

Lower Mill, Carshalton.

On the early 17th. century Arundel map, the earliest known map of Carshalton, is shown a mill named Middle Mill, on the Wandle just above Butter Hill bridge which, much. later, became known as the Lower Mill. I have used that name generally in this account, though it was not so-called until the 19th. century.

The earliest record of it seems to have been in 1235, when Thomas Chamberlayne owned a part of it [1], and there was a reference to Chamberlayne's Mill in 1482 [2]. The mill was later acquired by the Burton family of Carshalton, and was most likely the water mill mentioned in Nicholas Burton's will in 1559, which he bequeathed, together with the Manor of Chamberlayne, to his sons Nicholas and William Burton [3]. The mill at that date was occupied by William Atche, "myller", who in his will of 1569 bequeathed the lease of it to his wife Elizabeth [4].

In 1623 William Burton alone was the owner of the mill, and by 1640 it had passed to his nephew Sir Henry Burton [5]. In March 1641/2 he granted a lease of the mill to Anthony Wright [6]. On 15 December 1660 Anthony Wright's widow Mary assigned the lease to Dixey Longe, a London lawyer [7]. Sir Henry.Burton died in 1645 and by his will, proved on 29 January 1645/6, he bequeathed all his real estate to his younger brother Charles Burton [8].

In 1647 Charles Burton sold some of the family estates to Dixey Longe. A. E. Jones surmised that the property sold included the Lower Mill, and that it was subsequently acquired by Thomas Arden, who had married Dixey Longe's widow Theodosia a few weeks after Longe's death in 1664 [9]. However, it seems more likely that Charles Burton retained ownership of the mill until his death in February 1660/1, and that it was included among the "landes, tenements and hereditaments" in Carshalton referred to in his will of 1657, which he bequeathed to his wife Elizabeth, and after her death to his grand-nephews Prosper and Henry Fenton [10].

Support for this assumption is provided by indentures dated 10 and 11 May 1685, whereby Prosper Penton, following Elizabeth Burton's death, sold the mill to Bostock and Dudley Carleton [11]. The property later passed to Dudley Carleton's brother Edward, a tobacco merchant.

In about 1656 Dixey Longe had purchased the Old Farm estate in Carshalton, and after his death this did pass to Thomas Arden. In about 1700 he sold the property to Edward Carleton, who pulled down the Old Farm building and built Carshalton House in its place. Thus at this date Edward Carleton owned both Carshalton House and the Lower Mill, which became, in effect, an appurtenance to the Carshalton House estate, and was to remain so for the next 30 years or so.

The indentures of May 1685, referred to previously, mentioned that the mill was then in the occupation of Walter Styles; but an entry in the Carshalton Vestry Minute Book, dated 19 October 1707, which recorded that some of the inhabitants of the parish had agreed to pay an extra rate for the payment of the clerk's wages, included among them "Mr.John Moris for Mr.Carleton's Copper Mills." [12] This is the earliest reference found to copper working at the

mill, and it seems likely that Edward Carleton was responsible for its conversion from corn milling, probably around 1700, and that John Morris was the first copper worker there.

By 1713 Edward Carleton owed £16000 in tobacco duty to the Commissioners of Customs, and £15000 to various creditors. A detailed account of the subsequent negotiations was given by A..E.Jones [13]. Briefly stated, the Commissioners obtained a writ in September 1713 enabling them to confiscate Carleton's Carshalton properties, and they sold these early in 1714 to Dr.John Radcliffe. He died a few months later, on 1 November 1714, and his executors sold the properties soon afterwards to John Fellowes, a wealthy London merchant. Some doubts were then raised as to the legality of these two sales, as Edward Carleton, the title-holder, had absconded. Also, he had been declared bankrupt

on 16 July 1714, and his creditors had a claim on his estate.

The commissioners appointed to deal with Carleton's affairs on behalf of his creditors in the bankruptcy proceedings nominated Sir William Scawen as their trustee. He suggested to the Treasury that John Fellowes's purchase money be returned, and the Carshalton House estate be nominally granted to himself for the benefit of the creditors. He would then sell the property again, and pay a proportion of the price obtained as a contribution to the unpaid tobacco duty.

The outcome was that John Fellowes again bought the estate, from Sir William Scawen, by indentures dated 30 and 33 October 1716 [14]. The mill was described therein as "formerly a Water Griest Mill, called Burton Mill, now used for and as a Copper Mill." This was "formerly occupied by Walter Stiles, late occupied by John Morris."

In 1718 John Fellowes became Sub Governor of the South Sea Company, and soon afterwards was awarded a baronetcy. When that company failed in 1721 his properties were confiscated by the government and later offered for sale. They were then bought by his younger brother Edward Fellowes, although it is suspected that the purchase money was provided by Sir John Fellowes from undisclosed assets. The properties were conveyed to Edward Fellowes on 24 July 1724, a few days before Sir John's death [15].

In about 1715 John Morris had moved to a copper mill a short distance downstream at the confluence of the Carshalton and Croydon streams of the Wandle. In June 1720 it was recorded that the Lower Mill was in the occupation of Charles Parry "or his undertenant" [16]. Parry had been working at the Tower copper mill on the Wandle near Mitcham Bridge since before 1713, and until 1726 when it closed down. The Lower Mill was in the occupation of Benjamin Boss on 31 December

1720, when insured it with the Sun Insurance company for £1000 [17], so it seems likely that he was then the undertenant of Charles Parry.

On 26 September 1723 a lease of the mill was granted to Andrew Meure [18],presumably the head lease previously held by Charles Parry, for Benjamin Boss was still working at the mill. On 17 March 1727/8 Edward Fellowes entered into a deed of settlement with the Carshalton Vestry whereby he agreed to donate for charitable purposes the annual sum of £20, "issuing out of the Copper Mills now in the possession of Mr.Benjamin Boss", in return for permission to erect in the parish church a monument to Sir John Fellowes [19].

Benjamin Boss apparently worked at the mill until his death in 1731. He was succeeded by his son-in-law William Thoyts, who also took over the working of the downstream popper mill from John Morris at about this time.

Edward Fellowes died on 16 January 17301, and his properties passed to his nephew Coulson Fellowes, who sold them the following year, in lots, to various purchasers. The Lower Mill only was then bought by Thomas Scawen, nephew of the before mentioned Sir William Scawen, for £700, conveyance being made by indentures dated 19 and 20 May 1732 [18]. Thus the mill became separated from the Carshalton House estate.

William Thoyts insured the mill and its appurtenances with the Royal Exchange company on 23 December 1757 [20], and on 31 December 1762 he insured the premises with the Sun insurance company [21]. He probably ceased working at the mill shortly before 1770, when Thomas Scawen granted a lease of the premises to George Ansell and Robert Barker, and they converted the mill to calico printing. Thomas Scawen died on 11 February 1774, and his properties were inherited by his son James Scawen. In 1776 he renewed the lease of the mill to George Ansell alone. It was then described as a "water mill lately used as a copper mill, and now for calico printing ... late in the occupation of William Thoyts, coppersmith." [22]

George Ansell used the mill for calico printing for only a few years. By 1780 it had been converted to paper making and was in the occupation of Christopher Patch who, on 22 June of that year, insured his utensils and stock contained in the mill and in a "Raghouse", and his household goods in his nearby dwelling house, with the Sun insurance company [23]. Patch probably held a sub-lease from Ansell.

In about 1782 some of James Scawen's Carshalton properties were offered for sale by his trustees, and the Lower Mill, together with other properties, was then purchased by George Ansell. On 21 March 1786 he insured, among other premises, the paper mill, warehouse, stable, granary and dwelling house in the tenure of Christopher Patch. The register record of this policy had the memorandum added, that it was endorsed to James Newton, Robert Barker and Charles Bill, "as Mortgagees as Indenture dated 1 May 1788." [24].

On 16 April 1790 George Ansell, presumably having redeemed the mortgage, re-insured the paper mill and the machinery therein, together with various other properties [25]. Christopher Patch renewed his policy on his utensils, stock and goods on 9 July 1788 [26], and again on 2 July 1790 [27].

Christopher Patch died on 12 July 1792, at the age of 64. He had been, according to his obituary in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, "one of the best paper-makers this country has yet produced." The obituary also described him as "an accidental victim to the effects of the exciselaws", and went on to describe the circumstances:

"He had had, some time since, we are informed, a little difference with the officer who stamped his paper, which was of a well-known and peculiar sort, called Large Thick Post. As the brass which held the letters was not long enough for the whole denomination, Large Thick Post, at once, it was his custom always to print the words Thick Post, and afterwards to write the word Large. In the course of this operation, and

before the time allowed by the law had expired, the officer seized it, under the plea that there was an intent to defraud the King of his proper duty. The cause being tried before the chief

baron Eyre, in the court of Exchequer, Mr.P. obtained an honourable verdict against the Crown; but it having been more than a year before the cause came to an issue, it dwelt so much on his mind, that he sunk under the weight ..." [28]

Christopher Patch bequeathed his estate to his wife Ann and son Christopher [30], and they carried on the paper making business. In November 1792 Christopher Patch junior gave an account to another paper maker, James Whatman, of an experiment conducted by his father some three years previously. A Mr.Collinson, a calico bleacher working at the adjacent "cloth mill". treated some inferior grade rags supplied by his father-with dephlogisticated muriatic acid. The processed pulp 1

C PATCH
1794

One of a number of "Patch" watermarks known from various dates from 1780 to 1803 [29] [56kb]

was then used to make good quality paper. However he soon discontinued this practice because much of the pulp was wasted, and Collinson's charges were too high [31].

On 25 April 1795, George Ansell renewed the insurance policy on the paper mill and other properties [32]. He died on 8 June 1797 at the age of 69, and by his will proved on 18 June he bequeathed his mills and other properties variously to his wife and-sons. The Lower Mill, "now in the tenure or occupation of Mrs. and Mr. Patch", was devised to his son Charles Augustus Ansell [33].

In 1805 the mill was rebuilt, and Charles Augustus Ansell insured the unfinished building and the wheels and machinery therein on 20 August 1805 [34]. He insured the new mill on 18 December 1805 [35].

Ann Patch died early in 1806, and by her will proved on 15 March 1806 she bequeathed her half-share in "the messuage in Carshalton in which I now dwell and in the mills and appurtenances now used by me and my son Christopher for the manufacturing of paper and now held under lease from George Ansell for 14 years". to two trustees in trust for Christopher on condition that he pay annuities to her daughters [36].

In facts it seems that Christopher Patch discontinued paper making soon after the death of his mother and that Charles Augustus Ansell took over the business. Ansell was described as a paper maker when he insured the paper mill and its machinery, utensils and stock on 4 July 1806 [37]. He renewed this policy on 11 October 1806 [38] and on 13 February 1809 he insured the nearby dwelling house and his household goods therein [39]. He insured. the paper mill and the dwelling house again on 10 October 1810 [40].

It was probably about this date .that Charles Augustus Ans.ell went into partnership with his brothers James and Robert as paper makers and snuff makers and it is not altogether clear.as to which brother was working at which mill at this period. Robert was probably most concerned with snuff makings and later took over the sole operation of the nearby snuff mill. James was more associated with paper making, but by 1809 was working at Carshalton's other paper mills a short distance upstream so perhaps Charles Augustus was still making paper at the Lower Mill at this time.

James Ansell was declared bankrupt on 24 August 1815 [41]. The subsequent proceedings dealing with the settlement of his debts resulted in his half-share in the upstream mill being sold. It was purchased by Nathaniel Muggeridge, who then took over the working of that

mill. James Ansell then probably joined Charles Augustus at the Lower Mills but the latter was declared bankrupt on 23 April 1816 [42], and on 5 June 1817 the partnership of Charles Augustus, Robert and James Ansell was dissolved [43]. Apparently Charles Augustus had quit for on 21 January 1818 James and Robert Ansell, described as "Paper Makers Snuff and Madder Grinders". insured their stock and utensils in the Lower Mill and those in the snuff mill(44).

No doubt James Ansell had taken over the working of the Lower Mill, but it is not known for how much longer it was used for paper making. Pigot's directories from 1823 to 1834 name James Ansell as a "flock grinder" or "flock manufacturer" at Carshalton.

By 1839 the mill had been converted into a corn mill, and was in the occupation of John Ashby, and the entry in Pigot's directory for that year contains the first reference I have found to the name "Lower Mill". John Ashby was then also milling corn at a windmill on Brixton Hill, which he had built in about 1816. He died in 1845 and by his will proved on 22 September 1845 he bequeathed the lease of the Lower Mill to his son, also named John, who was then also working at that mill [45].

In 1850 the mill was listed by Brayley as "A flour mill of 16 H.P. for twelve hours also the property of Mr. Tyrrell, occupied by John Ashby." [46] Edward Tyrrell had acquired the mill by his marriage in 1823 to Frances, daughter of William Lingham, who had died in 1818, leaving the mill and other properties in trust for the benefit of Frances and her sister Harriet [47]. William Lingham's sister Sophia was married to George Ansell (another brother, not previously mentioned) in about 1806, and evidently at some time before 1818 Charles Augustus Ansell had sold the mill to his brother-in-law, probably following his bankruptcy in 1816.

The mill remained in the occupancy of the Ashby family for the next 20 years. John Ashby had moved to the Grove Mill at Mitcham by 1851, but his brother Aaron David Ashby carried on at Carshalton until he too went to Mitcham in about 1872. Local directories list William Cannon at the Lower Mill in 1874, and Walter Cannon from 1878 until 18821.



*The Lower Mill in
c.1867. [56kb]*

Edward Tyrrell, last named in this account as being the owner of the mill, died on 5 June 1881. An indenture was drawn up on 23 January 1883, involving Edward Tyrrell's son Avery Tyrrell and other members of the family, from which Dr. Peatling copied extracts. It is not clear what this document was, but it seems to have been a re-allocation of the ownership of the mill and other properties. The Lower Mill was referred to therein as having been "formerly in the occupation of James Ansell and now of John Smithers." [48]

Smithers's stay was brief, and from 1884 to 1887 Joshua Champion was the occupier, and Henry Denyer from 1890 to 1905. A description of the mill when it was occupied by Denyer was given in 1895, when it had recently been converted to the roller system, replacing grind stones. It was noted that the water wheel, supplied by John Smith of the nearby Grove Iron Works, was an interior 14-foot diameter breast shot wheel, worked by a 6-foot fall [49]. This had probably been installed some 20 years earlier, when the mill had been rebuilt.

Another description of the mill as it was at about that time was given by Hillier in 1951, based on information provided by an elderly man who at worked in the mill at that period

"Lower Mill was a brick and tiled building powered by an interior breast-shot cast-iron wheel driving three pairs of stones, both Peak and Butt, and later, rollers ... its mill-tail poured through a brick culvert which can still be seen, to join the tail of the snuff-mill." [50]

The interior breast shot wheel referred to in these accounts was driven not by the main river but from a side stream. This, obviously artificial, ran roughly parallel to the main river on the east side of it, passing behind the mill. A connecting stream from the side stream into the main river passed through the mill and drove the wheel..Presumably the side stream was dammed to provide a sufficient head of water. It is not known when the side stream was formed and the internal wheel installed to replace a wheel in the main river, but it may have been when George Ansell acquired the mill in about 1782. About that time he had built a cloth mill adjacent to the Lower Mill, and opposite to this, on the west bank, the snuff mill mentioned by Hillier. These mills both had wheels in the Wandle, and it may have been considered undesirable to have three wheels in proximity.

Henry Denyer was followed by William Weaver, who was there until at least 1915. Possibly he was succeeded by R.V. Aitken, who announced in January 1923 that he was "relinquishing business" at the Lower Mill [51]. This probably marked the end of corn milling there. By 1927 the premises were in the occupation of Leech (Carshalton) Limited, trading as the Victoria Floorcloth Company, who were there until at least 1938.

In about 1954 the mill building was incorporated into the works of Vinyl Products Limited, and according to A.E.Jones was then used as "a shed" [52]. It continued as such, in the occupation of British Petroleum, until it was demolished when the present housing estate was built in 1995.

References

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- 14.** Surrey History Centre, 174/1/3 and 174/1/4.
- 15.** Ibid. 174/1/6.
- 16.** Sutton Archives and Local Studies Library, Pamphlet SBC 347 (inventory of Sir John Fellowes's estate).
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- 19.** . Surrey Archaeological Collections, Vol.XXVI, p.116.

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21. Ibid. MS 11836/144 No.194962.
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