

Dyeworks near High Street Bridge, Wandsworth

These dyeworks were located on the east bank of the Wandle, about 70 yards north of the bridge carrying Wandsworth High Street, on a site now occupied by the rear buildings of the Ram brewery.

The earliest reference found to these works is in the form of an indenture dated 11 May 1724, whereby the landowner Thomas Brodrick granted a 51-year lease of the property to Edward Applegarth, a dyer. The premises included a dwelling house, a dye house, and a newly built mill house. This superseded an earlier lease, and had been revised in consequence of "divers new erections, improvements", etc. recently carried out by Applegarth [1]. He was probably the Edward Applegarth, "citizen and dyer of London", who took on an apprentice on 5 November 1717, probably in Southwark [2].

Following Applegarth's death in 1725, his widow Alice carried on the business [3], and was then or later joined by her son, also named Edward. On 9 May 1733 Edward Applegarth was granted a 31-year lease of some land adjoining the dyeworks by the owner, the Right Honourable Alan Lord Viscount Middleton of Ireland, a descendant of Brodrick, who had been awarded a peerage [4].

On 28 May 1742 Alice Applegarth sold the outstanding term of the lease of the dyeworks to Thomas Cecil, "scarlet dyer of the parish of St. Luke, Middlesex" [1]. On the same day, Edward Applegarth sold the remainder of the lease of the adjoining land to Cecil [4].

Soon after taking over the dyeworks, on 27 March 1743, Thomas Cecil complained to the Wandsworth Vestry that "from the filth Mud and dirt which from time to time is Washed into the River near to his Dyehouse by the great quantity of Road water that is discharged into the said River from the great Road or common Highway called Garret Lane ... he is totally obstructed from carrying on his Trade or business of a Scarlet Dyer in the said Dyehouse ... ". The Surveyors of the Highways were asked to look into the matter [5].

On 15 June 1743 Thomas Cecil took out insurance policies with the Hand in Hand company on his dyehouse, millhouse and dwelling house, together with three adjoining workmen's cottages [6].

Thomas Cecil's tenure did not last long, and on 4 December 1747 the insurance policies on the premises were renewed by John Spence, scarlet dyer [7], and presumably the lease of the works was assigned to him also at about that date. Spence renewed the insurance policies again on 15 November 1754 [8], but on 8 January 1755 half of each policy was assigned to his brother George, also a dyer, who was then working at Southwark. The premises were insured again jointly by John and George Spence on 28 October 1761 [9].

George Spence died on 24 September 1763 at the age of 58 and was buried at Wandsworth. John Spence continued the business. Writing nearly 50 years later, in 1812, Manning and Bray briefly reported the next development: "Mr. John Spence carried on a very considerable trade in dyeing scarlet cloth for the East India Company, near the Bridge. He retired about 1764, and was succeeded by Mr. Barchard, who now continues it." [10].

In fact, it is more likely that John Spence retired in 1765. The insurance policies he and his brother had taken out in 1761 were assigned to Joseph Barchard on 27 November 1765, and no doubt the leases were also assigned at about that date. John Spence died at Heston, Middlesex, on 14 May 1782 at the age of 80, but was buried at Wandsworth beside the grave of his brother George.

Joseph Barchard had entered into a 21-year partnership with Jeremiah Crutchley as dyers at Southwark on 1 January 1748. Crutchley died in 1752 and in his will proved on 27 April 1752 he referred to the articles of copartnership between himself and Barchard whereby it was agreed that in the event of his death the partnership be continued by Barchard and his executors for the remainder of the 21-year term [11].

Subsequently some disagreement must have arisen between Joseph Barchard and the others, for soon after he had taken over the dyeworks at Wandsworth, on 31 January 1766, the partnership was dissolved, "by Order of the Court of Chancery". Crutchley's executors were to carry on the business at Southwark, and Joseph Barchard "at his Dyehouse at Wandsworth" as separate concerns [12]. Evidently Barchard had made his arrangements at Wandsworth in anticipation of the dissolution.

Joseph Barchard renewed the insurance policies on 4 November 1768 [13]. He died early in September 1770 and by his will proved on 24 September he bequeathed his leasehold and personal estate to his sons Joseph and John in equal shares [14].

Joseph Barchard junior does not appear to have become involved in the dyeing business, and John Barchard took over the management. Soon afterwards he was in partnership with John Spence junior, the son of the John Spence who had retired in 1765. They jointly insured their stock in two warehouses, "a large Dyehouse and Elaboratory", a small dyehouse, and a millhouse at Wandsworth with the Sun insurance company on 1 August 1771 [15]. They renewed this policy on 14 January 1773 [16].

Their partnership was dissolved on 25 March 1775, when John Spence junior resigned [17]. John Barchard then took on new partners, Peter Barchard and Jacob Mills. The relationship of Peter Barchard to John has not been ascertained. He may have been a brother, but he was not mentioned in Joseph Barchard's will, so perhaps he was a cousin. The new partnership renewed the Hand in Hand policies on the buildings on 7 November 1775 [18]. They renewed the policy on the dyeworks buildings only again on 14 June 1779, following a "fresh survey", which increased the valuation from £500 in 1775 to £1,200, so evidently some extensive rebuilding work had recently been carried out to the premises [19].

The partnership was dissolved on 17 March 1781, to the extent that Jacob Mills left [20]. He had been replaced by Francis Hilton before 21 October 1782, when the firm insured their stock and utensils in their dyehouses and warehouses in Montague Close, Southwark, with the Sun insurance company [21].

John and Peter Barchard renewed the Hand in Hand policy on the dyeworks premises at Wandsworth on 13 June 1786 [22]. Peter Barchard died in October of that year at the age of 52. The Hand in Hand policy was renewed on 6 June 1793 [23], and for the last time on 2 June 1800 [24], in the name of John Blanchard only, although he was still in partnership with Francis Hilton and, since before 1799, with John Platt. Daniel Lysons also omitted to name his partners when he wrote in 1792 that "Mr. Barchard ... carries on the branch of scarlet

dying to a very considerable extent" [25], although in an 1811 supplement to his book he referred to the dye-house of Messrs. Barchard and Platt.

John Barchard died in 1816 at the age of 78, and was succeeded by his sons Henry James and Joseph Henry Barchard. The firm was still operating as Hilton, Barchard and Platt until 27 April 1827, when John Platt retired [26], but apparently closed down a few years later. The works were not shown on a Deposited Plan of 1834 nor listed in the schedule thereto. By 1838 the site had been acquired by Young and Bainbridge, the proprietors of the adjoining Ram brewery, and incorporated into their premises. The adjacent dwelling house, however, which had been occupied by successive proprietors of the works, and was later used for a time as a "Boys' Home" under the name "Bridge House", survived until 1896 [27].

References

- 1.** Minet Library, Deed 5758.
- 2.** Surrey Apprenticeships 1711-31, Surrey Record Society vol. 10 (1929), No. 2399.
- 3.** National Archives, PROB 6/101 p. 118.
- 4.** Minet Library, Deed 5766.
- 5.** Wandsworth Local History Library, Wandsworth Vestry Minute Book 1709-44, p. 481.
- 6.** Guildhall Library, MS 8674/64, p. 90.
- 7.** Ibid. MS 8674/71, p. 236.
- 8.** Ibid. MS 8674/83, p. 271.
- 9.** Ibid. MS 8674/96, p. 231.
- 10.** Owen Manning and William Bray, The History and Antiquities of the County of Surrey, vol. 3 (1814), p. 242.
- 11.** National Archives, PROB 11/794 q89.
- 12.** The London Gazette, 28 January-1 February 1766.
- 13.** Guildhall Library, MS 8674/108, p. 95.
- 14.** National Archives, PROB 11/960 q322.
- 15.** Guildhall Library, MS 11936/208, No. 300506.
- 16.** Ibid. MS 11936/218, No. 320873.
- 17.** The London Gazette, 28 March-1 April 1775.
- 18.** Guildhall Library, MS 8674/117, p. 315.
- 19.** Ibid. MS 8674/133, p. 88.
- 20.** The London Gazette, 17-20 March 1781.
- 21.** Guildhall Library, MS 11936/304, No. 465757.
- 22.** Ibid. MS 8674/129, p. 78.
- 23.** Ibid. MS 9674/134, p. 232.
- 24.** Ibid. MS 8674/138, p. 351.
- 25.** Daniel Lysons, The Environs of London, vol. 1 (1792), p. 503.
- 26.** The London Gazette, 1 May 1827.
- 27.** Wandsworth Historical Society Newsletter, no. 1 (1960).