

The "Cloth Mill" and Calico Printing Works, Carshalton.

This mill was situated on the east bank of the Wandle just above Butter Hill Bridge, opposite a snuff and madder mill, and adjacent to the north side of the Lower Mill. It was probably built by George Ansell soon after he purchased the Lower Mill and other properties from the trustees of James Scawen in about 1782.

The earliest reference found is in the record of an insurance policy taken out by George Ansell on 21 March 1786, on the nearby snuff mill and the Lower Mill, which included cover for a cloth mill, printing shop, colouring house, and drawing shop [1]. James Edwards in about 1789 observed that on this site, "Mr. Collison has a manufactory for whitsterng.". [2] George Ansell renewed the insurance policy on 16-April 1790, the register record of which named "Collison & Company, bleachers" as the occupiers of the cloth mill [3]. (The spelling in later references was "Collinson", which is probably correct.) Ansell renewed the policy for the least time on 25 April 1795, when the "Linen Cloth Mill" was still in the occupation of Collinson and Company [4].

George Ansell died on 8 June 1797 at the age of 69, and by his will proved on 19 June he bequeathed his mills and other properties variously to his wife and sons. The cloth mill was devised to his son George, with the appurtenant "colour house, drug house, cutting shops, and drawing shops", all of which were in the tenure of Messrs. (Benjamin) Bailey and (George) Sutherland when he wrote his will on 9 May 1796 [5].

George Ansell junior insured the buildings associated with printing and dyeing, and the cloth mill, then described as "mill used for weaving woollen cloth", on 31 March 1798 [6]. This is the last reference found to the cloth mill, and probably soon afterwards the business was wholly concerned with calico printing.

It was at about this date that George Sutherland moved to a calico printing works at Willow Vane, Mitcham [7]. Benjamin Bailey remained at Carshalton and later went into partnership with George Ansell, who was his brother-in-law, he having married Fanny Ansell in 1794. Holden's directory for 1802-4 listed Bailey and Ansell as calico printers at Carshalton.

On 15 May 1805 George Ansell insured the calico printing works and the plant and utensils therein. The works buildings then included a copper house, calender room, colour house, copperplate house, drughouse, pattern room, print room, cutting room, printing shop, pencilling shop blue house and dye house [8].

Bailey and Ansell dissolved their partnership on 8 October 1808 [9]. Soon afterwards it was announced that an auction sale would be held on the premises on 24 October, of their utensils and plant. These included a copper-plate press, cylinder machine and rollers, engraved copper plates, madder copper, steam copper, calico press, padding press, and printing tables [10].

It seems that not much was sold at this sale, for both Bailey and Ansell continued calico printing. Benjamin Bailey went into partnership with William Bennett and they took over premises at Mitcham, while George Ansell carried on at Carshalton. On 31 July 1809 he re-insured the premises and some of the utensils and machinery [11]. He was listed as a calico printer at Carshalton in Holden's directory for 1809-11.

On 20 October 1815 George Ansell, calico printer, was declared bankrupt [12]. It was probably soon afterwards that the freehold of the calico printing works, together with that of the adjacent Lower Mill and the nearby snuff mill, were sold to William Lingham, whose sister Sophia was married to George Ansell. When he died in 1818, Lingham left his properties in trust for the benefit of his sister Harriet and his daughter Frances [13]. On 2 October 1823 Frances was married to Edward Tyrrell, who thus acquired an interest in the mills.

At some time after his bankruptcy, George Ansell entered into partnership with Thomas Gillebrand, who had previously worked as a calico printer at West Ham, and they continued to work at the Carshalton mill. They dissolved their partnership on 31 July 1822 [14], and in 1823 George Ansell, together with his brother Charles Augustus, took the lease of a calico printing works at Wimbledon, on the Wandle a little north of Merton Bridge. Thomas Gillebrand carried on alone at Carshalton until his death on 1 January 1826 at the age of 6Q..

He was apparently succeeded, briefly, by George Gould, calico printer, whose "valuable and useful Plant, Machinery, Implements, Utensils, &c." were advertised to be sold at an auction to be held on the premises on 19 June 1828 [15]. Soon afterwards, on 30 June, Edward Tyrrell addressed an advertisement to "Calico Printers and Others", informing them that "extensive Buildings and Land, at Carshalton, Surrey, fit for any large manufactory", were available for leasing or purchase [16].

Evidently no acceptable offers were forthcoming, for in September 1832 it was announced that the "Building Materials of a Calico Printing Factory .., late in the occupation of Thomas Gillebrand anal Company", were to be offered for sale at an auction to be held on the premises on 5 October 1832. The buildings which were intended to be demolished comprised a "three-storey Printing Shop, 104 ft. by 27 ft. covered with pantiles; a blue house, covered with slates, 38 ft. by 24 ft., several other convertible buildings of a moderate size; a large drying mount 70 ft. by 20 ft., a granary on stone piers, also ... various workshops, counting house, sheds, etc." [17]

Again .no transaction resulted, and the building materials of the "factory premises" were advertised to be sold early in March 1839 [18]. No record has been found of a date being fixed for the sale, and the buildings .were certainly not demolished. They were taken over, either then or later, by another of the.Ansell brothers Robert, who was then working at the nearby snuff mill.

Robert Ansell probably used the former calico printing mill for storage. It was not included in Brayley's list of Carshalton mills in 1850, nor was it mentioned in Frederick Braithwaite's survey of the Wandle mills in 1853.

Edward Tyrrell died on 5 June 1881. Dr.Peatling copied extracts from a conveyance dated .23 January 1883, executed by Edward Tyrrell's son Avery Tyrrell and other members of the family, of the former calico printing mill, together with the Lower Mill and the snuff mill. The old calico printing mill was described therein as "buildings formerly used by Thomas Gillebrand as a calico printing manufactory and now occupied by Robert Ansell." [19] This Robert was the son of the previously mentioned Robert Ansell who had died on 4 May 1865, and he carried on working at the snuff mill until about 1891. The former calico printing works were probably demolished soon afterwards. They were not shown on the 1896 Ordnance Survey maps.

References

- 1.** Guildhall Library, MS 11936336 No.516374!
- 2.** James Edwards, Companion from. London to Brighthelmston, e.1789, Part II, p.24.
- 3.** Guildhall Library, MS 11936/366 No.568356.
- 4.** Ibid. MS 11937/10 .No.640722.
- 5.** PROB 11/1292 q394.
- 6.** Guildhall Library, MS 11937,21 No.676697.
- 7.** Eric Montague, A Study of the Textile and Printing Industry in Mitcham and Merton from 1590 until 1870, 1992, p.27.
- 8.** Guildhall Library,.MS 11937/65 No.776794.
- 9.** The London Gazette, 8-11 October 1808.
- 10.** The Times, 19 October 1808.
- 11.** Guildhall Library,.MS 11937/88 No.833877.
- 12.** The London Gazette, 31 October 1815.
- 13.** PROS 1111608 q420
- 14.** The London Gazette, 3 August 1822.
- 15.** The Times, 16 June 1828.
- 16.** Ibid. 30 June 1828.
- 17.** The County Chronicle, 25 September 1832.
- 18.** The Times, 5 March 1839.
- 19.** Sutton Archive and Local Studies Library, Peatling Papers, Vo1.12.