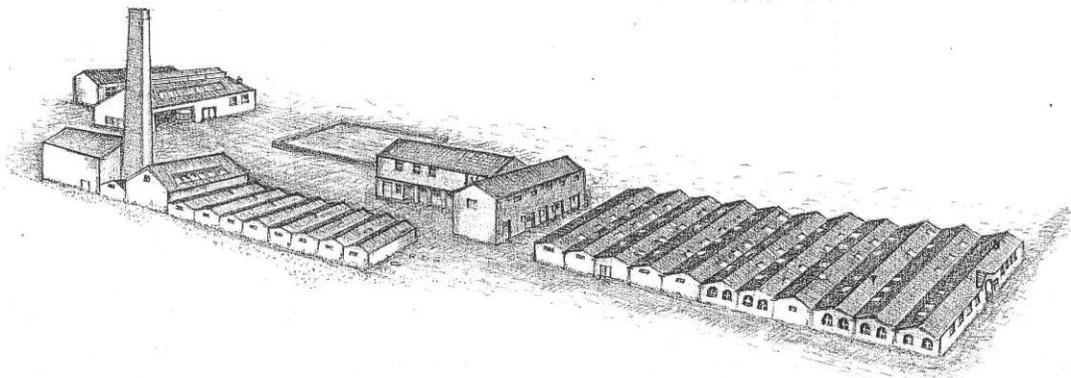


**GLOVER and ELLIS LTD**  
Mungo and Shoddy Manufacturers

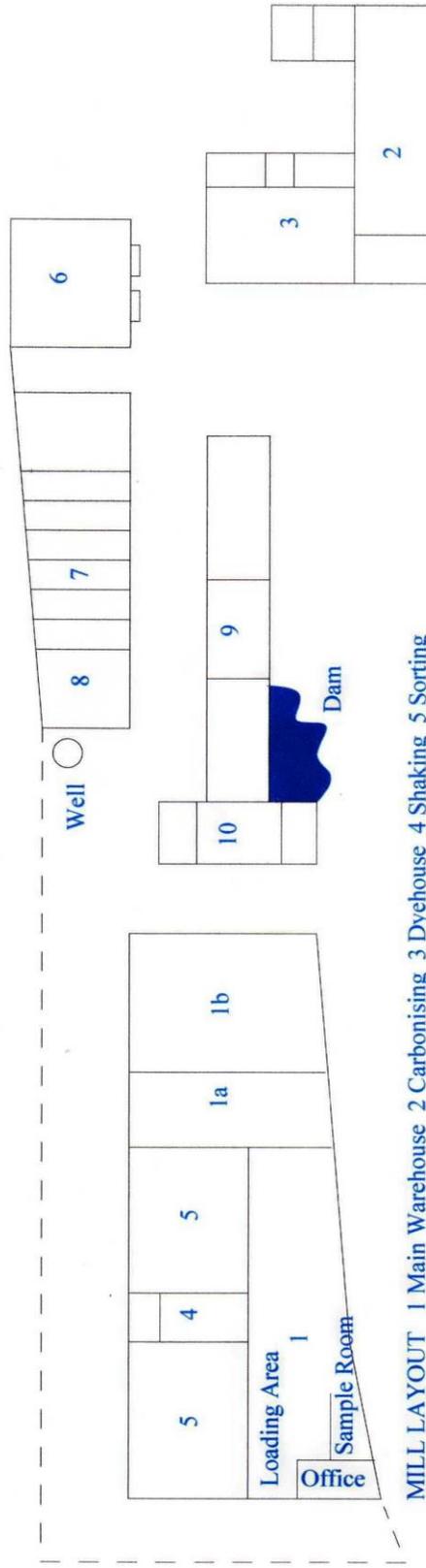
1898 – 1959

**The Story of a 'Mungo' family**



GEDHAM MILL, OSSETT, WEST YORKSHIRE, ENGLAND

MUNGO MANUFACTURING IN OSSETT GLOVER AND ELLIS LTD 1898-1959



MILL LAYOUT 1 Main Warehouse 2 Carbonising 3 Dyehouse 4 Shaking 5 Sorting  
6 Boiler/Engine 7 Grinding/Pulling 8 Carding 9 Packing 10 Transport

**GLOVER and ELLIS Ltd, GEDHAM MILLS, OSSETT. West Yorkshire, England**

**Manufacturers of mungo and shoddy, or reprocessed or reclaimed wool from old rags.**

**The Story of a 'Mungo' Family in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.** By Richard D. Glover. 2013.

## **INTRODUCTION**

With this study I have tried to bring the technical side of the business of mungo manufacturing together with references to the people involved running the company and certain episodes during their lifetime, the First World War and its aftermath. How it affected not only the family but the prosperity, or otherwise, of the town of Ossett and the people connected with it, reminiscent of the whole Heavy Woollen District. I hope the work will be of interest to future members of the family, but also to historians and anyone interested in the textile industry of Ossett, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The rag, mungo and shoddy trades were inseparable from the woollen industry in 19th and early 20th century. Shoddy was used as a textile material by Benjamin Law of Batley as early as 1813, but before that age, rags were also used for flocks for the stuffing of saddles. By 1855, 16 million kgs. of rags were dealt with, by 1935 nearly 27 million kgs, and by value over half a million pounds. This was over eight millions in today's money. But since the end of WW2, the industry was killed off by the use of man-made fibres, which were impossible to carbonize and get rid of from the mix. This left only the flock industry (Edward Clay and Son Ltd.) used for bedding and fillings, to exist which did not need any carbonizing.

A description of the difference between shoddy and mungo: shoddy is recycled wool fibres obtained by grinding unfelted or loosely woven woollen or worsted rags, very often knitted goods, jumpers, stockings etc : mungo is recycled woollen fibres, finer in diameter, but usually shorter in length than shoddy, made by grinding harder rags, the best being made from tailors clippings which gave a longer staple which obtained a better price. Both types of fibre were used for blending in various portions with new wool to enable the spinners and then the weavers to make a cheaper cloth.

Ossett as part of the 'Heavy Woollen District' (Dewsbury, Batley, Morley and Ossett) has been in the recycling industry for many generations. *Inutile Utile Ex Arte*, is the town's motto (Useless things made useful through skill). From the beginning of the 19th century my family has been involved in textiles when in the 18<sup>th</sup> century my great-great -great- grandfather George, started hand loom weaving in Ossett. His son John had 11 children, all except one went into the textile industry and most of his 39 grandchildren too, as the mungo and shoddy industry expanded in the industrial revolution, so did his family. In fact some of my family have been involved in textiles since the 17th century, when in 1637 George Glover, a clothier, married Jennett Fairbarne, whose family for several generations before, were woollen hand-card makers in Ossett, ten generations ago.

Gedham mill was specifically built as a medium sized, mungo manufacturing works in 1898 for Robert Elston Phillips, who was already a mungo manufacturer in Dale Street, Ossett, in the mill owned later by J. and S. Langley and Son, but before that by William Glover, my great grandfather in the mid 19th century.

Gedham land was amalgamated from a shared grazing land allotment near the village centre of medieval Ossett. Before 1485, 'Gethame' was mentioned 'as abutting on the street of the village of Ossett', and the meaning: 'get' = gate and 'hame' = village centre, i.e. meaning gateway to the village of Ossett. Total area of the land for the mill, was almost two acres, but with much other land around it.

In 1900 the mill was rented to my grandfather, John Henry Glover, who in his life was a dedicated, practising christian, a magistrate, special constable, and chairman of several organisations, also a considerable property developer, philanthropist and keen sportsman. He 'worked hard and played hard'. Walter Ellis, who was a lay-preacher, was the other partner. They paid £360 in rent per year to the devisees (12 of them including Mr. H.W. Langley, John Henry Glover and Walter Ellis, who by 1933 was the only surviving trustee of the will of R.E. Phillips who died in 1899. In his will, he left an annuity of £20, to Miss Charlotte Elizabeth Boothroyd, sister of Mary Helena Boothroyd, later wife of JHG, my grandmother). He obviously knew the family well from an early date. In 1916, both partners bought the mill outright for £4000. In 1918 they became sole shareholders in the limited company of Glover and Ellis Ltd. Over twenty people worked at the mill. Until 1914 the partners lived in the large brick built semi-detached houses next to the mill.

Gedham mill was run by my grandfather, John Henry Glover (JHG) and Walter Ellis, who was the salesman for Huddersfield and Holmfirth and Alvar Peace for Leeds and Bramley district. *The two known for putting their heads round their customers' doorway and saying mornin', mornin', 'owt or nowt' -in bad times the usual reply was very often 'nowt', mornin' mornin' but of course, sometimes a very good order was obtained. So goes the story.*

### **The Mill.**

Gedham mill was a complex of largely single story buildings providing all the components of a mungo mill. The main buildings are a large warehouse, a range of rag grinding sheds with attached engine house, a boiler house, dyehouse, chimney and carbonizing plant, stables and despatch sheds. My father said the plan on page2, which he originally drew", shows the mill was better designed than most in the district for efficiency and cheap working. In fact he came across some badly designed, or not designed at all". This of course, is one reason why in most years, good profits were made.

#### **1. The Rag Warehouse.**

The shed was eleven bays long by nine bays deep, tapering to eight at the west end, brick built and single story. Rooms 1 and 5 had wood plank floors, with ventilation grates for warmth, where operatives worked, and large sandstone flags in room 4, to take the weight of the shaking machine. Rooms 1a and 1b floors were earth and ash, strong enough to take the weight of stacked bales. The rest of the mill floors were brick, as can be seen in the dyehouse photograph. Also the mill-yard and road were brick. Each bay had an equal pitched roof of largely utilitarian style, covered by natural slate. Each of the bays had pairs of round-headed windows on the south wall and north and south-facing roof lights. On the east wall a round-headed doorway with pediment over the loading bay.

The bales of rags were brought in by the main loading doors at the east end of the mill, by horse and dray. The rags came from all over the U.K. but also Europe and the Middle East in large bales from the rag auctioneers in Dewsbury, Mr. W.E. Gundill, a good friend of JHG of Henry Cullingworth and Co. or the many local 'rag shops'. *At this stage of the process the rags were often flea infested and it was necessary for operators after going home to stand over a bath of cold water, when the fleas would jump out of their clothes for a drink and be killed.*

Within the warehouse were two coal heated offices, with doorways of reeded architraves where my grandfather, who really ran the mill, and Joseph Senior Firth, the chief cashier worked. The offices had newly installed telephones, very modern at that time. Next door was the sample room where customers' samples were kept for matching, an essential part of the business.

*A little story told by my father about his father (JHG) was that he would occasionally go into the mill itself and*

*actually sort the rags in such a fast way that the workpeople could not keep up with him, and say "if I can do it so fast, so can you", of course he only did it for a short while - easy that way wasn't it! He was 6 feet 3 inches and very strong. The writer must admit that he applied this trick himself much later, at Gedham when MD of his company RGS in the 1960 and 1970s. It works but only for a time!*

A large part of this shed was divided into different working areas by brick internal walls. Throughout the shed, the roof has wooden roof trusses of king-post and V-brace form. The trusses were supported by cast-iron columns bearing the maker's name, J.E. Hainsworth, Dewsbury. The form of the columns differs in detail in different areas of the shed. All columns, however, lack a bolting head, indicating that the processes performed were largely unpowered. The large area (1) of five bays by five bays next to loading area was used for the reception and initial storage of rags. The rags were generally ripped, taking off pockets and roughly sorted at this stage. If the rags were really dirty, they would be shaken before carbonizing. When the varying bales of different coloured rags were required for processing, they were then wheeled to the carbonizing department.

## **2. Carbonizing.**

The rags were moved from the warehouse to the west end of the mill complex (2), away from the local houses (fields all around in those days) where they were subjected to the removal of cotton and other natural fibres by the process known as 'wet-method' carbonizing. After first steeping in a weak solution of sulphuric acid the rags were then placed in the turntable perforated drum of the machine and subjected to the sulphuric acid gas (sulphur dioxide) from the retort, (enclosed vessel) which was heated by coke. The gas destroyed the cotton leaving only the wool and ashes. Handling the carbonized rags necessitated using suitable clothing and rubber gloves. After carbonizing the rags were then washed in the vats in the dyehouse next door, and spun in a ' buzzer' hydro-extractor and dried in the drying room above the boiler on tables or racks. Glover and Ellis Ltd. had two carbonizing machines, partly because they and the engine could very often break down, which caused loss of production throughout the mill, as JHG stated in October 1920 "Mill standing to put new bearings in the main shaft of the engine and began to dismantle the carbonizer". The valuation of a full second hand carbonizing plant in 1928 was £175, making it essential to keep all machinery in good working order.

Carbonizing was a corrosive and noxious process, not only destroying the cotton in the rags, but the gas affecting any gardens nearby, and the town's curtains which soon rotted away, but useful in killing moss in the lawns. We must remember that over 14 large mill chimneys were belching their black smoke, as well as the carbonizing fumes over the town, making the people and houses rather dirty. But, we must also not forget that the Ossett mills employed many hundreds of people, making the town prosperous, enabling many fine buildings to be made.

The carbonizing process was supposed to be an unhealthy job: no Government controls and regulations were in existence at the time-'just please yourself attitude' as to how you carried on this work. But in our case the fumes were properly controlled and carried away by our high mill chimney. Arthur Donovan Glover (ADG), my father, stated, that as proof we cared, two of our carbonizers lived to be over eighty.

Carbonizing is estimated to earn 0.84d per lb. Or 0.38p in new money. This price is calculated to include wages, acid, steam, coal, and power. In 1918 the actual cost of carbonizing itself, without wages and materials was half of one old penny per lb. One machine was capable of carbonizing 1680lbs. of rags each day, on a normal nine hour shift.

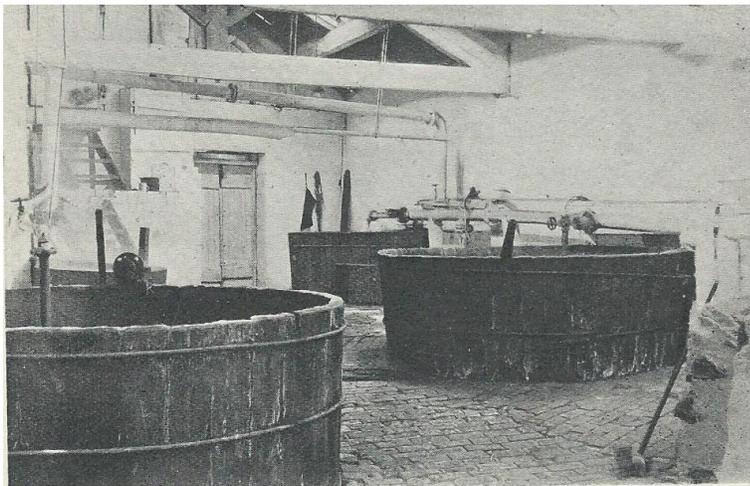
## **3. Dyehouse.**

The dyeing department (3) was needed, in most cases, to correct the colours for blending. Without this vital

section, correct colours could not be achieved. The head dyer was a very important man, who understood all about dyestuffs, fastness and colour matching to the customers' varying samples. In my father's early youth and before WW1, he was Albert Pollard. The head-dyer or indeed my grandfather checked the trial sample to determine the required shade and made up the recipe for the final production. My father stated "He could never remember a blend returning faulty." Albert Pollard was a member of a long line of textile people, his father John, was a dyer before him, and his son John, was also a head dyer and fully qualified college lecturer.

Four large wooden vats were used, each one about eight feet across, tapering slightly to a depth of 5 feet. Steam for heating the pans came from overhead lagged piping, from the boilerhouse to the centre of the base of the vat. The batch was 'poled' (agitated) with the wooden pole, promoting level dyeing. After completion of the dyeing the liquor was drained into the mill dam. It was sometimes needed to strip the old colour from a batch with a hot alkaline treatment of soda-ash to effect lighter colours. The blend was then spun-dried in the 'buzzer' hydro-extractor by centrifugal force, then removed to the drying room above the boiler which utilised wire mesh tables with sloping sides. Drying would normally take only a few hours, but had to be carefully controlled; over-drying or baking could affect the colour or handle and subsequent rejection by the demanding customer.

*The dye-pans in our case were made in Ossett by my Great Uncle John Henry Horsnell Ltd, who exported many of them overseas, particularly to Russia. Horsnell also made all the timbers and woodwork in the mill itself and many of the houses JHG built in Ossett in the 1920s. Fred Horsnell, my other grandfather, bought a house in Sunnybank ,which JHG developed, for £700.They carried on being the main joiner, until JHG died in 1928 at only 65 years of age, from something that would be easily operable to-day.*



*Dye pans for washing and dyeing rags at the Glover & Ellis mill.*

#### **4. Shaking.**

After carbonizing, washing, spinning and drying, the now 100% woollen rags were taken to the shaking or willeying room (4) back in the main warehouse, to literally batter and to shake-out any remaining friable cotton dust. This was performed in the revolving drum machine. The dust was extracted by pipes directly from the machine and bagged into a small room and collected to be used as a fertilizer. This was a rather noisy and dirty job and suitable clothing and masks had to be used. Yes! Even in those days.

## 5. Sorting.

Now the clean rags were taken into the sorting rooms (5) in the main warehouse, where women and girls were employed sorting different qualities and colours and placing them in separate baskets or skeps, made by the local company F. Burdekin. This was a skilled job and the skilled rag sorter could detect variations in the quality of rags very quickly and the sort of rag almost at a glance by visual and tactile examination. Good lighting is essential in the room; we had north lights in the roof and plenty of windows at the side walls. Electric lighting from a generator was supplemented by gas lights in the early days. Sufficient space was given for the storage of the bales of rags and the provision of riddle tables on which the women do their work. This was to eventually produce certain blends, types and colours for the buyers: the spinners and weavers of cloth. The blends were stored again in the room (1a and 1b) adjoining the main warehouse awaiting grinding and scribbling.

## 6. The Steam Engine and Boilerhouse.

These were located to the west end of the mill complex within easy reach of the water used in the boiler. The deep well which was situated at the eastern end of this block, I believe, was re-lined from an older well in the same brick as the mill itself. This provided the water into the overhead storage tank above the boiler. *It is interesting to note that the mill dam, next to the dyehouse, had large gold fish in, but they were ostensibly blind due to warm water and chemicals from the dye-vats polluting the water.*

The steam engine was of horizontal type, of 30 horse power by Robey, powering a line shaft for the grinding machines and scribbler, using steam under pressure from a single horizontal 'Lancashire' coal fired boiler, but also providing steam for the dyehouse. A brick wall separated the boiler from the very valuable engine from fire and explosion. My father said "The engine was well maintained by the engineer, Tom Hepworth, who cleaned and polished it every day". Tom joined the company from the beginning, and retired in 1918, straight after the war; no doubt passing on to his son, Bernard, the knowledge of mungo he had gained at Gedham. Bernard went on to found his own successful shoddy and mungo mills in Ossett.

The mill chimney was over 100 feet high; square build of Craven brick, as was the whole of the mill. Craven brick was a local company, with the quarry and brickworks at Roundwood in Ossett. Many of the local mills were made of the same Craven brick. Joseph Ellis and Sons, actually did the brick work in Gedham mill.

## 7. The Grinding Sheds.

The other principal block of buildings at the south-west corner of the site consisted of six bays for the rag grinding (pulling) machines one two-bay room (7/8) for the scribbling machine. Each machine divided by a brick wall in case of fire and separate doors to each bay. The roof employed king-post trusses. The rooms were lit by windows in the gable to the north and electric lights provided by electricity generated on site by a twelve horse-power electric motor.

*Not only did the buttons and trimmings come off in the sorting department but any surplus would be cut off in the grinding area as metal buttons could cause a fire in the machine. As proof of this the writer found many metal buttons wedged between the floor bricks before the buildings were demolished in 2008. In the last war my brother, Roger can remember collecting buttons, as a child and playing games with them.*

A trial blend of rags were mixed and put through one of the six grinding machines, which were made by either J. Halstead of Wakefield Road, or Joseph Redgwick, of Broadroyd, both companies based in Ossett. The machine consisted of a big revolving drum with a cone shaped swift, a horizontally mounted cylinder, covered in sharp

metal teeth, to grind the rags by high speed, back into fibres. The prepared mixture was put through into something resembling the original fibre of the wool. It was then washed and examined by the experts and matched to customers' samples. If satisfactory, the whole blend is put down in a huge pile next to the machine and sprayed with special oil, one with a low flash point (as fires could easily be started in the grinding machine). The oil held the resulting fibre together. The pile is then 'layered on' by hand, processed in lots to make up the customer's requirements. The fibres are then blown into a 'mungo-box', packed ready for the next process: scribbling.

#### **8. Scribbling or Carding.**

Grinding was not the final process of making shoddy and mungo. Scribbling or carding by a large machine took place in the next double-bayed room to the grinding machines. The scribbling engine straightened the fibres using the five large swift rollers and 'worker' rollers and doffer rollers on the top. They straightened the passing material through the machine to form a sliver, a loose web of the fibres making it very easy for the spinners to take over. *A little bit different from the woollen hand cards for combing, made by the family in 17th century!*

The cost of scribbling in 1918 was 0.71d per lb, or £15.18.0d. Per ton.

#### **9. Checking, weighing and packing.**

The result of all these operations was a much finer material which was packed into large bales ready for dispatch to the customer. The material was checked for colour correctness, weighed and packed.

#### **10. Transport.**

In the early days of the mill, horses were the main means of transport, which were kept in the stable block (10.). Hay was stored in the lofts above the stables. My father stated that "we had four or five heavy dray horses - fine animals - capable of carrying large and heavy loads to our customers to the mills in the Huddersfield, Honley and Holmfirth district, a distance of about 20 miles. Our teamsters had to be on the road at four in the morning in order to complete their delivery and return by 9pm same day. Lunch was inevitably at a pub for a beer and huge homemade cheese sandwich. The Leeds area was not too bad, and fairly normal working times were achieved." Goods were still being carried by the horses and drays until at least 1928 even though a Dennis lorry, with solid tyres, had been purchased in 1923. The lorry was still being used in 1930 and valued at £150. No mention of the horses, presumably these had lost their usefulness. The driver of the lorry was Edwin Stephenson.

*"One day before The First World War, when my father was about 16, our drayman was off sick and his father asked him to take the team of four huge horses with all the bales to our customers in the Colne Valley. My father said that would be difficult, as he did not know the way. "Oh! " My grandfather said, "You do not need to know the way, the horses know exactly where to go". They did. We unloaded the goods and set off back. The horses stopped at nearly every pub on the way.*

The horses were also used for chapel Sunday school outings, carrying children and their parents, they would automatically turn into pub yards, which did not fit the scheme of things, as Wesleyans they preached temperance. *Naughty horses!*

#### **Northfield Mill.**

In 1913, Just before WW1, Glover and Ellis bought the nearby Northfield Mill. The mill was re- built 1888, after a

disastrous fire, for William Speight and his son John, who was a rag and waste dealer in Ossett. John's daughter Jane married Abram Pollard, who was originally a book-keeper, one of the executors of William Speight's will, of 1870. Abram bought Northfield mill at an auction in the Carpenters Arms Inn for £4650 in May 1888, from the trustees: John Harrop, cloth manufacturer of Horbury, George Richardson, Frank Glover (brother of JHG), commercial traveller, who owned several closes near the mill, and the wife of Abram, Jane, (nee Speight). Abram Pollard died in 1900, leaving the mill to his two sons, George Arthur and William Ernest Pollard, of Longlands, Ossett. William Ernest Pollard sold the mill to Glover and Ellis in 1913, for £4500, included was the nearby Northfield colliery, worth £550, and nine acres of land, to the south and west of Laughable Lane (Crownlands) and Field Lane (Church Street). Before this in 1902 the coal lying under the land was sold by William Ernest Pollard to Henry Westwood and John Naylor and Company, presumably for the colliery.

Frank Glover (my great uncle and one of William Speight's trustees) contacted TB and decided to emigrate to Australia. He worked on a sheep farm hoping the fresh air and better climate would save him from this disease. He said, rather sarcastically, in a letter dated Dec. 17<sup>th</sup> 1894, to JHG "Your letters are like angels visits, few and far between". He died only 7 years later, in the Outback, aged 47.

Northfield mill was run by my father (ADG), before he joined the Royal Flying Corps (RAF), in 1915. Northfield mill had the usual warehouses, carbonizing plant, engine and boiler house, grinding sheds etc. In June 1918 as the war neared its end and therefore the loss of new Government orders, JHG gave Northfield workpeople a week's notice, also some of the Gedham staff. "An experience new to me, I don't like going back" he said.

Alongside the mill was Northfield house, originally built for John Speight and then Squire Broadbent (manager of Pildacre and Northfield collieries) a substantial stone built property, where from 1914- 1928, JHG's family lived for many happy years. With this house and grounds were plenty of outbuildings and land, enough to have a cow and goat for milk and cheese; poultry for providing eggs for cooking and baking; essential in the war years. The whole wide family enjoyed this produce.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November 1919, Edwin Bickle bought Northfield mill with a deposit of £1,000. The mill had seen Glover and Ellis through the busy years of the war.

After the sale of the mill in 1919, the lands around the house, including the old pit buildings (presumably the pit was now disused) was retained by JHG and Walter Ellis. The value of the house and lands in 1928 was £1,100. It was then that JHG moved from Northfield house with his wife, Mary Helena (nee Boothroyd of Holmfirth) to his newly built house in Wesley Street, to be near to his 'beloved' chapel. His daughter Margaret and her husband John William Gill; my father, Arthur Donovan Glover (ADG) and my mother Mary (nee Horsnell) lived nearby in newly built houses. Henry Glover, the other son, and Edgar Whitaker Ellis and families lived in the original, Gedham semi-detached houses. Walter Ellis himself lived at Grange View off Healey Road.

### **World War One.**

*A young man from Ossett, Roy Hepworth, who worked at Gedham mill before WW1, knew my father well; but when the war came they both went their separate ways, my father joining the RFC\* and Roy the army. Both became drivers and both stationed in France. Roy eventually went home on leave, and on returning camped with other troops near Rouen in freezing weather. Next morning he awoke in horror to find his transport had left him behind. Stranded, he decided to walk and try to find his unit by checking the badges of passing army vehicles. After trekking all day through the French countryside; after dark he came across an unknown village. He walked down the street feeling hopeless and lost, and did not know which way to turn, by sheer coincidence and one in a million chance, he heard a familiar voice in a broken lighted upstairs window, that sounds like Donovan Glover, He opened*

*the door and tore upstairs to see my father and his pals. What a relief! Next day they reunited him with his unit. Some story!* Information from Roger Hepworth, son of Roy. Roger Hepworth's Grandfather, Gladstone Hepworth, built and ran Sunnysdale Mill in Ossett, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

\* My father wrote that he had the good fortune to have many good friends among both men and pilots. He said that he was in the privileged position to often be the driver for Major Edward ( Mickey) Mannock, V.C.(Posthumous), D.S.O. 3 Bars and M.C. 2 Bars, (61 kills), the highest scoring British Ace of the war, and Captain George Mc Elroy D.F.C 3 Bars and M.C. 2 Bars (47 kills). In 1917 both pilots flew in their single-seater French built Neuport Scout planes, and in 1918 the British built S.E.5a,( Scout Experimental) with Wolseley Viper aero engine; before that in 1915, the FE-8. All being both the 'eyes' for our commanders observing movements and changes in the enemy lines. This last airfield was near St. Pol, in N.E. France. Because my father had a better education than most other drivers he was chosen to drive these two air-aces as well as other pilots. He took particular pride in being able to talk and discuss tactics with them. He states that "They had many jolly times together, amongst the very many rough".

ADG also drove Leyland heavy Lorries and Crossley tenders (personnel carriers). One example being, that after the famous Battle of Arras (9<sup>th</sup> April 1917), he wrote "As weather so bad to-day I took, with other men, a tender to go to the Vimy ridge to look round the captured trenches". He was in 40 Squadron, RFC and based 'somewhere in France'. Rank 2<sup>nd</sup> Class - Air mechanic.

My father was demobilised in February 1919, from an airfield near Tournai in Belgium, Arriving home at 9am, not having been in bed for six days, nor washed for three'. Hitch-hiking home by the sounds of it! Within a few days he was working back in the mill. My father's brother, Henry, was badly injured in the trenches in 1916 and invalided out, unable to properly work again. Their brother George was also badly injured in 1916 and spent the rest of the war in a prison of war camp, and a wreck for the rest of his life. Their cousin, Frank, was killed in France, aged only eighteen, a few weeks before the Armistice. A good friend of the family, Stanley Simpkin, who gained the British Military Cross, was a member of another Quaker family. He was badly injured and left for dead, but he pulled through, with a plate in his head. His two brothers were slaughtered in the trenches within two days of each other. *What a stupid war! 'Losing the cream of the youth'.*

### **Costings and pricings.**

Generally the costings were based on the following items and costs: the price of rags, the sorting, shaking, carbonizing, dyeing or neutralizing, if required, pulling (grinding), scribbling (carding), oil, wages, overheads renewals i.e. re-covering swifts, machine parts and repairs, selling expenses.

The writer has an invoice dated 1st July 1874, from William Glover, my great-grandfather, describing themselves as 'Dealers in shoddy and mungo' to Myers and Glover (a cousin, J.E. Glover of Wesley Street) for one quarter rent of machine at £32.10.0., 97lbs rag pulling@7/- per pack = £1.8.4. 166 packs of rags shaking @9d = £6.4.10. 5 packs at 6/- = £1.10.0, 34lbs new light rags @11d = £1.11.2. Total bill £43.4.4. *One pack =240lbs. (110 kg.)*

Henry Cullingworth and Sons were the main suppliers of old and damaged uniforms from the war. *What a terrible story many of those uniforms could tell.* By October 1917 over 45,000,000 separate battlefields waste items had been auctioned by Dewsbury auctioneers to the local mills. JHG had an interview with Mr. W.E. Gundill of Cullingworth regarding the War Office contract finishing on June 30th 1918.

The turnover of Glover and Ellis in 1917/18: Bought items £28,633 and sold @ £49,233, a profit of £20,600 -*what a profit!* For 1918/19, bought items £69,691 and sold @ £75,440, a profit of £5748. Evened out over the two years, a profit of 26%. On the 9th July 1918, JHG obtained Army Contracts for cutting and washing cotton shirts 7/- per

cwt.

*On the 12th October 1918, my grandfather stated in his diary "Germany's reply to President Wilson accepting his terms for the cessation of the conflict. I think that this is the beginning of the end. God grant it and guide it". On the 30<sup>th</sup> October 1918, JHG must have decided to celebrate and treat himself. He had his dinner at the National Kitchen in Ossett Town Hall: soup, Yorkshire pudding, fishcake and jam-roll. A 'capital repast', he said, for nine and a half (old) pennies.*

On the 5<sup>th</sup> November 1918, the mill received an invoice from Henry Westwood and Co. For coal leased and not got, (obviously held at the colliery) though paid for, for the support of the top dam, 1820 tons at 3/- (15p) per ton = £273. November 11<sup>th</sup> 1918. My grandfather wrote in his diary "Armistice signed – thank God!-, holiday in the afternoon. Subdued rejoicings. Attended service at Trinity Church. Peace celebrations filled our Gedham field in the evening. Fireworks were displayed. Peace celebrations went on for several days. The mill was on holiday on the 12<sup>th</sup> for armistice rejoicings". On Sunday the 17<sup>th</sup> November 1918 "Thanksgiving services all day- not least a great united meeting in the Town Hall at 8 o'clock".

Soon after WW1 ended we had to deliver to a customer (Priests), 11,000 lbs of blue/grey shirting dressed and about 10,000 carbonized helmets (I believe he means felt hats or gas hoods, not metal helmets). Obviously war surplus.

On the 18th February 1919 my grandfather ordered from Cullingworth and Sons, 2 tons of greatcoats @60/-, 2 tons of pantaloons @76/-. A week later he ordered again: 4 tons of tunics@87/-, 4 tons of puttees (long strips of cloth wrapped around the legs, particularly useful in the trenches) @85/-, 4 tons of trousers @104/-, 2 tons of pantaloons @76/-, 2 tons of greatcoats@60/- and 2 tons of pantaloons @76/-, for our own use. *Priced in cwts, 50kg = 1 cwt. 2240lbs or 1016 kg = 1 ton. 20/- = £1.*

On the 24th February 1919 JHG ordered 4 tons of tunics, 87/-, 4 tons of puttees 85/-, 4 tons of trousers 104/-, 2 tons of greatcoats 60/- and an extra 2 tons of pantaloons at 76/-, for processing in the mill. He said in his diary "bought freely at the sales of khaki etc. Felt like old times". But only a few days later, on the 28th February 1919, JHG, said "Business was very bad indeed, looks as if we have to shut (the mill) up for a while". Stock was not moving. *The boom years had obviously gone. The war years did not necessarily mean good years, for most of their money seems to have been made before the war. The woollen textile industry reached record production levels before the war. With the war itself, bringing massive government orders, this soon petered out in 1918.*

However, on the 18th March 1919, JHG bought 10,000 lbs of American fancy waste at 96/- cwt. and at the sales on 3rd December 1919, Australian uncut rags fetched 111/-, and uncut black, blues and reds at 280/-cwt.

Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> November 1919. 'Celebrated Armistice day by two minutes perfect quiet. A Solemn reverent occasion', JHG noted in his diary. "Peace celebrations in Ossett. The decorations were very good, the gathering in front of the Town Hall was a fine sight. The whole service went well. The scholars were given tea at various schools, and a great crowd filled Gedham in the evening. Fireworks were freely displayed and a huge fire lighted at 10.30 pm."

On the 20<sup>th</sup> April 1920, JHG said "Back again at work. I am happiest when busiest. Stuff lower in price, favoured by the exchange".

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June 1920 Shaw Peace printers, agreed to buy the old church school and cottage in Wesley Street, for £800 and £100 respectively. By this time JHG owned most of the land between Gedham and Wesley Street. This is interesting because Shaw Peace printers became part of my own company R.G.S. in the 1970s. The Town Council

was at the time making the new by-pass, which necessitated the demolition of these historical old buildings dating back to 1814.

## Poland

On the 1<sup>st</sup> June 1920, after only being demobbed four months before, my father (ADG) and Edgar Whitaker Ellis, both being educated at Ackworth, a Quaker school, and true to Quaker tradition, volunteered after an appeal by The League of Nations (local representative Winifred Ellis – daughter of Walter Ellis, the G. and E. director) in Ossett Town Hall, to help *The Society of Friends War Victims Relief Association*. JHG stated "Donovan and Edgar left for London, en route for Poland. God keep them and bring them back to us safely". They joined a team of doctors, nurses and other helpers, to do relief work in Poland because of the typhus epidemic there. They stayed seven months in terrible and sometimes freezing conditions, distributing food, collecting the sick and nursing them in their own 'hospital'. They brought in contacts to be bathed and given clean clothing, educating the children to keep themselves clean, but particularly giving medical care to the victims of the typhus fever epidemic. Typhus was caused and spread by lice that had engulfed 95% of the country; between 8- 10% of the population was decimated. One of the Society doctors and one member were struck down with this terrible disease, but luckily they just managed to survive, though mentally disturbed for over six months, which was typical of the disease. The poor people of Poland had to suffer not only typhus, but cholera and the so-called Spanish influenza, were also rampant in the country at the same time.

After several years of warfare, unbelievable poverty and degradation, the Polish people were coming back to their lands after having been ravaged four times by both German and Soviet armies, bringing with them the lice which were widespread in both armies. The Polish-Russian war came near enough for my father and pals to hear the Polish guns and those of the retreating Bolsheviks, commanded by Lenin. My father and Edgar Ellis were at Zawiercie, south of Warsaw in Silesia, which had a large Jewish population, where most personal goods, had either been destroyed or stolen by the armies passing over them between the years 1914-1920.

My father, amongst many other things, was involved in setting-up de-lousing stations, particularly on railway lines. Typhus was easily spread within a family or group. People in the countryside were living in shacks and dug-outs in the most dreadful conditions imaginable. *Well! What has all this to do with the mill? We shall soon see.*

My father and Edgar came back for Christmas 1920. Two weeks later, On the 6th January 1921, my grandfather wrote in his diary "The men in the mill were busy in the warehouse packing greatcoats for the Jews", which would have been some, or all of the 6 tons bought in February 1919. I wondered what this was all about, but now realise that the Jews were badly affected by typhus as they were living in tight local communes in Poland. But the problem was not only the typhus, but more-so, this was the time of the massacre and persecution of the Jews.

The pogrom in Poland and Eastern Europe followed the war with the Bolshevik Ukrainians. My father and team moved south to Galicia, in the Carpathian mountains, away from the fighting, to Pilica, Lwow(Lemberg) and Nadworna (now in the Ukraine) three of the enclaves, which had been fought over, where up-to half the population were Jews, most of them destitute. He must have seen at first hand the anti-Jewish sentiment amongst the rest of the Polish people. The whole thing was a premonition of much further horrors to come. Was this the beginning of those horrors? Yes, I believe it was!

Many thousands of these East European émigrés arrived by boat at Hull docks. A special platform was laid aside for them at the railway station, where I would think the greatcoats were handed out, before entraining to Liverpool and other ports for their long journey to New York. I like to think that some of them, at least, were wearing the greatcoats from our mill in Ossett.

Quaker principles stayed with my father throughout the rest of his life. He also had a 'soft spot' for the Poles, too.

*I will write later, much more of this Polish event, together with several photos.*

### **The Downturn.**

Of course all the foregoing processes done in the mill had to be done at an agreed price with the customer, after much haggling, a price would be agreed. Probably personified by Thomas Armstrong's book *Crowthers of Bankdam*, where the lay-preacher from Ossett, (meaning Walter Ellis) said "He would rather see his rag machines stand idle, than sell his eighty packs (over 19 tons) of carbonized and dyed blacks at such a cheap price".

However the layout of our mill, the efficient methods of production, JHG's keen sense of business; it is said that he would sometimes ring the auctioneers in Dewsbury, just as his transport was about to be sent, to see if a discount or better price could be obtained. Little things like this enabled Glover and Ellis Ltd to make good profits where other companies in the trade fared less well. But now the financial affairs of the mill were difficult, with both partners subsidising the firm's income with their own money, and refusing a yearly dividend, to enable them to pay wages and carry on business satisfactorily.

At the Dewsbury rag auctions on April 20th 1920, JHG states in his diary 'Prices were lower'. On October 15<sup>th</sup> "the markets were perplexed" and on 10th November, he states "Wretched sale", and one week later, he said – "Prices down again, very little business". My father (ADG) stated in his diary "The years following the war were miserable, trade very poor, culminating in 1921 in a colossal number of men out of work. It was heartbreaking to walk through the centre of Ossett and see hundreds of men standing in groups with a lost look on their faces. Dole in those times was small and poverty was widespread. Trade in our mill was as poor as with the others, we only worked three days a week". JHG did not take his yearly dividend.

As the Great Depression took hold the financial results of the company, shows exactly what was happening, both in the trade generally, but especially in our own company. In 1926 turnover was nearly £21,000 (£630,000 in today's money) and gross profit was £4,500, an amazing 23%. In 1927 the turnover was down to nearly £17,000 and gross profit £2,700, 17% profit. In 1928 turnover was down again to £15,500 and gross profit £2,500, profit 16%. In the same year JHG took half his usual stipend from the business. *Inflation rates from 1926 to 2013 x30.*

1928 was the year that my father ADG decided to start his own battery charging business in Kingsway. JHG had already built several shops and offices in Kingsway; one for the 'Public Benefit Boot' Co, one for Percy Kitson, the pawnbroker and one for Edward Dunford the tailor, and one office for Arnold Giggall, (accountant), and shop for Maison Tallants (ladies hairdresser). And by 1935, Allen Bennett (sports goods workshop), George Grainge (Greengrocer) and Mitchell and Horsnell (accountants). My father decided to do this because he said "I am useless in the mill because of my colour blindness, and business was not looking good". He made his break. JHG built several other properties at this time to try to alleviate the unemployment situation in the town. The building work in Kingsway was done by Gladstone Moorhouse, the plumbing by J.A. Fawcett, the joinery by J.H. Horsnell, electric lighting by Taylor and Co. with Lee and Briggs providing the ironmongery.

In 1929 turnover in the mill was down to £14,000 (£420,000 in today's money) and gross profit 2,600, profit 18%. This was the year the founder and chief entrepreneur, John Henry Glover died at the early age of 65. The company had lost its leader to an early death. The company staggered on for a few more years, under the directorship of Walter Ellis, Edgar Ellis and Henry Glover, but found it difficult to compete in a dying industry, none of them conversant with all processes in the mill. In 1930 turnover was only £10,700 with gross profit £2,000, but with all

disbursements a loss of £882, the turnover in just four years had halved and for the first time a net loss had been made. The whole shoddy and mungo industry was gradually going down, never to fully recover. Although several firms staggered on, working through the bad times until work picked up in World War II. Man-made fibres really finished off the trade in the 1950s.

### **A New Beginning.**

Realising the problems in the trade in about 1920, JHG helped two friends, Roy Secker and J. Machill install an old army hut in Gedham for storing and sorting shoddy, for ground rent of £5. per month, enabling them to start business. In 1921, the old army hut was demolished and JHG lent Secker and Machill £600 at an interest of 6%, enabling them to rent the warehouse at £60 per year. In 1925 they rented two grinding machines from Glover and Ellis for £15 per quarter. From 1926 the value of the warehouse was £1500. In 1928, Secker and Machill purchased it for £1420, by paying a deposit £150. Thirty years later in 1967, I bought it back for £11,000 (£174,000 in today's money) for the very same warehouse block, from John Secker, (son of Roy T Secker) for my own company, RGS Pattern Book Company Limited.

*I got on my bike and went to see my bank manager at the Yorkshire bank to see if I could borrow this £11,000, he said, "Oh no, Richard! That would not be possible," Rotter"! So I went to the Nat West bank nearby and queued up and talked to the manager there. What I did not know was that the man standing behind me was one of the cashiers from the Yorkshire Bank, he obviously heard me asking for the loan. When I got back to my office, the telephone rang and who was it but the Yorkshire Bank manager, saying "Come and see me Richard, I have changed my mind." Forever after, with my increasing turnover, I reckon my overdraft paid for all the staff at the YB in Ossett.*

In 1959 the rest of Gedham mill was conveyed to Charles Reginald Vause, who presumably, then sold it on to Tom Robinson Dyers Ltd. They were in possession of the dyeworks, rooms 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8 on the plan and in 1963, they rented ground and first floor rooms 9 and 10 and the rooms between to The Hippo Glass Fibre Company Ltd , for £520 per year. After purchasing the main warehouse I bought the rest of Gedham mill in 1968, for my company RGS Pattern Book Co. Ltd. for £28,000. Total cost with the warehouse of £39,000. This saw the end of Gedham mill as a mungo factory, and the start of a new venture. In fact the demise of the old mills in Ossett, many built in the 19th century, were the catalyst for many new ventures as newly built premises could not be afforded by the young entrepreneur.

Richard D. Glover 2013.

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### **Sources:**

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