

# Salford Textile Mills Survey

## 2018-2019

*A research project by Mark Child, Rick McGarry and Salford U3A Local History Group*

## Introduction



*Workers at Monk's Moss Side Mill, courtesy of AgeUK Swinton and Irwell Valley History Society*

The Salford U3A local History group has compiled this record of textile mills in Eccles, Monton, Patricroft, Pendlebury and Swinton, with an additional mill from inner Salford, as part of the Cottonopolis study theme promoted by the Greater Manchester U3A Network.

It complements a more comprehensive account of 'Worsley Textile Mills' by Glen Atkinson, published by Neil Richardson in 2004.

Maps are used to divide the record into different geographical regions, although certain of the larger companies had mills in different localities.

In particular the Ermen and Engels family started in Eccles in 1858, Pendlebury in 1860 and then Patricroft when the Eccles mill burned down in 1874.

We include an extended account of the Ermen family in recognition

of their importance to the region. The long-lived Holdsworth and Gibbs company also had its origins in Eccles in 1858, before moving to Swinton in 1887.

The table in the Appendix shows that most of the early mills, built in the 1840's and 1850's were concerned only with the manufacture of cotton or silk.

There was a wave of large cotton spinning and manufacturing mill constructions at the turn of the twentieth century including the Acme Mill (1905), Monton Mill (1906), Eccles Spinning Mill (1906) and Togo Mill (1907), of which the last two were built by local businessmen to provide work in the Eccles region.

In addition the Eccles and Patricroft silk mills went over to cotton manufacture in 1891 and 1933 respectively. Three of the mills remain standing: Islington Mill in inner Salford, Bridgewater Mill in Patricroft and Newtown Mill in Pendlebury.

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# Eccles Mills



## Bentcliffe Mill, Salter's Lane, Eccles, SJ 77984

Bentcliffe mill was the first to be constructed in Eccles, possibly pre-1800, and its extensive reservoir, which originally stretched north about a mile, strongly suggests that it was originally water-powered.

Ainsworth, Bentley & Fogg occupied the mill up to 1829. Then it was leased, (from the Trustees of Thomas Watkins of Ardwick between 1836 and 1842), by the silk throwsters Bindloss and Pearson.

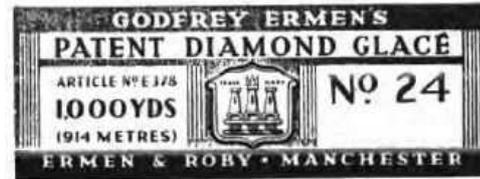
'Throwsting' was the equivalent of cotton spinning, and involved unwinding the silk thread from the cocoon, cleaning and polishing it. The lease was transferred to Henry Taylor for silk and worsted manufacture from 1843 to 1847, when the mill was badly damaged by fire.

A rebuilt mill four stories high was jointly operated between 1852 and 1858 by Hobson and Taylor (silk throwsters and dyers) and James Partington (spinner).

It was bought in 1858, by Godfrey Ermen and Frederick Engels, to employ 800 people, for spinning, bleaching, dyeing and polishing cotton sewing thread, under a patent granted to Godfrey Ermen in 1851. A serious fire broke out in 1866, but action by the fire-engine from Holdsworth and Gibb limited it to the top floor, with serious water damage to goods stored on the floors below. More seriously, the building was totally destroyed by another fire in 1871, with an insurance cover of £40,000, which was devoted to constructing the Nassau mill in Patricroft. The building survived until 1970 at least, but the site is now occupied by the Lankro chemical company.



*Ermen and Ermen advertisement for sewing thread*



*Label for a Godfrey Ermen cotton reel. Note the Three Towers trademark*

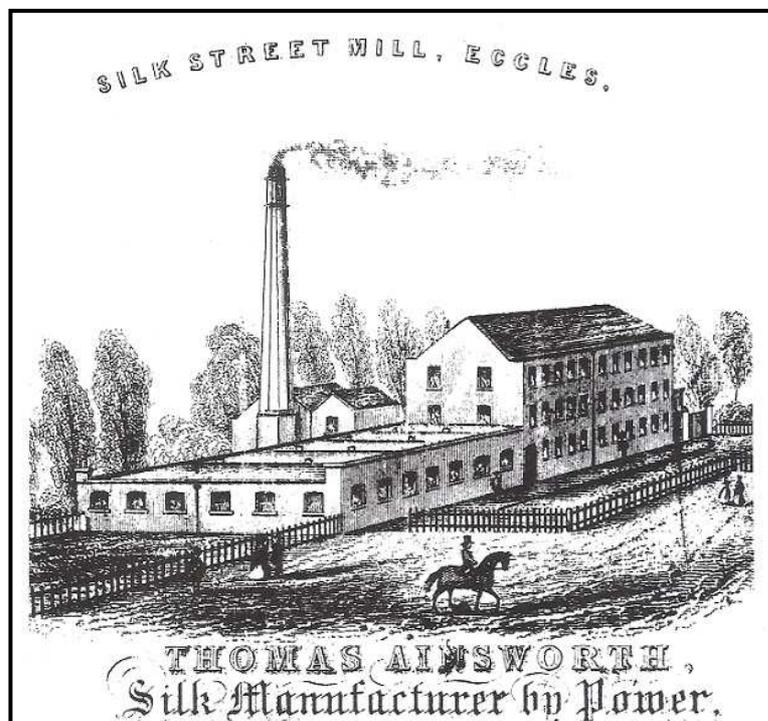
## Eccles (Albert) Silk Mill, Silk St, Eccles, SJ 778983

Eccles Silk Mill was built by John Clegg in 1841, and passed through various hands, including Ainsworth and Hilton (1843-61) and Evans & Syddal (1873-91).

Fabrics on sale in 1877 included silk glacés, satins, grosgrains etc.

It was converted for cotton manufacture, and named Albert Mill, by Peck, Son & Co in 1891 and changed hands to John Bethel & Sons from 1908 to 1937.

The mill was closed and destroyed in 1937, when the site was acquired by the Lankro Chemical Company.



*A mid nineteenth century sketch of the Eccles Silk Mill. taken from 'Church St Eccles', Helen Wickham, (Richardson publications, 1992*

## Monton Lane Mill, Monton Lane, Eccles, SJ 773985

Monton Lane Mill was built for cotton (nankeen, fancy drill and bedtick) manufacture by James Chadwick.. Our research to date suggests two different possible dates for its foundation, either 1841 or 1809, and that it may have been the first steam-powered mill in Eccles.

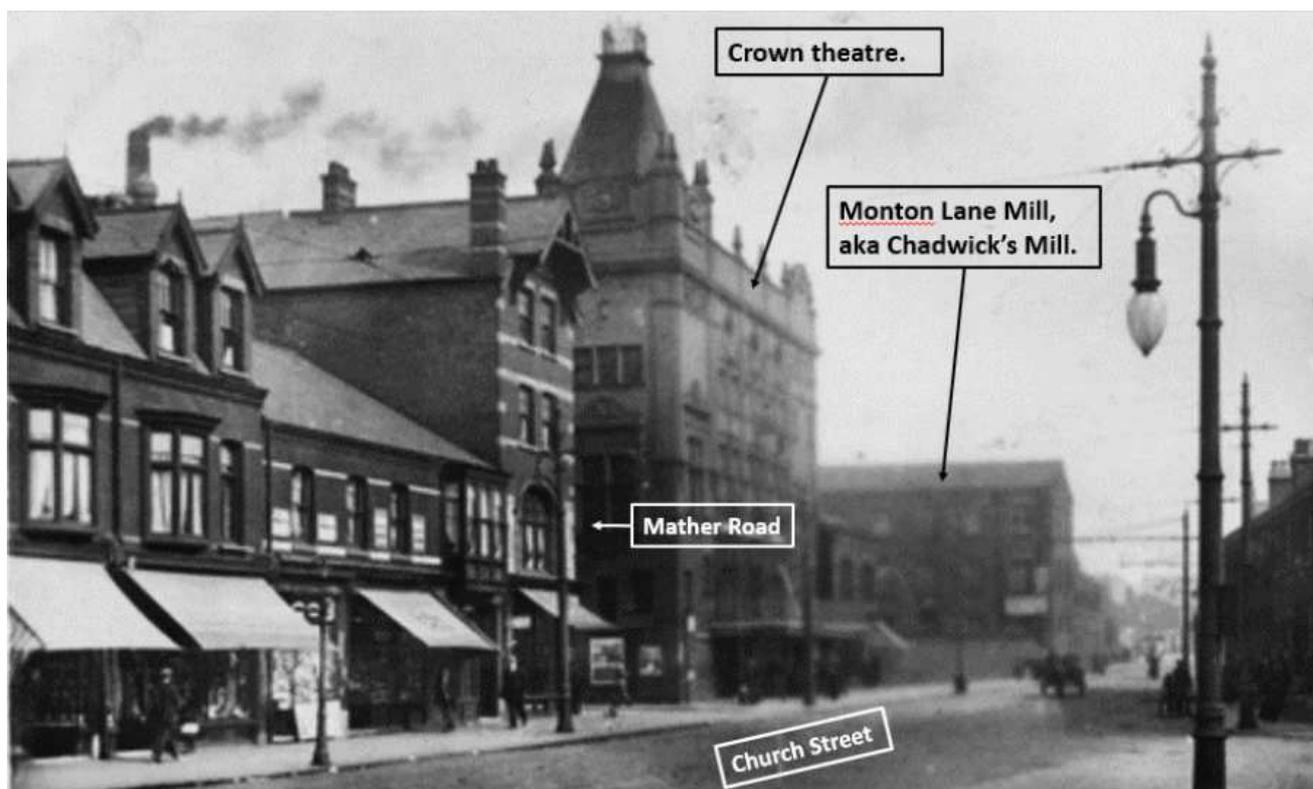
James never married, but when he retired, possibly in 1838, he transferred the business to his three nephews, the sons of his brother Richard.

They in turn retired in 1863, and John Holdsworth (1810-1870) and Walter Gibb (1833-1915) took a lease on the mill, which they operated for 45 years. They extended the mill to include spinning.

It was listed as Holdsworth and Gibb in 1871, and incorporated, with the Moorside mill in Swinton, as Holdsworth and Gibb Ltd., in 1877 (see Moorside Mill, Swinton).

The higher rents in Eccles led to a progressive transfer of operations from the Monton Lane to the Moorside site.

References to the Eccles site last occurred in Slater's 1891 Directory. The building remained (but no longer as a cotton mill) on historic maps as late as 1930. It was destroyed by bombing in 1941.



*Monton Lane Mill, aka Chadwick's Mill*

John Holdsworth lived at "Fernfield" on Victoria Road, Ellesmere Park, and Walter Gibb lived next door at "Fern Lea". John died, on 5 Jan 1870, of typhoid fever on a visit to Egypt and was buried at Menton, France.

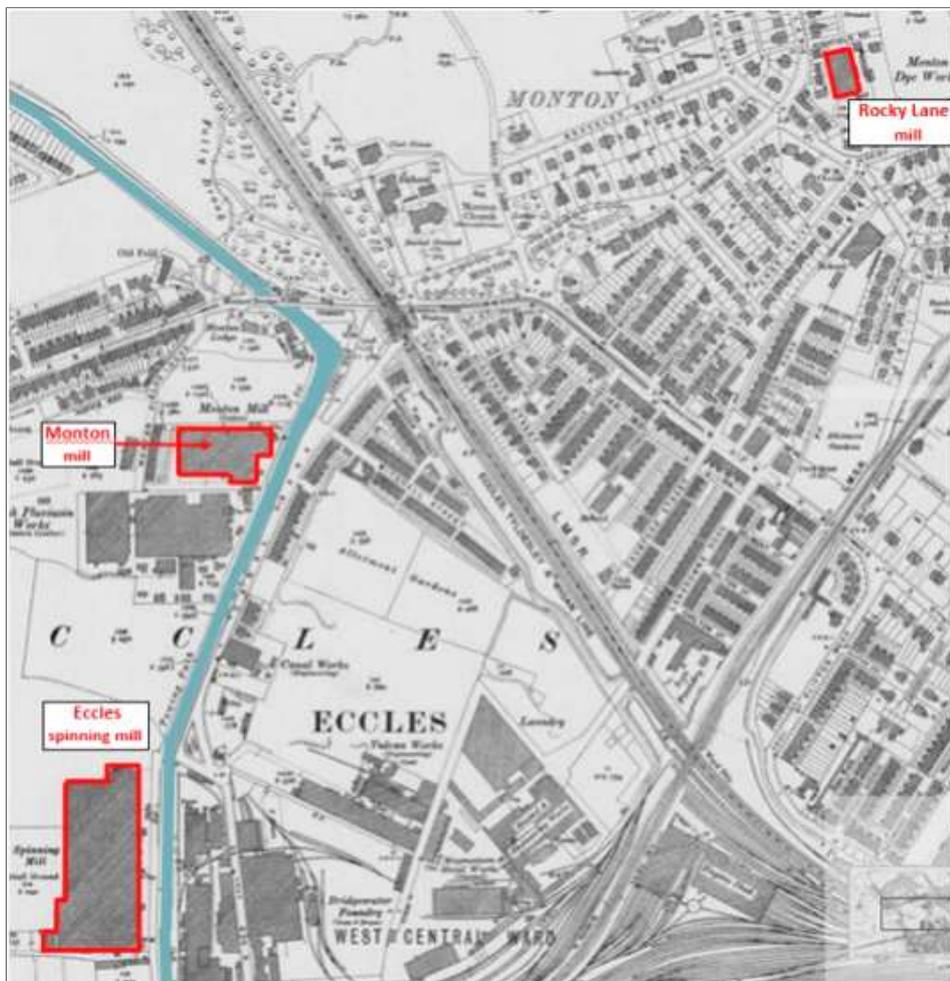
John's son, also named John (1850-1935) lived next door (towards Monton), at "Barclay House", with its entrance on Half Edge Lane, (Barclay was his grandmother's maiden name), and Walter

Gibb lived next door (towards Eccles) at “Fern Lea” (since re-named “Ashleigh”), about 200 metres from the Mill. The latter still stands, as an apartment block, but all that remains of the former are a pair of stone gate posts and the name “Barclay Drive” on a 1970’s housing development.



The gateposts of Barclay House, Half Edge Lane

## Monton Mills



## **Monton Mill, Montonfields Rd, Winton, SJ 763995**

Monton Mill was built as a spinning mill by the Monton Mill Co Ltd in 1906. The five storeys contained 26,784 32's twist and 64,894 42's weft spindles, driven by a 1400hp inverted compound steam engine supplied by George Saxon of Openshaw.

It was taken over by the Lancashire Spinning company in 1930-1964, after which it passed to Courtaulds and then Ward and Goldstone, makers of Volex electrical products. It was demolished in 1989, (the chimney by Fred Dibnah). The site is now a housing estate, centred on Montonmill Gardens.



*Monton Mill, Courtesy of Salford Local History Society*

## **Eccles Spinning Mill, 50 Worsley Rd, Winton, SJ 762990**

Like the Togo Mill in Patricroft, Eccles Spinning Mill was built in 1906 by local businessmen, led by the Mayor of Eccles, Joseph Schofield. It was built to the highest fireproof standards to a design by the leading mill architect Potts, Son and Henning of Manchester and Oldham.

It operated 60,000 power spindles and 100 Northrop looms, using cotton imported from Egypt, America, Brazil and Peru, and delivered to the site by canal. The date of closure is unknown, but the site was used by Great Universal Stores until 2006.



*Eccles Spinning Mill. Courtesy of Salford Local History Library*

## Rocky Lane Mill, Park Rd, Monton, SJ 769997

This mill was built after the publication of the 1845 map, probably by the Partington family, who owned the Hazelhurst Mill in Swinton. One clue is that the car park at Monton, previously known as Partington St, contained mill-workers cottages.

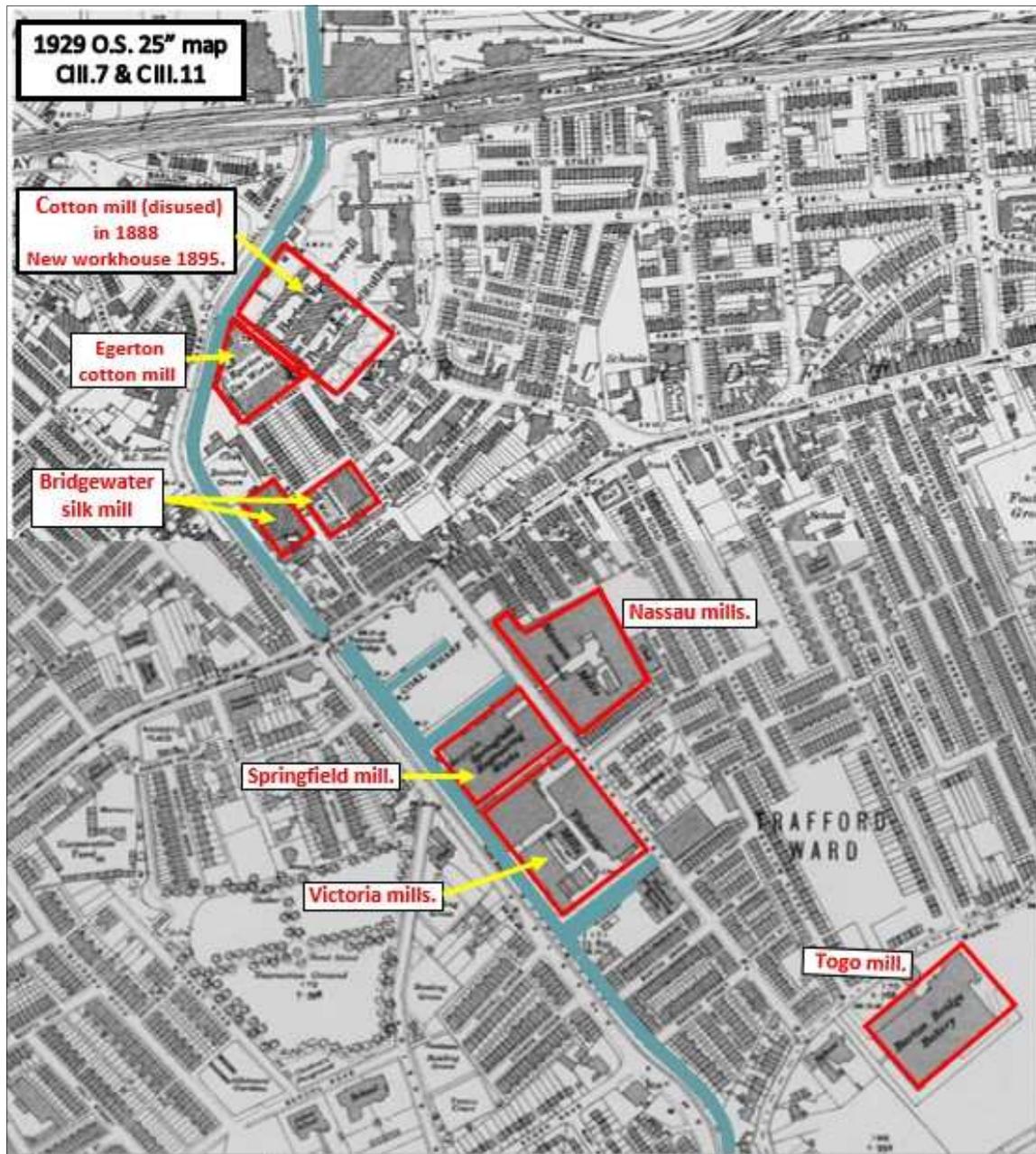
It appears as 'Silk Mill' on the 1888 map, and as 'Monton Dye' on the 1906 to 1936 maps and listed as owned by Halliwell Cop Dyeing Company in the 1904 and 1911 directories.

The mill is marked as 'Disused' on the 1938 map, but the site was occupied for some years after 1945 by Junitex Ltd, who made knitted woollens. The buildings, which were demolished c.1990, are under development as new houses in 2019.



*1888 map courtesy of [www.nls.uk](http://www.nls.uk)*

# Patricroft Mills



## Bridgewater Mill, 15 Legh St, Patricroft, SJ 763983

The first anecdotal reference to the Patricroft Silk Mill is to a fire at Mather and Booth's silk mill in 1831 ( see Eccles and Patricroft Journal 1/12/1977). After this the site, between Legh St and the Bridgewater Canal, was taken over by Walker and McClure, as a silk throwing and manufacturing mill.

Ownership was transferred to Booth and Leigh in 1858, and then to Henry Leigh & Sons in 1873, followed by temporary closure in 1884. An entry in the Eccles and Patricroft Journal on 26/11/1886 shows that it was reopened under the management of Robinson and Millington in 1886, and a comparison between 1886 and 1904 maps shows that a (three

storey) northern wing was added to the original (five storey) mill between these two dates, and that the area marked 'cotton.silk mill?' was included among the Leigh Silk Mills'.

Partial confirmation comes from the 1903 and 1905 directories that list Brown Samuel, jnr, silk manufacturers at the same address as Robinson and Millington. The introduction of cotton doubling is indicated by replacement of Brown Samuel by F & H Pearson, cotton doublers, in the 1911 and later directories and by the labels 'cotton mill' on the southern five storey part of the main mill and 'spinning mill' on the area to the east of Legh St on the 1927 map.

A newspaper report (EPJ 8/1/1837) indicates that Robinson and Millington ceased manufacturing in 1833 and that the mill was bought by Richmond Manufacturing Cotton goods manufacturer in 1837, although the eastern area seems to have been sold to Atlas Works (Insulating Materials), according to the 1936 map. Finally it appears from EPJ 1/12/1977 that the main occupier from 1955 until 1974 was the Universal Bedding Company, part of Great Universal Stores, who renamed the building as Beddingate Mill. The mill still stands beside the Bridgewater Canal as a retail outlet with leisure facilities, but a subsequent owner has relabelled it as Bridgewater Mill.



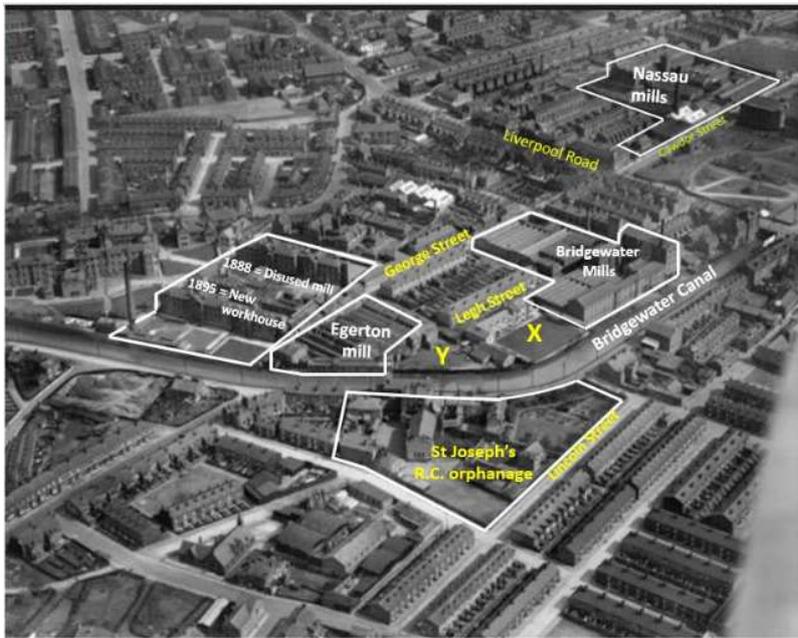
*Bridgewater Mill, Legh Street, Patricroft Courtesy of Salford Local History Library*

## **Egerton Mill, George St, Patricroft, SJ 762 985**

Egerton Mill appears as a cotton mill in the 1888 25inch OS map, which was operated by William Crippen, according to the 1877 and 1891, directories, for cotton manufacture on checks, gingham and shirtings etc., on 275 looms. The mill had passed to Arnold, Dean & Co, dyers and finishers by 1903 and remained as a dye works at least until the date of the 1933 map.

The 1888 map also shows a disused mill to the north of Egerton Mill, which was replaced by the Patricroft workhouse. In addition the 1891-1911 directories show George Mort and Co, as a small quilt manufacturer, with 25 looms to the north of a house named Gorsefield at 19 Legh St, but there is nothing to confirm the site on the corresponding maps.

Gorsefield itself is of interest as the house of the manager of the Bridgewater Mill. The neighbouring house to the north, called The Retreat, was the residence of James Naysmith, who set up a telescope to observe the craters on the moon, by night, often in his nightshirt!



### Aerial view of Patricroft, 1925

Springfield Mill, Victoria Mill and Togo mill are not shown on this photo.

X = 'Gorsefield', home of Edmund Leigh, manager of Bridgewater Mill. This later became Patricroft Working men's Club

Y = 'Fireside', James Nasmyth's home

## Nassau Mills, 83 Cawdor St, Patricroft, SJ 765983

Nassau Mills were built by Ermen and Roby in 1874 to replace the Bentcliffe Mill in Eccles that had burned down three years earlier. Like the other Ermen family mills, it was designed to spin, polish and dye sewing and knitting cotton according to a patent granted to Godfrey Ermen in 1851.

The map shows wharves for loading and unloading barges on the Bridgewater Canal. The mill was bought by the English Sewing Cotton company in 1897 and remained in operation until the site was acquired by MD Foundation, a local Salford Charity, as a retail park in 1971.

The main mill buildings were demolished in 1979 and a road extension from Vine Street to Cawdor Street now passes through the site. Most of the mill buildings were demolished in 1979, except the Mill Managers' house, which has been occupied since 2011 as Bridgewater (or Winton) Baptist Church, and also a range of single storey buildings which front onto Cawdor Street. Some of these were occupied until 2017 by a steel fabricating company, named Heavey & Co., and then by another named Manchester Steel Supplies.



*A view of the internal yard of the Nassau Mill (see map). The vans belong to the Calthena company which made furniture for hospitals and schools. A dozen or so other firms occupied the various buildings on the Nassau mill site, in 1979, prior to demolition.*

## Springfield Mill, 44 Cawdor St, Patricroft, SJ 763982

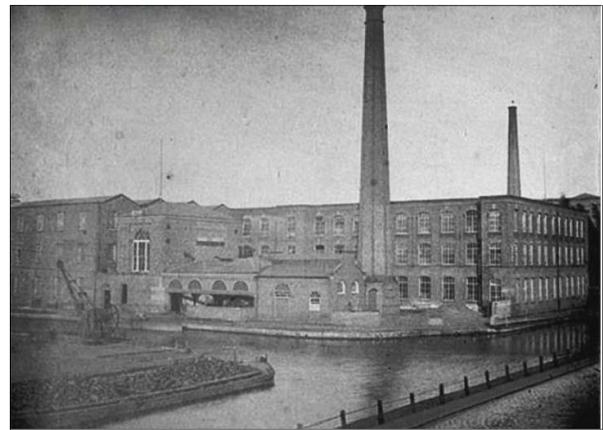
Springfield Mill, which was known locally as Shaw's mill, was a five storey building lying between the western side of Cawdor St and the Bridgewater Canal.

It suffered a minor fire in 1882, but appears in Graces 1891 Guide as owned by the Bridgewater Spinning Co Ltd, with 60,000 spindles, and again under the same ownership in Slater's 1903 Directory, although it had suffered a more disastrous fire in November 1902, which caused £50,000 worth of damage and put 200 hands out of work (see EPJ 21/11/1902) .

It was rebuilt as the Springfield Engineering works, on the 1905-1937 maps, under the management of Archibald Edmeston & Sons Ltd, who made mill machinery. Their names first appear in the 1911 Directory. The loss of mill work persuaded local businessmen, led by the mayor of Eccles, Joseph Schofield, to raise money for the construction of two large modern mills – the Togo Mill in Trafford Rd, and the Eccles Spinning Mill in Worsley Rd, Winton (see below)



*Burnt out Springfield Mill*



*Restored Springfield Mill*

## Victoria Mill, 42 Cawdor Street, Patricroft. SJ 764 982

Victoria Mill was built as a cotton spinning and manufacturing mill by Sir Elkanah Armitage in 1873. It remained in the hands of Sir Elkanah Armitage & Sons Ltd until it was demolished after 1939. Proximity to the canal allowed direct loading and unloading of raw cotton and finished goods. The site is now occupied by Barton Industrial Estates Business Park.

*Victoria Mill viewed over the  
Bridgewater Canal*



## Togo Mill, 175 Trafford Rd, Patricroft, SJ 765600



*The Mayor of Eccles and supporting dignitaries at the opening of Togo Mill*

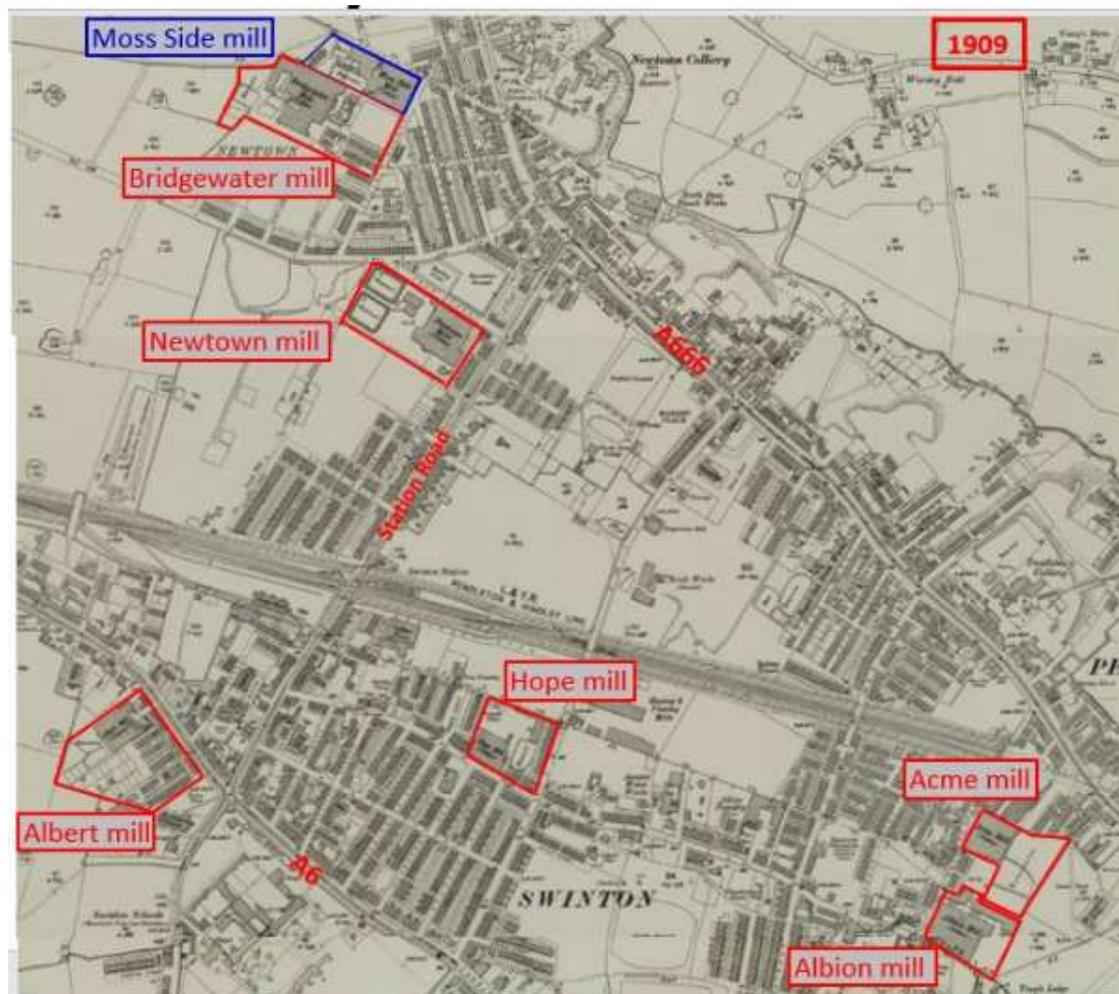
The Togo Mill was built by a group of Eccles businessmen, including the Mayor, Joseph Schofield, in 1907, to provide local employment after the Springfield Mill fire. It was a five storey mill, using a 1700 hp triple expansion steam engine to drive 115,000 mule spindles.

Ownership passed to Barton Bridge Mills Ltd in 1922 and then to Lancashire Cotton Corporation in 1933. Spinning had ceased by 1937, when the mill was acquired by the Cooperative Society Bakery. By 1964 it belonged to Thomas Fattorini mail order company and then was sold to John Myers mail order company by 1979. The demolition date is unknown but the site has been occupied by Barton Brook Nursing Home since 1991.



*Barton Bridge Mill, aka Togo Mill. Courtesy of Salford Local History Library*

## Pendlebury Mills



### Albert Mill, 206 Chorley Rd, Swinton, SD 772 020

Albert Mill was built in 1853 by Thomas Robinson, the father of the later Mayor, Noah Robinson, for the manufacture of domestics (tea cloths, drills, oatmeals etc).

The mill was leased to the company John Suttard & Sons from 1877 to 1931, who operated 440 looms with 260 workers in 1903. The premises were occupied by David Barker & Sons Ltd (joiners) from 1931 to 1979. The site is now occupied by the Swinton Police Station.

*Chorley Rd, looking east, with the chimney of Albert Mill in the background. Courtesy of Salford Local History Library*



### **Albion Mill, 228 Swinton Hall Rd, Pendlebury SD 785016**

Albion Mill is listed as “Manchester Pendlebury Spinning Co Ltd” in the 1891 Graces Guide and Slater’s 1903 Directory, with 10,400 ring and 22000 weft spindles (8’s to 32’s), and 250-300 employees. It was bought by Acme Spinning Co Ltd in 1909 and demolished in 1969. The site (combined with Acme Mil) is now occupied by BASF Concrete product supplier.

### **Acme Mill, 250 Swinton Hall Rd, Pendlebury, SD 785016**

Acme Mill was built in 1906 for the Acme Spinning Co Ltd, on a site adjacent to Albion Mill, by the leading mill architect Sidney Stott.

It was the first spinning mill in Britain to be powered by electricity, supplied by the Lancashire Electric Power Company.

It was built in six storeys, to house 74224 mule and 77840 ring spindles (24’s to 42’s) and also served as an inspiration for L S Lowry’s famous painting ‘Coming from the Mill’ (1930).

Spinning ceased in 1952, but the building was occupied by Cussons and Sons Ltd, the Kersal soap and perfumery factory, until demolition in 1984. The site (combined with Albion Mill) is now occupied by a BASF chemical plant for the manufacture of concrete admixtures and concrete repair products.



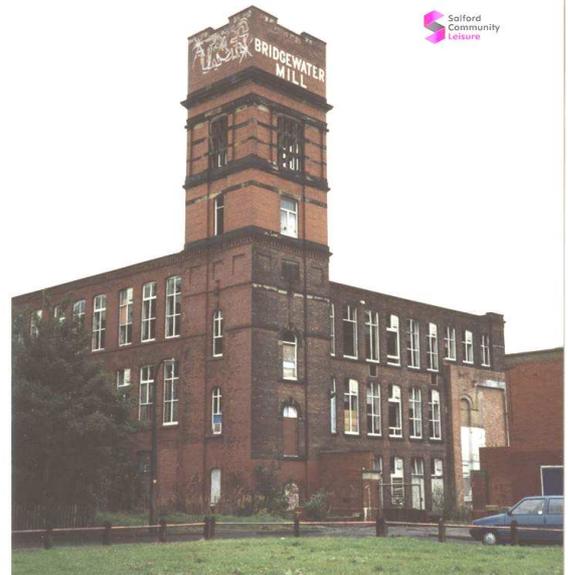
*Above: Acme Mill Both courtesy of Salford Local History Library*

## Bridgewater Mill, 27 Carlisle St, Pendlebury, SD

Bridgewater Mill was acquired by Godfrey Ermen in about 1860 as an addition to the Bentcliffe Mill in Eccles and the Victoria Mill at Weaste, all devoted to the manufacture of sewing cotton, according to a patent awarded to Godfrey in 1851.

The mill traded as Ermen Brothers until 1875, and Ermen and Roby until 1898, when it was bought by English Sewing Cotton Ltd. It still traded as Ermen and Roby in 1911, when it operated 30,000 spindles (4's to 40's twist) with a workforce of 600, between the Bridgewater and Nassau Mill sites. It later traded as Sir Richard Arkwright and Co. Ltd until it closed in 1980 with the loss of 380 jobs.

The date of demolition is unknown, but the site is occupied by housing.



Salford  
Community  
Leisure

*Bridgewater Mill courtesy of Salford Local History Library*

## Moss Side Mill, 34 Little Moss Lane, Pendlebury, SD

Moss Side Mill was built by Monks Brothers (possibly related to John Monks of Worsley) prior to 1877, for the manufacture of cotton and linen ticks and drills, on 306 looms in 1891, with a workforce of 300. The mill changed hands (to Monks Brothers successors) in 1903, and continued in operation until 1957. The site is occupied by housing, but the date of demolition is unknown..



*Workers at Monk's Moss Side Mill, courtesy of AgeUK Swinton and Irwell Valley History Society*

### **Newtown Mill, Lees St, Swinton, SD 778024**

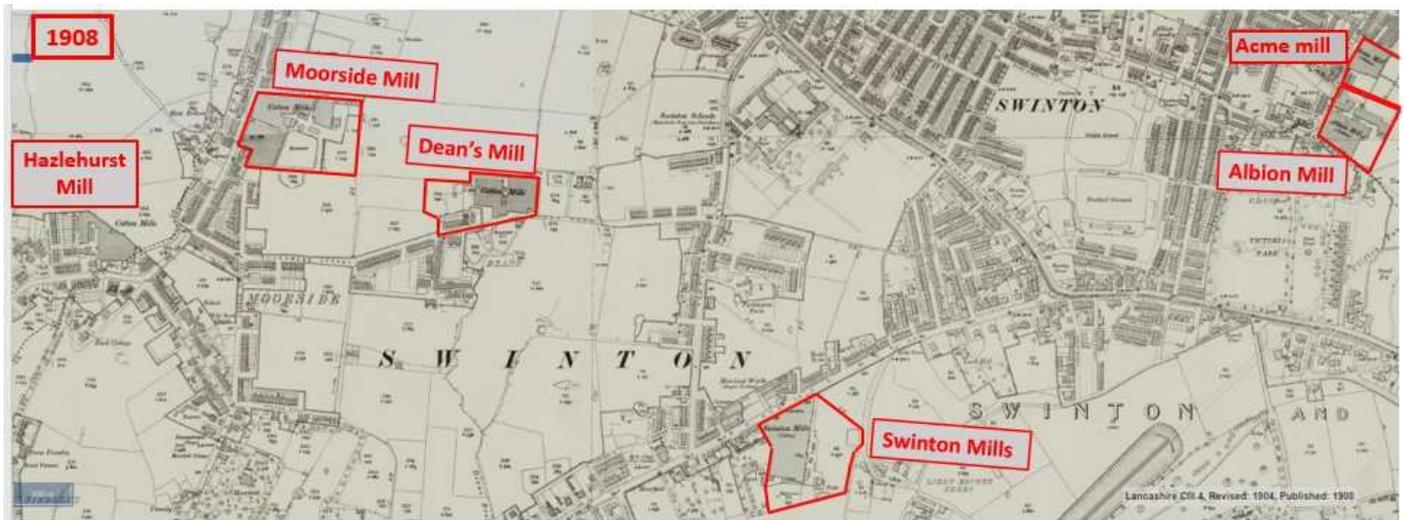
Newtown Mill was built as a spinning mill by John Knowles & Sons in 1884, opposite the site on Station Rd, where Longshaw's mill had been destroyed by fire in 1875. The mill was subsequently transferred in 1902 to John Ashworth & Sons, with 70,000 spindles (30's to 150's twist and weft). It was acquired by the Lancashire Cotton Corporation in 1930, closed in 1962, and reopened by Dorma Group (Coates Viyella) in 1964. It featured in Lowry's 1928 painting 'Newton Mill and Bowling Club'.

The date of closure is unknown, but the building was acquired by Vanguard Holdings in 2016 and converted to the Lowry Mill office complex, with a restaurant and leisure facilities. It is the only remaining mill building in Swinton.



*Newtown Mill, Pendlebury, Courtesy of Salford Local History Library*

# Swinton Mills



## Deans Mill, 76 Deans Rd, Swinton SD 771 015

Dean's Mill was built by Simpson and Higgins in 1856 for the manufacture of Damasks, Belgians etc. The management transferred to the company of Simpson and Godley in 1877, who were operating 540 looms with a workforce of 300 in 1903. Weaving had ceased by 1962.

The electrical firm Sheathed Heating Elements took over the ground floor of the mill from 1966 until it was demolished in July 1973.



*Dean's Mill Swinton'*

*Drawing by LS Lowry, commissioned in 1945 by Simpson and Godley*

*Photo of Dean's Mill, Swinton, and its bowling green.  
courtesy of AgeUK Swinton and Irwell Valley History Society.*

### **Swinton Mill, 164 Worsley Rd, Swinton, SD 775010**

Swinton Mill was built by James Bowers in 1843, to manufacture calicoes, dimities, ticks, regattas, damasks, twills &c. with a workforce of 600-700. It continued from 1853 to the 1870's as Bowers and Yates, and was bought by the Dacca Twist Co in 1877, and later by John Rylands & Sons Ltd, with 618 looms and a workforce of about 350 from 1903.

It was the first mill in Swinton lit by electric light. The date of demolition is unknown, because there was a major fire in November 1938, but the mill was still recorded on the 1948 OS map. The site is now occupied by a housing development based on Daccamill Drive



*Left: Dacca Mill, close to the junction of Worsley Road and Partington Lane Right: Hope Mill looking west along Swinton Hall Road  
Both images courtesy of Age UK Swinton and Irwell Valley History Group*

### **Hazelhurst Mill, 2 Hazelhurst Rd, Swinton, SD 764013**

Hazelhurst Mill started as a small cotton manufacturing mill, owned by John and Richard Partington in 1868. It was extended to 340 looms in 1880 and 558 by 1891. On the death of Richard Partington in 1900, it was registered as a private company, with John Partington as managing director until his death in 1902, when his nephew William assumed control. The company was restyled as R & J Partington in 1920, with William's son Albert as managing director. The company ceased manufacturing in 1930.

See Glen Atkinson, 'Worsley Textile Mills', Neil Richardson, 2004, pp 48-50.

### **Hope Mill, 77, Swinton Hall Rd, Swinton SD 736 046**

Hope Mill was built by J Davis in 1877 for the manufacture of fancy union and cotton drills. It was acquired by Thomas Bold in 1891 and later by Barker and Swift, who had a workforce of 200. The mill closed in 1968, and the site is now occupied by Aldi Supermarket.

## **Moorside Mill, 192 Moorside Rd, Swinton, SD 769022**

Moorside Mill, owned by Walter Gibb in 1858, originally doubled the yarn from the well-established Monton Lane Mill in Eccles, then owned by John Holdsworth.

Holdsworth and Gibb jointly operated the two mills from 1860, which were incorporated into Holdsworth and Gibb Ltd cotton spinning, manufacturing and dyeing company, in 1877.

In view of the high rents at Eccles the decision was taken to move all operations to Moorside Rd. As a preliminary, the Moorside Mill was closed for a few years for expansion.

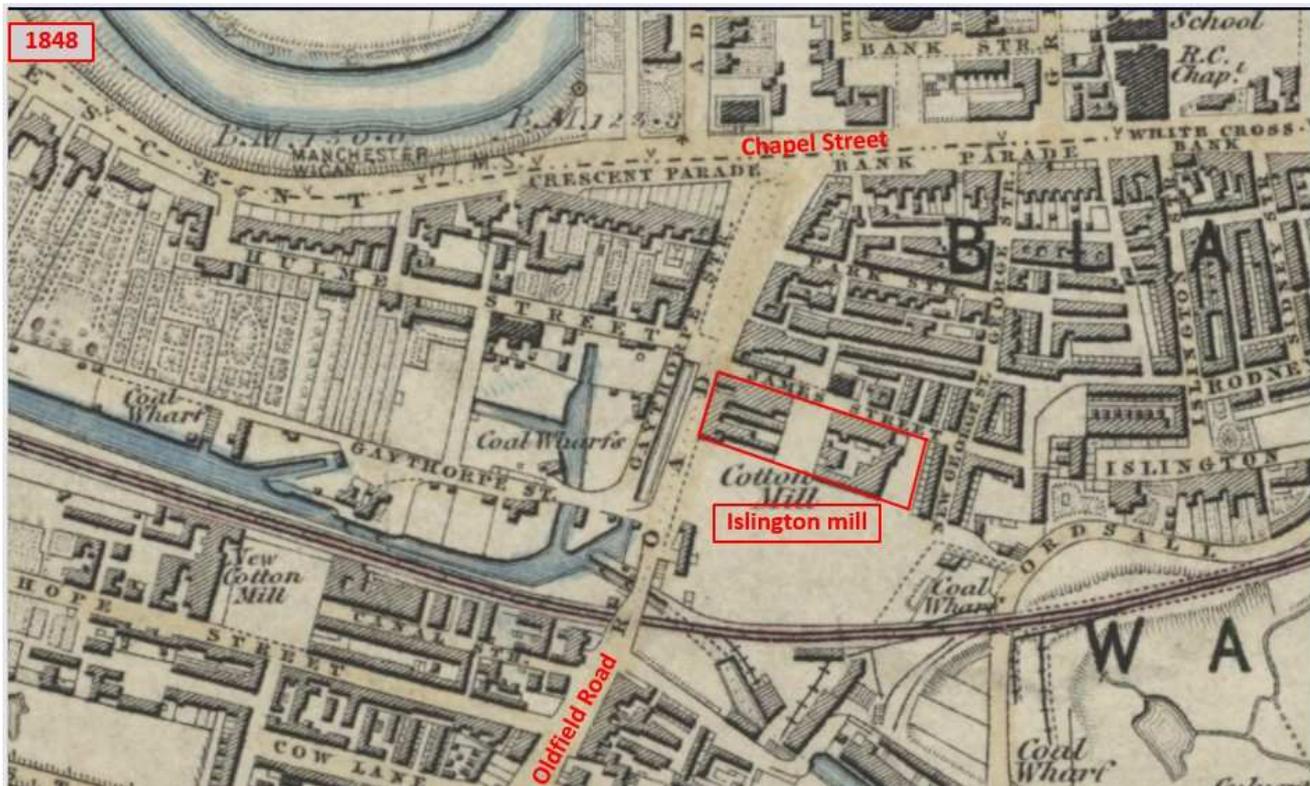
Graces Guide for 1884 shows both sites in operation with a combined total of 60,000 spindles and 633 looms, which fell to 26,00 spindles and 227 looms at Moorside in 1887, but the Eccles Mill possibly continued dyeing, because it did not close until 1898. Products included single and doubled American Yarns, 32's and below, sail cloth, shoe ducks, and hammocks. In 1914, and Queen Mary is recorded as having bought a hammock and some garden furniture for Buckingham Palace at a London Exhibition in 1931.

The workforce numbered 300-400 between 1930 and 1960. Holdsworth and Gibb was the last spinning mill in Swinton, when it closed in 1971, before demolition in 1974. The site is currently occupied by housing and a small industrial park.



*Above: Holdsworth and Gibb offices, courtesy of Salford Local History Library*

# Salford Mills



## Islington Mill, 1 St James St, Salford, SJ 826984

Islington Mill was built by Nathan Gough in 1823 as a pioneering 'fireproof' seven storey spinning mill, with cast iron floor beams supported by a central row of cast iron columns.

Lack of experience with the iron frame construction led to disaster in 1824, when the introduction of heavy machinery into the attic caused the serial collapse of the lower floors and the deaths of 21 workers.

Adequate repairs were effected by introducing two additional rows of supporting columns. The mill was powered by a single cylinder steam engine. It was recorded as a doubling mill with 30,000 spindles in 1891.

A six storey second mill, with warehouses and offices was added c 1890, and the mill went over to doubling in about 1900. It is unknown when spinning ceased, but the building still stands, as a grade II listed arts and community centre.



*Islington Mill, Salford. Chimney demolished after closure. Courtesy of Salford Local History Library*

## Ermen and Engels



**The Ermen and Engels Engelskirchen spinning mill in Germany**

The management of the Ermen and Engels mills involved no fewer than seven members of the Ermen family, who originated in the German Bergisches Land.

The eldest, Peter Albert Ermen (1802-1889), formed the 'Ermen Brothers' partnership with his brothers Godfrey Anthony (known as Anthony) and Peter Jacob Godfrey (known as Godfrey) in 1834, to manufacture cotton thread in Deansgate Manchester. Three years later they were visited by the successful cotton manufacturer, Frederick Engels (senior) with whom they set up an 'Ermen and Engels' partnership.

This led to the establishment of the Engelskirchen cotton mill in Germany, and the Victoria Mills in Pendleton outside Manchester, with Engels providing 25% of the capital. Engels himself remained in Germany but he sent his son Frederick Engels (junior) to work in the Victoria Mills in 1842.

Young Frederick probably lived in Gore Crescent, Pendleton (known until 1838 as the Land of Nod), with the family of Peter Ermen,



**Henry Edward Ermen and his wife Frederica Sara Schwabe**



**Godfrey Ermen 1812—1899**

who had taken on management of the mill. While living there he formed a firm attachment with one of the mill girls, Mary Burns, who was his constant companion until her death in 1863. The two remained single, because they had a joint aversion to marriage, but Mary's knowledge of the Manchester slums was invaluable for Frederick's research into social conditions.

The young Engels was less committed to the mill than his father probably wished, because he travelled home to Germany in 1844, with Mary, and then to Paris, where he met Karl Marx, who helped with publication of the German original of his famous study of the 'Condition of the working class in England'. It was published with Marx's help, in 1844. English translations first appeared in New York in 1887 and London in 1891. Frederick and Mary returned to London with Marx in 1849, but a year later he was persuaded by financial difficulties to take up a position with Ermen and Engels, at a salary of £200 pounds per year, which was sufficient to take a house in Great Ducie St, Manchester, while Mary lived nearby at 80, Mary St, Strangeways. Visits by the elder Frederick Engels in 1851 and 1852 led to a revised arrangement by which Frederick the younger received a reduced salary of £100 pounds per year plus 5% of the profits for the next four years, rising to 7% for the following four years.

Several changes in the management of the firm occurred in the early 1850's, starting with the retirement of the founding partner Peter Albert in 1851. His successor, P. J. Godfrey Ermen), who took over the management, greatly increased the prosperity of the firm by patenting his invention of a highly polished 'Diamond Thread' in 1851. Thereafter the firm concentrated entirely on the production of sewing and knitting cotton. Two nephews of the original partners, Henry Ermen (1828-1913) and Francis Julius Ermen (1838-1896) joined the firm in 1852 and 1859 respectively. In addition, the firm's registered address for both the 'Ermen Brothers' and 'Ermen and Engels' partnerships moved from 2 South Parade, Manchester to 2, Southgate, St Mary's,

Manchester. Peter Ermen retired to live at 'Ashfields', Tanner Lane, while Godfrey resided at 'Irwell Cottage', Eccles New Rd.

There were also substantial changes in the locations of the spinning operations. The first occurred between 1852 and 1858, with the purchase of Bentcliffe Mill at Salter's Lane in Eccles which had been rebuilt, by the previous owner Henry Taylor, after a serious fire in 1847. Secondly c.1860, Godfrey bought the existing Bridgewater Mill in Pendlebury, which traded as "Ermen Brothers", with no Engels connection, under the management his nephew, Henry Edward Ermen, who lived at 46, Bolton Rd, Pendlebury. Evidence from Slater's Directory suggests that spinning had ceased at Victoria Mills by 1863, although the site remained in Ermen and Engels hands until it was sold to Archibald Winterbottom and Co in 1878.

Young Frederick Engels' relatively small part in the management of the firm was probably further reduced by the death of his father in 1860, because he was unable to establish his right to inherit his father's partnership until 1864. Moreover, a dispute with his brothers over rights to his father's German property led to an arrangement whereby he renounced all rights to the latter, in exchange for the deposit of £10,000 for his benefit in the Ermen and Engels partnership. The income from this investment, plus a direct legacy from his father enabled Frederick to set up house in 1862 with Mary Burns at 252 Hyde Rd, Ancoats, and also to support the family of Karl Marx. Sadly Mary died suddenly, aged 40, in January 1863. The following year, Engels moved to stay with his friend Charles Moore, at 25 Dover St, Chorlton on Medlock, to help with the translation of Marx's 'Das Kapital'. Some months later he joined his housekeeper, Mary's sister Lydia (Elizabeth), at 86, Morningson St., Manchester, after which they moved to London in 1870, where they were married on the day before Lydia died in 1878. Engels himself lived on in London until 1895.

His thirty year association with Eccles and

Salford is now remembered only in naming a block of flats at the junction of Cawdor St and Trafford Rd. However, in 2017, the citizens of Manchester belatedly recognised his time as a resident, with a large second-hand statue, which had been erected in his memory c.1970 in the small town of Poltava, in Eastern Ukraine. However the advent of “Perestroika” and “Glasnost” led, as with many similar statues, to its removal to a civic dump, from which it was rescued to be re-erected in Tony Wilson Place, off Medlock St, Manchester. However the inscription on the plaque below Engels feet is totally opaque - being written in the Cyrillic alphabet Ф ЗНГЕЛІБС (for F Engels) and dated 1970-2017 according to the dates of the statues erection and removal from Poltava, rather than Engels own dates of 1820-1895

Returning to the Ermen family, a third nephew of the founding partners, Francis John Ermen (1849-1925), joined the firm in 1867, four years before the final disastrous fire at the Bentcliffe Mill (see Eccles Mills above), which allowed the company to consolidate production at a new mill in Patricroft. The insurance cover of £40,000 was devoted to the construction of Nassau Mill, in Cawdor St., which was completed in 1878, and named after the home town of the Ermen family



*Engels statue in Tony Wilson Place, off Medlock St, Manchester*

The Ermen and Engels partnership was dissolved when Engels withdrew his capital in 1869. Godfrey Ermen drove a hard bargain, but the Engels name continued in use for trading purposes until 1874. Two years earlier Francis Julius and Francis John had been taken into partnership, together with Henry John Roby (1830-1915), the son-in-law of Peter Ermen. Godfrey Ermen retired in 1877, first to live at ‘Heathbank’, 263, Eccles New Rd, and then to Devon, where he died in 1899, leaving a large estate of roughly £400,000 (valued at about £45M in 2019), but no direct heirs because he never married. The Trustees of his estate, Frank Ermen and Arthur Godfrey Roby, ensured that he would be remembered by the establishment of the Godfrey Ermen School in Eccles and the Godfrey Ermen Memorial Dispensary in Gartside St., which formed an important part of the Manchester Children’s Hospital.

Henry Roby succeeded Godfrey as managing partner of the Nassau and Pendlebury mills under the name of Ermen and Roby, until it was bought by the English Sewing Cotton Company for £300,000 in 1897. Prior to his involvement with the company, Roby had been an active educationalist. He was the top classics student of his year at Cambridge, served as a Fellow of St John’s College (1854-61) and as a schoolmaster at Dulwich (1861-1865), before accepting a position as Secretary of the Schools Enquiry Commission, which led to the Endowment Schools Act of 1869. On moving to Manchester he was made a member of the Council of Owens College and a governor of Manchester Grammar School. He was also an active member of the Liberal Party, and Member of Parliament for Eccles (1890-1895). He retired from business in 1894 to live at Lancrigg in Grasmere, where he died in 1915, aged 84.

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## Appendix

### Summary of information on Eccles, Patricroft, Pendlebury and Swinton Mills

map	name	built	closed	spinning	manufacture	silk
Eccles	<u>Bentcliffe</u>	c1860	1871	x		x
	<u>Monton Lane</u>	1841	c1890	x	x	
	Silk St	1841	1937		x	
<u>Patricroft I</u>	Egerton	c1860	1903		x	
	Nassau	1874	1971	x	x	
	<u>Patricroft Silk</u>	1831	1945+	x	x	x
	Springfield	c1860	1902	x	x	
<u>Patricroft II</u>	Eccles Spinning	1906	c1960	x	x	
	<u>Monton</u>	1906	1964	x	x	
	Rocky Lane	c1860	c1900			x
Pendlebury	Acme	1905	1959	x	x	
	Albion	1891	1959	x	x	
	Bridgewater	1860	1980	x		
	Moss Side	1877	1957		x	
	Newtown	1884	1964+	x	x	
Salford	Islington	1823	1960?	x		
Swinton	Albert	1853	1979		x	
	Deans	1856	1962		x	
	Dacca	1843	1946+			
	Hope	1877	1968	x	x	
	<u>Moorside</u>	1858	1971	x	x	

Summary of Atkinson's --- 'Worsley's Textile Mills'

Town	Name	Built	Closed	Spinning	Manufacture
<b>Boothstown</b>	Delph	1812	1878	x	
	Stirrup Brook	1817	1968	x	x
	Garden	1878	1940		x
<b>Little Hulton</b>	Greenheys	1840	1932	x	x
	Grecian	1860	1950	x	
	Lakefield	1869	1954	x	x
	Brook (Suez)	1873	1962	x	
	Cleggs Lane	1879	1981		x
<b>Walkden</b>	Granville	1862	1985	x	
	Walkden	1862	1945	x	
	Park	1865	1932	x	
	Primrose	1869	1969		x
	Linnyshaw	1874	1962		x
	Wardley	1878	1968		x
	Bridgewater	1879	1963		x
	Hope	1879	1938		x
Walkden New	1907	1959	x		
<b>Worsley</b>	Sindsley	1819	1877	x	
	Brookhouse	1858	1934	x	
	Hazelhurst	1868	1959		x

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## **About Salford U3A**

Salford U3A is part of a unique and exciting movement which provides life-enhancing and life-changing opportunities. Retired and semi-retired people come together and learn together, not for qualifications but for its own reward: the sheer joy of discovery!

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