

Chapter 19 The Mills

The Mill's Life, 1998. L. Charles (Ilkley Library)

The Mills of Medieval England, 1988. R. Holt. Publ. Blackwood.

Watermills, 1989. P. Wenham, publ. Blackwell

Langcliffe Mills, North Craven Heritage Trust J., 1996. J. Nelson

Langcliffe: Glimpses of a Dales Village Millennium booklet, 2000

Yorkshire Cotton: the Yorkshire cotton industry 1780-1835, 1997. G. Ingle, publ. Carnegie Publishing

See Appendix 23 for H Christie dinner menu

Early Water Corn Mills

In the Middle Ages there appear to have been two water corn mills on the Langcliffe stretch of the River Ribble. Both High or Old Mill (on the Langcliffe-Stainforth boundary) and a mill (sited near Langcliffe Place Mill built 1784) near the locks and dam were built by the monks of Furness Abbey.

About 1160 Adam of Giggleswick had rented land at Stackhouse to the monks of Furness Abbey and a few years later men and monks are living at Stackhouse. By 1194 they were in dispute with Adam's grandson Elias, who was then Lord of the Manors of Giggleswick and Langcliffe. The monks had erected a cornmill by the river which took away custom from Elias' mill at Giggleswick. The monks had also trespassed on land occupied by Elias. The monks made a mill-pond on the alluvial island called Stackhouse Holme which they rented but the mill was built on land that belonged to Langcliffe. Eventually after much quarrelling Furness Abbey appealed to the Pope's legate who in 1221 judged that Elias took possession of the mill built by the monks and was allowed to rent the mill-pond. Elias had to pay the monks one pound of cumin or 2d a year and to release them from their rent for the Stackhouse land. The Abbot of Furness so became Lord of that land in Stackhouse *Brayshaw & Robinson*, 1932).

In about 1240 Elias granted his body and all his land in Langcliffe and Stainforth, in desmesne and in service, and the Langcliffe mill with its suit etc., to Sawley Abbey with full manorial rights.

(Historical account of Sallay Abbey, ed. J. Harland, publ. J. Russell Smith, Clitheroe 1853)

Pensions and extra farm payments by the Abbot of Furness for attachment of the water-mill of Langclyff, 11d. To the Earl of Northumberland for the fee-farms of Staynforth and Langclyff, and for service of Lytton 29s 7d

Surtees Society vol. 6 1837 The Priory of Finchale

page 66 LXXIV Ordinatio Vicariae de Gykleswyk 1259 Cart. III. 27

.....the vicar, for the time being, should have the tithes of the sheaves of corn of Langcliffe and of Stainford sub monte, and tithes of all the parish hay, of the grist (of the mills),.....

The Clifford papers show a rental item for Ribblesdale in 1499(1520) and in about 1550 when the Percy family were overlords;

YAS DD121/32/1 1499-1520

Thabbott of Sallay for the township of Stanford under the hill payith xij s j d

The same Abbott for the Works for the said towne ij s viij d

The said Abbot for the towne of Langclyff xij s j d ob

The same Abbot for Works of the said towne ij s viij d

YAS DD 121/29/2 c1550

Nup Abbas de Salley pro ten. in Staynford xij s jd

Idem Abbas pro op[er]ibus dicte vill ij s viij d

Idem Abbas pro ten. in langclyff xij s jd ob

Idem pro op[er]ibus dicte vill ij s viij d

(ob= 1/2 d)

It is guessed that the buildings (opus, operibus) referred to are the mill.

The troubles of 1652

Brayshaw and Robinson, 1932

During the late 1600's and early 1700's there were problems at the water corn mills in the area. Profits for the millers were down in the mid 1600's because of the disturbed times and ownership changes. A group of four partners rented several mills in the area and closed Langcliffe High Mill so that local residents had to grind locally grown corn at the Settle mill where they also increased the multure, or toll payable to the miller. This was not to the liking of Samuel Watson at Knight Stainforth who in 1652 brought an action against William Carr, the owner of Langcliffe High Mill and the four tenants of the other Giggleswick parish mills. As Lord of the Manor of Knight Stainforth he claimed a quarter of the Langcliffe water corn mill (later known as Langcliffe Old Mill) sited near the Langcliffe/Stainforth boundary – perhaps this was the one part *not* left to Leonard in William Carr's will of 1674. Anyway, Samuel Watson lost his case and was, due to "one Carr", imprisoned in York Castle where he famously became a Quaker.

Will of William Carr of Langcliffe 1674

Borthwick vol 55 fol 277

....And now I hereby give and bequeathe unto Leonard Carr my eldest sonn my whole esstayt within the Towne and Township of Langclife now in my possession together with three partes of the milne called Langclife Milne The Turbary upon Capanahill The new house and shop standing in Settle called Reeby(?) hous now in the possession of the said Leonard Carr my son with all and every of their privildges...

The fourth part of the mill may have been owned by Samuel Watson who claimed it as Lord of the Manor of Stainforth in 1652.

The land valuation 1692

Mr Leonard Carr	£15 05 10
and mill	£ 1 17 06

Will of Leonard Carr 1696

.....And alsoe I do give and bequeath unto William Carr sonne of Thomas Carr of Gigleswicke aforesaid my nephew all my messuages Lands tenements and hereditaments which I am now seized of in fee simple with all the heriditaments and appurtenances thereunto belonging : to hold to him his heires and assignes forever...

William Carr

Difficulties continued as more grain was being carried to Settle from elsewhere and sold in the market – the milling of this was not tied to the Settle mill. Much, including barley for brewing, was being sent to Carr's independent mill in Langcliffe and he encouraged this by 'greasing palms' in Settle. So in 1720/1, Benjamin Ferrand, who currently held the tenure of the Settle mills, brought an action against the Settle innkeepers who brewed their own beer and arranged their own barley milling. It is not known what was the outcome of this, but in any case the writing was on the wall for the local water corn mills with the new turnpike road facilitating transport of grain into the area in the mid-1700's, followed by the industrial revolution.

The legal action on Settle Corn Mill took place in 1720 - against John Lawson and Agnes Carr (widow and innkeeper in Settle). There was sale of malt to Thomas Kidd, Thomas Carr, Margaret Carr et al. who all kept public ale houses in Settle.

John Chester of Langcliffe (husbandman aged 75) made a deposition as follows ¶NA E 134/7Geo1/Mich23 Exchequer)

50 years ago he used to be a poke carrier for William Carr at Langcliffe Mill for about 15 years. He brought 1, 2 or 3 horses to Settle to get corn and might take 6, 10, 15 or 20 bushels away with him.

Some years ago, one Carr was the miller at Langcliffe, and he used to send poake carriers into Settle to get trade. "And ye sd Carr hired the miller of Settle Mill (in regard he knew the customs to Settle Mill) to be his miller att Langcliffe Mill & dranke shotts att several of the public houses in Settle & by those & other means got grist to his ye said Carr's mill from the inhabitants of Settle".

E 134/7Geo1/Mich23

Further evidence was presented in 1720 (*Ferrand Papers, Bradford*):

William Carr of Langcliffe Mill persuades the inhabitants of Settle to grind at his Mill "... by drinking large shotts & reckninhs with the alehouse keepers in Settle and by

promising their indempnity for so doing and actually contributes towards the carrying on this suite..." and thus greatly enhances the value of his own mill.

"Note also that one Mr William Carre owner of a mill called Langcliffe Mill hath since the of a comson in this cause threatened all ye plts witnesses in such a mannor saying he would cause a pillary to be built where they should all mount, that in fact they are terrified by such his threats that they really dare not speake their full knowledge in this cause".

As a result of this and other possible financial troubles William Carr sold the mill to Benjamin Ferrand.

Wakefield Deeds V 345 433; 1724

Lease and Release between William Carr of Langcliffe and Thomas King of Skaelands in Kirkby Malhamdale and Charles Nowell of Cattleside

..... and also two parcels of ground with one water corn mill thereon standing commonly called the Miln Hill and the Mill Floss. One and a half acres with the fishery and all multure toll soken suit service and other profits to the same mill belonging

John Fishers attornmt. to Mr. Ferrand for Langcliffe Miln.

13th July 1728

Whereas Wm. Carr of Langcliffe in the County of York gent some time ago by lease under his hand and deed duly executed did demise for a term yet in being unto John Fisher his executors and administrators one Mill called Langcliffe Mill with some parcellls of Land contained in this said Lease towit the Mill Hill and Island with all easemts. and appurtenances thereunto belonging and whereas the said Wm. Carr jointly with Charles Nowell of Cattleside in the County of York gent. have by Lease and Release under their hands and sealls duly executed for the considerations therein mentioned granted and conveyed unto Benjamin Ferrand of St. Ives in the said County Esqe. his heires and assignes for ever all and singular the premises above mentioned and whereas it is the mind and desire of the sd. Wm. Carr and Charles Nowell that the said John Fisher shall attorne and tenant for and in respect of the said premises to the said Mr. Ferrand, know all men that by payment of six pence in the name of attornemt the said John Fisher do hereby attorne and tenant for and in respect of all the said premises unto the said Benjamin Ferrand his heires and assignes and do hereby promise to pay unto him and them the yearly rent or sum of Five Pounds fifteen shillings of Lawful Brittish money on the thirtieth day of November and the 25th day of March for two years next ensuing from Mayday last by equall portions in persuance of the Lease above mentioned. The term thereby granted not being to expyre till Mayday 1730. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand.

Wakefield Deeds Z320 438; 1728

Nowell et al to Ferrand:

....between Charles Nowell of Cattleside in the parish of Giggleswick and County of York Gentleman and W^m. Carr of Langcliff in the said parish of Giggleswick in the said County of York Gent. of the one part and Benth. Ferrand of St. Ives in the parish

of Bingley in the said County of York Esq^e. of the other part Of or Concerning all that Water Corn Mill Situate Standing and being at Langcliff in the said parish of Giggleswick Comonly called or known by the Name of Langcliff Mill now in the Tenure or Occupation of John Fisher And also those Two parcells of Ground whereon the said Water Corn Mill Stands Comonly called the Mill Hill and the Mill Isles and Containing by Estimation One Acre and an half be the same more or less with the Fishery thereunto belonging And all Suits Services Soken Toll Mulcture Ways Paths Waters Watercourses Dams Closes(?) Goats (?Goits) Attachments of Dams Flood Gates Flood Hatches Banks and All the Waiste Ground Liberties Freeledges and priviledges for winding and Dressing of Corn profitts Commoditys Hoppers Hammers Picks Sives pecks Bushells Mulcture Dishes Measures Meal Arkes and other Appurtenances Whatsoever to the said Water Corn Mill belonging or appurtaining on to or with the same held used occupied or enjoyed or accepted reputed taken known demised or lett as part parcell or member thereof

Wakefield Deeds DK 277 367 June 1792

B. Ferrand to W. Sutcliffe

Lease release and assignment 1792 between Ferrand and Sutcliffe of Settle, apothecary. Three mills, Settle, Giggleswick and Old Langcliffe Mill.

Wakefield Deeds DM 306 353 May 1793

B. Ferrand and W. Sutcliffe

Indenture of lease and release.

Lease between Ferrand and Sutcliffe surgeon on the one part and Joseph Allen of ... Inn, London gent.

Release between Ferrand and Sutcliffe on the one part and J. Allen and W. Carr of Stackhouse, gent. on the second part. Re all the site of that water corn mill ... Langcliffe... name of Langcliffe Old Mill and two parcels of land whereon the said water corn mill formerly stood - Mill Hill and Mill Iles (plus fishery etc.) heretofore in the tenure or occupation of Wm Carr and now of the said B. Ferrand.

Wakefield Deeds DL 656 762 June 1793

Sutcliffe to Salmon

Lease and release between Sutcliffe Settle apothecary and surgeon on the one part and Robert Salmon of Hollingbourne, Kent esq. on the other part.

(for £400 - see NRO ZXF 1/6/110 - abstract of title to Langcliffe Mill).

Northallerton RO ZXF 1/6/110

Abstract of title

1728 Lease and release C. Nowell, W. Carr of Langcliffe, B. Ferrand

For £120 Langcliffe Mill then in the tenure or occupation of John Fisher

1730 Will of B. Ferrand Senr. to B. Ferrand his son. Recovery of all freehold estates.

1792 Indentures of lease and release Ferrand to Sutcliffe for £1300

Langcliffe High or Old Mill for paper-making

During the 17th and 18th centuries, the two Langcliffe corn mills were closed, since there was not enough corn to be ground within the parish to keep them going. After the Keighley/Kendal highway was constructed in 1753 the corn mills converted to textile and other manufactures. The Langcliffe High Mill (Langcliffe/Stainforth boundary) was closed as a corn mill in 1652 (*Brayshaw and Robinson, 1932*). In 1793 Robert Salmon (with John Hartley, Robert Rugg and John Salmon) bought the water cornmill referred to as 'Langcliffe Old Mill' and converted it to papermaking. In 1851 it was sold to John Ovington, then Hector Christie in 1861 (leasing it to John Roberts in 1880).

Langcliffe Place Mill

This mill lies below the main Langcliffe Village and was originally a corn mill. With the eighteenth century came the revolution in machinery for cotton spinning. The building of the Keighley-Kendal turnpike road in 1753 made transport so much easier. In 1783 the mill was bought by the Lancashire men George and William Clayton, together with their brother-in-law, R. Walshman, with the idea of building a cotton mill to house the new spinning machines, invented by their friend, Richard Arkwright. It was built by piecework to their own requirements and knowledge. Payments were made for stone, wood, iron and steel, with rooms at the Folly rented as a joiners' shop. The Mill was in production within a year, with children brought from Keighley to work as cotton pickers and lodged with Langcliffe families. Langcliffe Place was built as home for the mill owners and a row of terraced houses built near the mill for the workers in 1787. In 1785 the Shed was added and became a weaving mill in the 1820's (now Watershed Mill). There might have been a medieval fulling mill on this site.

Leeds Mercury, April 10th, 1787

Notice is hereby given that Messrs Clayton & Walshman, cotton manufacturers, in order to accommodate work people are now erecting a number of convenient cottages at Langcliffe Place, which will be ready to enter at Mayday next.

Any people with large families that are desirous to have them employed, and can come well recommended, may be assured of meeting with every reasonable encouragement, by applying to Messrs Clayton & Walshman, at Langcliffe aforesaid, or at their cotton works at Keighley.

William Clayton was succeeded by his son, another William, in 1823. Mr Walshman had been bought out in earlier years. William was a very successful business man and became a partner in the Preston Bank. By 1833 cotton weaving had been added and a 30hp steam engine installed to supplement the 40hp water wheel. The firm then employed 203 people at the mill.

Claytons sold the Langcliffe Sheds in 1849, bought by Mr Bashall who ran it with High Mill until closure in about 1855 and then taken over by the Christies.

Cotton Mills - Act of Parliament 1803 No Ref Probably Wakefield Archive

Dear Sir,

By a late Act of Parliament I find the Proprs. of Cotton Mills either taking Apprentices or Employing upwards of 20 persons in the Mill are required at the

ensuing Sessions to make an Entry of such Mills with you. I have therefore to request the favour of your making such Entry for the following Mills and Mr. Carr(?) Who is so good as to bring you this, will pay you any Expence Attending it. I am not quite sure

whether Messrs. Claytons may not have entered their Mill at Langcliffe: along with their Mill at Kyhley as it is the same T... .im but you will soon find out whether that is done or not. I am D... .. Your much obliged.....

John Hartley

John Clayton George Clayton Wm Clayton and Thomas Halshnam? (*Walshman*) Cotton Merchants and Copartners in a Cotton Mill and premises situate in the Township of Langcliffe in the Parish of Gygleswick in the West Riding of the County of York. John Thornber James Thornber and Thomas Thornber Cotton Merchants & Copartners in a Cotton Mill & premises situate in the Township of Settle in the parish of Giggleswick aforesaid Edmund Armitstead of Settle in the Parish of Giggleswick aforesaid Cotton Merchant Prop(rietor) of a Cotton Mill at Settle Bridge within the Township of Settle in the Parish of Gygleswick aforesaid

Return to Clerk to Justices at Wakefield

By the county J.P.s under Peel's (Act?) and Morals of Apprentices Act 1802

Only factories employing more than 20 people or taking apprentices need

register John Hartley Catterall Hall would have been J.(P)

1849 was a difficult year with a falling off in the cotton trade which led to problems for the Liverpool banks, which in turn brought down the Preston Bank, along with Mr Clayton. To his credit, he sold all his assets to pay the creditors but sadly was forced into retirement and died at York in 1855. As a point of interest, his son became the rector of Bentham and married Miss Bolland of Townhead in Settle. The mills were sold at the Golden Lion in Settle and bought by Mr Bashall who also failed and the mills again closed in 1855. Many workers were forced to look for work elsewhere. The local paper reported,

"...in the village of Langcliffe we learn that almost every house is empty. The stoppage of Langcliffe Mills must in great measure account for this diminution of population. Great numbers have gone to Accrington and other parts of Lancashire. So many have gone to Accrington as almost to form a Settle colony." 1st May 1855.

It was in 1861 that Mr Lorenzo Christie from Derbyshire, purchased High Mill and sheds. Lorenzo had the weaving looms taken out of the shed to be replaced firstly with spinning machines and then with doubling machines. Hector Christie succeeded his father, Lorenzo, who died in 1892 at Stackhouses, although it is clear that he had been managing the business for some time before this. He had to supplement the reduced workforce by bringing families from Devon, Cornwall and Norfolk.

The 1881 census records many families from these areas. The population increased dramatically and many of the houses and cottages in the village date from this time. In 1878-9 improvements were made to the accommodation at the school and it was enlarged. The school log book has many entries of large families arriving in the village. This created problems, because as well as the increased numbers, many of these children were *"unable to say their letters or do arithmetic."* Children aged between 10 and 14 often worked part time at the mill, the other half of the day being spent at school. At 14 they went full-time to the mill. Some idea of the different types of jobs at the mill can be obtained by looking at the 1881 census. There were cotton gassers, yarn doffers, cop winders, warpers, doublers, reelers and yarn examiners and many more.

Hector Christie, whilst always the business man, and often described as stern, does appear to have been a fair man and was concerned about his employees' welfare (as a look at the included letters will show). In 1899 the Institute was built by him for the men and youths of the village. He took a prominent part in local government and was a manager at both Langcliffe and Giggleswick Schools.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the water wheels that had powered the mill were replaced by turbines and then, steam power, provided by two boilers and an engine were added to assist the water power. The shed mill was linked to High Mill by a narrow canal which provided water for the Shed's turbines. In 1898, Langcliffe Mill became part of a combine, Fine Cotton Spinners and Doublers' Association, with Hector as vice-chairman. He died in 1915.

A newspaper article by Tom Guy recalls starting work at the Shed Mill in 1926. Workers came from Langcliffe, Settle and Giggleswick, with some travelling in by

bus from surrounding villages. High Mill employed about 250 people in the 1930s, with over 100 at the Shed. The day began at 7.30 a.m. and went on till 5.30 p.m. There was one hour for lunch and ten minutes for tea and biscuits halfway through morning and afternoon. If a worker was late, one penny was docked from their wages. Langcliffe residents recall the first buzzer in the mornings and the sound of the workers' clogs as they rushed to clock on before the second buzzer went. The days were long with rather primitive conditions, but Tom Guy remembers a cheerful atmosphere. There were other compensations too, such as the excellent sports complex with a pavilion (now a private house on Lodge Lane), tennis courts and greens for bowling and putting. Mill teams competed for trophies.

Both the Shed and High Mills closed in the early 1950s. Initially the Shed was taken over by corn merchants who used it as a warehouse, but it is now known as Watershed Mill and is an outlet for the Edinburgh Woollen Mill, Dales Crafts and offices. High Mill was taken over by John Roberts and converted to paper making.

Old Mill

John Roberts Holdings is the company which now runs the other mill, Old Mill on the Langcliffe - Stainforth boundary. In 1793 it was bought by Robert Salmon who adapted it for use as a paper mill. Paper was made from linen and hemp rags, with the water wheel driving the machinery. In 1836, John Hartley and Robert Rugg joined John Salmon. Fine handmade paper still exists bearing the "Rugg and Hartley" watermark.

Wakefield Deeds NS 348 278 1840 Paper Mill

Lease and Release 9 September 1840

Lease Wm Clayton, John Birkbeck (Anley House) of the first part

Henry Salmon of Hollingbourne (Kent)

Release WC and JB on first part,

John Hartley and Mary Hartley second part,

Henry Salmon third part.

All site of water corn mill now rebuilt and converted into a paper mill in Langcliffe, usually known as Langcliffe Old Mill together with Mill, Mill House, Rag House, Stove House, Bleaching House, Warehouse, cottages or dwelling houses and all other edifices and buildings and appurtenances and also two pieces of land whereon said water corn mill formerly stood and whereon the said water corn mill, edifices and buildings now stand commonly called Mill Hill and Mill Isles...

The mill was sold in 1851 to John Ovington of Skipton who made press papers for cloth finishing, but in 1860, disaster struck when the paper mill dam burst. The mill was bought by Hector Christie who rebuilt the weir and twenty years later, leased it to John Roberts whose family had been paper makers in Cumberland. He extended the mill and introduced a machine for making paper boards. His successors bought the mill in 1919. In 1994 a new company took over, Robert Jubb, but they trade under the name of John Roberts Holdings.

It is remarkable that, in the year 2000, both mills - High and Old still trade, now both as paper mills giving many families a living, and of course, Old Mill serves as a

source of collection of waste paper with the consequent revenue to Settle's Swimming Pool and thus benefits the community as a whole.

Jean Jelley (with additions)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Jim Nelson "Langcliffe Mills" from the North Craven Heritage Trust Journal 1996.
"The Ancient Parish of Giggleswick" by Thomas Brayshaw and Ralph M. Robinson.
Langcliffe School Log Book, Craven Herald, August 1996 1881 Census.*

Copy of a letter from Hector Christie 26th Sept 1876

Langcliffe Mill, Nr. Settle. 26th Sept 1876

To Bridget Heard

I have your letter of 23rd inst and now write to say that I shall be willing to engage all your children old enough to work in the mills for the term of years and at the weekly wages set opposite their respective names on the other side hereto. Your two children Louisa and Margaret would be old enough to work full time, but John and George would only work half days and attend school the other half until they were 14 years of age and then they would have to work full time.

The hours of work in the Mills, for persons of 14 years and upwards is 56½ hrs per week. On the first five days of the week they commence work at 6.0 o'clock in the morning and leave off at half past five in the evening with an interval of half an hour for breakfast and an hour for dinner. On Saturdays they work from 6.0 o'clock to one o'clock with an interval of half an hour for breakfast only.

The expenses of removal of you and your children, Louisa, Margaret, John and George would be apprenticed to me and I would pay myself but the expenses of yourself and Francis you would have to pay for yourself but I should be willing to advance you the money to be repaid by instalments of net less than 2/6 per week. House rents are from 2/- to 4/6 weekly according to the accommodation in them.

If my terms are accepted please drop me a line by return and I will send the Indentures to Mr John Richards who will have to witness yours and the children's signatures thereto. Please read them very carefully, you must decide whether you are improving your position in life if you accept my terms - this is most important as I do not want families to come here and then feel dissatisfied after they arrive.

The work carried on in these Mills is Doubling Cotton yarns, a very healthy branch of the cotton trade.

If you decide to come you should pack all that you can as luggage such as pots, pans, beds and bedding and bring it with you (it will then cost you nothing) but anything in the shape of chairs and tables you had better sell as the carriage will cost more than they are worth and you would have to pay the carriage yourself. You will please understand that you will have your own furniture to buy when you get here.

If there is anything you could do in the Mills yourself we would be glad to employ you but if not, and you are a clean hard working woman there is no doubt that you would get plenty of charing. If you could bring a few respectable girls with you as lodgers, they might help you.

Yours Respty, Hector Christie.

For any time they lose on their own account they will not be paid, but any time they lose on my account will be paid for.

Mr Ingham, Sept 1876

The Christies

Lorenzo Christie

Born 1802 Nottinghamshire.

Wife - Ann (died Langcliffe Place, 17 July 1861 age 63)

1881 Census - living at Stackhouse with unmarried sister-in-law, Esther Bayley, 55, and two servants.

1891 Census - living at Carrholme, Stackhouse.

Died at Stackhouse in 1892 - grave in Langcliffe churchyard.

Hector Christie

Born c1829 Lenton, Nottinghamshire.

Wife - Mary Elizabeth 1829-1868 (grave in Langcliffe churchyard)

1871, 1881 and 1891 Censuses - living at Langcliffe Place.

1881 Census shows him living with daughter Ann and 5 servants. He was described as Justice of the Peace, and Cotton Manufacturer employing 400 people.

Died at Jervaulx 25 August 1915 age 87

Memorial plaque in East Witton church.

Children of Hector:

Mary Elizabeth Christie

Born c1853 Died 1869 (grave in Langcliffe churchyard)

Ann Christie

Born c1856 Manchester

1871 and 1881 Censuses - living at Langcliffe Place with father.

Died 1947 age 90. Memorial plaque in East Witton church.

William Lorenzo Christie

Born c1858 Crumsal, Manchester.

1871 Census - living at Langcliffe Place age 12, with parents.

1881 Census - Undergraduate age 22,

(lodger with Edens family at 6&7 Aldates Street, Oxford.)

He was the oldest ex-Etonian when he reached the age of 100.

Died at Jervaulx in 1962 age 103.

Memorial plaque in East Witton church.

Helen Bean & Ken Atkinson

Langcliffe Mill

George and William Clayton and Thomas Walshman 1784

Cottages built 1787 near the mill to attract more families.

From Leeds Mercury 10th April 1787

Notice is hereby given that Messrs Clayton & Walshman, cotton manufacturers, in order to accommodate work people are now erecting a number of convenient cottages at Langcliffe Place, which will be ready to enter at Mayday next.

Any people with large families that are desirous to have them employed, and can come well recommended, may be assured of meeting with every reasonable encouragement, by applying to Messrs Clayton & Walshman, at Langcliffe aforesaid, or at their cotton works at Kighley (sic).

Langcliffe Place, March 28th, 1787

Obituary Mr John Roberts

Craven Herald and Pioneer Friday January 5, 2007

The former owner of Langcliffe Paper Mill has died peacefully at home in Kirkgate, Settle, at the age of 87.

John Roberts was born on January 22 1919, the son of Herbert and Olive Roberts. He was the husband of the late Jean and father of David and the late Ellen. Mr Roberts' family leased the mill from Hector Christie before eventually buying it and continued providing a valuable source of employment for hundreds of people around the district. The family also owned Kings Mill in Settle.

Mr Roberts was educated at Giggleswick School and fought in North Africa and Italy during the Second World War.

During his working life he was classed as a "doer" and was particularly gifted in craftwork, carpentry and engineering. He was at his happiest when working with his hands and his expertise was constantly impressive in every task he tackled - from devising a machine to lay paving stones on his own patio to creating elaborate fancy dress outfits for his grandchildren.

He could also be relied upon to roll up his sleeves and dismantle and repair any faulty machine at the mill.

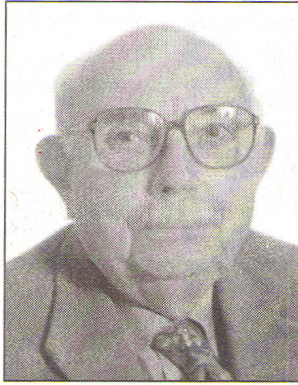
Following his retirement, he took up many creative projects. He made fine furniture, beautiful carved wooden boxes and was particularly interested in working with leaded glass. In this medium, he mainly made grand, intricate lampshades. He put his ever-expanding skills to work in his home, where every single lampshade is now a "John Roberts original".

When he heard that the Langcliffe Institute required a new outdoor lamp in front of the building and was having trouble acquiring a suitable one, Mr Roberts stepped in and made one himself which is still there today.

He was a private man, never enjoying limelight or attention by his own choice. However, he was always warm, polite and generous as many will fondly remember. He was also an exponent of recycling long before it became fashionable.

Langcliffe Paper Mill used entirely waste paper to turn out its product. Interestingly, during the heyday of Langcliffe Paper Mill, the paper machine itself was driven by a steam engine, the waste exhaust steam was then used to dry the paper as it wound back and forth between a number of heated rollers. It is remarkable that, in an age

obsessed with the ecology and recycling, an enterprise such as Langcliffe Paper Mill, which not only reduced the need to cut down trees for paper but supplied employment, put so much back into the community through the Swimming Pool paper collection which generated around £15,000 per year for Settle Pool. A funeral service was held on Wednesday at St John the Evangelist Church, in Langcliffe, followed by cremation at Waltonwrays in Skipton. He leaves a son, David and grandchildren Alice and Eleanor.



A life at the Langcliffe Paper Mills

Reg Trusler

The early days of the paper mill

The paper mill on the Langcliffe-Stainforth boundary was originally a corn and cotton mill. This was converted to paper making by Robert Salmon in 1793. *(See J. Nelson, North Craven Heritage Trust Journal, 1996).*

In 1880 the mill was bought by Hector Christie and leased to the Roberts family. In 1919 the mill was bought by John Roberts and Sons, which subsequently became John Roberts and Sons (Langcliffe) Ltd in the 1930s. There were family connections with paper-making both in Little Salkeld near Penrith and Kidderminster.

The original Roberts business was founded in 1873 and the company celebrated its centenary in 1973 - this was of course as a limited company. The original members of the Langcliffe company were Frank Roberts, Herbert Roberts and John Arthur Roberts (from the Kidderminster family) and Joshua Maudsley (husband of a Roberts). Fred Gray was Company Secretary - he was husband of Mary Gray who was in turn daughter of Herbert Roberts. Two later members were from the local family, both named John Roberts - one was the son of John Arthur Roberts and the other was the son of Herbert and brother of Mary.

In 1941 (1940 according to SMR MYD25336) the part-wooden paper mill suffered a severe blow by being burnt down. This was allowed to be re-built during the war years and in 1943 was in full production with two intermittent board-making machines which produced lead-free (silver paper-free) millboard for the packing pieces in shells for guns. No impurities could be tolerated for munitions applications. The mill supplied Millboard to the Royal Ordnance Factories such as Aycliffe, Glascoed, Chorley and several other factories which were on war work.

The Millboard was produced on two board machines and female labour ran these machines on two 8 hour shifts 6am to 2pm and 2pm to 10pm with men taking over for the night shift of 10pm to 6am. Some of the girls were evacuees and I recall two of them were Cockneys from London. Blackout paper was made during wartime.

In the re-building of the mill by Brassington's after the fire in 1941 space was allowed to put in a paper machine but this was not allowed to be built because it did not assist the war effort. The machine was in fact built in the early 1950s.

The Company expanded in 1945 by purchasing the older portion of King's Mill in Settle. They were already using the smaller portion of King's Mill. In this factory paper was pasted together and cut into strips known as Jacquard cards used in the manufacture of curtains and carpets - and exported all over the world. Some board from Langcliffe Paper Mill was also converted into strips for the same usage. In 1955 they expanded further by purchasing High Mill from Hector Christie Ltd. - this mill was part of the Christie empire which had mainly been closed down by the cotton re-organization programme. One unique thing about High Mill was the 'Penny Hole' at the entrance to the side of the main gate. In this 'Penny Hole' the timekeeper sat and he noted the time of arrival of the employees - for any who were late there was a penny fine, hence the name.

My working life

I joined the paper mill as a clerk in 1944, together with Margaret Kitchener. I retired as a director in 1996 with 52 years service. I lived in Horton at first then moved to Stainforth for four years, then to Langcliffe for 8 years, living in Northlynn, a subsidised company house. I moved to Settle in 1964. I was appointed company secretary in 1955 after the purchase of High Mill.

My starting salary in 1944 was £3 10s a week; I remember that the boiler fireman worked 12 hours a day, 5 days a week 6am to 6pm and 6am to 12pm on Saturdays - for £5- 2 -1 1/2 and he was well-off on that wage. John Roberts and his cousin John were both in the army in 1944 and Fred Gray (*ex* Midland Bank) who joined in the late 1930s ran the mill. I with Fred and others were in the Home Guard - the farmers armed with broomsticks and the like. Bombs were dropped near Neal's Ing.

In 1964 Fred Gray died and at the following Board Meeting I was promoted to the Board having been company secretary since 1955. A pension scheme was started to boost the new State Pension. Private money was put into the company.

The paper processing

After 1943 two intermittent board machines, 45" and 72" wide, were employed in Langcliffe Mill. Waste paper was put into one of the 12 beater tanks with heated water to form a pulp of shredded material. The pulp was drained to form a wet felt layer, then passed through a roller to a certain thickness. The pieces of wet board were cut off then lifted, stacked in layers between hessian sheets in a block up to 3 feet thick then hydraulically pressed to expel more water, then hung up as pieces to dry for two or three days. There was a drying machine working continuously during the war years - mainly drying sheet board for munitions. The paper machinery was driven by a steam engine and the waste exhaust steam was used to dry the paper as it wound back and forth between a number of heated rollers.

Waste paper came from merchants in Bradford and Leeds at a rate of about 100 tons a week, as well as from Bristol, London and Edinburgh. Large quantities of waste linen backing from OS maps made by Chalmers in Edinburgh and buckram from bookbinders came by rail and was transported by wagon to the mill. This was used to make better quality press board for use by ICI Nobel Division at Stevenston in Ayrshire for coal mine explosives. A sludge

derived from cigarette tissue paper making by Fletchers, near Oldham, was also used for a year or so. (Woodbines five for 2d). Material came in by road and rail wagons - there were 20 wagons on Stainforth railway sidings. Two Lancashire boilers were in use, 20 to 25 ft long, one fired by slack coal via a hopper and the other by coal or oil according to cost, to raise steam to help the beating process. Large rectangular wired bales of waste paper were man-handled into the process.

In the 1950s a second-hand paper machine was bought to make common brown wrapping paper and occasionally the blue paper used for sugar bags. Both John's were now back in the business - John Arthur as managing director looking after sales and John (son of Herbert) being the engineer. John had a good reputation for making useful things such as a duplicator based on inking a silk screen, when he found that the clerks did not have one. When he heard that the Langcliffe Institute required a new outdoor lamp in front of the building and was having trouble acquiring a suitable one, Mr Roberts stepped in and made one himself which is still there today.

The High Mill was used in 1963 to house a corrugating machine which used the paper from the paper mill and produced corrugated board and corrugated rolls. Starch was bought from various companies to glue the corrugated roll between one or two flat sheets. This is still in production. The reels of corrugated board were lifted to the top floor of the building and were delivered by chute down to wagons. A new Platen machine was installed to make cardboard boxes by die cutting out the shapes. An embossing machine was also installed for dimpling board between two rollers. There was a large demand for packaging by the potteries for example - for corrugated cardboard and dimpled chip or straw paper. The later introduction of plastic bubble wrap and shrink wrapping presented severe competition.

The King's Mill was used to make the blank card for Jacquard loom weaving. One part was used during the war by Pancreol Ltd. (subsidiary of the J. H. Fenner company of Hull famed for industrial belting manufacture) making paints and dyestuffs. The other part was rented by the John Roberts company who then bought the Fenner part. Sheeting paper was made for customers by cutting up large rolls imported from Russia, Spain and Germany in 100 ton quantities. King's Mill finished production after 1980 and was sold for property development in 1996.

Years ago there were 30 to 40 paper mills in the UK and John Roberts and Sons was one of the very few left in the 1990s. They survived by keeping overheads low and were the envy of many larger companies. Profits were re-invested and financial management was very sound. The process has mainly passed to other countries in which electricity is much cheaper since that is the main expense. Although the High Mill had electricity generated by a turbine from 1936 the dam was destroyed by a tree brought down in flood conditions in the River Ribble and the turbine was abandoned.

In 1996 the company was sold, in part due to lack of succession in the Roberts family. I retired, along with Roy Brown, Managing Director, and John Roberts, after 52 years of a happy career. Mr John Roberts died peacefully at home in Kirkgate, Settle, at the age of 87 (*Craven Herald and Pioneer Friday January 5, 2007*).

