

THE BAKEWELL COTTON MILL AND THE ARKWRIGHTS.

By M. H. MACKENZIE.

IN the recent book on the Strutts and the Arkwrights R. S. Fitton and A. P. Wadsworth, when discussing Jedediah Strutt's partnership with Richard Arkwright, write, "We know much less of Arkwright than we do of Strutt".¹ That is true, but, in the compilation of this excellent study, two deposits of original material relating to the cotton mill at Bakewell have been overlooked. There are four volumes of wages books at Chesterfield Central Library² and a box of deeds, correspondence and memoranda at Chatsworth. These deposits are neither rich in contents nor wide in range and nearly half the documents refer to the titles and mortgages of the previous owners of the properties, but, read in the light of government publications and contemporary and modern books on the cotton trade in Derbyshire,³ the relevant material advances our knowledge about the Arkwrights.

A skeleton of facts emerges from the Chatsworth box. The story covers the years 1777-1860 and deals with the management of four generations of Arkwrights. In 1777 Sir Richard Arkwright, the founder of the family's fortunes,⁴ negotiated with Philip Gell of Hopton for a fifty years' lease of fifty-three acres of land in Bakewell and Longstone at an annual rental of £68: the lease was to become effective as from the 25 March 1778.⁵ By

¹ R. S. Fitton and A. P. Wadsworth, *The Strutts and the Arkwrights*, 1958.

² There is no indication as to which mill these books have come from, but internal evidence points to Bakewell. See below.

³ Fitton and Wadsworth, *Bibliography*, 349-61.

⁴ Richard Arkwright (1732-92) was not knighted until 1786, but, to distinguish him from his son Richard, it is convenient to refer to the father as Sir Richard Arkwright.

⁵ Arkwright MSS. at Chatsworth (hereafter ARK), 44.

the end of the year⁶ a water cotton mill had been built on the banks of the Wye at Lumford in the Liberty of Holme, just outside the Township of Bakewell on the Ashford and Buxton road. Sir Richard Arkwright gave the property to his son, Richard Arkwright, Junior, who at this date lived in the "genteel residence" built for the manager.⁷ But in installing the water machinery the Arkwrights had taken possession of the reaches of the river, above and below the cotton mill (Fig. 7). Upstream, the river belonged to the fifth Duke of Devonshire (1748-1811), downstream, to the fourth Duke of Rutland (1779-1787), who was Lord of the Manor of Bakewell.⁸ The latter's corn mill, situated below the cotton mill, now received only an intermittent supply of water, the famous trout fishing suffered and the value of the common had deteriorated. The resulting dispute went on till December 1786, when Richard Arkwright, Junior, faced with litigation, had to accept the fourth Duke's terms, pay a nominal rent of £10 a year for a lease of the waters for forty-two years and agree to a proviso that, if requested two years before the expiration of the lease, he would restore the river to its ancient course. The interesting point in this quarrel is not the lease of the waters, but the wording of the long preamble: it strikes an almost feudal note.

"Whereas the said Charles Duke of Rutland is Lord of the Manor of Bakewell . . . And whereas the said Charles Duke of Rutland and his Ancestors have for time immemorial been seized and possessed of a certain antient Corn Mill situate . . . within the said Manor of Bakewell and turned and worked by the said River Wye . . . at which Mill the tenants of the said Charles Duke of Rutland . . . have of antient right and custom been used to have their Corn Ground paying the customary Toll . . . And the said Richard Arkwright the elder and Richard Arkwright the younger . . . have . . . erected upon the said piece of ground called Lumford and have likewise without the leave or licence of the said Duke or of John Duke of Rutland his late Grandfather . . . made . . . Divers Wares

⁶ Once the site had been secured, cotton mills were built quickly, within a period of three or four months.

⁷ ARK/80. J. Pilkington, *A View of the Present State of Derbyshire*, 1789, II, 416.

⁸ The Lord of the Manor owned all common land, the soil, the produce of the soil and mineral wealth found underneath the soil. *An Essay on the Nature and Method of Enclosure*, Parker, Oxford.

Sluices Dams and other Obstructions upon and about the said River Wye . . . and have made great Dams Pools or Reservoirs in the Grounds called Great and Little Lumford and have diverted the waters of the said River Wye from its ancient course . . . into the said Pools for the purpose of impounding the water and for the turning the Wheels and Engines of the said Cotton Mill and have thereby prevented and obstructed the Water of the said River from flowing in its antient and usual course to the aforesaid Corn Mill . . . whereby the same is obstructed and injured and the Fishery of the said Duke is affected and prejudiced And whereas the said Richard Arkwright hath also cut through the ancient Mill dam of the said Corn Mill and hath taken and carried away the Stone Gravel and Soil from the same as well as digged up and taken away Clods Stone and Soil from the Commons and Waste grounds belonging to the said Duke of Rutland⁹ . . . for the making of the said Dams and Mounds . . . a Map . . . of which River Works . . . is annexed''.¹⁰

It is true that Sir Richard Arkwright had made use of horsepower at Nottingham¹¹ and a stream from the lead mines at Cromford,¹² but his spinning mill at Birkacre, near Chorley, built at the same time as the Bakewell mill, was worked by the River Yarrow.¹³ He must have known the conditions usually attaching to the use of water power from a river, but, probably fearing a refusal from the Duke of Rutland, at Bakewell he acted first and negotiated afterwards.

On his father's death in 1792 Richard Arkwright moved to Willersley Castle, but he retained the ownership of the Bakewell mill until 1821. To make his position more secure in 1798 he purchased the freehold of the Bakewell property from the Gell family.¹⁴ Samuel Simpson Esq. of Matlock was probably left in charge of the mill,¹⁴ but it is clear from a conveyance of 1814 that at that date his son, Robert, was living at Stoke Hall and already was the manager at Lumford.¹⁵

The mill, the workmen's cottages and further purchases of land were formally conveyed to Robert Arkwright by his father in 1821: his brother, Peter, was named as

⁹ ARK/39.

¹⁰ For plan see below.

¹¹ A. Rees, *The Cyclopaedia*, X, 1819.

¹² Fitton and Wadsworth, 65.

¹³ Fitton and Wadsworth, 78-9.

¹⁴ ARK/44-7.

¹⁵ ARK/58-9.

co-partner.¹⁶ It is interesting to see how the property had developed: the Arkwrights now owned fourteen and a half acres in Bakewell, fifty-one and three-quarter acres in Longstone and sixty-nine acres on Longstone Common.¹⁷ But the gift involved the two brothers in serious trouble. In 1826 the expiration of the 1786 agreement with the Duke of Rutland was approaching, and Robert Arkwright expected that the terms would be renewed. He and his father had been conciliatory, and had put themselves to considerable expense in carrying out the suggestions of the Duke's agents, Mr. Gauntley and Mr. Coke. At the cost of £1,000 they had cut a road on their own land to avoid crossing the Duke's land, and had been careful to ensure an adequate flow of water downstream for the mill, the cattle and the fishing, though, they were honest enough to admit, "the Trout fishing (which of late years has been encouraged and brought into a degree of repute at Bakewell) may not afford so much amusement in such part". But in the negotiations, the fifth Duke of Rutland proved even more hostile than his father: he meant to enforce the proviso. In vain the Arkwright's lawyer pointed out: "The money expended by Mr. Arkwright in the above alterations was to such an amount . . . that it could never have been contemplated by the Duke of Rutland or his agents, that they were done for the duration of the term of the lease only but that they were intended as permanent advantage to the client". In his correspondence and conversations with the Duke, Robert Arkwright came to the conclusion that the Duke "was unwilling to enter into any reasonable arrangement respecting the water" and that whatever he said would be misunderstood. He dropped the discussions, but it was only because the Duke notified him three months too late that he was spared the necessity of restoring the river to its original course.¹⁸ It was probably this friction, coupled with his decision to leave the immediate district for Sutton Scarsdale, near Chesterfield, that made Robert Arkwright try to sell the mill.¹⁹

¹⁶ ARK/60-2. S. Glover, *Peak Guide*, 1830, 81.

¹⁷ ARK/60.

¹⁸ ARK/63.

¹⁹ Glover, *Peak Guide*, Road Sketch no. 5.

Between 1830 and 1836 we see him cautiously approaching Horace Mason, Cotton Spinner of Calver, whose father, Horatio Mason, was joint manager of the Calver mill with Mr. Girdom. The Lumford estate was valued at £17,232 with liability for a further sum of £2,832, contingent upon the state of trade. Horace Mason, whose resources were limited, bought the property on a hire-purchase basis. He paid £8,571 towards the purchase price and undertook to meet the remainder of his debt by twenty-eight half-yearly payments. Meanwhile Robert Arkwright kept a financial grip over him by a mortgage in fee of the premises.²⁰ But the Arkwright pace was too quick for a man trained in a country mill. As a country mill, Calver ranked high: it had received a good report from the Visitors in 1803,²¹ but overhead costs must have been much lower than at Bakewell. The Arkwrights had stopped night spinning, installed steam heating, built workmen's cottages, provided medical attention for the operatives and employed a team of mechanics, at high wages, to keep the machinery in order. At the time the Masons were at Calver the workers enjoyed none of these expensive amenities, and the water wheels, reputed to be some of the best in the county,²² needed little expert attention.²³ In 1839 Horace Mason broke down,²⁴ having defaulted on all his instalments.²⁵ Robert Arkwright made another attempt to sell the mill; in January 1840 it was put up for auction at the Rutland Arms and, though the Particular of Sale set forth its financial, rural and social advantages in glowing terms,²⁶ there was no bid, or no bid worth considering. Peter Arkwright, acting on behalf of his brother, bought the mill back for £7,400, probably the reserve price.²⁷ It was an unfortunate time to try to sell; trade was bad and there was much unrest in the North Midlands, caused by unemployment and fomented by the Chartists.²⁸ For four years the mill

²⁰ ARK/64-5, 68, 72 a, b, 73-4.

²¹ *HLP*, II, 1819, Appendix G.

²² S. Bagshaw, *Directory of Derbyshire*, 1846, 425.

²³ *Sheffield Telegraph and Star*, 15 November 1929.

²⁴ ARK/91.

²⁵ ARK/94.

²⁶ ARK/80.

²⁷ ARK/82, 85, 90.

²⁸ ARK/79. The copy of the *Manchester Guardian*, 18 January 1840, gives an account of the Chartist rising in Sheffield.

appears to have been closed, but in 1844 Robert Arkwright adopted another policy; he leased the mill with the machinery and near-by houses to two cotton spinners for a term of years,²⁹ and later made other similar agreements.³⁰ In 1857, two years before his death, he made over the Bakewell mill and lands to his third son, the Rev. Godfrey Harry Arkwright,³¹ who in 1860 sold the property to the Duke of Devonshire.³²

From this rather dull list of facts four interesting subjects present themselves for further examination — the choice of Bakewell as the site for a new cotton mill, its financial record, the welfare of the workers and the impact of these industrialists on a rural society, in which respect for the wishes of the Lord of the Manor was traditional.

There is no certain evidence as to why Sir Richard Arkwright made Bakewell the northern terminal in his chain of Derbyshire factories. Various reasons have been suggested; the humidity of the valley, the suitability of the slow flowing Wye as a source of water power, the probability that in a market town with a mixed economy he could recruit a labour force more easily than in a country district. All these motives may have influenced him, but we are on surer ground when we consider the topography of Bakewell. It was a natural centre of communications and this was an important factor in a hilly district. Moreover, the demands of the heavy industries — Ashford marble and chert, lead and lime — and of the increasing number of visitors had already equipped the town with some good turnpike roads.³³ When in 1777 Sir Richard Arkwright opened negotiations with the Gell family for the lease of the Lumford site,³⁴ it must have seemed to him a good jumping-off place for his next advance. With his expanding business he needed

²⁹ ARK/83; Bagshaw, 410.

³⁰ ARK/97.

³¹ By deed of sale, the Rev. Godfrey Harry Arkwright paid £7,400, the sum his father had advanced in 1840 for buying back the mill. ARK/85.

³² ARK/86-9, 93.

³³ In the past the Bakewell market may have been a factor in the development of roads, but not at the time when the Arkwrights built the mill. Contemporary writers point out that the horse and cattle market was poorly attended. J. Britton and E. W. Brayley, *The Beauties of England and Wales*, 1801, III, 486; D. P. Davies, *A New Historical and Descriptive View of Derbyshire*, 1811, II, 590.

³⁴ ARK/44.

to improve communications with Liverpool and London; Bakewell was a link. Within easy distance of Matlock and Cromford, the road led to Derby and the south, and, as the Buxton road runs alongside the Wye at Lumford, communications with Lancashire and Liverpool passed the door of the mill. On the east side of the town there were routes to Chesterfield and Sheffield and so to the West Riding, where Sir Richard Arkwright hoped to capture markets by adapting the water-frame to the spinning of wool.³⁵ He did not carry out this project, but, from the Particular of Sale of 1840, it is clear that the Lumford mill had established contacts with Leeds.³⁶ We must not imagine that at this time any road was satisfactory over its whole length; there were bad and dangerous patches even on relatively good roads, but these bad patches could be, and were, improved by the establishment of turnpike trusts, and in this cause the Arkwrights were zealous.³⁷ It is instructive to glance through the lists of trustees in turnpike acts relating to Derbyshire. Before 1790 we begin to find the names of the two Richards, father and son, but, as the younger generation grew up, in the 19th century, a veritable Arkwright clan served on these trusts.³⁸ Writing in 1837 Rhodes records: "Bakewell in nearly every direction is approached by excellent roads".³⁹ Until the coming of the railways the Arkwrights secured their own communications by road. The Strutts, on the other hand, depended on canals for the carriage of the raw cotton and made Gainsborough their inland port.⁴⁰ The Arkwrights were interested in the development of canals for the heavy industries, but not in relation to the cotton trade. Farey gives a long and careful account of the goods carried by the existing canals and of the goods to

³⁵ Fitton and Wadsworth, 88-9.

³⁶ ARK/80.

³⁷ It is useful to compare the early edition of Burdett's Map of Derbyshire 1762-7 (reproduced by Fitton and Wadsworth) with the later editions of 1789 and 1791. In the early edition, places like Cromford and Belper are isolated, but in the later editions the road to the south had been turnpiked.

³⁸ See collections of Turnpike Acts in Sheffield City Library, Chesterfield Library and Derbyshire County Records, Matlock.

³⁹ E. Rhodes, *The Derbyshire Tourist's Guide*, 1837, 135.

⁴⁰ Fitton and Wadsworth, 289.

be carried by projected canals. With the exception of a little agricultural produce, the list is always the same — coal, limestone, iron, lead, grindstones, freestone, chert, etc. — with cotton mentioned once in connection with Gainsborough. The proposed canal between Bakewell and Cromford was to export the lead, marble and chert; again there is no mention of cotton.⁴¹

In considering how far the Bakewell mill was a success, the year 1779 is an important date. At this time Sir Richard Arkwright enjoyed a virtual monopoly of the cotton world. It is true that he did not actually lose his patent until 1781,⁴² but it was in 1779, when the Lumford mill was opening, that Lancashire dealt him two heavy blows. His factory at Birkacre, near Chorley, was burnt down by the mob,⁴³ and Samuel Crompton's mule appeared on the market, unencumbered by patents or restrictions, and small enough to be worked in the cottages. The "muslin" wheel could spin much finer yarn than the water frame⁴⁴ and, as early as the 1780's, the fashionable world was demanding fine cambrics.⁴⁵ Sir Richard Arkwright fulminated against Lancashire, but the mule did him no immediate harm, for, with the growing demand for cotton by all classes,⁴⁶ there was a market for the stouter calicoes at home and abroad. The Lumford mill opened in an increasingly competitive world. This challenge may have been a factor in making the second Richard a very competent manager at Bakewell. Here the Chatsworth deeds do not help, but we learn a certain amount about Richard Arkwright's methods and activities from the correspondence printed by Professor Unwin. Sir Richard Arkwright has been described as "flamboyant".⁴⁷ Richard Arkwright and his son, Robert, were not flamboyant: they were controlled, rather reticent and correct in their dealings with neighbours, but, as business

⁴¹ J. Farey, *General View of the Agriculture and Minerals of Derbyshire*, III, 1817, 305-430.

⁴² The Duke of Rutland used his influence for the withdrawal of the patent. Fitton and Wadsworth, 83, n. 3.

⁴³ Fitton and Wadsworth, 79.

⁴⁴ G. W. Daniels, *The Early Cotton Industry*, 1920, 114-22.

⁴⁵ G. Unwin, *Samuel Oldknow and the Arkwrights*, 1924, 45, 65.

⁴⁶ P. Mantoux, *The Industrial Revolution in the Eighteenth Century*, 1928, 223; Unwin, 65.

⁴⁷ Fitton and Wadsworth, 91.

men, they were as keen as Sir Richard. When at Bakewell, Richard Arkwright would get up early on Sunday morning and ride to Chapel-en-le-Frith to talk over prices and orders at the breakfast table with his friend, Samuel Oldknow.⁴⁸ In response to the London agent's repeated requests for a finer yarn, he succeeded in making it, but always the emphasis was on quality.⁴⁹ As a financier, he became increasingly powerful in the business world.⁵⁰ Under Robert the value of the mill declined, but this was not necessarily his fault, as, in the 19th century, the localization of the cotton industry in Lancashire became an increasingly important factor in success. Moreover, after 1826 he had a run of bad luck: there was the dispute with the Duke of Rutland, the failure of Horace Mason and his inability to sell the mill in the depression of the 'forties. In a period of normal trade the Arkwrights expected to make an annual profit of at least £2,000 at Lumford,⁵¹ so, when Robert had to let the mill for £347 p.a., it was a serious loss.⁵² However, it is a testimony to good management that in 1860 the Duke of Devonshire paid his grandson £14,500 for the Bakewell properties;⁵³ the mill must still have been an asset.

Any attempt to reconstruct life inside the Bakewell mill is difficult because the direct evidence is slight. There are two reports by inspectors, the one very short and formal, the other more informative; moreover, three people, who might have left eye-witness accounts, did not do so. We have to try, therefore, to piece together the scraps of evidence we can find and supplement them from the Cromford records, where the Arkwright system was more fully developed.

In the summer of 1790 John Byng, fifth Viscount

⁴⁸ Unwin, 75.

⁴⁹ Unwin, 95, 97. Cromford made coarse yarn and therefore the temperature in the workrooms could be kept at 60 degrees (Evidence of Richard Arkwright before the *Select Committee on Children in Manufactories*, 1816, 282). Bakewell made finer yarn with the result that the temperature was higher; in 1833 the inspectors reported a temperature of 75 degrees. (*R.C. on Factories Inquiry*, Supp. Rep. Part I, 1834, 267.) Finer yarn was made by driving the machinery more quickly; this, in turn, raised the temperature.

⁵⁰ His loans to Samuel Oldknow: Unwin, *passim*.

⁵¹ ARK/72 a, b.

⁵² ARK/97.

⁵³ ARK/93.

Torrington, was staying at Bakewell during a tour of the Midlands in search of "quiet and wild scenery". From his diary we learn that he detested cotton mills in general and Arkwright cotton mills in particular, but one day his curiosity got the better of him. "In the evening I took a walk to Mr. Arkwright's great cotton mill, at a small distance from the town; and wou'd have entered it, but entrance was denied, for this (no doubt right) reason, however odd, 'That I should disturb the girls'." We wish Richard Arkwright had admitted the young aristocrat; his account would have been racy.⁵⁴

In 1803 we find the first report of the visitors, appointed under the 1802 Act:

"Richard Arkwright and Samuel Simpson Esq.
Cotton Mill — Holme in Bakewell Parish.
Bakewell — No apprentices. Everything in great order".⁵⁵

These cursory inspections were continued for a few years and then dropped.

The next source we can tap for definite information about the working of a cotton mill is found in the evidence given to the Select Committee of 1816, appointed at the suggestion of Sir Robert Peel, the Elder, to inquire into the advisability of extending to "free" children the limited protection afforded to apprentices by the 1802 Act. George Gould and Richard Arkwright were among the witnesses; in the past they had both worked at Bakewell, but, except for two short references to Bakewell, they based their evidence on their more recent experiences. George Gould drew a very black picture of children's employment in the Manchester mills. Asked if he considered that the children's health was getting worse, he answered negatively: "they are worse at Manchester than they were at Bakewell". He would not admit that conditions were good at Bakewell, and he remembered the fatigue he had felt as a spinner.⁵⁶

Richard Arkwright spoke at some length and defended the Cromford system, which his father had evolved and

⁵⁴ J. Byng, *Torrington Diaries 1789-94*, 1934, II, 40, 190-1, 309.

⁵⁵ *HLP*, 1819, Appendix G, 1803.

⁵⁶ *Select Committee*, 1816, 98-100.

which the mills under his control followed. It depended on a belief in the principle of *laissez-faire*, in the inexorable working of the iron law of wages and in the necessity of piece-work, as the only practical corrective for the laziness of the operatives. Into this rigid structure amenities could be fitted — no night spinning, limitation of hours to thirteen a day with half-an-hour for breakfast and an hour for dinner, the age of entry to be fixed at nine or ten, preferably ten, after the child had passed a reading test, the provision of schools for the “under tens” and of Sunday schools for the adolescents, work rooms, well ventilated, dust free⁵⁷ and reasonably warm, water and medical attention for the workers, half-pay for those on the sick list, low rented cottages with gardens, facilities for meals and about ten days’ holiday a year *without pay*. When asked his opinion on the working of the 1802 Act, he criticised the provisions for inspection, as a neighbouring J.P. and parson might feel embarrassed when asked to inspect a friend’s mill. For the rest he thought that the Act had done good and that no further legislation was necessary. Some of his answers are worth quoting, because they bring out his good intentions and limitations.

“What time do you allow for meals? — An hour for dinner. As to breakfast, it is very irregular. In the summer the bell rings for breakfast at half-past eight; . . . There is a room called the dinner-house, in which there is a range of hot plates or stoves, much the same as in gentlemen’s kitchens; the mothers, or the younger sisters of the hands employed bring the breakfast into this room; . . . As soon as the bell rings a number of boys, perhaps eight, carry those breakfasts into the different rooms in the factory; . . . In the afternoon the bell rings at four, and they are served in like manner; but very few have their refreshment, probably not one in five, I should think”. (And for a very good reason, which Richard Arkwright himself supplied in a later answer.)

“Would it not, in your opinion, be beneficial to the health and spirits of the children, if they were allowed to go out of the mill for a short season in fine weather? . . . — For so short a space of time, I should think it would not be much advantage to them, in any respect, or desirable, two thirds of these 725

⁵⁷ Richard Arkwright had invented a scutching machine for eliminating dust in the carding room. *Select Committee*, 1816, 305.

are working in effect by the piece; if the doors were thrown open to them very few would go out”.

Asked if he had considered the effect of the long hours on the children, he replied: “I never saw the children affected at all by the work; and it is very extraordinary, from my house, I see the children playing in groups in the summer time till it is dark”.

Pressed by Sir Robert Peel, he admitted that the reading test, which was the qualification for admission to the mill, was often a farce. Children were accepted if they could read “Any small words”. “And in general the parents are so anxious to get their children to work, that the man appointed to hear them read will sometimes examine them very little, and probably they can *scarcely* read”.⁵⁸

The picture of Richard Arkwright watching the mill children from the windows of Willersley is pleasant, but we would rather have had accurate information about the type of discipline obtaining in the workrooms of Cromford and Bakewell. We would like to know whether the doffers and pieceners were bullied, and whether Sir Richard Arkwright’s system of incentives to hard work — the annual candle-lightings, balls, distribution of prizes and free pasture — was ever introduced at Bakewell.⁵⁹

The Arkwrights had considered themselves humane employers and experts in the art of running a factory, but the reports on their mills in 1833 were only fairly good.

Medical Examination of the Factory belonging to Messrs. Horace Mason at Bakewell, on the 3rd June, 1833.

Temperature — Seventy-five.

Ventilation — Moderately good.

Cleanliness — Indifferent.

Work — Begins at 6 o’clock and ends at 7 o’clock.

Relaxation for meals — Half an hour for breakfast, half an hour for tea, and one hour for dinner.

Hot water — Gratis.

Holidays in the year — Christmas day, two days & a half at Whitsuntide; about ten days in the year.

Medical assistance — (Management) subscribes to dispensary and pays accidents.

Total number of persons employed of all ages — About 150 and 200 fluctuating.

Appearance (of mill) — Moderately good.

Situation — Low.

⁵⁸ *Select Committee*, 1816, 277, 280, 283-4.

⁵⁹ Fitton and Wadsworth, 99-102.

Total number of females under 18 — 46:

Good health	. 18
Middling health	. 19
Bad health	. 9

“Bronchocele”, (Derbyshire neck) the Doctor added, “is a very common disease at Bakewell, Matlock and Cresbrook Dale. I saw numerous examples of it amongst the factory children of those places”.⁶⁰

The amenities were the same, but cleanliness was “indifferent”, there was a sharp drop in employment and a good deal of ill health. This report may have been due to a lowering of standards by Horace Mason, but it was also due to the raising of standards of inspection by the three Benthamite Commissioners — Thomas Tooke, Edwin Chadwick and Thomas Southwood Smith. What Robert Arkwright thought of the report, we do not know; he probably regarded the Bakewell mill as an investment that was not paying, for now he had other interests and was planning great improvements at his new home of Sutton Scarsdale.

The single most interesting subject that we can follow up in these documents is the relations between the Arkwrights and the landed interest. The Duke of Rutland’s opposition to the Arkwrights was based on more serious considerations than losses on his corn mill, the trout fishing and the common. He tried to do his best for Bakewell. He wanted to attract visitors by building the Rutland Arms and extending to its patrons the privilege of free trout fishing in the River Wye,⁶¹ but he was determined that the town should retain its rural character.⁶² As an agriculturalist his income benefited from low wages and rates; the Arkwrights raised these two burdensome charges against him. Richard Arkwright was probably able to recruit the nucleus of his labour force locally, but White Watson states that at the beginning he brought “hands” from Manchester, who in times of unemployment would be on the rates, and that the demand for 300 to 350 workers at the Lumford Mill sent up wages in the district.⁶³

⁶⁰ *Factories Inquiry*, Supp. Rep. Part I, 1834, 267, 309.

⁶¹ Rhodes, 133; Bagshaw, 410.

⁶² The open fields of Bakewell were not wholly enclosed until 1807.

⁶³ *D.A.J.*, XI (1889), 160.

The Arkwrights met with less overt opposition from the Dukes of Devonshire, but the attitude of the latter to the intrusion of industry into the country was fundamentally the same as the Rutland attitude. They did not, however, make common cause with the Dukes of Rutland in 1786 or 1828. Sir Richard had lent Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, £5,000 to meet her more pressing debts. We know that he was asking for repayment in January 1788.⁶⁴ If the loan had been made before December 1786, this factor may have influenced the Cavendishes, but there was a more fundamental reason for their complaisance. The Arkwrights climbed the social ladder even more quickly than the Strutts of Derby or the Walkers of Masborough, and were accepted by the county. The second Richard used his immense wealth to promote the interests of his large family and to acquire influence in the land,⁶⁵ in local government,⁶⁶ in Parliament,⁶⁷ in the Church,⁶⁸ and in the law.⁶⁹ After 1830 the activities of the Arkwrights provided the *Derby Mercury* and the *Derbyshire Courier* with interesting items of county news. In September 1832 the *Derby Mercury* noted that Mrs. R. Arkwright was staying at Chatsworth with a distinguished company.⁷⁰ In the North Derbyshire by-election of May 1834, it fell to Robert Arkwright to second the nomination of the Hon. George Henry Cavendish, who was returned unopposed.⁷¹ In January 1837 the *Derby Mercury* recorded the opening of Sutton Scarsdale: "The

⁶⁴ Fitton and Wadsworth, 95-6.

⁶⁵ Fitton and Wadsworth, 224, n. 4.

⁶⁶ Fitton and Wadsworth, 224. Richard Arkwright served as High Sheriff and as a J.P. in Derbyshire.

⁶⁷ His eldest son, the third Richard, was entered for Cambridge, and was M.P. for Rye 1813-18 and 1826-30. His name does not appear on the list of members who spoke in debate, but no doubt he established contacts useful to his family from the point of view both of trade and of social advancement. It is noteworthy that education at a public school, usually Eton, and at Trinity College, Cambridge became customary in the family, and had a marked influence on the future of the fourth generation.

⁶⁸ A son and grandson were in holy orders, and in the *Derby Mercury* (24 July 1833, 18 January 1837) we find references to the patronage exercised by Richard and Robert Arkwright, who appear to have been genuinely interested in promoting the welfare of the Church of England.

⁶⁹ Anne Arkwright married Sir James Wigram, Vice-Chancellor of the Court of Chancery: Rev. Joseph Arkwright married Anne Wigram.

⁷⁰ *Derby Mercury*, 17 September 1832.

⁷¹ A by-election was caused by the death of the Earl of Burlington in May 1834; his son, Lord Cavendish, had represented North Derbyshire. *Derby Mercury*, 21, 23 May 1834.

splendid residence of Robert Arkwright, Esq., is now inhabited by its long expected inmates, an event which will be hailed by the surrounding neighbourhood with the warmest feelings of gratification".⁷² In the spring and summer of 1843 the Arkwrights provided the *Derbyshire Courier* with valuable copy. In the issue for 6 May there was a long and flattering obituary of Richard Arkwright, followed some weeks later by an analysis of his amazing will,⁷³ but the most interesting piece of news is found in the issue for 15 July: "Robert Arkwright, Esq., of Sutton Hall, near Chesterfield, Derbyshire" was elected a Governor of the Royal Agricultural Society of England with "his Grace the Duke of Rutland in the chair".⁷⁴

Horace Mason was not accepted by the county, and between 1830 and 1832 the Duke of Devonshire presented his terms. Horace Mason undertook to pay an annual rent of £44 for the use of the water between Ashford and Lumford, to respect the Duke's fishing rights and to allow no apprentice to gain a settlement in Longstone.⁷⁵ The Duke of Devonshire solved his problem by buying out the Arkwrights in 1860,⁷⁶ a policy which had been envisaged in 1832.⁷⁷

We might have expected the tourists also to resent the industrialization of the river valleys, but, except for John Byng, this was not the case. From Pilkington⁷⁸ onwards contemporary writers expected the traveller in Derbyshire to take everything in his stride and to enjoy it all — the "romantic" scenery, the "noble" mansions, the "genteel" residences, the "neat" chapels and cattle and the "handsome" cotton mills, built by the "ingenious" Mr. Arkwright, who obligingly provided employment. The clichés become monotonous, but they amused Jane Austen, who enjoyed poking fun at conventional attitudes. She took the heroine of *Pride and Prejudice* to Bakewell

⁷² *Derby Mercury*, 18 January 1837.

⁷³ *Derbyshire Courier*, 29 April, 3 June 1843.

⁷⁴ This was followed a week later by the following notice: War Office, July 14 — 4th Dragoon Guards — Lieut. F. W. Arkwright to be Captain by purchase, vice Leigh, who retires.

Derbyshire Courier, 22 July 1843.

⁷⁵ ARK/66.

⁷⁶ ARK/87-9, 93.

⁷⁷ ARK/67.

⁷⁸ J. Pilkington, *A View of the Present State of Derbyshire*, 1789.

for a holiday, and there Elizabeth Bennet, usually a forthright young woman, appears to have succumbed to the climate of opinion. On meeting Darcy on the lawns of Pemberley she found herself tongue-tied and embarrassed: "At last she recollected that she had been travelling and they talked of Matlock and Dovedale with great perseverance".⁷⁹

In trying to assess the impact of these early cotton mills on public opinion, we must remember that they were not all gaunt and grim. It is difficult today to form an idea of the original appearance of the Arkwright mills at Cromford, Matlock and Bakewell. Cromford must always have been cramped; the red brick of Masson is rather startling, but it has interesting points; the approach to Lumford is still charming, but the gas-works and the loss of the upper storeys detract from this site. Calver, on the other hand, retains its dignity, and, from the excellent plates reproduced by Fitton and Wadsworth,⁸⁰ we can see that at Milford and Belper a cotton mill could be a good building.

Some of the deeds and papers in the box of Arkwright documents at Chatsworth merit special comment. There is a short letter in Sir Richard Arkwright's own hand⁸¹ — the contents are not important, but it is of some interest because he found writing so difficult — an early certificate of renunciation of dower⁸² and two copies of the *Manchester Guardian* for January 1840, with the advertisement of the sale of the Bakewell mill and current news, which helps us to understand why it did not sell.⁸³ Attached to a few of the deeds there are diagrams, which often explain a point more clearly than the written account. A plan of the old and new courses of the River Wye showing the cotton mill, corn mill, reservoirs and open fields illuminates the Duke of Rutland's problem in 1786 (Fig. 7).⁸⁴ A marginal sketch of the bridge, connecting the mill with

⁷⁹ Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, chapter 43.

⁸⁰ Fitton and Wadsworth, 70-1, 100-1, 190-1.

⁸¹ ARK/24.

⁸² ARK/68-9.

⁸³ ARK/78-9: the issue for 15 January 1840 gives as its main item of news an account of the Anti-Corn Law League banquet in Manchester; that for 18 January is chiefly concerned with the Chartist rising in Sheffield. Business men were probably not thinking of buying cotton mills.

⁸⁴ ARK/39.

the Ashford and Buxton turnpike, brings out the convenience of the Lumford site,⁸⁵ and another sketch shows Robert Arkwright's land in Longstone, surrounded on three sides by the Duke of Devonshire's property.⁸⁶ The Duke naturally wanted to consolidate his estate, when the Arkwrights left. On one subject there is a good deal of information; from the Particular of Sale of 1840, from schedules of property and tenancy lists we learn that the Arkwrights built over fifty substantial cottages for their workpeople, that they were let at low rents and that a certain number of women were accepted as tenants.⁸⁷ One valuation provides a description of the inside of the mill, and we find that there was a dinner room and a mill school. We would like to know more about that mill school! Making due allowances for the fact that it certainly would have been run on Lancastrian lines, the valuation of 1844 remains startling:

	£	s.	d.
Iron Water Wheel . . .	1,000	0	0
Two school forms . . .		2	0
Box of school books . . .		1	0

We suspect that it was like the Cromford mill school.⁸⁸

The four wages books at Chesterfield relate to the period when Richard Arkwright owned the Lumford mill.⁸⁹ The record is too limited⁹⁰ to justify many generalisations, but we can deduce that trade declined during the Napoleonic Wars, that night spinning went on at first and then was given up, that there was a hierarchy among the workers, with the mechanics at the top of the scale earning from 10s. to 15s. a week, and the waste pickers at the bottom earning from 1s. to 1s. 10d. a week in their cottages and that a system of forfeits was introduced for bad work. Between the workmen and the pickers, who cleaned and reeled the cotton, came the spinners. We can see that family groups worked

⁸⁵ ARK/68-9.

⁸⁶ ARK/67.

⁸⁷ ARK/60-2, 65, 68-9, 80, 83-4, 86, 93.

⁸⁸ ARK/83.

⁸⁹ Arkwright Wages Books, 1786-8, 1793-6, 1804-8, 1808-11. Richard Arkwright left Bakewell for Cromford in 1792, so he would have been concerned only with the first volume.

⁹⁰ Most of the wages books must have been lost in the fire at the mill in 1868. These books were found at Sutton Scarsdale, Robert's home.

in the mill, that beginners received a wage of a shilling or two, but what is surprising is the low wage paid to trained workers, four or five shillings a week.⁹¹ We must remember, however that some of the adult spinners might occupy the firm's cottages and that about 1s. 6d. would be deducted for rent, and that there are very few pages in these account books that do not record some examples of a good wage, earned by sheer hard work. Some useful information emerges from the lists of pickers. In the first two books we find five groups of women working in Bakewell and the district in "the inferior branches" of the cotton trade.⁹² An entry for the week 10 June to 17 June 1786, shows that the Arkwrights were employing 32 Youlgrave pickers, 20 Youlgrave reelers, 9 moat pickers, 12 waste pickers and 27 Bakewell pickers. The mention of the Bakewell pickers is important, for it links the wages books with Bakewell; with a cotton mill in the town it is very unlikely that Bakewell pickers would work for Cromford or Matlock. Payment, of course, depended on results; for 6 lbs. of cotton picked Mary Beresford was paid 1s., for 30 lbs. of cotton Martha Turner was paid 5s., for 48 lbs. of cotton Elizabeth Turner was paid 7s. In the fourth volume there is a slightly different pattern. It covers the years 1808-1811, when, owing to the Continental System and the loss of markets in Europe, the numbers employed in the cotton industry were reduced.⁹³ This happened at the Lumford mill, but the interesting point is that wages went up a little.

The Arkwrights have left us an interesting historical site, where we can study how their generation made use of water power, but they have not had a permanent influ-

⁹¹ Dr. E. Holme, in giving evidence to a Select Committee in 1819, considered that spinners were healthier than weavers, because the spinners' wages were low and stationary so that they could not afford to get drunk! *HLP*, II, 1819, 8-9.

⁹² i.e. the preparatory work carried out in the cottages.

⁹³ Except for the years covered by these books, it is difficult to estimate with any degree of accuracy the numbers employed at Lumford. Contemporary writers give the figures 300-350, but they copied these figures from the preceding travel-book, and, even if they had wanted to be more accurate, they would probably not have been admitted to the mill. How wide of the mark these guesses could be is shown by two references. Glover in *The History and Gazetteer of the County of Derby* (II, 84) in 1833 stated that the Bakewell mill employed between "three and four hundred hands, besides mechanics", whilst in the same year government inspectors in their report gave the Bakewell employment figures at 150-200, fluctuating.

ence on the development of Bakewell. The town has not become an industrial centre, and, in spite of the growth of population, it retains its rural and slightly aristocratic atmosphere.

A Note on the Mason Family.

Little is known about this family, but the following facts have been ascertained. Horatio Mason and his wife, Sarah, belonged to Claughton, Birkenhead, where there was a spinning mill. From the inscription on the tombstone in Baslow churchyard we learn that Horatio and Sarah Mason had five children, Horace and four daughters. Horatio and his family moved to Calver at some date before 1830; he was joint manager of the Calver mill with Mr. Girdom. Glover records that "The cotton mills are worked by Messrs. Mason & Co. who employ about 200 hands".⁹⁴ Horace Mason appears to have worked in the Calver mill.⁹⁵ We can trace Horace Mason's negotiations with Robert Arkwright and his ultimate failure from the Arkwright papers. Twenty years later, when the Rev. Godfrey Harry Arkwright was selling the family property in Bakewell to the Duke of Devonshire, the Arkwright's lawyer, J. Barber of Derby, stated that Horace Mason could not be associated with the deed of sale of 1840; "Mr. Mason was not *compos* at the time and as I learn remained without state".⁹⁶ In 1840, after his son had broken down, Horatio Mason retired from the Calver mill. In 1844 Sarah Mason, Horatio's wife, died and was buried at Baslow. At some date, probably after 1844, it appears that the family returned to their home district. In the *Birkenhead Directory* for 1851 Horatio Mason, Esq., was then living in the town; two of his daughters, Mary Anne and Fanny, were running a preparatory school for young gentlemen. In the *Cheshire Directory* of 1857 we find that the family had moved to Claughton. What happened to Horace Mason between his breakdown in 1839 and his death on 4 May 1877, we do not know.

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⁹⁴ S. Glover, *History of the County of Derby*, II, 1833, 191.

⁹⁵ ARK/64.

⁹⁶ ARK/91.