic event in November.

The Federation of British Industries (FBI) was formed in 1916, thanks to a local entrepreneur, Frank Dudley Docker, who persuaded 124 manufacturing companies to join forces to make the country's chaotic defence sector more efficient.

Until then, the government had placed orders for shells, bullets and other munitions with individual companies, a system which proved hopelessly inadequate once WW1 began. In October 1917, the FBI's Midlands chairman, Arthur Brooks - who was also Lord Mayor of Birmingham – brought forging companies together at the city's Chamber of Commerce, to establish the Association of Drop-Forgers and Stampers.

The FBI is long gone, but it was a forerunner of the West Brom-based Confederation of British Metalforming (CBM) which is organising the centenary celebrations at JCB's global headquarters at Rocester, Staffordshire.

CBM chief executive, Geraldine Bolton, said the November 15<sup>th</sup> event was both a nod to the forging sector's long history, and a chance to discuss contemporary challenges facing the manufacturing sector.

“British industry wasn't equipped to deal with the demands of the armed forces in 1914, but thanks to the inspiration of Docker, Brooks and their peers, it gradually become more productive and was finally able to supply the great push for victory, as German industry collapsed during 1918,” she said.

“Now, as we look to life outside the EU, our manufacturers also have to become more productive, and we'll be having three keynote speakers during our visit to JCB, before a social occasion in the evening, to get everyone thinking about how to tackle the challenges ahead.”

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