

History of the Bathford Mill

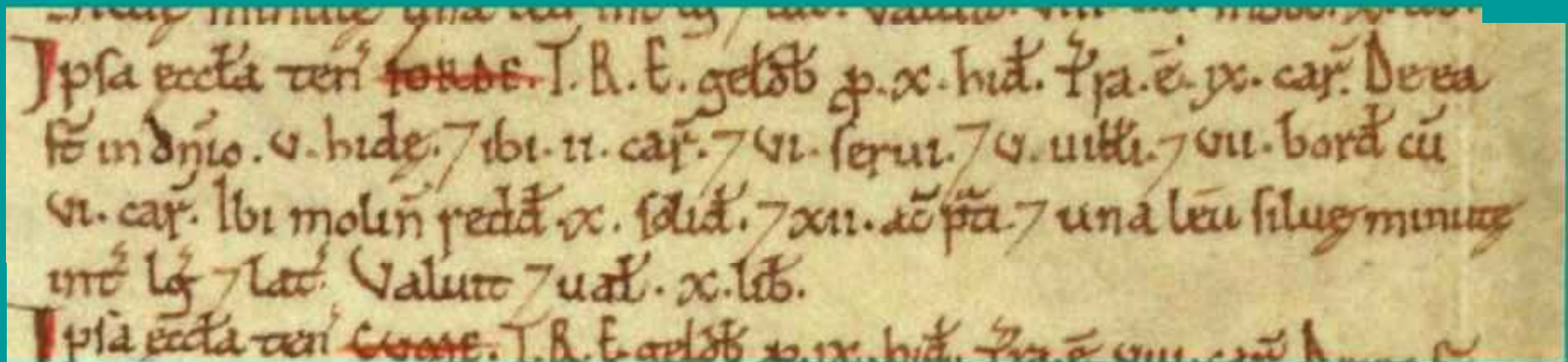
by

Michael Tabb

for the

Bathford Society – 31st October 2005

A mill has been present in Bathford from very early times. *Domesday Book* records a mill 'which pays ten shillings' tax



The church itself holds BATHFORD. TRE it paid geld for 10 hides. There is land for 9 ploughs. Of this 5 hides are in demesne, and there are 2 ploughs and 6 slaves; and 5 villans and 7 bordars with 6 ploughs. There is a mill rendering 10s, and 12 acres of meadow, and scrubland 1 league in both length and breadth. It was and is worth 101.

TRE = tempora regis Eduardis In the time of King Edward the Confessor; by implication, when all in the realm was legally correct and ownership would have been rightfully secured.

Just over a century later we have documentary evidence of a land grant, circa 1200, by Walter de Sikerwika to Richard de Forda, of half an acre in Hagelega, upstream of Hagelegesford. It included permission to construct there a millbay for his mill, and a way twelve feet wide between Ludelande and the little meadow beyond Rokelega, upon payment of one mark and at the annual rent of half a pound of pepper.

Somerset Record Office DD/WHb 244, also in Somerset Record Seventy v51 73, Bath Reference Library.

In 1539 the crown leased a grist and fulling mill to William Gamage for 66 years, and in the Manor survey of 1605 it is still described as a granary and fulling mill, being part of the leasehold property of William Ducke Esq.² In the Survey of the Manor dated 12 March 1606 reference is made to "2 mills Granary and a fulling Mill with two stones under one roof".

Somerset Record Office, DD/SK 10/4, No 4.

In the *Gloucester Journal* of 14 August 1733 a farm at Bathford was advertised for sale, along with a water-grist mill (used in production of animal feed), and tucking stocks (used in the woollen trade).

or of Mr. John Jones at the said House.

**To be Sold together, or in Parcels,
The several ESTATES following;**

The Manour of South-Wraxall in the County of Wilts, about five Miles from Bath, and two from Bradford, consisting of several Farms, lett at 250 l. per Ann. Reversions after one Life about 40 l. per Ann. after two Lives about 40 l. per Ann. after three Lives about 6 l. per Ann. with the Chief Rents belonging to the said Manour.

Two Farms at Whitley in the Parish of Melksham, in the said County of Wilts, with good Stone-built Farm-Houses, Barns, Stables, Outhouses, and other Conveniencies, of the yearly Value of 118 l.

A Farm at Bathford, about 3 Miles from Bath in the County of Somerset, together with a good House, Garden, Orchard, and Fishery on the River Avon, a Water Grist Mill, and Tucking-Stocks: And another Dwelling-house, Dye-house, and other Outhouses, fit for a Clothier, of the yearly Value of 117 l. Enquire of Mr. Morgan Keen at Salisbury, Mr. Lock, Attorney at the Devizes, or of Mr. John Jones at Mounckton-Farleigh.

MARY COLES, the Wife of JOSEPH COLES of

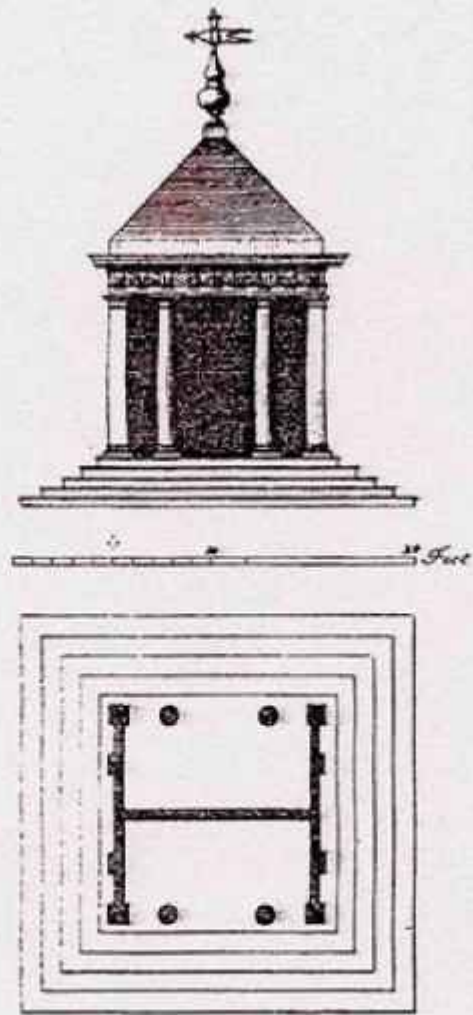
By 1740 the Miller was Arnold Townsend, and it was he who, when clearing the ash bed to the north of the mill, found a mineral spring. Some of the water was sent to Oxford and was declared to possess medicinal properties.

A description of Bath, 1765, John Wood.

Dr. William Oliver

The miller sold the ash bed together with the Farm House to Dr. William Oliver of Bath Oliver biscuit fame. (He was also one of the founding doctors of the Mineral Water Hospital in 1738.)

Dr. Oliver called his new property (referred to by his biographer James Fortt as a vacation residence), after his birthplace at Trevarno in the parish of Sithney near Helston in Cornwall.



The PLAN and ELEVATION of
a Square Pavilion for Bathford Spaw
begun to be Executed A.D. 1746.

J. Wood Arch.

P. Fourdrinier Sculp.

In 1746 Dr. Oliver established a spa pavilion over the spring to a design by John Wood the elder, which was built by John Ford.

There is no trace of the building today.

Origin of Papermaking at Bathford

Exactly when papermaking came to Bathford is uncertain, but watermarks from the mill dated 1810 have been found. By 1812 the mill was known to the Excise Commissioners as mill No. 18, being worked by George Yeeles and John Midhurst.



By 1849 the mill was for sale, as the following notice, which appeared in the *Bath Herald* of 23 August, states

TO UK LET,
*Ami may he end ml on -immediately, on J MM of flour or
8\$ven Years,*
THOSE VALUABLE: AND HIGHLY REPUTED
PREMISES, CALLED
TREVAINO PAPER MILLS,
WITH a comfortable FAMILY RESIDENCE and
ft Garden, &c. situate in the Parish of BATH-
PORD, in the County of Somerset, three miles from Bath
by the London Turnpike Road, to which the Premises
adjoin ; and within *h>xt* hour* of the Metropolis by the
Great Western Railway (from London to Exeter), which
passes near thereto, the Box Station being only one mile
and a half from the Mill, so desirable for the London And
other markets.
The Premises and Machinery, which have cost the Pro-
prietor a very considerable sum of money, are in excellent
condition, and replete with every required advantage ;
worked by a powerful stream of water, and possessing a
constant spring of perfectly pellucid water, that has esta-
blished its long reputation for making the finest writing
papers in the kingdom.
The Mill is also provided with a very superior Steam
Apparatus, lately erected by Messrs. Stothert and Co., of
Bath, on the most approved principle, for the purpose of
boiling rags, warming and drying in the lofts and work
rooms, heating the vats, sizing vessels, and felt-washing
vessel : the whole *%o* arranged as to produce the utmost
economy, cleanliness, and convenience in its several op-
erations.
An order to view, and further particulars, may be ob-
tained at the Offices of If, J. MANT, Esq., Solicitor,
Wood Street, Bath, (#3

Bathford Mill - Calotype 1853 by Rev Francis Lockey © Bath Library



In the *Bath and District Directories* of 1858/9 and 1860/1 Thomas Dewdney is listed as working the mill.

His family name was one of the best known in paper making in the West Country.

His father, John, who operated the Hele Mill at Bradninch in Devon was awarded a prize medal at the Great Exhibition of 1851 for the excellence of his writing paper.

Inscribed on the reverse: 'Bathford Mill. July 9th 1858' - artist unknown



The period following Dewdney's tenure appears to have been rather a troubled one for the Mill, with several operators over a few years.

Paper Mills Directory 1864 - 'not in work' and Mr.T.L.Henley making 'browns'.

Bathford Directory 1868/9 lists the mill as being run by John Hill

Bathford Directory 1870/1 lists the mill as being run by William Southwood Esq.

In 1872 Kelly's Post Office Directory of Stationers, Printers, Booksellers, Publishers and Papermakers listed Trevarno mill as being run by 'Southwood and Unger', manufacturing Printings and Cartridges.

The Era of Albert Reed

In July 1873 Albert Reed took over Trevarno Paper Mill, aged 27, with backing from Thomas Owen (32) and Samuel Evans (57), owners of "Evans and Owen", drapers of Bath. Both men were ardent Wesleyan Methodists as were the Reed family. Albert's brother, William (23), who had worked as a clerk accountant at the Evans and Owen store, soon joined Albert full time, and in 1874 younger brother Ernest, then aged 20, also joined them.

From 1 November 1874 the business traded as Reed Brothers and by the end of 1875 the business was operating profitably, the Reeds succeeding where so many others had failed

Soon considerable extensions were required. On 10th February 1876 a new company was formed called the Bath Paper Mills Company. It bought the Reed Brothers business for £8,312 and from this the Reeds were able to repay £6,186 to Evans and Owen. The new company had a nominal capital of £20,000. The major shareholders were Samuel Evans and Thomas Owen, the other leading shareholders being Owen Owen, Albert E. Reed, William Reed and their father, Edward Reed. Thomas Owen was made chairman and Albert Reed the manager.

Monthly Journal.

We learn that the Trevamo Mills, Bathford, near Bath, have been disposed of by Messrs. Reed Brothers to ^{<f} The Bath Paper Mills Com* pany (Limited)/* the directors of which company purpose carrying out considerable extensions to meet the growing demand for the paper manufactured at these mills* The business will, in future, be carried on under the management of Mr, A- E. Reed*

The Bath Herald of 25 October 1882

The scene at Bathford is one of grandeur, the trees at the sides of the river being bedecked with all shades and colours of paper washed away from the paper mills above. At the corner of the Box Brook is a large collection of barrels and timber and even a piece of a cart, the most noticeable being however the reams of paper which the stream has carried down. The water at the paper mills has done a great amount of damage, it having reached the rooms in which a large quantity of paper is stored.

MAY 23, 1914.

THE PAPER TRADE REVIEW.

Explosion of Another Esparto Boiler.

FIVE MEN INJURED.

8 **BETWEEN** half-past eight and nine o'clock on the morning of Friday last, a serious explosion occurred at Jtalford, resulting in injuries to five men—two being of a fatal character—and the destruction of property. The injury was caused by the bursting of a grass boiler at the mills of the Bath Paper Mills Company (Limited), the boiler containing a large quantity of pulp, which had been boiling from the previous evening.

Esparto Grass

With the tremendous increase in demand for papers over time, the shortage of rags became chronic late in the 18th century, papermakers were forced to turn to other sources of vegetable fiber.

Esparto (grass), the first really successful substitute for linen and cotton fibers, was introduced in England in 1850, and put into commercial production early in the 1860s.

Esparto grass is native to Southern Spain and North Africa.

JUNE 20, 1884.

THE PAPER TRADE REVIEW.

THE BATHFORD EXPLOSION.

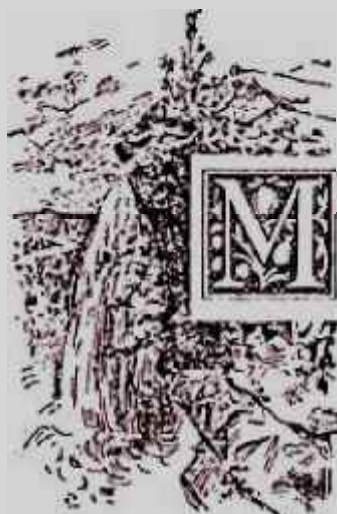
INQUEST AND VERDICT.

AT the inquest held on the bodies of Edward Garner and Thomas Hobbs, who died from injuries received by the recent explosion of an esparto boiler, at the Trcvarno Mill, Balhford, reported in our issue of the 23rd ult_M W. II. Johnston, II. M. Factory Inspector for Ihc District, and J. Rickctts, representative of the mill owners (the Bath Paper Mills Company), were present.

Contemporary Pictures,

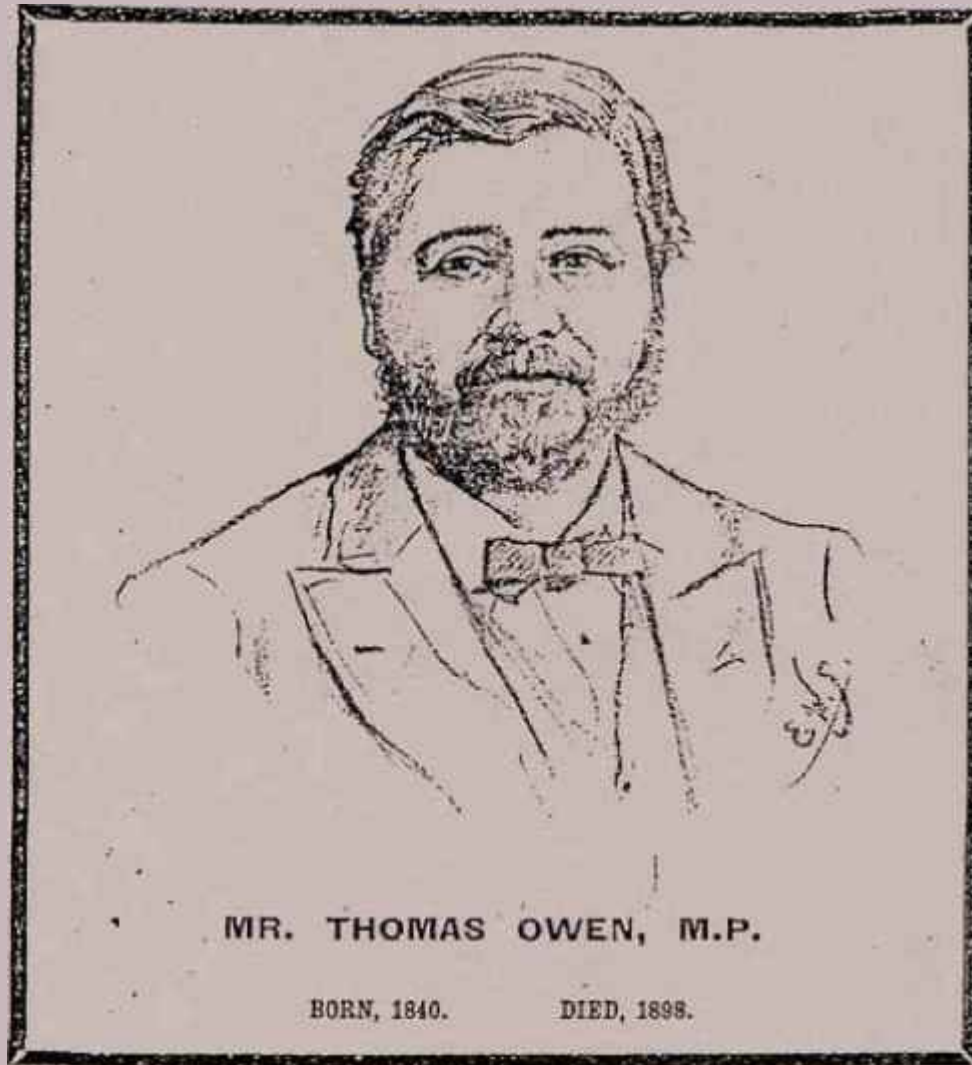
No. XLIV.

MR. THOMAS OWEN, M.P.



MR. THOMAS OWEN, of Westbury-on-Tyrm, near Bristol, the present Radical member for the Launceston division of Cornwall, is the son of a yeoman farmer, and for two hundred years his ancestors have lived at Bwlch and Cymyrhaidr, near Machynlleth. He was born in 1840. His business history is the record of a series of successes. After becoming head of the largest drapery establishment in the West of

possibly that it was more adapted to his tastes, MR. OWEN turned the drapery establishment into a limited company. His first connection with paper mills was in 1872, and he and his former partner, Mr. Evans, purchased the Ely Paper Works in 1877, which were then an unsuccessful concern in the hands of liquidators. With energy and good fortune, the undertaking, after a large outlay of further capital, was a complete success. When Mr. Evans died in 1885, the two partners, in addition to their initial venture, were the proprietors of the Soyland Works at Ripponden, Yorks, rented



The Tabb Family at Bathford

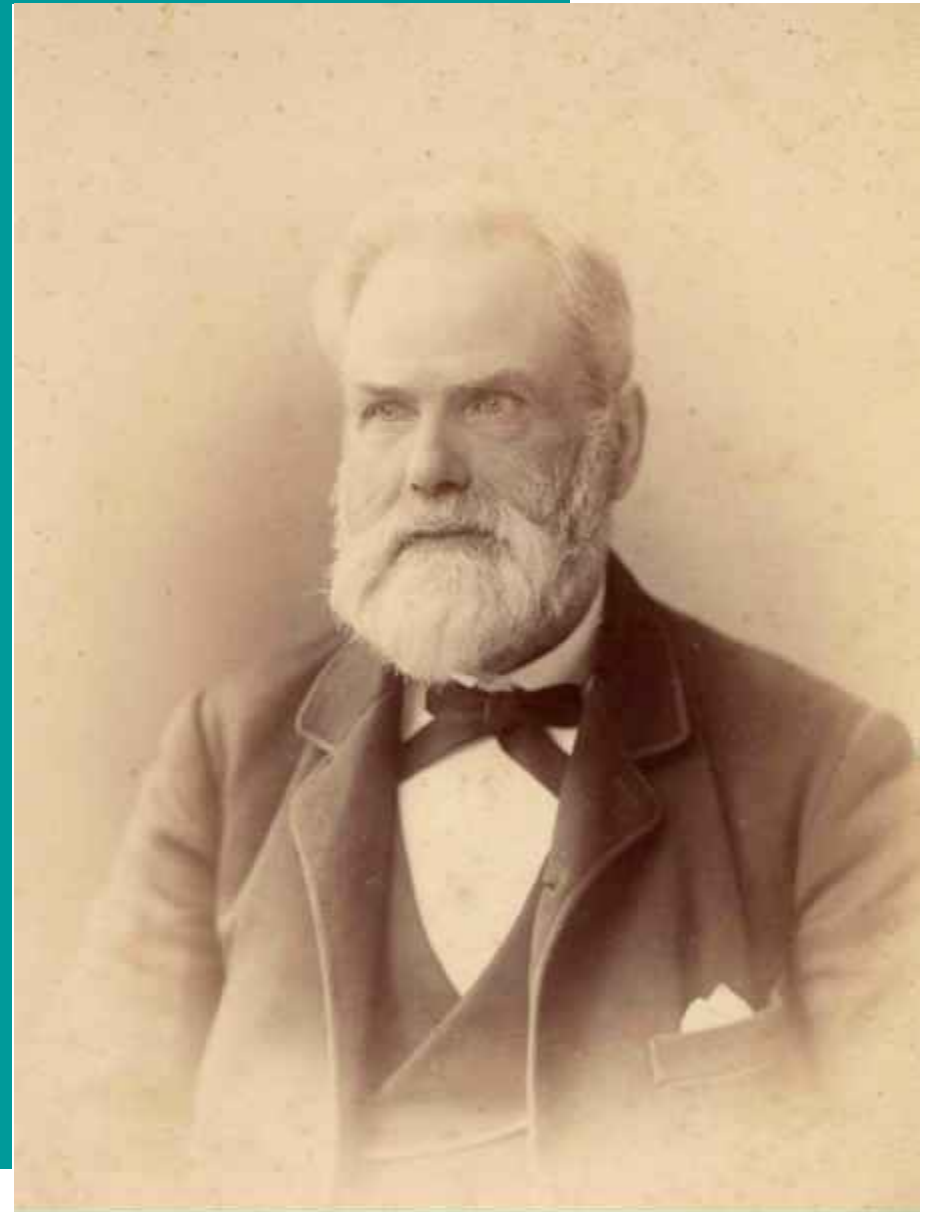
Thomas Bray Tabb

Born in Bodmin 1825.

Apprenticed there to a printer and stationer.

After a time in London he started his own printing and stationary business in Stall Street, Bath in 1853.

About 1890 he was called by Thomas Owen to manage the Bathford Mill. He had sold his business to a Mr. Blackett.



In 1896 Thos Bray Tabb was appointed managing director of the Ryburndale Mill in Yorkshire also – a success as reported here:-

12



JANUARY 28, 1893.

WORLD'S PAPER TRADE REVIEW,
Office: 53, Shoe Lane, E.C.

TRADE NOTES.

HYBtmsnALB PAFiit MILL CO.* LTD.—
The employees of this company were invited to a soiree on Saturday evening, the 22nd inst. in one of the Ripponden school-rooms, and in response, about 100 sat down to a substantial meat tea presided over by Mr. Thomas B. Tabb, the managing director of the company. After full justice had been done to the ample repast provided, Mr. A. B. Fearce, foreman of the mill, LU proposing the toast to the "Success and Prosperity of the Firm," and in returning thanks for their liberality, congratulated them on the position they had achieved in the trade and the many internal improvements which had been effected since the present firm took over the works some two years ago. Mr.

At J. Smt(h, one of the oldest-hands present, seconded the motion, and this was supported by Mr. W. H. Hailcy, the accountant. Mr. Thus. B. Tabb, in acknowledging the toast, thanked the employees for their co-operation in helping to bring about so desirable a result, and pointed out that every effort must be made both by the management and employees of a works if they are to maintain their position in these times of keen foreign and home competition. Mr. J. S. Tabb, manager, in a few terse remarks, expressed (he pleasure it gave him in meeting the company present at their first social gathering, and hoped it would be the first of a series of successful meetings. After a well-filled programme of dances, interspersed with songs, the company broke up at 11 o'clock with unanimous opinions that the whole affair had been an unqualified success.

Foreign Strawboards, &c.

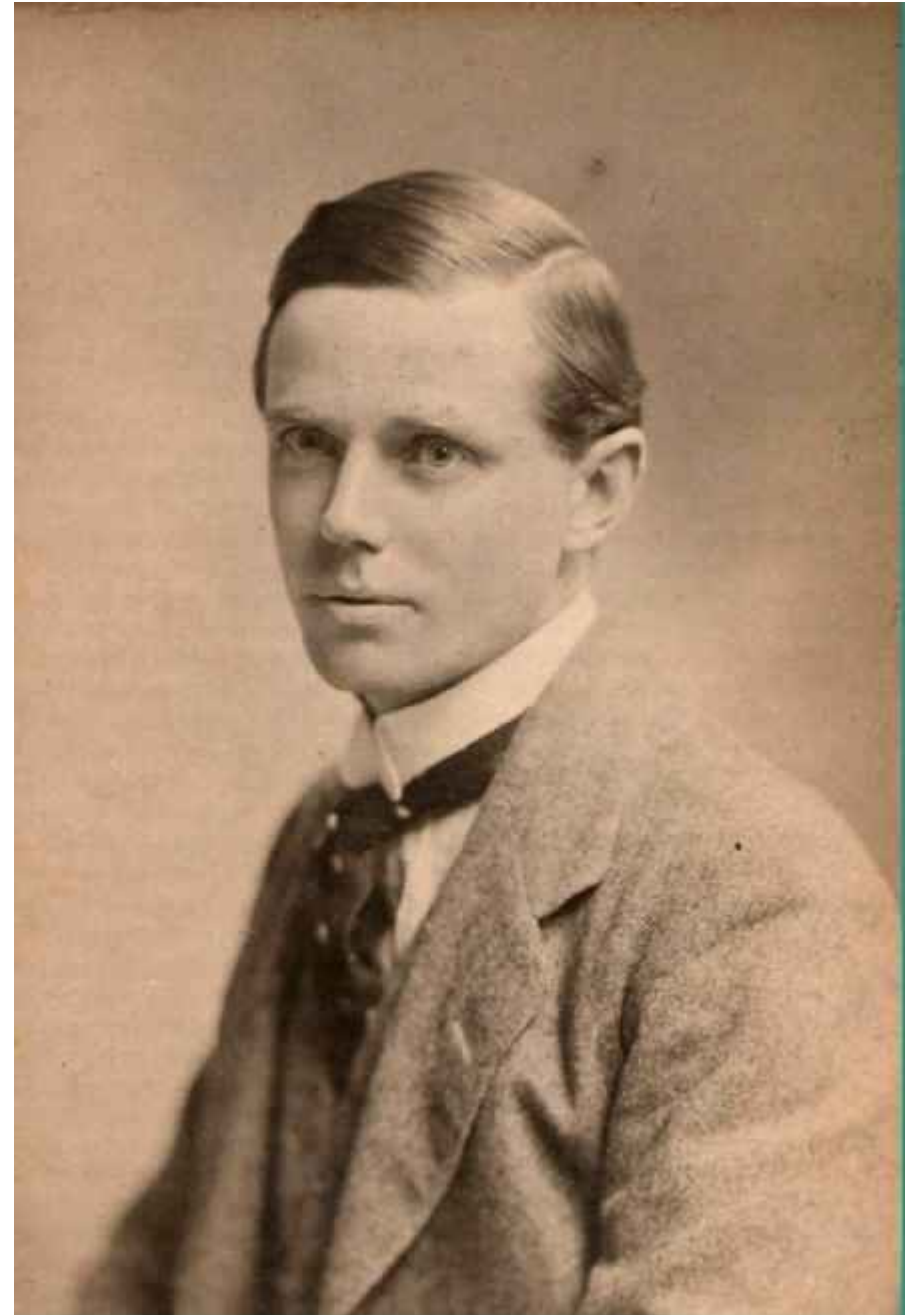
The following were the imports of strawboards, etc., at the ports mentioned, for the week ended Tuesday last:—

Also, his son Henry S. Tabb is mentioned as manager.

**Henry Samuel Tabb
1876 – 1951**

**Managed Ryburndale
Mill 1896 – 1911**

**Rebuilt Bathford Mill
1912 – 1913**



In 1910 the Bathford mill was devastated by a major fire, as a result of which the Bath Paper Mills Company went into liquidation. At this time Henry Samuel Tabb was still managing the mill at Ryburndale. When told of the fire he is reported to have said "Thank God for that now we can build a mill the way it ought to be."

tion will be on Thursday week, March 23rd, and will be a graceful diving handicap.

THE BATHFORD PAPER MILLS.—On Tuesday afternoon at the City Auction Mart, Messrs. Powell and Powell offered the above important freehold property for sale by auction. It comprises about 21 acres of land, the site of the Trevarno Paper Mills, foreman's residence, cottages and various buildings, also the valuable machinery, about 40 to 50 tons of printing paper, horses, 3 carts, and the goodwill of the trade connection of the Company. The bidding commenced at a low figure, but eventually reached £2,200 at which price the property was withdrawn, the auctioneer stating it may be treated for by private contract.

Koene's 11/3/11

BATH ELECTRIC TRAMWAYS. — Mr. W. E. Hardy supplies the following official figures regarding

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Chronicle 173/10

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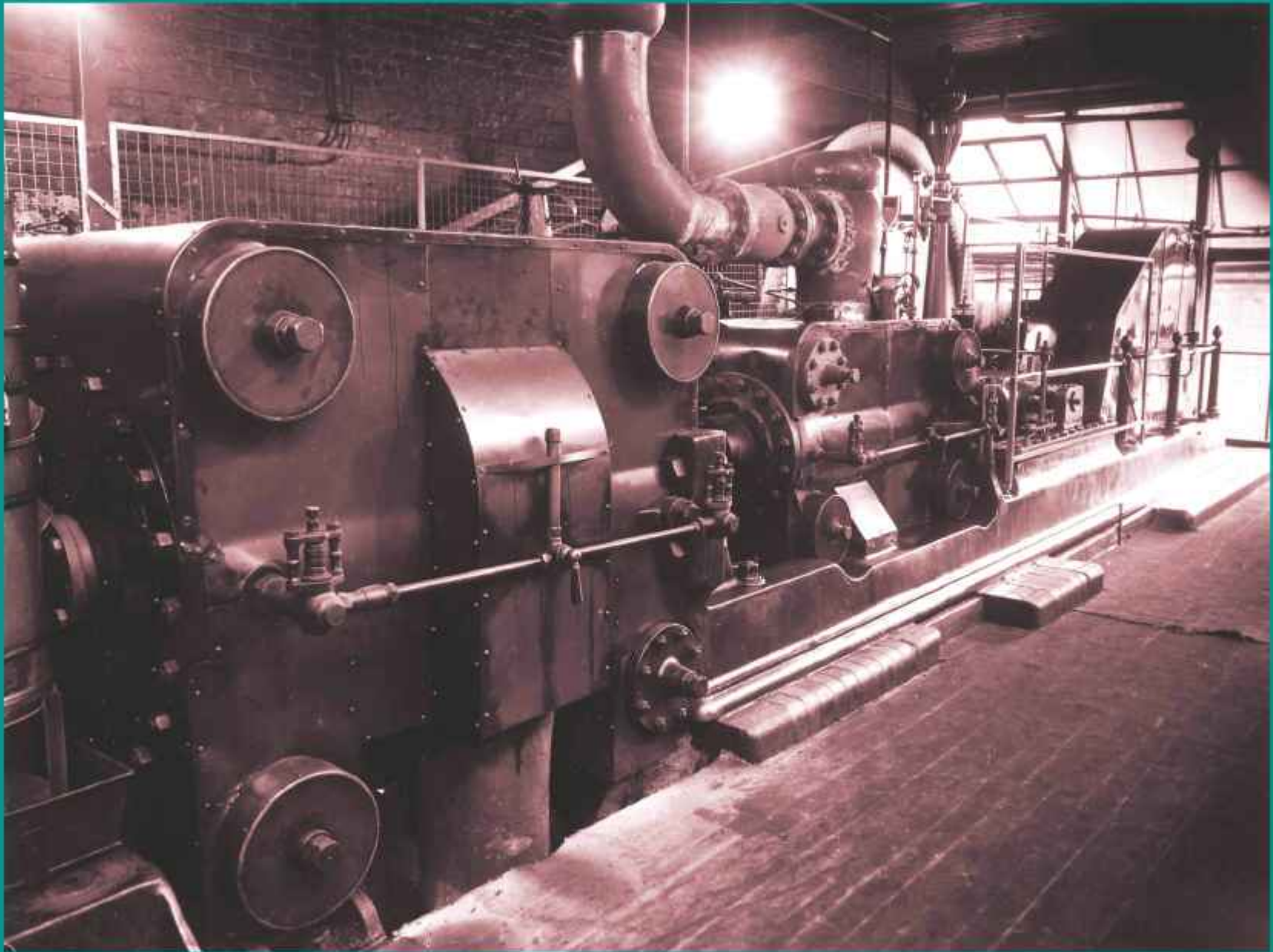
The site of the old Bath Paper Mills, and the adjoining property, at Bathford, I understand, has been purchased by Mr. Henry S. Tabb, whose father, the late Mr. T. B. Tabb, was managing director of the old Company from 1884 to 1896. Mr. H. S. Tabb has had charge of a successful mill in the North of England for a number of years past.

* * * * *

A Company has been registered, in the name of the Bathford Paper Mills Company, Limited, of which Mr. Tabb is managing director. Messrs. Hayward and Wooster's tender for the erection of the new mill buildings has been accepted, and the works will be equipped throughout with the most modern machinery. It is expected that manufacturing operations will be commenced early next year.



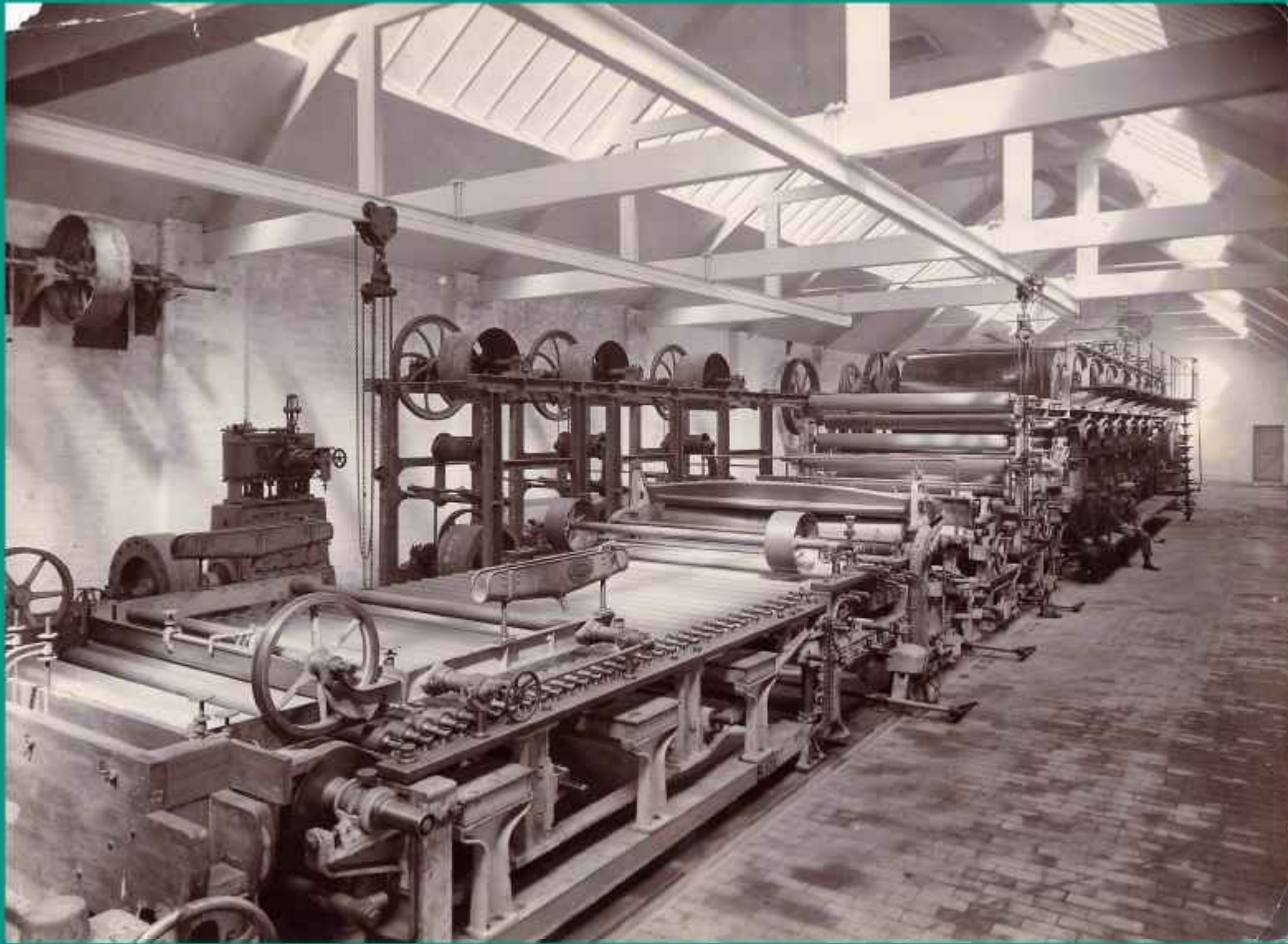
Bathford Mill - a building site in 1913



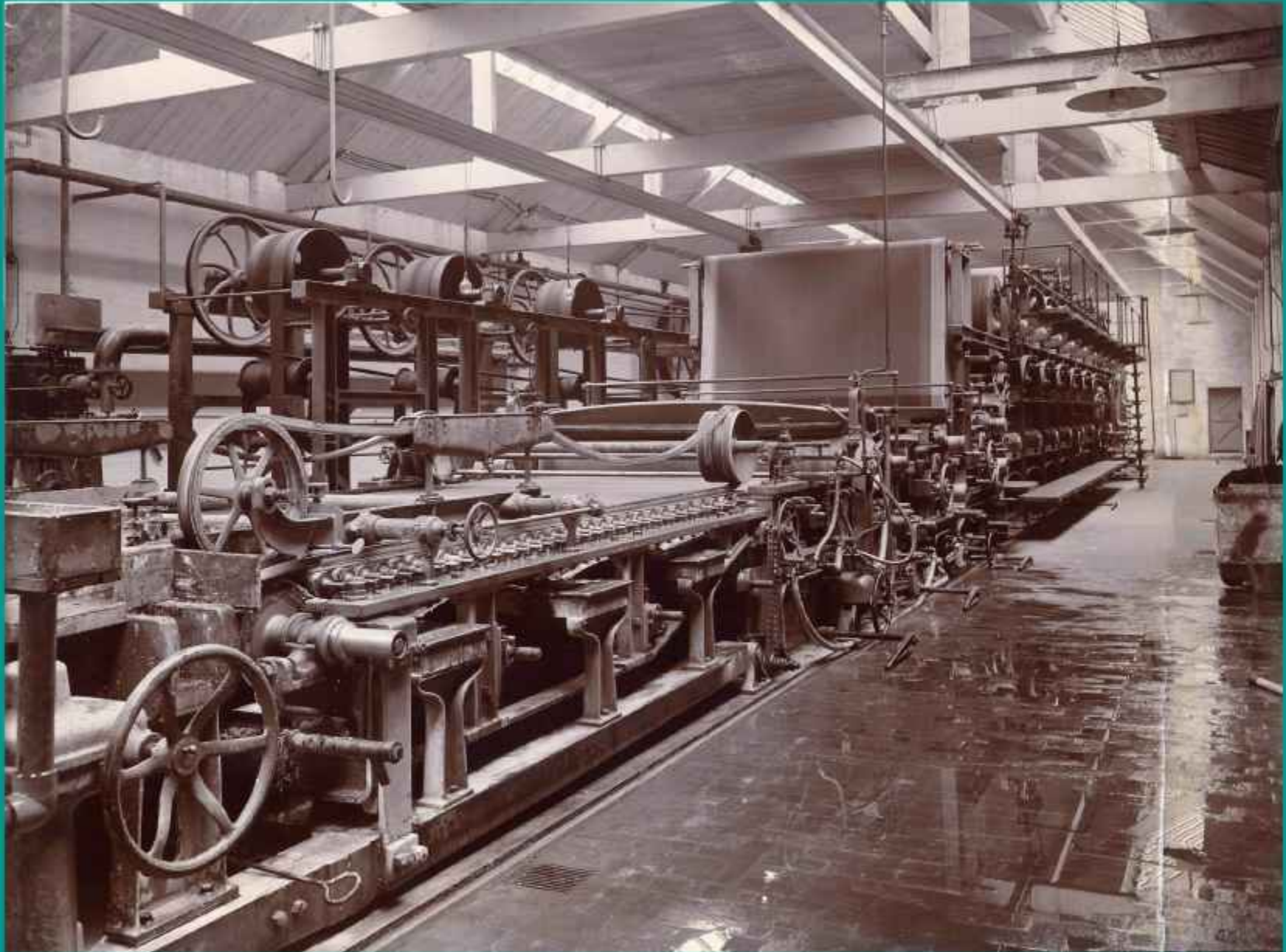
Wood Bros of Sowerby Bridge supplied a 400 hp Steam Engine



Five 'hollander' beaters were driven by the steam engine



The paper machine from the wet end before belts and 'clothing' were fitted. H. S. Tabb seated on platform.



The driving belts, wire and felts fitted – ready for papermaking

Several early ledgers are preserved.

This is part of Cash Book No. 1, showing that Henry Tabb, Joseph Asquith and A Breddy were investing in the business.

Bathford Paper Mills Co

Ltd - Cash Book

1 Bankers:-

The Capital and Counties Bank, Limited

				Paid		A	
1912							
May	5	To Henry S. Tabb chq	£ 1	✓	150 0 0	150 0 0	✓
	16	" " " "	1	✓	1541 12 6	1541 12 6	✓
July	1	" Joseph Asquith "	8	✓	770 0 0		
		" " " "	8	✓	20 0 0		
		" " " "	8	✓	20 7 9		
		" " " "	8	✓	189 12 3	1000 0 0	
	6	" Henry S. Tabb "	1	✓	628 17 0	628 17 0	✓
	20	" A. Breddy "	29	✓	10 0 0	10 0 0	✓
Aug	22	" Henry S. Tabb "	1	✗	755 12 0	755 12 0	✓

1912			
June	3	By Hayward & Co	
		" Lilecock & Co	
		" Lancashire & Co	
	10	" John Booth & Co	
	8	" W. H. Lewis	
May	14	" Cheque Book	
July	8	" Hayward & Co	
		" Lilecock & Co	
	19	" W. H. Lewis	
Aug	1	" J. Carter & Co	
		" Lancashire & Co	
	10	" W. H. Lewis	

How that money was spent:

Ld - Cash Book 1

		Bank, Limited.	Bath.		Discounts			Withdrawn					
1917			Days	Rate									
June	3	By Hayward & Wooster 1 st	3	13	•	✓	1000	0	0	✓			
"	"	" Silcock & Reay	2	11	•	✓	25	0	0	✓			
"	"	" Lancashire & Yorkshire Ry.	5	19	•	✓	8	14	0	✓	1033	14	0
"	10	" John Booth Sons	7	19	•	✓	44	7	8	✓	44	7	8
"	8	" W. H. Lewis	6	16	•	✓	12	5	9	✓	12	5	9
May	14	" Cheque Book	✓	190	•	✓	1	0	0	✓	1	0	0
July	8	" Hayward & Wooster 2 nd	11	13	•	✓	1000	0	0	✓	1000	0	0
"	"	" Silcock & Reay	12	11	•	✓	25	0	0	✓	25	0	0
"	19	" W. H. Lewis	15	16	•	✓	21	0	0	✓	21	0	0
Aug	1	" J. Cartwright & Co. L ^{td}	16	20	•	✓	40	13	6	✓			
"	"	" Lancashire & Yorkshire Ry.	17	19	•	✓	6	0	3	✓	46	13	9
"	10	" W. H. Lewis	18	16	•	✓	10	10	0	✓			
"	"	" Cash for wages	✓	35	•	✓	50	0	0	✓	60	10	0
"	22	" Hayward & Wooster 3 rd	19	13	•	✓	1000	0	0	✓			
"	"	" Silcock & Reay	20	11	•	✓	25	0	0	✓	1025	0	0
"	24	" F. Lawington	21	23	•	✓	3	10	0	✓	3	10	0

In 1913 the mill started to make paper again. Soon after, there was a strike by China Clay workers in Cornwall. According to the agent in Stoke on Trent, railway wagons were smuggled past the pickets late at night to keep the mill running.

The problem was solved by the outbreak of war.

- Thin opaque papers for bibles and dictionaries contain a large proportion of china clay.**

Trouble with Slaughterford Paper Mill – July 1914

July 13th 14

Messrs. W. Dowding Sons
Slaughterford
Dear Sirs

You will remember that some time ago we had to complain to you of the dyeing of the Box brook: we regret having to do so again: the brook has been dyed a dull red all the weekend and shows no signs of clearing yet. - Of course this is simply disastrous to our making white papers. - It is bad enough at any time: but when the stream is so low it takes days to clear itself.

We trust you will go into the question carefully and take such steps as will absolutely prevent the escape of dyes into the brook again.

Yours faithfully

W. S. Labb

July 12th.

9.

NOTICE.

MILL CLOSING.

These Works will be closed on Thursday evening July 17th. until the usual time on Monday morning July 21st.

Motor-char-a-bancs will leave the Crown Inn, Bathford, at 8.0 a.m. on Friday morning July 18th., for Weston-super-Mare, thence to Burnham, returning to Bath via Cheddar.

Everyone is requested to be at the Crown Inn not later than 7.45 a.m.

It has been found impossible to arrange for a meal altogether : in lieu of this each employee will be given 3s/0d.

As already arranged, tickets for friends will be charged at 9s/0s each : and children at 4/6 (children under 12 years).

Each person will be provided with a ticket bearing Car number, seat number, and name.

PEACE CELEBRATION DAY ~~WEDNESDAY~~

As this day falls on Saturday July 19th. it has been decided to mark the occasion by announcing that full wages will be paid to all employees for the time during which the Mill is closed.

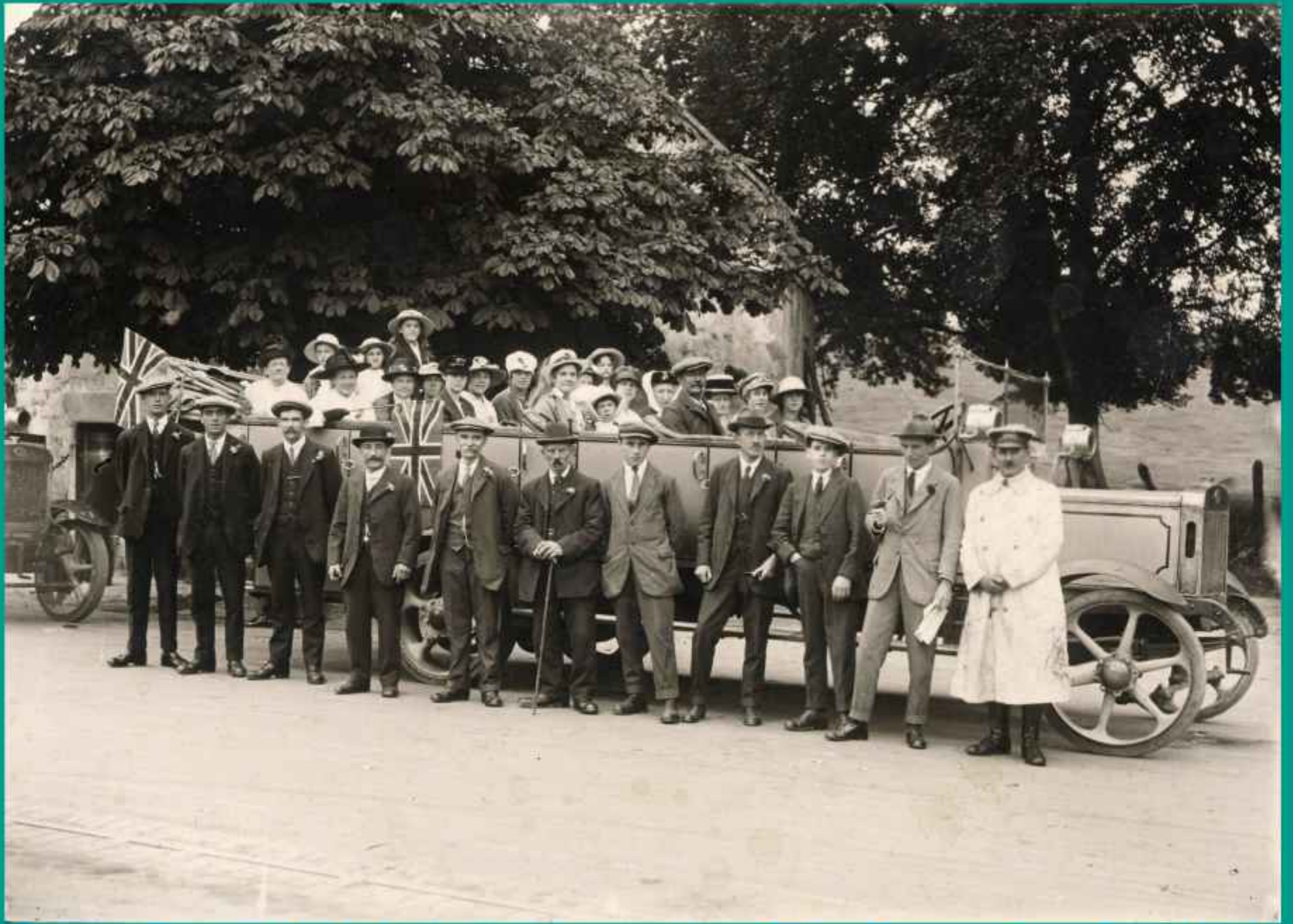
The Bathford Paper Mills Co. Ltd.,

Managing Director.

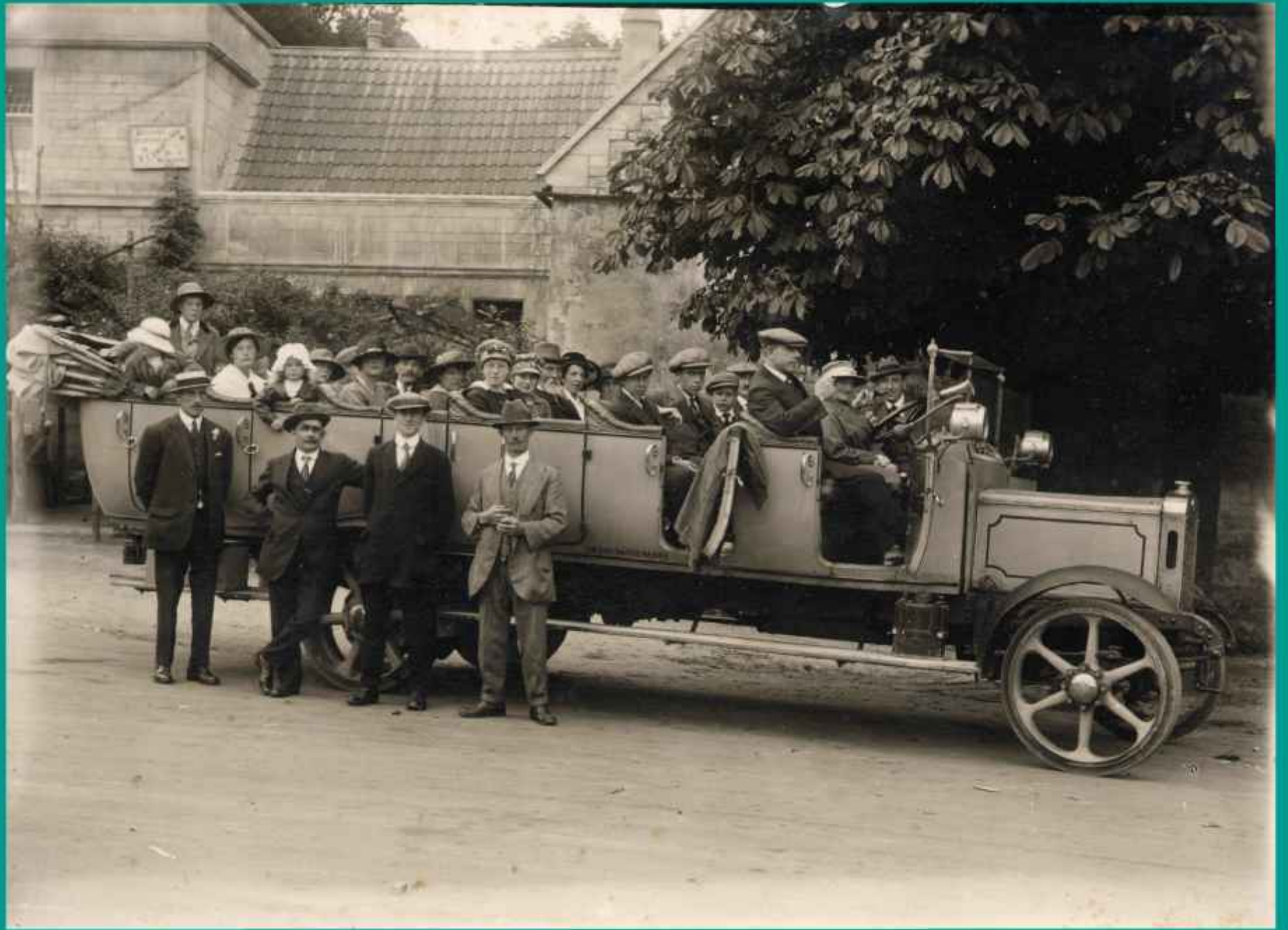
To mark Peace
Celebration
Day on the
19th July, 1919

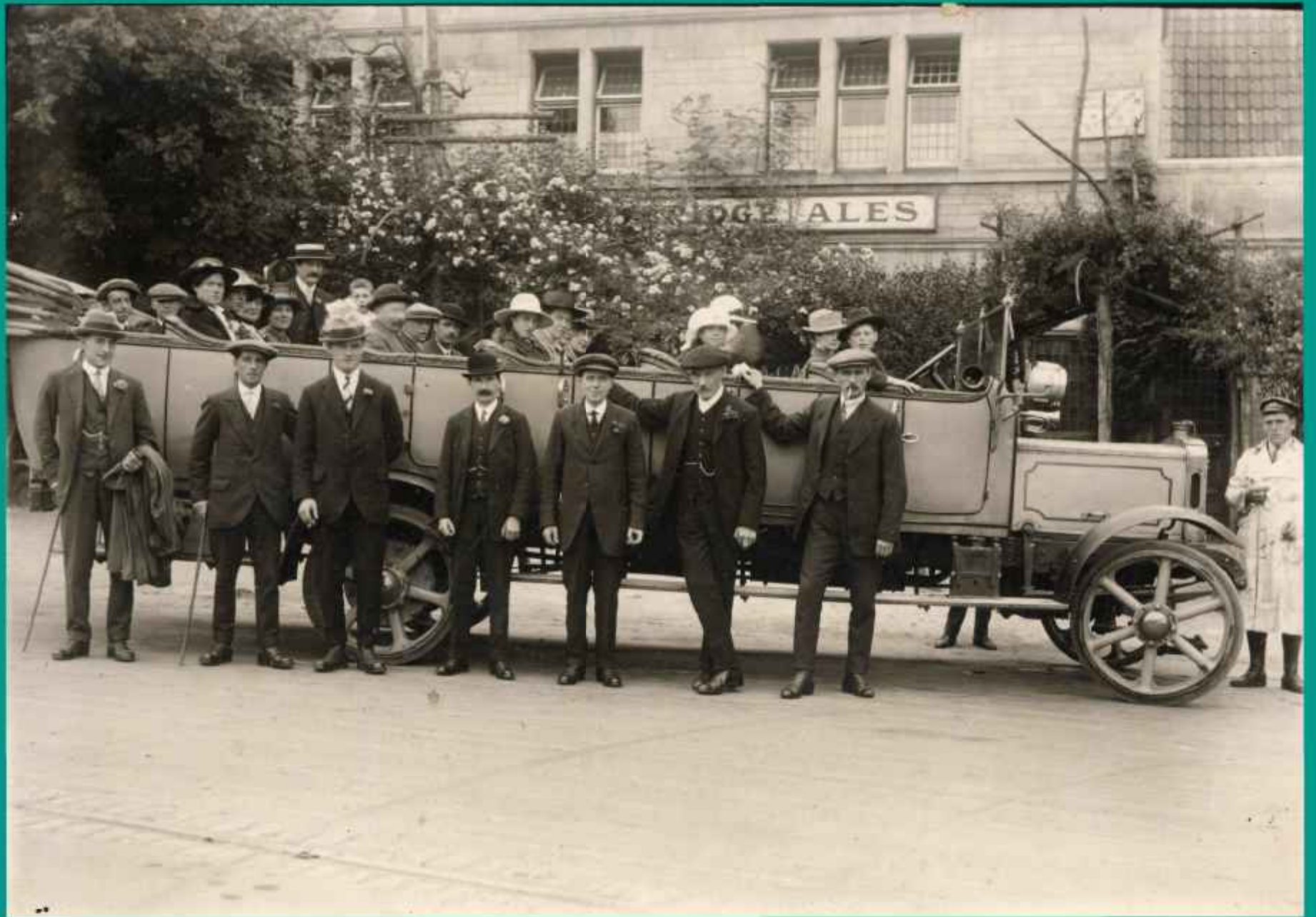
Mill closed
from July 17th
pm to restart
on Monday
21st.

A char-a-banc
trip to Weston-
super-Mare,
Burnham and
Cheddar was
made on
Friday 18th



Peace Day, 19th July 1919 outside "The Crown" at Bathford







No.	NAME.
<i>Machine</i>	
1	Gray Joseph
2	Gray Jim
3	Piles R.
4	Bolegate J.J.
5	Newman J.
6	Bolton A.
<i>Beaters</i>	
7	Yates J.H.
8	Gowan G.
9	Hodder C.
10	Grant A.
11	Baldwin J.
12	Baldwin W.
<i>Brokers</i>	
13	Harding Mark
14	Davies G.
15	Baldwin C.

16	Symes J
17	Berbridge R.
<i>Firemen</i>	
18	Keate Sam
19	Piles J
<i>Mechanics</i>	
20	Hopkinson C.
21	Weston Fe
22	Allen W.
23	Allen P.
<i>Cutter</i>	
24	Harrison C.
25	Harrison H.
26	Bolegate J. Jun
27	Symes J.
<i>Labourers</i>	
28	Philpott J.
29	Fielder C.
30	Tye A.
31	Crew B.
32	Gray J.

No.	NAME.
<i>Salle</i>	
	Whitley G.
	Harrison M.
	Turner J.
	Symes J.
	Hunt W.
<i>Fireman</i>	
	Allen J.
<i>Office</i>	
	Holt J.C.
<i>Labourers</i>	
1	Coombes A.
2	Baldwin J.
3	Flower Mrs
4	Cockle Mary
5	Coombes W.
7	Coombes Mrs
8	Piles K.
9	Milton Ivy.
10	Robert H.J.
11	Philpott May

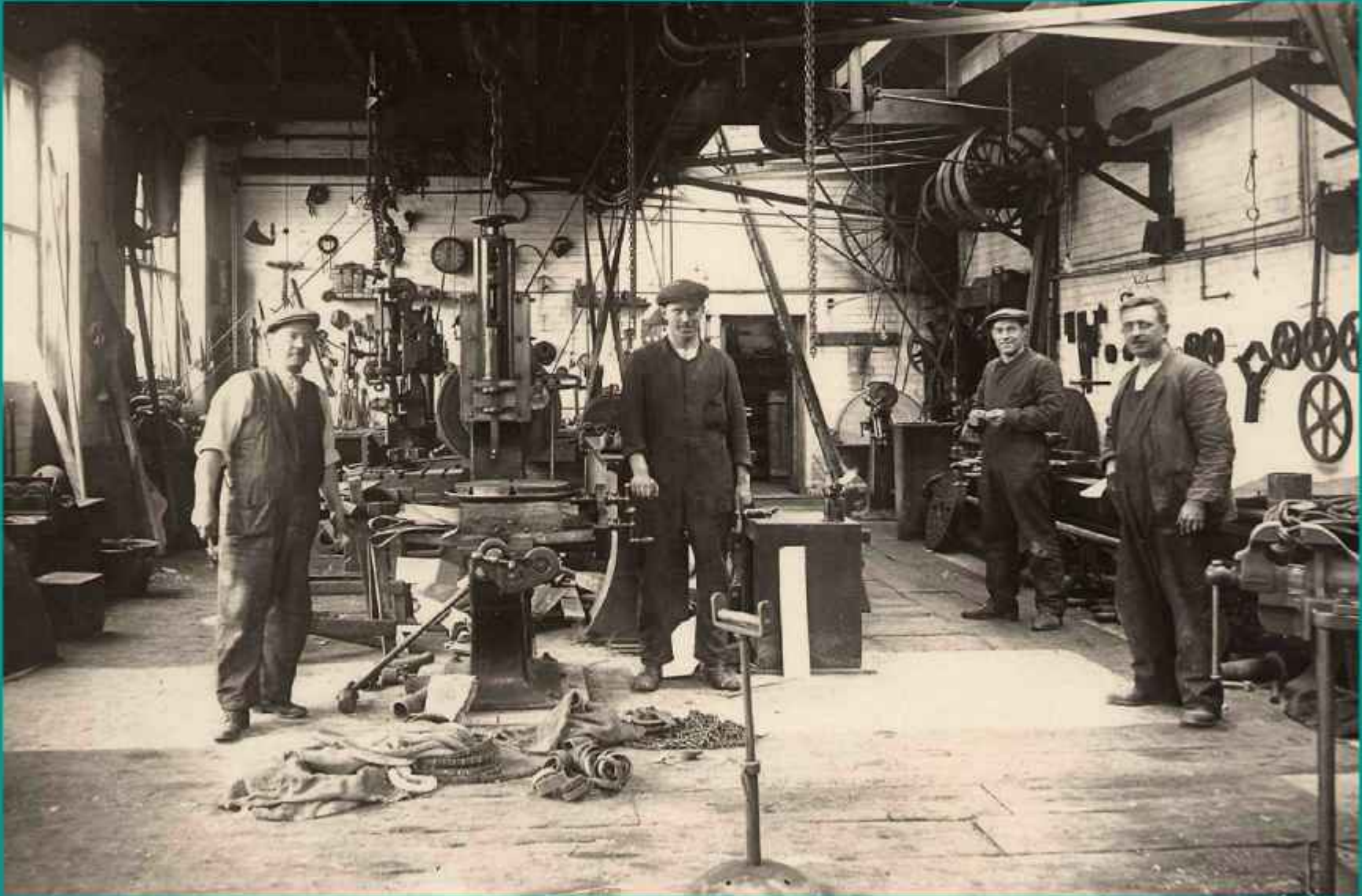
12	Thresher G.
13	Freegard Th.
14	Smart Doris
15	Gerrish Mrs
16	Allen V.
17	Hobbs Elsie
18	Hobbs Gwen
19	Mrs Philpott
20	Mrs Hobbs
21	Mrs Canning
<i>Wages Book</i>	
	Mrs Colegate
	Mrs Harding
	Mrs Inghwell
	Mrs Wagstaff.
	Mrs Remery.

Wages book
week
ending
Thursday
July 17th
1919



Another outing to Cheddar

View of the fitting shop 1930s – some of the machinery survived into the 21st century





Sentinel Steam Waggon

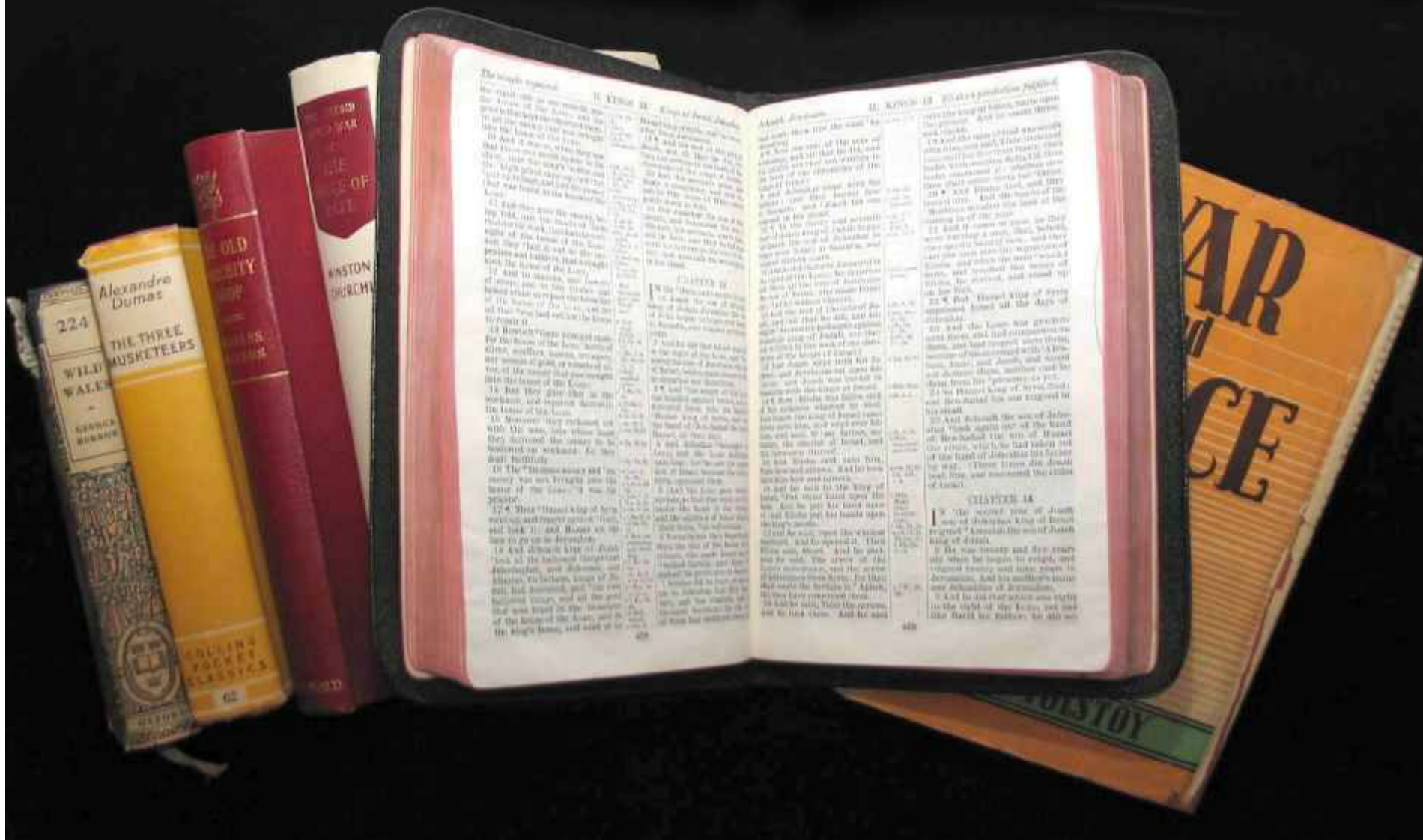
In the *Directory of Paper Making* 1922, Bathford was reported to be manufacturing 'white and tinted printings, opaque, and bulky, book papers, and E. S. writing and banks' on its 84" fourdrinier machine.

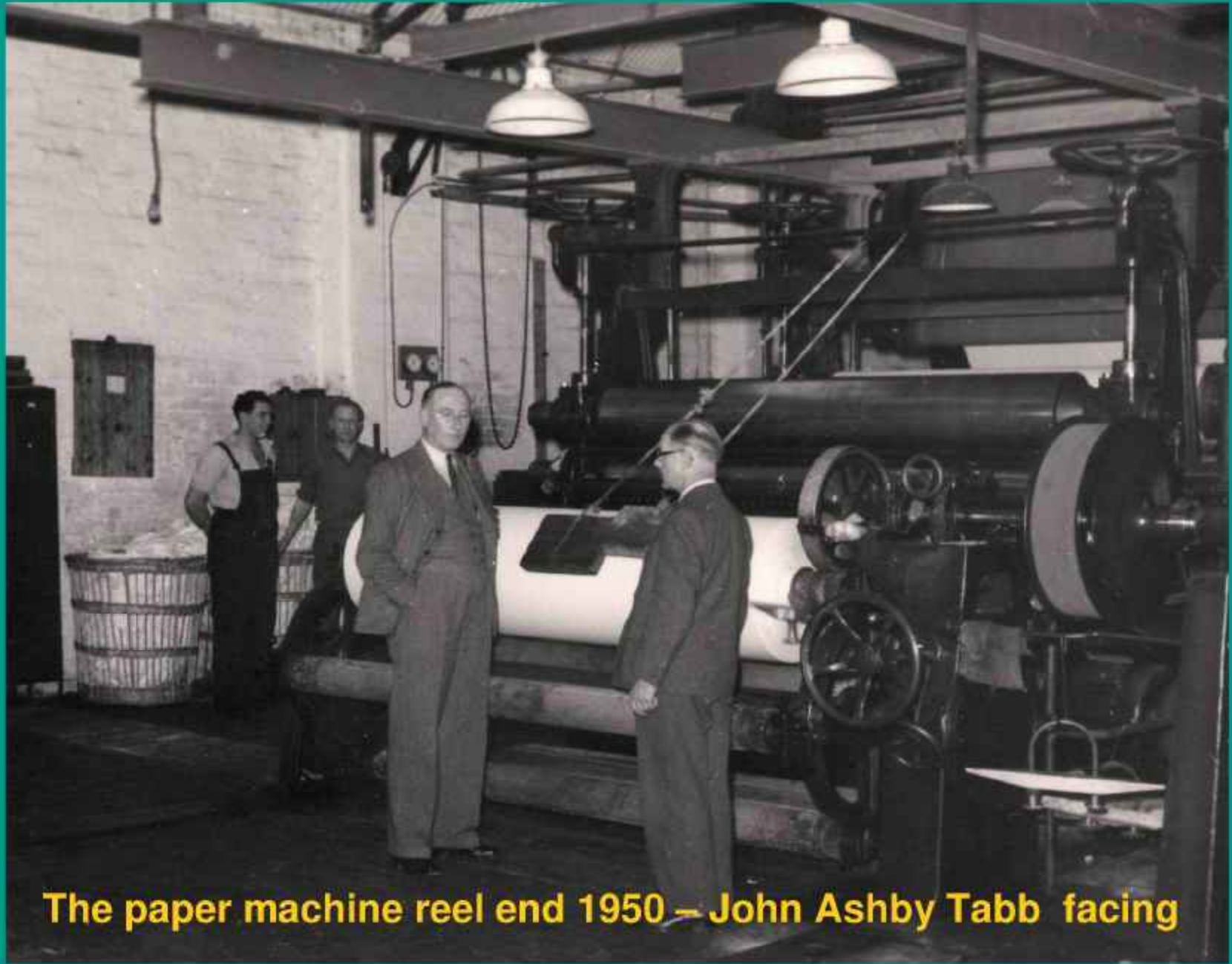
The same grades were still being produced in 1948, according to the *Directory of Paper Making* for that year.

However, the majority of the tonnage over these years and until the Portals era commencing in 1973 was in "thin opaque printings"

Some of the books printed on Bathford Paper

in the 1930s to 1960s





The paper machine reel end 1950 – John Ashby Tabb facing

**The mill
has been
flooded
several
times:-**



**Three feet deep at
Christmas 1960 this
one in Summer 1967
and lesser ones since.**

BATHFORD & RYBURNDALE HOLDINGS

The close links between Bathford and Ryburndale Paper Mills alluded to earlier was formalised with the establishment in 1960 of Bathford & Ryburndale Holdings.



Both mills continued with the production of lightweight papers until 1970 when they were purchased first by Central and Sherwood Industrial Trust, and soon after by Portals Limited, banknote papermakers to the Bank of England since 1724.

In 1973 all lightweight papermaking was moved to Ryburndale, and the wet end of the Bathford machine was converted to produce cylinder mould security papers.

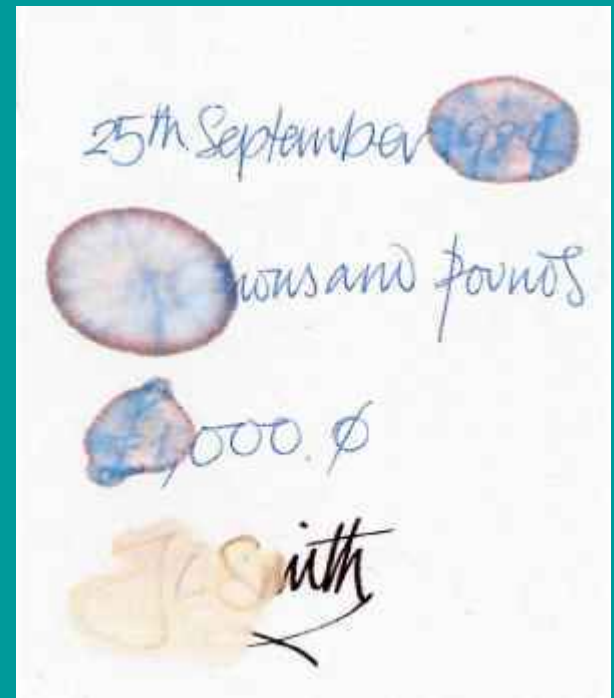
Portals Bathford – makers of Security Printing Papers

The cylinder mould is covered in bronze wire cloth, embossed with the pattern of the watermark.



Watermark of Henri Portal

Normally invisible security dyes defeat attempts to alter print or handwriting on documents



In 1995, Portals was acquired by De La Rue and production of security papers continues.

Portals Bathford is the only paper mill in the world specialising in high security paper cylinder mould paper other than banknotes.

Each year the Mill produces paper for 1000's of millions of security documents, including travellers cheques, postal orders, passports, product authentication labels and vouchers.



**The film that follows was made by H S Tabb and
J A Tabb some time in the 1930s with a 16mm
Magazine Cine-Kodak**

