

SUMMARY OF NOTES BY ELONA CUTHBERTSON RELATING TO THE RIVER COLNE, GRAND JUNCTION/UNION CANAL AND SURROUNDING LANDS.

Medieval Mills.

Domesday Book mentions two mills in Harefield with no description as to their exact location. Four fisheries also mentioned.

The two medieval mills were called Hacketts and Ravenings.

Hacketts was held from the Lady of the Manor at the end of the twelfth century. (VCH). It remained in the Hackett family for over a century. From 1305 entries in the Calendar of the feet of fines mention a premises with a mill and marsh.

1436-1467 a tenement called Hacketts plus a watermill was the subject of conveyances. No mention of Hacketts after this. Speculation that Lord of the Manor's mill featuring from 1559 onwards at the Coppermill site may be Hacketts Mill. Lord of the Manor's mill was at the end of modern Park Lane.

Ravenings Mill.

In Gulchwell (now Springwell since about 1800) area. Plentiful water supply from Colne, may have been fed by a well or spring.

Fulling is where newly woven cloth is scoured to remove oil and size, done by pounding the cloth with gently falling fulling stocks operated by water power. Dried, knots or burrs removed, then laid in soapy water and fullled again. Dried outside. Stretched on tenter frames (held in place on tenter hooks). On enclosure Tenter Meadow is old enclosure 24. Rickmansworth well known as a medieval cloth making centre, so probably the source of the cloth for fulling.

The fulling mill was probably on the east bank of the Colney Stream. It had fishing rights south from Lawshard: Ravenings had rights over the same stretch. The mill's floodgates near Lawshard suggest the main water force came from a large stream. (ACC 1085 M54/EM3/EM11).

The mill had little in the way of land except for an island or islands in the Colney Stream.

Gapes, Gibbs or Gulchwell was next to the fulling mill. In a triangle between Colney Stream and Gulchwell Water. In 1699 survey (Gregory King) was south of Gapes Mead and Mill Meadow and part of a farm with farmhouse near Gulchwell edge.

1310: Lord of the Manor Richard of Batchworth owned a mill above Hacketts Mill.

1345 or 1346: Ravening family sold Ravenyng Mill to Sir John Swanland (VCH 245).

1370: William Swanland owned a fulling mill (VCH).

1405: Mill sold with fishery.

1438: Mill rebuilt. Old mill to be underpinned, old timber removed, new floodgates to be installed (VCH).

1449: Described as a fulling mill in the Calendar of the feet of fines.

1510: Court roll describes Ravcenings as a 60 acre estate with a tenement called Ravenings standing near the fulling mill, belonging to Richard Aweedon (ACC 1085 M54). House had a garden, some meadow land and moor, a grove by the road from Drakenford to Harefield, an eyot and "a water course in the river leading from the floodgates at the mill to the water coming from Gulchwell." The land included Le Malmes and Popes Field/Popes Innings and a lane between Crypses and Popes Innings in Hill End.

1511: Held as copyhold from manor (ACC 1085 M26).

1517: Gulchwell a tenement with a tenanted close to Lord of the Manor. Tentermead, Gulches Well, waters and fishings to Lord of the Manor.

1518: Reference in deed to Cripses Fulling Mill (The India Rubber Journal May 14 1949).

1521-1522: Court roll describes tenement called Gaybbes lying next ye fulling mill sold to George and Juliana Cooke by Abel Baldwyn? or Lord of the Manor (ACC 1085 M11)

Mill let on its own, with the fishing rights but not much land except for islands in the Colney Stream (ACC 1085 M54). Building in a decayed state and new occupier supposed to repair it. The Lord of the Manor let it to Henry Budbrooke to make the house habitable.

October 1523 to April 1524: Floodgates of the fulling mill and to "teyntermede" (ACC 1085 M13).

1524: Dispute over water between tenants of river bank properties (Budbrooke, Cooke, Weedon).

1526-1527: Bridge between Ravenings and the Tentermerad in disrepair (ACC 1085 M55).

1528: Parcel of land on which fulling mill built to Cooke, a free fishery.

1546: Rental, same house apparently, is "Gapes hard by the fulling mill" on Colne Stream (ACC 1085 EF2). Land on which fulling mill built and fishery rights part of Gapes?Gibbs by 1636 (ACC 1085 EM3).

1559: John Gybbes repairs at Lawshard, Ravening and Pages (formerly Weedons).

1636: "a little cottage lately erected on Le Malmes" (ACC 1085 EM3). Probably erected by John Lea about 10 years earlier. Probably a two-bayed timber frame house similar to cottages in Hill end in living memory.

1636: John and Ann Weedon sold Ravenings to Levy and Joanne Sparks, and Gapes/Gibbs to Robert and Martha Summerfield (ACC 1085 EM3).

From 1636 no more references to a fulling mill. The land on which it was built now part of Gapes or Gibbs.

End of 17th Century: Gapes/Gibbs and Malme to George Wingfield. After 1699 during his ownership Gapes/Gibbs pulled down. In 1699 Ravenings to the west of the Colney Stream (ACC 1085 EM11).

1767: James Hunt bought Ravenings. (ACC 1085 M67). Existence of house unknown.

1777: Malme only messuage left standing on death of Hannah Wingfield (Acc 1085 M67).

1780: James Hunt bought Malme and Gapes/Gibbs sites from Hannah Wingfield's great nephew (ACC 1085 M67). He built a new house named Union Hall. In 1782 Sun Insurance Company described this as brick with a tiled roof with timber and tiled barn, stable and outbuildings (Guildhall Library). Union Hall is on plans on deeds of GJCC purchases. Map of 1805 in Middlesex Deeds Registry shows name as Springwell Place. In enclosure award and plan of 1813 old inclosure 11 is "Scite of Springwell House". MDR 1807 4 601 at GLA suggests Union Hall/Springwell was on the site of Ravenings.

1791: Hunt died, estate left to John Liptrap Esq. Sold in 1794 to Alexander Ross Esq of Harley Street (banker, army agent) on whose bankruptcy in 1805 the property sold under name of Springwell Place to Robert George Spedding.

Paper Mill.

1636: Parish survey records corn mills on the site.

1670: Existing corn mills rebuilt and extended to provide for paper making as well as corn grinding.

In the 1670s there were about 50 paper mills in England, concentrated around London which was the biggest market and had a good supply of rags.

The paper making process was that first rags were soaked, washed, heaped, fermented, turned and watered. Then they were pulped in a water powered stamping mill. The paper was then made:

- (a) by a "vatman" using a mould (a sort of sieve) and deckle for shaping;
- (b) by a "coucher" turning wet sheets on to a felt. A post of 144 sheets or 6 quires was built up and pressed;
- (c) by a "layer" removing half-dried sheets from the felts, piling them up and preserving them.

Finally the moist sheets were hung individually and dried in a drying loft, sized and dried again.

1692/1693: William Milton recorded in parish survey as owning the house, corn mill and paper mill.

1719: William Henman insured the mill.

1737: Deed shows John Newdigate of Harefield let to William Henman "The Paper Mill and Corn Mill" on the River Colne.

1746: Richard Ware insured the mill.

1752: Mills freehold sold by John Newdigate to George Cooke of Bellhammonds.

1777: John Church insured the mill.

Copper Mill.

Numbers employed:	1803	121	
	1818	70	
	1851	86	
	1861	50	
	1871	40	
	1890	180	(asbestos works)
	1895	200+	
	1901	400+	

Copper came from Mines Royal Company's smelting works in Neath. Some came by canal via Oxford. Charged the same as if it went to Paddington at 8s 1d.

Initially made copper and brass kettles and pans, then rolling of the sheaths and bolts for shipyards for copper bottomed vessels. First use of copper sheathing in 1761 on frigate *Alarm* to preserve the wood from worms in southern climates. The market for copper sheathing boosted by the wars with France. Claimed that the copper ball on the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral made here. Brass goods were also manufactured, and brass and zinc workers lived in the neighbourhood.

The copper mills operated a continuous furnace, only closed on Christmas day, when the company gave a feast to the employees.

1781: Mills, including the recently built mansion aka Manor House, leased to Governors, assistants and Societies of the Mines Royal Copper Company. Manor House was occupied by superintendents and managers of the mills. Had a view down the mill stream.

13 February 1799: Mr Bowser complained that injury had been done to his Copper Works by the Canal and the leakage of the pipes under the Canal. General Committee of the GJC replied that the pipes had been mended and that any other damage was caused by the complainant having altered and deepened the river below the works subsequent to the works of the canal.

September 1802 – October 1803: Dispute over millers complaint that canal was taking too much water from the rivers. Eventually rejected by GJCC.

1803: the buildings had been erected, with power from the River Colne.

1813: By this time a terrace called Workhouse Row (occupied by 10 households) had been built for employees of the mill.

By 1815: Royal Exchange, a row of 29 cottages, had been built in West Hyde to house copper workers. In 1841 several straw platters, 2 lace makers, 1 elderly female grocer, 1 washerwoman, 1 shoemaker, 1 rag cutter, 1 bonnet sewer, a beer house keeper, a lime kiln labourer and 3 bakers among the residents. By 1851 117 residents.

1816: The absence of a rural simplicity of manners was blamed on the copper mill.

1826: Reconstruction of copper mills by MRCC (RAIL 830/4).

July 1829: MRCC failing to send declarations of weight with their cargoes. Must comply or their cargo will not be allowed to pass.

1832: Poor rate assessment made on Henry Goodman for freehold of the house and mill.

1863: Copper works closed because of decline in demand for copper products. A troubled time followed. The copper guttering was stripped off and sold. An upholsterer who furnished and decorated the house was never paid and found his goods seized to pay his customers rent.

1870: Thomas Newell of Paris converted the mills to make superfine paper and envelopes. He employed 40 people. An enthusiastic Baptist he was an enlightened employer and established lecture rooms at the mill for musical evenings and talks. Made use of the Union Chapel for a Christmas fete in January 1874. In April 1875 put on a musical interpretation of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Went bankrupt in 1879.

1872: Advert for sale of the leasehold of Harefield Mills and Corn Mill called Jack's Mill with residence, land, fishery, cottages and residence called Manor House.

1881: The Anglo-Russian Iron & Tinsplate Manufacturing Co. planned to convert the works and to employ four to five hundred hands. A plan greeted in the parish with satisfaction.

Copper Mill or Black Jack's Mill?

September 1797: Report from the Upper District Committee. Upon a late view of the works in the canal from Uxbridge to Rickmersworth they observed a Mill erected at Harefield with a cut made thereto from the Canal without any previous application having been made to the Company for their consent thereto. (830/39)

Bridge over the Canal.

Before 1800: the bridge over the river to Harefield had a gate at each end and a toll of 1/2d for any vehicle using it.

May 1804: Mines Royal Copper Company (MRCC) sued over the state of the swing bridge by owners of mills on the Colne.

July 1805: meeting to discuss removal of bridge to another spot.

August 1805: Bridge to be repaired or rebuilt as expedient.

1826: Plan and estimate for new bridge. Also cost of merely doing the necessary repairs.

July 1827: Coppermill Bridge in so wretched a condition as to have required the support of piles.

1851: Fisheries Inn was then the Cross Keys.

1875: Road from West Hyde to Harefield will be closed for the rebuilding of the bridge over the Grand Junction Canal near the copper mills from 23 August.

Asbestos Works.

1882: United Asbestos Company took the lease on the mill. Sought women workers of good character.

Works was three in one: a textile factory combining the processes of a cotton and woollen mill and produced high quality asbestos goods. There was also an india rubber factory and a paper mill manufacturing mill boards.

Later company manufactured poilite roofing tiles.

Initially the water from the Colne was sufficient to work nine water wheels but over time the amount of water decreased and other sources of power (certainly coal) had to be used.

1884: Company secured its first Government contract. Work for the Admiralty, War Office and other government departments followed.

1884: John McCallum JP joined the Asbestos Works.

1886: J Boyd, manager of the Asbestos Company at Harefield requested a drain for houses to the west of the canal and the Colne, leased by the company for which they were paying sanitary rates. Their present drain is into a ditch behind the houses near the wells for drinking water. The ditch is stagnant in the summer and a danger to the wells.

1889: As tenants of Harefield Park J McCallum attended funeral of W F Vernon. Asbestos Works closed.

July 19 1890: Letter from Watford Sanitary Authority about health of employees being threatened by dust. Death rate at West Hyde has increased in the last few years. The effects of dust are often delayed. Mill employs 180. Suggests an "air propelling fan" to collect the dust. (Middlesex Gazette)

By mid 1890s death rate per thousand in Harefield 19.9 (one of the highest in the area). Middlesex Gazette of March 5 1892 has an article on health in Harefield.

November 8 1890: At Uxbridge Petty Sessions United Asbestos Co summoned for infringing the Factory Acts by employing children, young persons and women during prohibited hours. 35 cases. Managing Director Mr H A Allport and Mr J McCallum present. Total fines and costs £97/3/6. "The system of overtime meant that 32 and 36 hours were worked but with a few hours interval". This a system that went back 40-50 years. A 15-year old girl had worked all night. (Middlesex Gazette)

1893: Mr McCallum's daughter married. The employees of the Asbestos & India Rubber factories gave her a handsome tea and coffee service. The wedding breakfast at the Manor House. Employees entertained with music and dancing until midnight.

March 1895: Wanted 12 girls over 16 for wallpaper factory. J McCallum. (200-300 men and women worked in the factory). (Middlesex Gazette)

October 1895: 40 teachers from Watford visited the Asbestos Works and were shown around. (Middlesex Gazette)

October 12 1895: Foremen and wives from the Asbestos Works visited Breakspears, were shown round the grounds and had tea in the hall next to the Kings Arms provided by Mr Tarleton.

July 1896: 100 workers went on an outing to Hampton Court, travelling in 5 brakes and accompanied by the works band. Didn't get back to Harefield until midnight.

November 1896: Fire at 2 Riverside Cottages. Owners United Asbestos Co. Tenant John Richardson. The Rickmansworth Fire Brigade arrived to find the fire already extinguished by the asbestos workers using buckets and a ladder. The tenant has suffered a good deal of loss.

November 28 1896: Case of typhoid in a cottage west of the canal near Coppermills. Sample of water taken from well.

1899: Seen as benevolent employers. Supported a string band, brass band and football club. Self-service canteen where wives and children of employees would meet their menfolk for meals. Cooking facilities. Shop and hostel for single people. (Uxbridge Gazette)

August 1900: Mr A H Tarleton honoured the visit of HRH Duchess of Albany to Breakspears by entertaining to tea at Breakspears the employees of the Asbestos Works and the

Breakspeare Estate and members of the Breakspeare Institute. The Duchess stayed three days and visited the Asbestos Works.

1907: "The general setting of the place is extremely picturesque, for with much water in the foreground and pleasing wooded slopes and undulations at the background, and an extended view all round, there is by no means a contemptible scene."

"The buildings do not display an excess of the aesthetic except for the house with its pretty façade, trees, lawn, view."

Stephen Springall, *Country Rambles Round Uxbridge*, 1907.

1910: The asbestos works merged with Bell's Asbestos Company and became known as Bell's United Asbestos Company Ltd.

Undated: Mrs Pangbourne lived at No 7 Riverside Cottages. They were the first family to have a kitchen range fitted in the back room. Before that there was an open fire in the front room. Later lean-tos were added to the backs and were used as kitchens. Tin baths, copper boilers with wood fires. Toilets at the bottom of gardens were emptied weekly. Walks to Apple Grove remembered. Mrs Pangbourne was saved from drowning in the canal when she was 60.

Black Jack's Mill.

June 1872: advert for sale of the leasehold of Harefield Mills and Corn Mill called Jack's Mill.

March 1874: Lease of water corn mill Jack's Mill auctioned for 21 years at rental of £70 p.a. 5 floors with residence, outbuildings, garden, meadow.

1907: Mill out of use. It does not now grind common sawdust to flour-like fineness and despatch the same to linoleum works, as of yore. (Springall).

Troy Mill.

1822: By now Troy Arm open to serve Troy Mill and some chalk pits. ½ mile long with no locks. 4 feet deep. Originally extended under the main road past Troy Mill as far as a chalk pit.

1833: King's College Cambridge bought an estate of 220 acres including Troy Mill.

1841: A corn mill.

1895: Leased to a timber firm from Montrose who used it to grind sawdust for linoleum.

1907: A sawdust mill.

Hodder's Limeworks,

Hodders operated both the Harefield Lime Works and St. Ann's Quarry (later to become Harefield Cement Works) in the early nineteenth century.

September 1807: Hodders allowed to separate chalk from their flints.

1813: Hodders apply for leave to navigate their boats from their wharf at St. Ann's, Harefield to their wharf and lime works at Harefield Park, a distance of one mile and a half. Annual in lieu of tonnage for 8 miles charged for, because of short distance through a lock. (830/43).

Harefield Lime Works.

1832: Poor rate assessment for freehold made on George Groves.

1872: Hinton Cooper died suddenly at the residence of his brother Archibald Cooper of Harefield Lime Works.

1886: Accidents reported at Cooper's Lime Works.

Harefield Cement Works.

1885: Coles & Shadbolt took over Cement Works.

1906 – 1907: Construction of houses at Moorhall Settlement (King's Cottages?) for employees of Coles Shadbolt. A score of houses arranged in two opposing rows. (Springall).

1907: "Waiting boats, steaming buildings, chalk pits and kilns of bricks proclaim to us that we are facing the large cement and brickworks of Messrs Coles & Shadbolt". (Springall).