

THOMAS TAYLOR AND LOW MILL

By John Berry – October 2007

Introduction

The village of Staveley in Westmorland has been known for many years as the centre of the bobbin making industry during the Victorian period. Within that history the largest bobbin producer was Chadwick's mill in the centre of the village, employing over 200 workers at its height. Despite extensive research for 'A Lakeland Valley Through Time' in the early 1990s, little is known about the person who built this mill or of its early existence. This paper investigates this early history, and that of the person who built (or commissioned the building of) the mill which eventually expanded to become Chadwick's.

The first mill making bobbins at Staveley was on the River Kent at Barley Bridge in 1797, part of the cotton mill complex started in 1785 by Matthew Roddick, a Kendal linen Dealer¹. In the early part of the 19th century it was owned by Thomas Cookson. Bobbin making was reputedly carried out in the old fulling mill nearest to the bridge².

In 1816, a man called John Hirst, from Horbury in Yorkshire built a woollen mill on Staveley's other river, the Gowan, then known as Staveley Beck. In a small section of this mill Hirst's son in law, Thomas Taylor was making bobbins in 1822. Taylor had employed not only two experienced 'journeymen' but had also taken on a number of apprentices, many more than were required to service the mill. This resulted in a petition from the local yeomen to the Lord of the Manor, suggesting that this could lead to an increase in pauperism³.

In the 1822 petition, Thomas Taylor is accused of operating a bobbin manufacturing operation in part of Hirst's mill (later known as Rawes Mill after it was purchased by Richard Rawes). He *keeps no more than two Journeymen, has seven Apprentices under Indentures and three or four more ready to be bound*. The petitioners felt that this was unsustainable – presumably having regard to the size of the part of the mill given over to Bobbin production.

Low Mill

Although firm evidence has yet to be found, it would appear that following this petition, Taylor (no doubt assisted by his father in law) decided to build his own Bobbin Mill on land to the north-east of the village which he owned. Taylor did in fact own virtually all the land between the village and the river from the tenter field adjacent to Barley Bridge mill, right through to the Ayland⁴. He is shown as a Bobbin Manufacturer in Over Staveley in the 1829 trade directory⁵ and it is likely that the mill was completed in about 1825. Later documentary evidence⁶ links Taylor with the construction of the weir which served the mill, so it is almost certain that he built the mill itself.

Taylor however did not live to see the great expansion of the mill. He died in 1832⁷ and the lease of the mill was advertised by his executors. The Westmorland Gazette of 27th October 1832 (just one week after his death) carried the advertisement shown on page 2. It is clear from the wording of the third paragraph that the auctioneers still did not see a future for bobbin making.

The 1836 Corn Rent Schedule⁴ shows Thomas's executors' land and 'Low Mill' on field 65. The drawing of the buildings of the mill itself agrees with the dimensions in the advertisement, powered by a waterwheel, with a long leat taking water from the dam towards the north end of Taylor's land. (The current weir was not in existence in 1836). Adjacent to the mill is another building, probably a cottage for the workers. It could be that part of the mill is incorporated in today's 'office' block. A similar drawing is shown in the plans for the Kendal & Windermere Railway in 1844.

Benjamin Turton is shown as the occupier of the Mill, and was successful in bidding for the mill when the lease was put up for sale by Taylor's executors. Turton also came from Horbury and was previously at a mill in nearby Crook¹. Under Turton, the mill continued to develop. Turton managed to finance the building of a large house (Bridge House) on the opposite side of the river to the mill. The success of the business attracted the

attention of the Chadwick brothers who owned a large cotton mill at Eagley, near Bolton. When Taylor's executors were relieved of the need to support Taylor's children (the youngest, Thomas Ullock, was 21 in 1850) they agreed to sell the mill and the adjacent two fields to Chadwicks.

BOBBIN MILL ETC TO LET

To be let by ticket

FOR A TERM OF YEARS

At the Kings Arms Inn in Staveley in the County of Westmorland on Tuesday the Sixth of November 1832 at Four o'clock in the afternoon, with immediate possession if required.

ALL that valuable and extensive **BOBBIN MILL** situate at Staveley aforesaid, lately in the occupation of Mr Thomas Taylor, deceased.

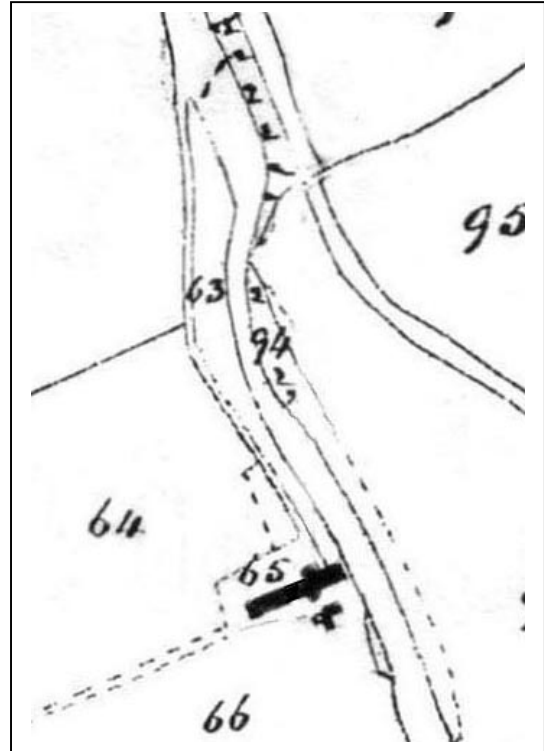
The premises are Twenty-seven yards long and Eight yards wide; Two stories high: with Three Saws and One Lathe on the first floor, and Twenty Three Lathes and One Saw on the second floor: are well supplied with a never failing stream of water, and may be converted into a woollen mill at a trifling expense.

The whole of the Machinery and such part of the Stock as the Taker may think proper, to be taken at a valuation: and the remainder of such valuation may remain in the Taker's hands, on his giving good security for the same.

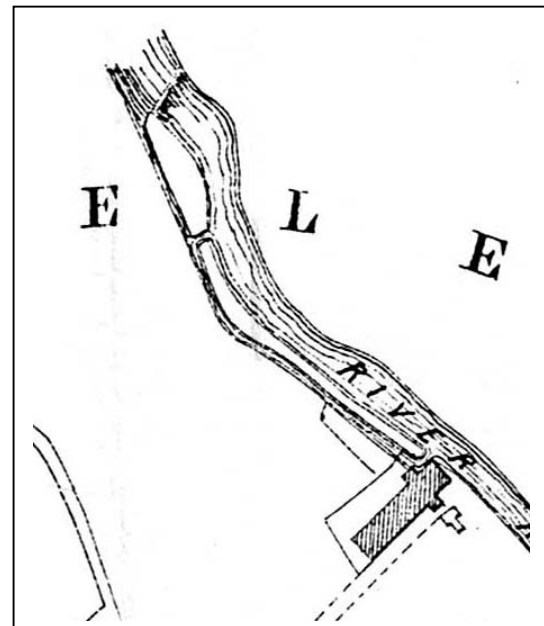
Also those **TWO FIELDS** adjoining the mill containing together about Seven Acres, and another **FIELD** on Staveley Banks containing One Acre or thereabouts, be the same more or less, lately in the occupation of Mr Thomas Taylor, deceased.

Further particulars may be known on application at the Mill, to Messrs BENJAMIN ATKINSON and THOMAS ULLOCK, Devisees in Trust of the said Thomas Taylor, or to Mr PENNINGTON, Solicitor, Kendal.

All Persons to whom the said Thomas Taylor stood indebted at the time of his decease, are to send their Accounts to the said BENJAMIN ATKINSON and THOMAS ULLOCK And all Persons indebted to the estate of the said Thomas Taylor, are to pay what the severally owe to the said Trustees, or they will be sued.



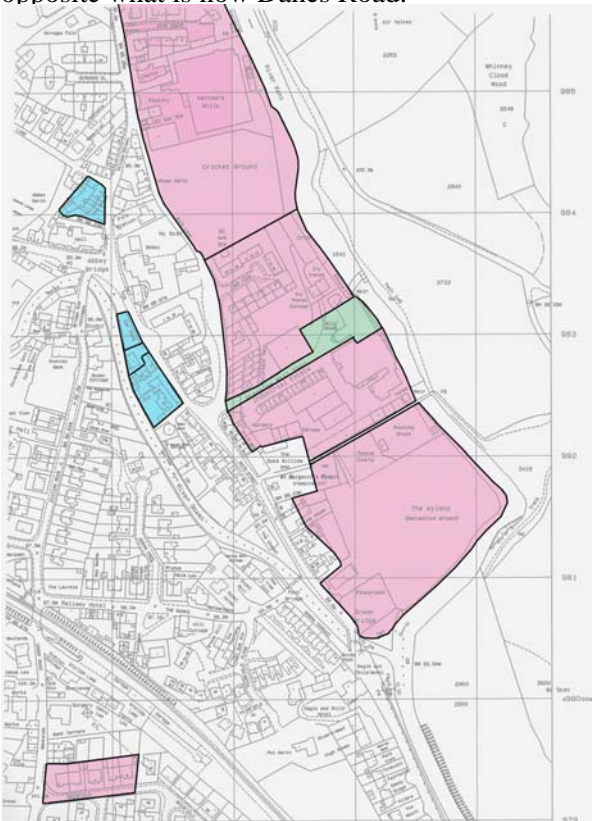
Above is an extract from the 1836 Corn Rent map and below is the same area taken from the plans of the Kendal & Windermere Railway, 1844⁸.



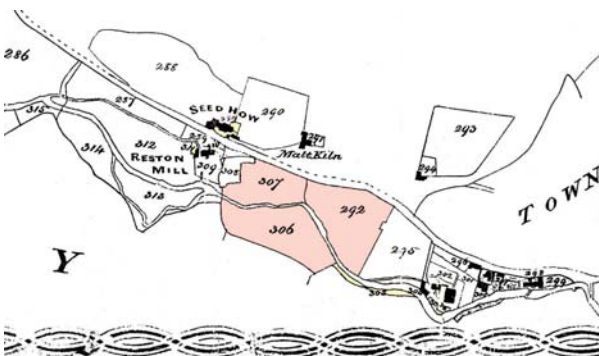
Some three years after this purchase, Chadwicks bought more land on the opposite side of the river to create a new weir which remains to this day⁶. Taylor's weir was abandoned, though it remained in situ for a number of years. Chadwicks built more buildings on the adjacent fields and the mill developed to reach its peak by about 1870. The remainder of the history of the mill is well documented elsewhere⁹

Taylor's land and buildings

Taylor's land holdings are shown in plan below. Besides the land, and the Old Vicarage on Main Street (together with the old barn at the rear) Taylor also owned the six cottages in Alec Row (referred to as Taylor's Row in the 1891 census) and 5 more on The Green. In Nether Staveley he owned the Bankside allotments, resulting from an award in the 1816 Enclosure Act¹⁰. Presumably Thomas had some grazing rights on the common prior to enclosure. In Hugill he owned three fields opposite what is now Danes Road.



Taylor's land ownership in Over and Nether Staveley superimposed on a modern map (pink is agricultural land; blue residential and green the original industrial part)



Taylor's land in Hugill parish, as shown on the 1836 Corn Rent map

Thomas Taylor's Family

Thomas Taylor was born in 1786 (baptised on 25th April) in Kendal¹¹ – and came to Staveley around 1810 where he married Mary Hirst, daughter of the John Hirst who built Rawes Mill. John Hirst was born in 1764 in Horbury (Wakefield) and died in Staveley in 1845 aged 80¹²; his wife Elizabeth had died in 1827. Thomas' parents were John Taylor of Kendal and Mary Ullock of Windermere. The Ullocks were landlords of the 'White Lion' in Bowness and the family subsequently went on to build the Royal Hotel¹³.

Thomas and his wife had ten children¹⁴; one son died in infancy and two daughters died in 1833, less than a year after Thomas himself died on 19th October 1832, aged only 46. It is understood there was an epidemic of Cholera in the country in 1832¹⁵.

Name	Born	Christened	Buried
Mary Elizabeth		22 May 1814	
Jane		24 Dec 1815	13 May 1833
Margaret		23 Mar 1817	
Charlotte	2 Aug 1818	23 Aug 1818	8 July 1884*
John Hirst		18 June 1820	
Rebecca	8 Jan 1822	4 Mar 1822	
Ann		2 Feb 1823	6 May 1833
Thomas Ullock		30 Oct 1824	19 Jul 1825
Dorothy	14 Feb 1827	4 April 1827	
Thomas Ullock		29 June 1829	22 Apr 1870*

* indicates date of death, not burial

The family continued to live in the family house (the 'Old Vicarage' on Main Street) as the 1836 Corn Rent Schedules show 'Miss Taylor' as the head of the family. On the 2nd March 1835 Mary, Thomas' widow, married John Winder of Kendal and moved away from the area. She eventually died on 14th November 1872 in Lancaster. There is a family tombstone in St Margaret's Churchyard with the following inscription:

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF
 THOMAS TAYLOR
 Departed this life on the 19th October 1832.
 Aged 46

*One Truth o'er these Remains below,
 More lasting Honour will bestow,
 Than Lineage, Wealth or Grandeur can,
 Here lies interred an honest Man.
 Also his infant Son*

who departed this life 17th of July 1825.

Aged 9 months.

Also his daughter Ann who departed this life on the 3rd of May 1833. Aged 10.

Also his daughter Jane who departed this life on the 13th May 1833. Aged 17.

Also of THOMAS ULLOCK his Son, who died in *Australia*, on the 22nd April 1870.

Aged 40

Also of MARY his Widow who died at *Lancaster* on the 14th November 1872. Aged 80.



The tombstone in St. Margaret's Churchyard

It would appear that the remaining family then moved to Bowness; in the 1841 census, second eldest daughter Margaret is shown as head of the family, together with younger sister Rebecca and brother Thomas Ullock. Two other sisters, Charlotte and Dorothy, appear in Crosthwaite (Cumberland) as teachers. Back in Staveley, the family house is now the home of James Elleray, the Staveley Curate.

In 1851, the household is headed by John Hirst Taylor, a solicitor, together with Rebecca and Dorothy. Another Taylor, Jessie from Penrith, is shown as a visitor. Thomas Ullock Taylor does not appear in Bowness, but appears in the 1861 census in Cartmel, having qualified as a Solicitor like his elder brother. He eventually died in Australia in 1870. From other information both in the Staveley & District History Society files and on the LDS web site we find that three of the daughters married in Windermere: Mary Elizabeth married Rev. Henry Calderwood on 10th April 1838, Margaret married Charles Adams on 27 September 1845, and Charlotte married John Herbert Sargent on 3 April 1847. Mary Elizabeth and her husband remain a mystery; there is no record of them in any subsequent UK census.

However, in 1861, an 18-year old Henry Calderwood is lodging in Kendal; his place of birth is Cape of Good Hope. Presumably his parents had emigrated there shortly after their marriage. That this Henry is part of the Taylor family is confirmed by an entry in a birthday book owned by Charlotte giving his date of birth as 25 Aug 1843¹⁶.

The census returns for Lancaster in 1861 and 1871 show Mary, Thomas' widow, married to Thomas Winder (not John) though whether this was a third marriage or use of a second name we have not been able to establish. Visiting Mary in 1861 was her unmarried daughter Dorothy, whilst in 1871, widowed daughter Margaret Adams was living with Mary and her husband.

The Grand Sale

Following Mary's death in 1872, and in accordance with the provisions of Taylor's will⁷, the Taylor land and property holdings in Staveley were auctioned off. The Westmorland Gazette carried this advertisement:

*Valuable Accommodation Land and House;
At and near the Village of STAVELEY,
Westmorland, for Sale.
TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,
By Mr. M. DEROME,*

At the Duke William Inn, Staveley, on Tuesday, the 17th of December, 1872, at Three o'clock in the Afternoon, by order of the Devisee in Trust under the Will of the late Thomas Taylor, deceased (unless previously disposed of by Private Treaty, of which due notice will be given), in the following or such other Lots as may be determined upon at the time of Sale,

ALL those valuable LANDS, DWELLING HOUSES, and PREMISES, situate at STAVELEY aforesaid, known by the names and containing in statute measure the quantities following, that is to say:-

Lot 1. — TWO ALLOTMENTS of LAND, situate on the East side of and adjoining the Road leading from Staveley to Kentmere, in the respective Townships of Over Staveley and Hugill, and containing altogether 45a. 3r. 5p, statute measure, or thereabouts, in the occupation of Mr. William Douthwaite.

Lot 2.— FIVE COTTAGES, situate at Low Green, at the high end of the Village of Staveley, on the West side of the Road leading to Kentmere, with the Gardens and Appurtenances thereunto

belonging, in the occupation of Mr. Anthony Swidenbank and others.

Lot 3. — SIX COTTAGES, with the Gardens and Appurtenances, situate in the Village of Staveley, on the West side of the Turnpike Road, in the occupation of Mr. Raven and others, as Tenants.

Lot 4.—A well-built and commodious DWELLING HOUSE, containing Two Sitting Rooms and several Bed Rooms, with a good-sized Garden and Orchard, and the Barn, Stable, Cow House, Gig House, and Cottage adjoining, situate on the West side of the Turnpike Road, in the Village of Staveley, in the occupation of Messrs. Ireland and Edmondson and others, as Tenants.

Lot 5.—A CLOSE of excellent MEADOW LAND, with the Tenter Ground at the North end thereof, called TUBMAN FIELD, containing 6a. 0r. 4p., statute measure, or thereabouts, at the North end of the Village of Staveley, in the occupation of Messrs. Ireland and Edmondson.

Lot 6.—A CLOSE of excellent PASTURE LAND, called THE AYLAND, with the several Cottage Gardens adjoining, containing altogether 4a. 3r. 0p., statute measure, or thereabouts, situate at the South end of the Village of Staveley, adjoining the Turnpike Road, in the occupation of Mr. John Cannon.

Lot 7.—A CLOSE of LAND, containing 0a. 2r. 12p., statute measure, or thereabouts, situate near the Village of Staveley, on the South side of and adjoining the Road leading to Crook, in the occupation of Mr. Thompson.

Lot 8—THREE INCLOSURES of excellent PASTURE LAND, now lying together, situate at Seedhow, near Staveley aforesaid, on the South West side of and adjoining the Road leading from Staveley to Windermere, containing in statute measure 4a. 3r. 25p., or thereabouts, in the occupation of the representatives of the late Edward Dickinson.

The above Property is of Freehold Tenure, with the exception of Lots 2 and 8, which are of Customary Tenure; Lot 2 is held of the Manor of Staveley and Hugill, by payment of the yearly Customary Rent of 1s. 8d., and Lot 8 is held of the Manor of Staveley, by payment of the yearly Customary Rent of 6s. 8d. The Fields are most conveniently situate for occupation in small parcels, as Accommodation Land; they adjoin good roads, and are in the immediate proximity of the Village of Staveley. The Dwelling houses are in a good state of repair, and, from their situation, never fail to command good Tenants at remunerative rents; and the various Lots, either together or separately afford a most excellent opportunity to parties wishing to purchase,

whether for investment or occupation.

The respective Tenants will shew the Premises, and further particulars may be had on application to THOMAS ULLOCK Esq., Quarry How, Windermere; J. H. TAYLOR, Esq., Cambridge Park, Twickenham; or at the Office of Messrs. HARRISON and Son, Solicitors, Lowther Street, Kendal, where a Plan of the Property may be seen.

Kendal, November 20th, 1872.

The advertisement shows a J H Taylor, in Twickenham at the foot; the 1871 census for Twickenham confirms that this is John Hirst, born Staveley, and that his two sisters, Rebecca and Dorothy, still single, are with him. He is married to Annie, from Yorkshire, some 14 years his junior, and has two sons, John T aged 5 and Reuben W aged 3.

The lands in the advertisement are similar to those in the 1836 schedules; except that as mentioned earlier, the Mill had already been sold to Chadwicks in December 1850. Lot 1 is additional land either purchased by the executors or possibly left to them by Taylor relatives. One of Thomas' executors, Thomas Ullock is named, the other executor, Benjamin Atkinson of Kendal, had died in 1869.

Lot 4 in the auction is of particular interest. It is now known as the Old Vicarage and was built for the expanding Taylor family in 1831. The front, with its limestone blocks, is clearly a copy of several of the Georgian buildings in Kendal. Sadly, Taylor did not live long enough to appreciate it, and his family moved away soon after 1836. It was then rented out to the local curate, James Elleray, and gained the name of the 'Old' Vicarage following the construction of the (then) new Vicarage on Brow Lane in 1865.

The deeds to the 'Old Vicarage'¹⁷ show that the property was initially purchased by John Hirst in 1816 from the Barley Bridge Estates of the late Thomas Harrison. At that time the only property on the site was a cottage and some outbuildings alongside Staveley Beck, together with a butchers shop fronting Staveley Gate (Main Street). John Hirst sold the property to his son in law in 1826. It is almost certain that either Hirst or Taylor bought the land and fields adjacent to Low Mill from the Barley Bridge Estate; the conveyance to Roddick¹⁸ refers to 'part of Tubman Field' for the

new mill in 1785; Taylor became the owner of the other part.

In Conclusion

Despite many enquiries, the original deeds for the purchase of the land at Low Mill have not been traced. However, the later deed⁶ confirms Taylor's existence as the builder of the dam which served the mill, and therefore it is 90% certain that Taylor also built the mill itself. Whether or not Taylor acquired the land directly from the Barley Bridge estate, or whether his father in law first acquired the land and sold it on to him (as in the case of the Old Vicarage) has yet to be confirmed.

The fact that little is known locally of the Taylors (apart from the tombstone) is probably due to the fact that the family moved away after Thomas' death. The subsequent family history, involving South Africa, Australia and New Zealand has proved worthy of a historical paper in its own right.

References

1. Water-Power Mills of South Lakeland – A Somervell 1930 (Kendal Library Local Studies section)
2. Westmorland Gazette 18 May 1833; sale following Cookson's bankruptcy
3. Carlisle Record Office D LONS/L5/2/11/251
4. Kendal Record Office WQ/RC/16 1836 Corn Rent map & schedule, Over Staveley
5. Parson & White Directory 1829; Kendal Library Local Studies
6. Conveyance 1893 Chadwick to Chadwick Bros Ltd. SDHS collection
7. Lancashire Record Office, Preston WRW/K R528 No.8
8. Kendal Record Office WQR/DP/35; Kendal & Windermere Railway deposited plans.
9. The Bobbin & Reel Industry in Staveley – Diploma submission to Liverpool University Centre for NW Regional Studies at Lancaster – C.E. Brockbank 1986.
10. Kendal Record Office WQR/1/99; 1816 Enclosure Act for Nether Staveley
11. Kendal Parish Registers
12. Staveley Parish Registers (burials)
13. 1851 Census for Bowness
14. Staveley Parish Registers and additional information from Taylor descendants in UK and New Zealand.
15. Westmorland Gazette – various dates in 1832.
16. Birthday book in possession of J. Good in New Zealand.
17. Private collection; copies in SDHS archives.
18. Kendal Record Office WDX 572; indenture 21 April 1785

The assistance of Kathy Hayhurst of the Cumbria Family History Society in the preparation of this paper is gratefully acknowledged.

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This paper, in single column format, was submitted to the Cumbria Local History Federation's Joe Scott Memorial Prize competition in Summer 2007 and was awarded second prize.