

The Paper Mill, Carshalton.

This mill spanned the River Wandle off Mill Lane, Carshalton, opposite its junction with the present Gurney Road and near the present Paper Mill Close, about 200 yards above Butter Hill Bridge.

The owner in the mid-18th. century of the land on which it stood, Thomas Scawen, was probably responsible for its erection. It is said to have been leased by Scawen to John Taylor in 1744 [1]. On 17 May 1746, Thomas Scawen granted a 21-year lease of the property to William Herbert of Monument Yard, Gracechurch Street, London, stationer, at a rent of £70 per annum, to commence on 19 September 1746 [2]. William Herbert insured the mill with the Hand in Hand insurance company on 6 November 1746, when it was said to be "unfinished" [3].

On 1 August 1751 Herbert surrendered his lease and entered into a new lease with Thomas Scawen and his aunt Dame Martha Scawen, for 21 years commencing on the following 19 September [2]. This was probably because of some rebuilding work, for on 25 September 1753 he renewed his insurance policy at an increased valuation, from £400 to £1200 [4]. He assigned this policy to his brother-in-law, Thomas Durnford, on 24 January 1754, possibly due to ill-health, for he died about a year later. By his will, proved on 11 April 1755, Herbert bequeathed the lease of the paper mill, ancillary buildings, and his dwelling house, with all the utensils and plant, to his wife Susannah, and after her death to his sons Roger and Robert in equal shares [5].

Within three months Susannah had also died [6], and the lease duly passed to Robert and Roger Herbert, although the latter does not appear to have become involved in the business, and his name is not mentioned in later records. On 10 December 1755 Robert Herbert entered into a new lease with Thomas Scawen and his brother William, who had been granted Dame Martha Scawen's interest, for a further 21 years, backdated to 20 October 1755 [2]. The insurance policy which had been taken out by William Herbert in September 1753, and assigned to Thomas Durnford, was re-assigned to Robert Herbert on 28 April 1756, and he renewed the policy on 19 September 1760 [7]. On 16 June 1763 he was granted a new lease by Thomas Scawen for a further 21 years [2]. He renewed the insurance policy on 9 September 1767 [8], and again for the last time on 6 September 1774 [9].

Robert Herbert died in 1776, and by his will proved on 27 September 1776 he bequeathed the lease of the mill to his wife Sarah and his unmarried sisters Mary and Deborah, "for their joint use requesting them to carry on the business of paper making and the profits therefrom to be equally divided among them." [10].

The three women disregarded Herbert's request, and a few weeks later the lease of the premises was advertised to be offered for sale at an auction to be held on 30 October 1776, "by order of the executors of Robert Herbert." The mill was described in the notice as being "in excellent Condition, and executes as good work as any in the Kingdom; the Buildings are in thorough Repair completed at an Expense of upwards of £4000 and containing two breast-shot water wheels. The "large and valuable stock of paper" was also to be offered for sale a few days later [11].

The lease was purchased by William Curteis of Clapham and John Taylor of Wrotham (possibly the John Taylor who was said to have held the lease in 1744), who were granted a new lease by James Scawen, the son and heir of Thomas Scawen who had died in February 1774 [12]. The register record of the insurance policy taken out by Robert Herbert in September 1774 was annotated as "Void May 3, 1777." On 4 September 1777 Taylor and Curteis insured the premises with another company, the Sun insurance company, together with their utensils and stock, and the nearby dwelling house then in the occupation of William Curteis [13]. On 3 October 1778 the policy was renewed by William Curteis alone, and nothing more is heard of John Taylor [14].

In 1782 James Scawen's estates were sold, and the paper mill, together with other properties, was purchased by George Ansell, a local calico printer. On 21 March 1786 George Ansell insured the paper mill and other properties, including the house occupied by William Curteis. A memorandum annexed to the register entry of the policy indicates that all the properties were mortgaged to James Newton, Robert Barker and Charles Bill on 1 May 1788 [15]. Ansell later redeemed the mortgage.

By 1787 William Curteis was in partnership with his sons John and Thomas, under the name Curteis and Sons [16]. On 14 October 1788 John Curteis insured his household goods in his house in Carshalton [17]. On 15 October 1789 William, John and Thomas Curteis jointly insured the paper mill and appurtenances and the utensils and stock therein [18].

In 1789 the engineer John Smeaton, on the instructions of William Curteis, prepared a design for a new low-breast water wheel 15 feet in diameter and 7 feet wide, to replace the existing wheels. [19]. It is not known for certain if this wheel was installed, but the mill was rebuilt the following year. On 29 April 1790, William, John, and Thomas Curteis insured the mill and the adjoining engine house, described as "not finished" in the register record, together with the machinery [20]. In 1791 George Ansell revised the terms of the lease he had granted to William Curteis after he had bought the mill, "in consideration of pulling down the old mill and erecting a new mill and engine house." [12]

It was at about this time that James Edwards noticed "some large paper-mills, belonging to Mr. Ansell, and occupied by Mr. Curtis (sic), who carries on a large trade here. These mills are particularly noted for white paper ..." [21]

At this period paper was also being made at the nearby Lower Mill by Christopher Patch, whose son, also named Christopher, was apprenticed to William Curteis. In 1789 Mr. Collinson, a calico bleacher working at the "cloth mill" adjoining the Lower Mill, experimented with some inferior grade rags supplied by the elder Christopher Patch, by treating them with "dephlogisticated muriatic acid". The processed pulp was then used by Patch to make good quality paper, but he soon discontinued the arrangement because much of the pulp was wasted, and Collinson's charges were too high. William and Thomas Curteis then started to make use of the process, but their experience was not recorded [22].

On 14 October 1791 William, John, and Thomas Curteis renewed the insurance policy on the premises and their contents [23], and again on 21 October 1794 [24].

CURTEIS & SONS
1794

& Sons watermarks [25]. George Ansell died on 8 June 1797 at the age of 659 and by his will proved on 19 June he,bequeathed his mills and other .properties variously to his wife and sons. The paper mill, "now in the tenure or occupation of Messrs.Curtis(sic)" was devised to James and Robert Ansell in equal shares [26].

John Curteis died on 26 July 1800 at the age of 52.,By his will, proved on 25 January 1801, he bequeathed his quarter-share in the partnership to his brother-in-law Jeremiah Curteis in trust to provide an income for his wife Martha and son Thomas [27]. Jeremiah does not seem to have become involved with the running of the business.



*William Curteis and
Curteis [56kb]*

The insurance policy on the premises was renewed on 18 October 1800 [28], but the register entry, obviously copied from the previous ones has the names William and John crossed through in pencils so it would seem that William retired at about the time of John's death. He himself died soon afterwards on 19 June 1803 at the age of 81.

Thomas Curteie carried on the business alone, and insured the stock and utensils only contained in the mill on 5 August 1805 [29] and the buildings with the fixed machinery, and his dwelling house and its contents on 21 October 1817 [30].

The working of the mill had apparently been taken over by one of the owners James Ansell, by 29 May 1809 when he insured the premises and fixed machinery [31], though Thomas furteis continued to live in Carshalton until his death on 4 December 1813 at the age of 56, so he may still have been involved for a few°years.

James Ansell renewed his insurance policy on 24 October 1809 [32] and again on 7 October 1813 [33]! In the case of the two last-mentioned policies the register entries note that the dwelling house was occupied by "Parkinson". This was Matthew Parkinson who had entered into partnership with James Ansell together with John Willson and James's brother Charles Ansell. On 26 June 1813 James Ansell had mortgaged his share of the business: to Matthew Parkinson and on 24 August 1815 he was declared bankrupt [34]. On 23 September 1815 the commissioners in bankrupt assigned James Ansell's assets to his creditors, Christopher Magney, Henry Fellows and John Fuller [35]. On 12 October 1815 Matthew Parkinson insured his share of the mill property [36], and it seems likely that he had acquired the shares of John Willson and Charles Ansell.

In March 1816 it was agreed that Matthew Parkinson would surrender his own and James Ansell's interests in the premises which were to be sold by the assignees, E1500 Of the purchase money being paid to Parkinson, and an indenture was executed accordingly on 4 May 1816 [37].

On 30 April 1817 the creditors of James Ansell held a meeting with the assignees to consider their proposal to sell his half-share for X3000 [38]. They evidently agreed, and by an indenture dated 10 May 1817 Nathaniel Muggerridge, of Queen Street, London, stationer, purchased the half-share held by the assignees for X3000, and also the other moiety for 92000, and thereby became the owner of the whole of the property [39].

Evidently Nathaniel Muggeridge then went into partnership with Charles Ansell; they were given the excise number 496 in July 1817 [40]. On 8 January 1818 Nathaniel Muggeridge insured the paper and rags in the mill premises [41]. The partnership was short-lived, and was dissolved on 25 May 1820 [41]. Muggeridge then carried on the business, alone until 1827, when he went into partnership with his son John, and Thomas Sprague, although the latter seems to have been involved only with the retail stationery side of the business [43].

Nathaniel Muggeridge died probably early in 1831; his will was proved on 20 February 1831. In this he directed that after the expiry date of the partnership agreement, his assets were to be sold for the benefit of his children [43]. The partnership was duly continued, with Nathaniel's place taken by his widow Hose, until it was announced that the partnership was dissolved on 24 June 1834 [44]!

Despite his father's wishes, John Muggeridge carried on with the business, possibly initially with his mother. Brayley in 1850 included in his list of Carshalton mills, "A paper mill, with five vats, the property of the owner Mr. John Muggeridge." [45] In 1853 Frederick Braithwaite noted that the mill had a water wheel of 15 horsepower and also a steam engine of 12 horsepower. He added that. "The water of this place is much polluted, by rag-washing and bleaching, in addition to the strong alkaline solution employed by the manufacturers. The quantity of water taken from the Wandle, as estimated by the two pumps supplying the rag tanks, amounts to 108,000 gallons daily." [46]

John Muggeridge was named in various directories as the occupier up until 1876. He probably retired about this time, and moved to Tunbridge Wells, where he died on 21 March 1878 at the age of 72. He was succeeded by his son, Commander James Stanley Muggeridge. Henry Smitherman was at this time the works manager, a position he had held since 1851 and possibly earlier. He continued to work there until his death on 21 December 1883 at the age of 64, and was followed as manager by his son-in-law Thomas Andrews.



The paper Mill in c 1867.
[103kb]

On 5 November 1886 the mill was partially destroyed by a fire which started in the drying shed [47]. Reconstruction work commenced soon afterwards and "the most modern appliances" were installed, including a new steam engine. A "noticeable feature" was that electric lighting was installed throughout the premises. The rebuilding works were completed in August 1887 [48].

James Stanley Muggeridge was named as the proprietor in Kelly's directory for 1890 but in April 1893 it was reported that the "old established business" had been acquired by Andrew Cornwallis Miller [49]! The following year the output was described as "Hand made writing and account book papers, Banks and Loans," and amounted to six tons per week [40]. At about the same date, Barrett described the premises as "a noted paper mill - noted because here they make the finest handmade foolscap in the Kingdom." [50]

Miller was there for only a few years, and in January 1899 it was reported that the business had been taken over by Edward Prentice and Arthur Monkton, as the C. Ansell Paper Company Limited, "with the object of carrying on the old-established business at Carshalton Tills for the manufacture of 'C. Ansell' and other special watermarked handmade papers." [51]

Soon afterwards Guiseppi wrote that:

"The business now consists of the manufacture of the finest hand-made paper, well known in the trade with the watermark 'C.Ansell', and ledger paper, writing, drawing, and loan papers are made. There are five vats in use on the premises, and the Carshalton mills are now the only ones in the county for hand-made paper." [52]

The mill closed down in 1905, and on 12 April of that year the lease was offered for sale by auction. No sale was then effected, as the highest bid was below the reserve price of X10,000 [53]. In June 1905 the plant and machinery were auctioned, and apparently much of it was sold [54]. The company, however, continued in existence in premises in Upper Thames Street, London, presumably as retail stationers, until it went into voluntary liquidation on 17 July 192q. [55].

In 1908 the premises were taken over by W. & G.Tulloch, cocoa and chocolate makers, who were there until they stopped production during the First World War. They were followed by the British Pencil Company Limited, who were named as the occupiers in a 1920 directory, but who would have seemed to have stopped pencil making after a fire on 8 June 1918, which damaged the buildings facing Mill Lane. They were succeeded in about 1922 by the Carshalton Chemical Company, which carried out various distilling processes,~in rehabilitated buildings [56].

In 1927 the premises were bought by the Metbylating Company, a subsidiary of the Distillers Company Limited, which extended the site and introduced new processes mainly connected with producing materials for car body finishes [56]. During the Second World War the factory was taken over by a department of the Ministry of Supply, and subsequently handed back to the Distillers Company Limited, which in 1967 sold it to British Petroleum Chemicals Limited. They were there until December 1991, after which the site and adjoining areas was developed for housing accommodation.

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