

## CALVER MILL AND ITS OWNERS

By M. H. MACKENZIE

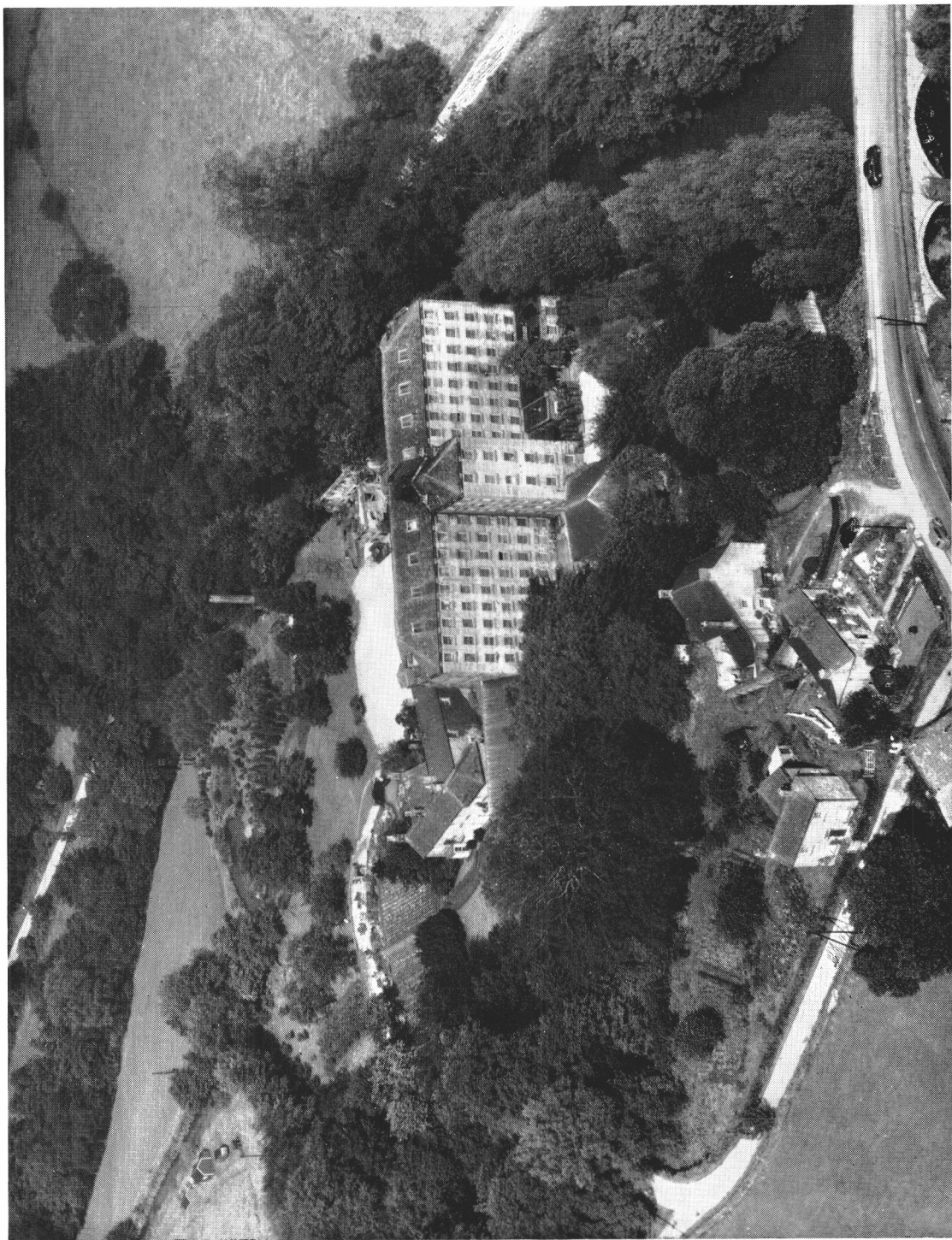
IN 1920 Calver Mill, after running as a water spinning mill for about 130 years, closed down. The water-powered cotton mill was now an interesting anachronism, and Calver survived because the water-wheels were "the best constructed in the county",<sup>1</sup> and Mr. Massey, the last tenant, clung to old-fashioned methods. In 1918 the Leslie family, descendants of the Eyres of Hassop, sold the mill and the surrounding land and, during the next twenty-two years, it changed hands seven times, as one project after another failed to materialize. The original purchaser, Terah Hooley, a financier associated with Horatio Bottomley, went bankrupt shortly after the sale. It was then bought by Charles Markham, who fought a long and bitter lawsuit with Mr. Massey over dilapidations, and then found that the scheme for converting the mill into a hydro-electric power generating station was impracticable; it was to have provided the power for a light railway from Bakewell to Grindleford. His widow sold the property, which, in turn, was bought by the Staveley Coal and Iron Co., by T. W. Ward and Co. and in 1929 by Mr. J. Mudford, rope manufacturer of Sheffield. Here we can pause, for on 15 November the *Yorkshire Telegraph and Star* published an article on its history. Taken from the manuscript of Thomas Goddard, a former workman, it was re-edited three times during the subsequent years, as one scheme after another was put forward for the utilization of the building, but basically it was the same article.<sup>2</sup>

According to the Goddard tradition, the mill was constructed between May 1785 and May 1786 after the expiration or cancellation of the Arkwright patents: that is an important point, so is the list of managers, beginning with John Gardom, but, for the rest, the information is disjointed and is supplied because it seemed quaint or curious. The mill was built without scaffolding: the roof was made in sections in a field by Ellis of Curbar: a bell, placed on a balcony, summoned the hands to work at intervals,<sup>3</sup> but was removed in 1898 because the district was disturbed by the Calver Green-wich: when an attack on the mill was expected at the time of the "Plug" riots in the 1840's, a store of pikes and stones was laid in for the reception

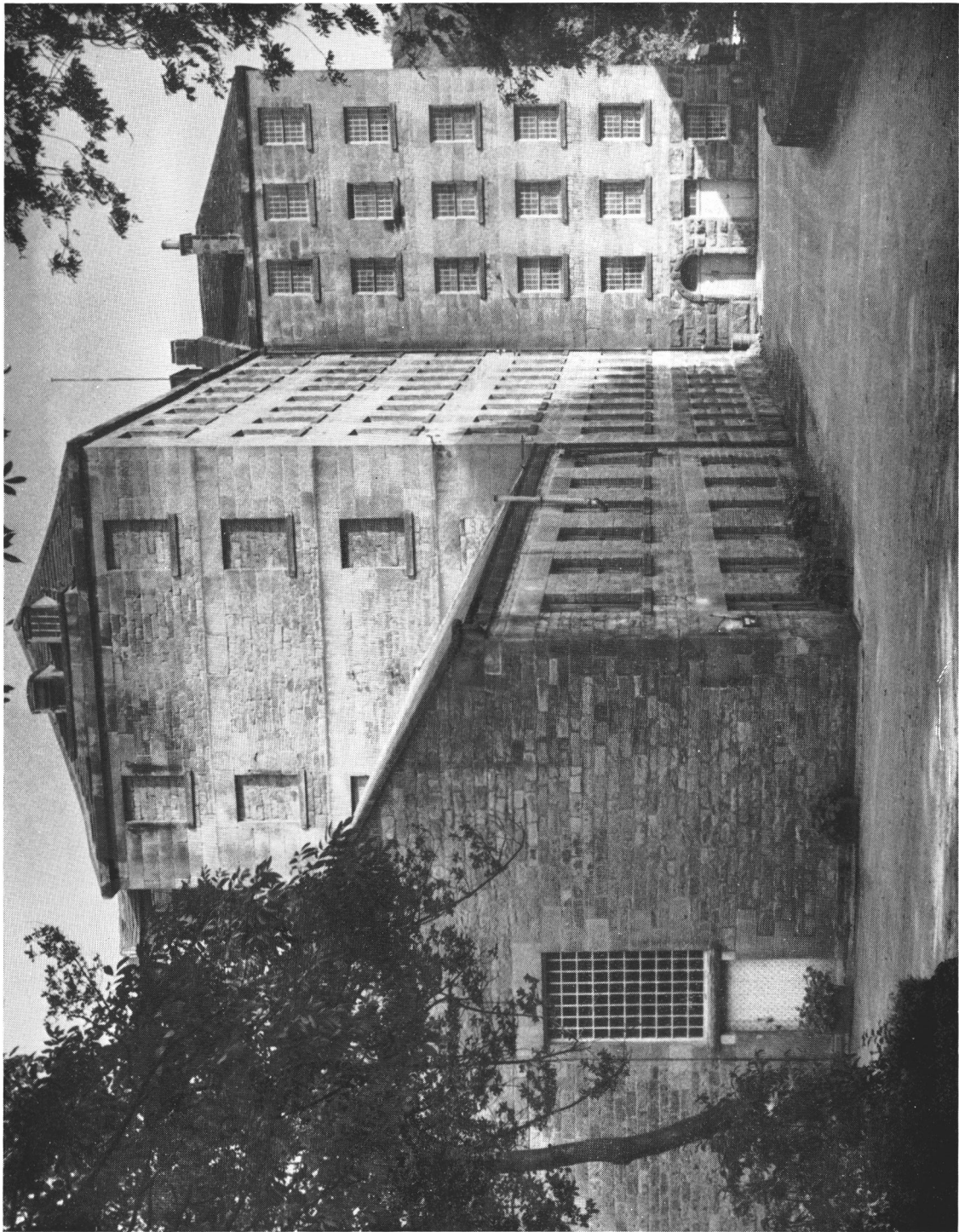
<sup>1</sup> S. Bagshaw, *Directory of Derbyshire*, 1846, 423.

<sup>2</sup> *Daily Independent*, 31 October 1930; *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 25 January 1933; *Derbyshire Countryside*, April 1935.

<sup>3</sup> *Derbyshire Times*, 2 March 1929.



Aerial view of Calver Mill from the south-west.



*(Architectural Review)*

The Big Mill at Calver from the west.

of the rioters: when gas lighting was introduced in 1848 the Baslow band played in the first night of illuminations: when peace was declared after the Crimean War, Calver put out a flag. But on one point Goddard was confused: he did not know, apparently, that the building of 1785-6 was the first mill, burnt out in 1802, and that it was the second mill, rebuilt about 1803-4, he worked in and described.

Calver Mill remained a mysterious place until the Barker Collection in 1961 was catalogued at Sheffield City Library. Deeds and papers have come to light, relating to the business activities of the Gardom family, which give point and meaning to references in travel books, in the maps and correspondence in the Fairbank and Bagshawe Collections and in the *Derby Mercury*. These references are no longer isolated items of information, but have become links in a story. The articles of agreement of 1789<sup>4</sup> is the single most important document relating to Calver's early history, but there is still no authoritative statement on the exact date of the first building.

Before accepting the year May 1785—May 1786 in the Goddard tradition, we must try to understand why this date has been challenged by those who find in the second edition of William Bray's *Tour into Derbyshire and Yorkshire* proof that Calver was built about the year 1782 by Sir Richard Arkwright. This second edition is a confused record. The author copied so much from his first edition, that we can never be sure that he had really traversed a certain stretch of road again, and he picked up some of his information, not from personal observation, but from local gossip which he did not always understand. He was impressed by Sir Richard Arkwright's mills and added to his paragraph on Cromford these two sentences: "A third (mill) is built at Bakewell, another at Calver. Mr. Arkwright was bred a barber, but true genius is superior to all difficulties."<sup>5</sup> Bray had evidently heard about developments at Calver Bridge and jumped to the conclusion that yet another Arkwright mill had been erected, but the weight of evidence is against such a simple explanation of that cryptic remark about Calver. All that we know are the following facts. In 1781 Bailey's *Northern Directory* lists John Gardom and Son, Bakewell, not as "hosiers", but as "yarn and cotton merchants".<sup>6</sup> In 1782 Thomas Gardom, eldest son of John Gardom of Bunnell, probably on the occasion of his marriage, left the family farm, crossed the river and settled at Cliff House, Curbar Cliff.<sup>7</sup> Some people in the district must have known that in 1778 his father had taken a 21 years' lease of the

<sup>4</sup> Barker, Fairbank and Bagshawe Collections in Sheffield City Library; *Derby Mercury* in Derby Borough Library. Barker D.199.

<sup>5</sup> Bray, 2nd ed., 119. The preface to this edition was written in February 1783 so the tour was presumably undertaken in or shortly before 1782.

<sup>6</sup> "Hosier" was the usual description at this date. The Gardoms had always sold yarn. On 9 March 1774 Elizabeth Strutt, who was managing the business in Derby whilst her husband was in London, wrote, "Have ordered a good deal of thread from Gardom . . . We never get any that the men like so well as Gardoms." (Strutt Correspondence in Derby Library.) From 1780 onwards the Gardoms concentrated their resources on the production of yarn; hosiery became a secondary interest.

<sup>7</sup> In 1782 Thomas Gardom's name appears for the first time in the Land Tax assessments as owner of a freehold in Curbar; the amount was nominal, 3d. p.a. Over the years he built up his holdings in Curbar, leasehold and freehold. Land Tax assessments in Derbyshire Record Office, Matlock.

In April 1783 the birth of a son to Thomas Gardom "of Cliff House" is recorded in the Bishop's Transcripts at Lichfield.



Calver Bridge site, recently vacated by the corn mill, from Sir Thomas Eyre for the erection of a cotton spinning mill and have seen in Thomas Gardom the future mill manager, who had moved near to his work.<sup>8</sup> They were quite right, but the mill was not built for several years, because the Gardoms were in a weaker position than the Arkwrights and were biding their time. Some temporary buildings however may have been erected, possibly jenny sheds or a warehouse.

This interesting family was of Dutch extraction — in the 17th and 18th century parish registers the name is spelt GURDOM — and established itself in Edensor, Baslow and Bubnell. The Edensor branch claims the distinction of seniority and of having produced John Gardom, the famous blacksmith, who, according to Francis Thompson, executed much of the ironwork at Chatsworth once attributed to Tijou.<sup>9</sup> It is with the Bubnell branch that we are concerned. In December 1747 John Gardom of Bubnell, hosier, married Sarah Barker of Edensor and brought up his three surviving sons, Thomas, William and George, as hosiers. Already he had opened a bleaching yard in Bakewell, had a partner in Litton, and in 1771 was described by the *Derby Mercury* as “an eminent hosier of Bakewell”.<sup>10</sup>

Accustomed all his life to cottage industry, John Gardom in his old age turned to large-scale production. Perhaps it was the news (that leaked out in November 1777) of the Arkwright's intention of building at Bakewell that galvanized the Gardom family into action.<sup>11</sup> It is significant that the lease at Lumford, Bakewell, from Philip Gell, and the lease at Calver Bridge from Sir Thomas Eyre, both became operative as from Ladyday 1778 for the erection of water spinning mills. Perhaps the suggestion that it would be wise to snap up the Calver site had come from John Pares of Leicester, a wealthy hosier, who carried on a very large manufactory of hose, adjacent to his mansion in the Newarke.<sup>12</sup> John Gardom must have done business with him. But whatever the motive, the siting of the future mill could not have been better. It was excellently placed for labour, in the heart of the lime and lead districts of Calver, Rowland, Hassop and Stoney Middleton, with their surplus population of women and children, and within walking distance of the villages of Curbar and Baslow. Coal, which was needed for the lime kilns, was delivered cheaply and regularly from Chesterfield and Sheffield. It was at the junction of two turnpikes to Chesterfield: true, the old Curbar turnpike was so steep that it was dangerous in winter, but the new turnpike from Sheffield was better routed and avoided precipitous descents. From Chesterfield the yarn would be taken to Leicester. Half a mile along the road lay Calver Sough, the meeting point of the routes to Sheffield and, more important for a cotton mill, to Manchester by way of Stoney

<sup>8</sup> Lead and corn mill in 1752, Bagshawe 243. Closing down of the lead mill in 1770, noted by G. G. Hopkinson, S.C.L. Local Pamphlets, vol. 219, 16. Corn mill moved into premises of lead mill, Fairbank 1831, Bak 1 L, FB. 209, 210; Bagshawe C.252, 674; Barker D.199.

<sup>9</sup> Francis Thompson, *A history of Chatsworth*, 1949, 68, 125.

<sup>10</sup> A note on their record as hosiers is given on p. 34.

<sup>11</sup> M. H. Mackenzie, “The Bakewell Cotton Mill and the Arkwrights”, *D.A.J.*, LXXIX (1959), 61.

<sup>12</sup> C. J. Billson, *Leicester Memoirs*, 20-1.

Middleton, Tideswell, Chapel-en-le-Frith and Stockport.<sup>13</sup> The Arkwrights' mills fed the Strutts' mills, but now a rival system was being planned.

John Gardom, immersed in the problems of his hosiery business, his refractory framework knitters and dishonest customers, acted with deliberation. His resources were limited and, in addition to building costs, he almost certainly could not afford to pay royalties at the rate of £7,000 per 1,000 spindles for the use of the Arkwright machines. Living on the edge of the Arkwright country, he must have watched the position closely. The patent for the much coveted carding frame had been successfully challenged in the summer of 1781, and the patent for the water-frame had run its course and expired in 1783, but John Gardom did not begin building till May 1785, if the Goddard tradition is right. At first sight May 1785 seems an odd date, for in the previous February Sir Richard Arkwright had recovered his carding rights. For a factory relying on the use of water-frames, it would now be necessary to wait until 1789 for the expiration of the carding patent, but John Gardom took the risk and was justified by events. So strong was feeling in the cotton industry against the renewal of this monopoly, that in July 1785 Lancashire manufacturers got the case reopened, the judgment reversed and the patent cancelled. By his delaying tactics, he had evaded paying royalties or being summoned for infringing the patent.<sup>14</sup>

The scraps of information we can collect about Gardom finances at this time suggest that great economy was necessary. In 1771 John Gardom, now a widower, had married Christian Chappell of Youlgreave, who according to the *Derby Mercury* was "an agreeable widow lady with a genteel fortune".<sup>15</sup> He must have wished her fortune had been larger! In 1779 she may have put some of her "genteel" estate into her husband's new venture: we find a settlement of her property being made "to such uses as John and Christian Gardom and Benjamin Chappell (her nephew) shall direct".<sup>16</sup> The theory that local labour was employed is supported by Thomas Goddard's story of the making of the roof in sections in a field at Curbar and by the absence of advertisements for workmen by the Gardoms in the local press. The Arkwrights, the Strutts and Peter Nightingale of Lea frequently advertised in the *Derby Mercury* for stone masons, joiners, smiths and labourers, painting a rosy picture of the excellent conditions awaiting good workmen. There are anonymous advertisements, but these usually suggest that the advertiser has to be secretive, because he is not very well off. Two references in the Baslow churchwardens' accounts to Thomas Gardom's activities in 1788 show that he was using the labour force, which he had collected to erect the mill, to make a little money by undertaking building and carpentry

<sup>13</sup> *Derbyshire Times*, 2 March 1929, has an interesting description of the two wagons setting out from Calver Mill with the yarn by this route and returning from Manchester with the raw cotton.

Communication by road was adequate for the cotton mill, but not for the heavy industries. A canal was projected to export lime and import coal from and to Calver Sough.

Bray, 1st ed. 1778, 99; S. Glover, *History and Gazetteer*, 222, 368; J. Farey, *A General View of the Agriculture and Minerals of Derbyshire*, III, 225, 309-12; E. Rhodes, *Peak Scenery*, III, 63.

<sup>14</sup> R. S. Fitton and A. P. Wadsworth, *The Strutts and the Arkwrights*, 1958, 86, 93.

<sup>15</sup> *Derby Mercury*, 20 September 1771.

<sup>16</sup> Barker D.526.

jobs at Stanton Ford School. The first amount was a substantial sum, £15 12s. 0d. The second entry was for a small amount, but it is exceedingly important, because it indicates that Thomas Gardom had called in outside help and that a fundamental change had taken place in the management of the newly-built mill:

"1788. Gardom, Pares and Co. account for work at Ford School — To one deal plank 14 ft. to make school table 4/5."<sup>17</sup>

John Gardom had died in March 1788 and his will was proved at Bakewell in October of the same year, probably after controversy. His two elder sons accepted their responsibilities as executors, but his Barker brother-in-law of Edensor, did not.<sup>18</sup> Within a few months John Pares of Leicester had slipped into the position of third executor. By the end of that year the partnership of Gardom, Pares and Co. was in existence, and by the next year its membership was extended and its obligations defined as the Calver Mill Co.

The articles of agreement were signed on 7 October 1789, and, in effect, extended the partnership existing between John Pares and the three Gardom brothers to George Rickards of Calver Mill and James Heygate, John Pares' London partner.<sup>19</sup> They agreed to work the new cotton mill for the remainder of the term of 21 years on a basis of profit and loss in the following proportions: John Pares and Thomas Gardom shouldered half the burden, and the remaining four partners an eighth part each. Provisions were made for the proper keeping of accounts in ledgers, which were to be balanced in October every year, showing the amount of capital invested in the firm and the profit and loss thereon. We can see how starved of capital the mill had been in the first three years as it was necessary for the partners to advance a loan of £17,039. 17s. 6d. at 5%.<sup>20</sup> Some yarn would have been earmarked for the local hosiery business and the Manchester trade, but the bulk of Calver's output would have been sent to Leicester, where John Pares organized its distribution in the cottages and the sale of the finished article, sending surplus stock to the London warehouse in Aldermanbury.<sup>21</sup>

James Pilkington, who had been collecting material for several years, published his book on Derbyshire in July 1789. He probably knew nothing of these developments and simply observed that a large cotton mill had been built several years earlier at a place between Bubnell, Froggatt, Curbar and Calver, and that it provided "considerable employment to the inhabitants of the neighbouring country".<sup>22</sup> This testimony is useful, but again it is inconclusive as to the exact date of the building.

So Calver Mill was built and financed, but, though it was destined to work for over 130 years, night and day for much of the time according to tradi-

<sup>17</sup> C. R. Allcock, MS. history of Baslow, 90, 70.

<sup>18</sup> Will of John Gardom, Lichfield Diocesan Registry.

<sup>19</sup> George Rickards is first described as "of Calver Mill", and later as "of Baslow". It is impossible to say whether he was simply a partner, or whether he held an executive position at the mill. James Heygate was a banker, hosier and promoter of cotton mills. Billson, 15-26.

<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately none of these ledgers has survived. Barker D.199.

<sup>21</sup> Billson, 21.

<sup>22</sup> J. Pilkington, *A view of the present state of Derbyshire*, 1789, II, 421-2, 429.

tion, it never enjoyed the halcyon years when profits at Cromford had been "immense", and at Bakewell £20,000 p.a.<sup>23</sup> We do not know if Calver spun coarse or fine (probably coarse), but it was late in starting for Crompton had put his mule on the market in 1779. This was a more versatile machine than the water-frame: it could spin yarn that was both strong and fine.

The three Gardom brothers now described themselves as "cotton spinners", though William looked after the bleaching yard at Bakewell and George the hosiery business at Bubnell, where he lived. In their own circle they were very much respected and were responsible for starting in Baslow a Society for the Prosecution of Felons which still exists.<sup>24</sup> At a time when there was no effective police force, these local self-help groups did something to protect the propertied classes against theft and deeds of violence. The Gardoms all attained the rank of gentleman, served as jurors and invested what savings they could in land, but they never acquired the status of country squires, as did the Arkwrights. George seems to have been the one with social aspirations; in 1803 he appears, from the sharp increase in his land tax assessment and from his will, to have spent money on the improvement of his farm, and he achieved the distinction of being mentioned three times in the marriage and obituary notices of the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1797, 1801 and 1813.

From 1799 to 1802 the Gardoms had a run of bad luck. In August 1799 the Derwent overflowed its banks and swept away Calver Bridge presumably with the toll-bar.<sup>25</sup> The county was responsible for reconstruction, but the interruptions to communications, just outside the mill yard, must have injured the Gardoms' trade. In the spring of 1800 William of the Bleaching Yard House died. He left a wife and two children, who had to be provided for until the boy, another William, attained the age of 21.<sup>26</sup> The two trustees, his brother-in-law, Nicholas Broomhead of Baslow, and his personal friend, Horatio Mason of Calver Mill, who was becoming increasingly influential in Gardom circles,<sup>27</sup> must have done their best to keep the business together, but it began to go down. The third blow fell on 17 May 1802, when during a severe snowstorm the mill was burnt to the ground. This is the account from the *Derby Mercury*:

"On Sunday last, a dreadful fire broke out in a large cotton mill, situate near Calver Bridge, in this county, belonging to Messrs. Gardom, Pares and Company, which entirely consumed the building and the greatest part of the machinery."

The cost of rebuilding the mill must have fallen mainly on John Pares and James Heygate, and it probably was not insured.<sup>28</sup> They evidently thought that it was still a desirable investment, but they enlarged its scope: it was

<sup>23</sup> Pilkington, II, 306; F. Espinasse, *Lancashire Worthies*, I, 463.

<sup>24</sup> Colonel Thomas Gardom of the Baslow Volunteers received the regimental colours from Georgiana, duchess of Devonshire. *Derby Mercury*, 26 September 1793.

<sup>25</sup> Allcock, 35.

<sup>26</sup> Copy of the will 6 September 1799, Barker 60040/7.

<sup>27</sup> First reference to Horatio Mason of Calver on his marriage, *Derby Mercury*, 1 June 1797. He had probably been in the Gardoms' service before this date. He was named as an executor by both William and George Gardom.

<sup>28</sup> Calver Mill was not insured by the Sun, the Royal Exchange, the Phoenix or the Hand in Hand. Horatio Mason became an agent for the Eagle Insurance Co. in 1810. *Derby Mercury*, 19 July 1810.



to be a cotton mill and country bank. They were becoming increasingly interested in banking, and about the year 1800 they had turned the hosiery warehouse in Aldermanbury into a "banking shop".<sup>29</sup> The second Calver Mill is the six-storey building we know, and with its counting-house and wheel-house, it must have merited the description of "a handsome cotton mill".<sup>30</sup> We can fix the date of the rebuilding from the Visitors' reports. These Visitors were appointed in pursuance of Sir Robert Peel's Act of 1802, which ordered that they should examine conditions in cotton mills to find out primarily how parish apprentices were treated and secondly how children coming from their own homes fared. We know that the mill was in production again in 1805, because it is on the Visitors' lists for that year. In 1807 it was inspected and got a good report:

"Calver — No Apprentices. Everything remarkably neat and in order, except the want of the Act of Parliament respecting mills and factories."

Joseph Denman.

S. Middleton.<sup>31</sup>

This was a fresh start, but, in the face of the French Wars and the Continental System, it was not enough to enable the Gardoms to stabilize their finances. Young William Gardom of the Bleaching Yard House came of age in 1807 and inherited slender resources and heavy debts: he had to find money for his mother's annuity, his sister's marriage portion and his uncle's advances to Gardom, Pares and Co. made on his behalf in respect of his share in the firm. In 1817 he sold up and went into business in Manchester.<sup>32</sup> George Gardom of Bubnell had died in 1813, and Thomas Gardom of the Cliff died in 1817, having made a brave attempt to leave his family reasonably well off, but it later transpired that his estate was encumbered with a debt of £2,600, which had dogged his footsteps since 1807.<sup>33</sup> Except for James Longsdon, the brother-in-law, no member of the family now had an interest in the mill. None of the younger generation joined the firm. Thomas' son, John, had been manager of Calver Mill for some years, but, on his father's death, he apparently preferred the life of a farmer at Bubnell Hall.<sup>34</sup> As we have seen, William Gardom, junior, had realized that there was no livelihood for him at Calver, and George's son had died.<sup>35</sup> Horatio Mason, who had been right-hand man at the mill for over twenty years, stepped into the gap and became responsible for the management at Calver.

He lived with his large family at the mill house and was a well known figure in the district, prominent in good works and acting as trustee for innumerable small charities connected with the church and the poor. He seems to have been a hard working manager. When the Bleaching Yard House was given up by William Gardom, junior, he may have been responsible for building the small mill at Calver for bleaching. He planned the cutting

<sup>29</sup> Billson, 22.

<sup>30</sup> S. Glover, *The Peak Guide*, 1830, sketch 8.

<sup>31</sup> *Lords' Papers*, 1819, III (66), appendix 6-9; appendix G, 48, 1 August 1807.

<sup>32</sup> Barker D.200, 274, 296-9, 307.

<sup>33</sup> P.R.O. C.13/463.

<sup>34</sup> Will of Thomas Gardom, 12 September 1812, Lichfield. P.R.O. C.13/463.

<sup>35</sup> Will of George Gardom.

of the new goit in 1833.<sup>36</sup> The number of workers at this time was about 200,<sup>37</sup> and he took his responsibilities towards the mill community seriously. Social services were not as advanced at Calver as at Bakewell, Cromford or Belper, but they did exist under the Mill Company. The management may have paid for visits from the dispensary doctor at Bakewell. The housing problem was not acute, for many of the workers lived in neighbouring villages, but Thomas Gardom had settled some families near the mill in London Row, Curbar,<sup>38</sup> and the leasing of these properties would be at the discretion of the manager. But what was interesting about Horatio Mason's administration was the establishment of a Sunday School and his handling of the banking side of the business.

The school building with its belfry still bears witness to his work as a promoter of Sunday Schools. With the passing of the 1833 Factory Act we move into an age of registers, certificates and inspectors. Every child, on entering the mill, had to be "certified" by the mill doctor that he was fit for work in a factory, and between the ages of nine and eleven had to produce a certificate on Monday morning that he had been "schooled" the previous week. The Sunday School now was a valuable asset, for on the six days of the week it became the mill school, where the youngest group received the statutory two hours' instruction each day. The four harassed inspectors and their assistants, responsible for covering the British Isles, were so overworked that they could only pick out excellence — as at Cressbrook and Belper — and flagrant breaches of the law. They visited Calver from time to time and must have found conditions in the mill adequate as there was no adverse comment. But in 1839 an inspector wrote a full and interesting report on the mill school and on the educational theories of Horatio Mason's formidable family.<sup>39</sup> The education was designed to teach the little mill hands to read the bible and to learn the lesson of "subordination". Bright boys and girls and regular attenders at Sunday School were promoted to writing, but there is no mention of arithmetic. "We are of opinion," the family informed the inspector, "that it is more conducive to the welfare of our people to endeavour to make them enlightened Christians than wise in worldly knowledge; we do not want statesmen in our factories but orderly subjects." But there was a more human side to the Calver mill school, and they continued: "We endeavour to give relaxation to the body during the school hours, by letting the children sit, or, if convenient, allowing them to lie down occasionally, of course at the discretion of the teacher, upon whom the whole welfare of the school depends . . ."

The story of Horatio Mason's bankruptcy illustrates the dangers inherent in a mortgage business in the early decades of the 19th century, when the

<sup>36</sup> Bagshawe, 675.

<sup>37</sup> Glover, *History and Gazetteer*, 222-3.

<sup>38</sup> The mill property is marked in Horace Mason's name on a survey in 1831; the reason is not clear. Fairbank, Bak. 1 L: FB. 209, 210.

<sup>39</sup> Horatio Mason's son, Horace, manager of the Bakewell Mill was prosecuted in 1836 for overworking children. PF. 331.3 F2, 24-5; PF. 331.82 H1; PP. 333 F3, 4 September; PF. 331.82 H1, 20 February 1839, 51. Manchester Central Library.

country banker was often inexperienced and impecunious. In 1824 John Pares and James Heygate retired, leaving the two younger members of the Heygate family and Horatio Mason to carry on the Calver Mill Co. The latter was jubilant and in a buoyant mood wrote to Captain Jonathan Peake, for whom, over the years, he had acted as guardian, trustee and banker:

"11th July, 1824.

We stand in an excellent position, having possession of the premises carrying on the business under the firm of Heygate Mason & Co. with a distinct capital and an entire new set of books . . ."<sup>40</sup>

He did not realize that he was only a country banker and cotton spinner, and that he was now in partnership with an eminent financier. Alderman of the City of London and Lord Mayor in 1822, Tory M.P. for Sudbury 1820-6, Sir William Heygate was versatile and philanthropic, but ruthless to inefficiency or an attack on his interests.<sup>41</sup> He claimed that during the fifteen years of their association in the Calver Mill Co. he had rarely interfered with Horatio Mason's management, but by 1834 it is clear that he distrusted it. At a time when Horatio Mason admitted he was selling little yarn, expenses increased. In 1830 he must have advanced over £9,000 to establish his son, Horace, at the Arkwright cotton mill at Bakewell.<sup>42</sup> That was his own money, but the cutting of the new goit in 1834 and the raising of the rent from £100 to £367 p.a. were liabilities on the firm.<sup>43</sup> But what made Sir William Heygate uneasy were his partner's banking methods, especially with regard to Captain Jonathan Peake's mortgage. In 1807 this young man's estate of £2,600 had been deposited by his guardians in the Calver Mill Co. at 5% and, while he was serving with his regiment abroad and receiving the interest regularly, he had no idea that his capital was not safe. Thomas Gardom had drawn on it to an amount that took his executors ten years to pay back to the firm, and now Horatio Mason was nibbling at it. Sir William Heygate saw that if he and Captain Peake simultaneously demanded their money, they would not both be paid: he determined to be first. In November 1834 he proposed dissolution of partnership and claimed £16,700 as his share in the mill. He did not enforce his demands at once, partly because he thought his threat would be sufficient to make Horatio Mason resign and partly out of consideration for the Mason family, who during the next four years had a distracting time. In 1838 Horace Mason, who had been floundering at the Bakewell Mill, broke down completely,<sup>44</sup> and in the spring of 1839 Sir William Heygate insisted on payment, a step which so depleted Horatio Mason's resources that he could not save himself from bankruptcy.<sup>45</sup> Captain Peake

<sup>40</sup> In July 1841 Captain Jonathan Peake began an action against Sir William Heygate and Horatio Mason in the Court of the Exchequer of Pleas for the repayment of his capital. As a defensive measure in January 1842, Sir William Heygate exhibited a bill of complaint in Chancery which produced a voluminous correspondence. The main facts related below are taken from this case. P.R.O. C.13/463.

<sup>41</sup> He was an expert in cotton finance. His mother was an Unwin and his father had promoted mills in Notts. A. Beaven, *Aldermen of the City of London*, II, 142; Billson, 23-4.

<sup>42</sup> *D.A.J.*, LXXIX (1959), 65.

<sup>43</sup> Bagshawe C.252.

<sup>44</sup> *D.A.J.*, LXXIX (1959), 79.

<sup>45</sup> *Derby Mercury*, July 1839.

now discovered that his trusted friend and guardian was a bankrupt, and that the partnership had been dissolved, that Sir William Heygate repudiated responsibility and that he stood to lose all his capital. It took him three years to establish his case against the Company.

Meanwhile having evicted Horatio Mason, Sir William Heygate was anxious to keep the mill: the water power was excellent and the running costs low. Between 1840 and 1844 he paid off the arrears of rent, negotiated a new lease with the Earl of Newburgh<sup>46</sup> and brought in his son. A few months after he had completed the reform of the Calver Mill Co. he died. His son, Unwin Heygate, in partnership with Mr. Bentley, installed gas and modernized the mill.<sup>47</sup>

The most interesting record of Calver Mill in the middle of the 19th century is the diary of Dr. E. M. Wrench of Park Lodge, Baslow. He was the mill doctor and through his entries for 1863 we catch a glimpse of Calver at work and play and under the shadow of a smallpox epidemic.

- Jan. 10th After breakfast to Calver Mill to certify some children when Mr. Brown, the overseer, showed my brother and myself the works at Calver Mill — very interesting.
- Feb. 17th . . . all the villages gone mad on battledore and shuttlecock, or rather I should say all the females in the village — at Calver I saw upwards of 50 women and girls playing.
- June 22nd To Calver after dinner to see a son of Mr. Fletcher's servant who has been sent home from Sheffield with smallpox.
- June 29th To Calver in the afternoon — found my smallpox patient in the public house. Thus people spread infection.
- Nov. 20th To Curbar again after lunch — the death of poor Brocklehurst from smallpox has caused quite a panic in the village and tonight I found great cauldrons of boiling pitch burning to prevent infection.
- Dec. 1st In the morning at Calver where I vaccinated 15 in the school.

After 1850 the management was taken over in turn by Greg & Co., Tolson, Gibb, Kershaw and Massey, who in 1920 surrendered his lease to Charles Markham. As we have seen, in the following years no useful purpose could be found for Calver Mill, but in 1940 it was taken over by the Ministry of Supply for storage. In 1945 Mr. J. Mudford sold the premises to Mr. H. G. Sissons, Director of Calver Mill Estate Ltd., for the manufacture of stainless steel sinks. The demands of industrial efficiency and industrial archaeology clashed, but Mr. Sissons happily solved this problem. By keeping the walls but removing the old floors so that the inside could be rebuilt as a modern factory, on a purely functional basis he has been able to preserve the fabric of this interesting building and the site whilst bringing employment back to the district.

<sup>46</sup> Bagshawe C.371.

<sup>47</sup> Bagshaw, *Directory*, 423.



## A NOTE ON THE GARDOMS AS HOSIERS

Unfortunately we know practically nothing about the details of the Gardoms' hosiery business. It would be interesting to know how many frames the family let out to the cottagers and on what terms. But we can build up a general picture of how this little domestic firm was organized and of the kind of problems it had to face. Living in Bubnell, a noted centre of framework knitting (Farey, III, 487), John Gardom was well placed to do business with Litton, another centre of the trade according to the Tideswell parish registers, and, in turn, with Bakewell. As early as 1744 John Gardom and his partner, John Baker, had bought a property in the Bakewell open fields (Barker D.278) and had developed it "for a whitening croft or bleaching yard", erecting buildings "used as warehouses and workshops in the trade . . . of hosiery" (Barker D.277). The first of the Barker deeds raises a difficulty. In 1744 John Gardom and John Baker are described as "framework knitters of Litton". John Baker belonged to Litton and John Gardom had business connections with the place, but framework knitters were usually humble people, the employees of the hosiers (Barker D.278). Perhaps this phrase is a slip; it is the only time it is used. John Gardom, hosier, certainly belonged to the managerial class. We can see from the account in the *Derby Mercury* of a robbery from the Gardoms' bleaching yard that this new venture must have enlarged the scope of their trade: they were bleaching not only yarn for hose, but also long lengths of cotton and linen sheetings. (20 July 1770.) Later this side of the business was taken over by William, the second son. With the death of John Baker of Litton in 1783, and probably before, the partnership came to an end, and the firm was now known as "Gardom and Sons". In that year Gardom and Sons joined with the Chesterfield and Litton hosiers to warn the public that they were going to invoke the full rigours of the law — a fine of over £20 or three months in the house of correction — if customers bought hose privately from workmen, who had received yarn for hosiers' orders. There is no evidence of the part the Gardoms played in 1771 or 1778 at the time of the framework knitters' petition for higher wages, but we can be sure that they were on the side of management.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to Mr. H. G. Sissons for the personal interest he has taken in this project and for his unfailing helpfulness; to Miss V. Parker for her stimulating suggestions on fields of research; to Mr. C. R. Allcock for his great generosity in lending me his manuscript history of Baslow; to Mrs. I. Wright for her ready help in inspecting Bakewell parish registers; to the Rev. Francis Gardom for the information he has supplied about his family; to the archivist of the Westminster Bank for searching his records on my behalf; to Mr. E. G. Wrench for allowing me to transcribe extracts from his grandfather's diary; to the staffs of the Sheffield Central Library, the Derby Borough Library and the Derbyshire Record Office, for their excellent service; to the staffs of the Sun, the Royal Exchange, the Phoenix and the Eagle Assurance Companies for letting me examine their policy books or making the search on my behalf; and to the editor for his help and encouragement.