



### John James COOKSON

To anyone who has passed along Sunderland Street, the name J. J. Cookson is very familiar and the car dealership bearing that name has been established on the same site for over 100 years. But who was J. J. Cookson?

John James (known as J. J.) Cookson was born on 18 December 1889 in Elworth, Sandbach. He was the son of Samuel, a farmer, and Fanny

Steele Cookson. He studied engineering at Manchester Technical College and was apprenticed to Belsize Motors, Manchester in 1905. Afterwards he worked with J. A. Lawton & Co., car body makers, Liverpool and with the Grosvenor Motor Co., Ltd. Chester. In 1911, J. J., with financial help from his father, took over the Central Garage in Macclesfield.

J. J. was a keen motorcyclist and, on 8 October 1910, he took part in the 100-Mile Reliability Trial at the British Motorcycle Racing Club meeting at Brooklands motor racing circuit, riding a 976 Matchless-JAP. No riders managed a non-stop run and he was the only finisher. His achievements at various motorcycle meetings are recorded in *The Motor* magazine and in local newspapers.

On 17 September 1913, J. J. married Daisy Gordon at Congleton Wesleyan Methodist Chapel. They had a daughter, born in 1917, and a son, in 1920.

When the First World War started, and with the garage closed, J. J. joined the army reserve. He was posted to the Machine Gun Corps as a gunner in March 1917, and by July 1917, was a sergeant in the Machine Gun Corps Heavy Branch which later became the Tank Corps. He joined the *British Expeditionary Force in 1917, working as a tank mechanic.*

In 1919, the business re-opened and J. J. expanded it to include two petrol stations and small showrooms on Beech Lane and London Road, Lyme Green.

*The 1934 Kelly's Directory of Cheshire has the following entry:*

*'Cookson John James, motor engineer; Morris sales and service; Standard sales and service; coach painting; motor insurance; Exide battery service station; official repairer to the R.A.C. & A.A.; breakdown lorries available day or night. The largest and best equipped garage in the district. The Central garage, Water's Green and Beech Lane.'*

By 1939, J. J. was no longer 'living above the shop.' He was at Old Meadows, Ivy Lane, with his wife and daughter. On 18 January 1942, his wife Daisy died at the family home aged 50. She was buried at Macclesfield cemetery.

Although the garage remained open during the Second World War, the workforce was greatly reduced as most car factories were needed for war work.

In 1945, J. J. married Edith C. Ardern in Macclesfield and, shortly afterwards, retired to Deganwy, near Conway, Wales. His son Ian took over the running of the business.

J. J. was a keen sailor and his other hobbies were caravanning and fishing. He died on 26 August 1966 at Llandudno.

The business is now run by his great grandson, James Cookson.