



Brinsley and Co. (Richard Brinsley and Philip Spence Bett), Ironfounders and Range Manufacturers, Cumberland Street, Dunedin, was established in June, 1895, to challenge Henry Shacklock's hold on the New Zealand coal range market, on a quarter-acre freehold section, upon which a brick building having 2,400 square feet of floor space has been erected.

The premises include office, fitting shop, and foundry, steam-power being used for driving the polishing, drilling and boring machines, emery wheels, etc. There was a cupola with melting capacity up to two tons at a time. Messrs. Brinsley and Co. were the patentees of the celebrated Champion ranges, which were well-known and popular for household purposes, and the principle of which is that the draught concentrates the heat on the oven so as to economise fuel and does not waste heat on the outside plates. There was a steady demand for these ranges, orders being fulfilled for all parts of the colony, from Auckland to the Bluff, and the business increased exceedingly during recent years. The firm successfully exhibited at the various local shows in different parts of the Colony. Messrs Brinsley and Co. were also patentees for Champion furnace fittings for building-in coppers, the word "Champion" being their registered trade mark.

Richard Brinsley was born in Victoria in 1860, and was educated at public schools in that colony. He came to Dunedin in 1880, and gained general experience in the trade till he founded the business of Brinsley & Co.

Philip Spence Bett was a son of the late Rev. Mr. Bett, of Dunedin, was born at East Taieri in 1866, and was educated at Tapanui public school, Milton High school, and at the Normal school, Dunedin. He was brought up to banking; was four and a half years in the Colonial Bank and ten and a half years in the National Bank, and was for some time accountant at Balclutha. Mr. Bett retired from the bank and joined Mr. Brinsley in October, 1897.

Richard's son, William Richard, became Managing Director on Richard's death in 1924. Around 1930 Radiation Ltd, a UK based manufacturer of gas and solid fuel cooking appliances purchased a majority shareholding in the firm. William, the major shareholder, put some of the proceeds to good use by building the magnificent house on the corner of Ings Avenue and Forbury Road.

Local Public Accountants WEC Reid & Co were closely associated with the business over many years, a partner holding the office of Chairman of Directors, and the firm being the auditors.

Around 1947 Radiation Ltd purchased 100% of the local firm.

When William died in 1959 his son Winston Richard became joint Managing Director with Harold Slade, an appointee from Radiation UK. Winston looked after sales and Harold looked after the works.

In 1960 Tube Investments UK purchased Radiation UK and thus became the new owners of the Dunedin operation.

Winston Brinsley resigned from the firm about this time, and died in 1964.

In 1980 Tube Investments sold the Dunedin business to Autocrat/Sanyo and they changed its name to Champion Appliances Ltd.

In 1987 a group of entrepreneurs, Stride Ltd, purchased the business but it all fell in a heap and in 1988 receivers were appointed to realise the considerable assets. However most of the plant was of a very specialised nature, consequently no-one wanted it, so it was eventually sold for scrap.

Sanyo still owned the buildings (the land was leasehold) and sold these to the then works Manager Kevin Marr, who subsequently subdivided the buildings into smaller units, and has leased them off.

In its heyday Radiation NZ employed some 350 staff and occupied 4 acres of buildings. The plants was extensive, including production assembly line, painting and baking line, huge steel presses, product development, foundry, sales and spare parts, accounting and costing. It was one of Dunedin's major industries which met a somewhat ignominious end.

Richard Brinsley lived in Portobello and died on 9 April 1924, and is buried in the Portobello Cemetery with his wife Sarah.

Prepared by the Historic Cemeteries Conservation Trust of New Zealand ([www.cemeteries.org.nz](http://www.cemeteries.org.nz)) from information taken from the Cyclopaedia of Otago and Southland, and recollections of Robert Glass who was the accountant for Radiation NZ for some 20 years.