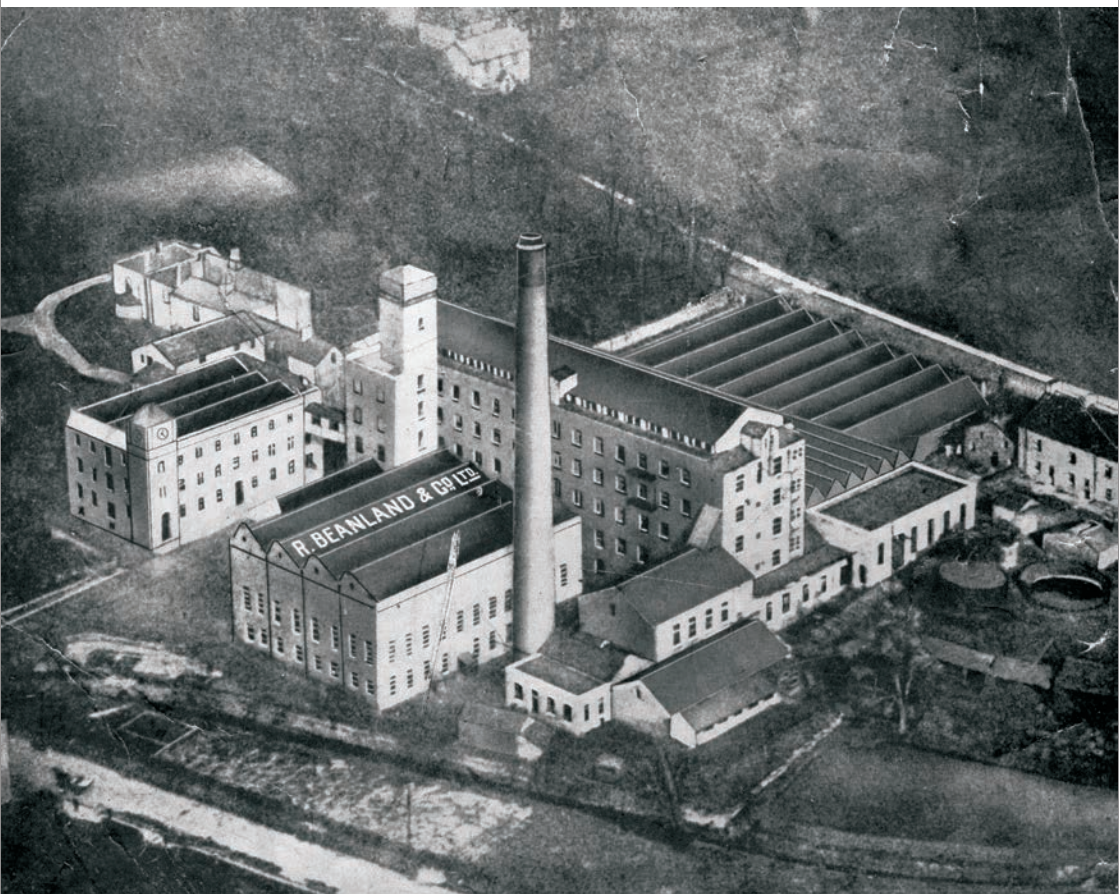


Know your village :
Clayton West in times past



**SPRING GROVE
MILLS**

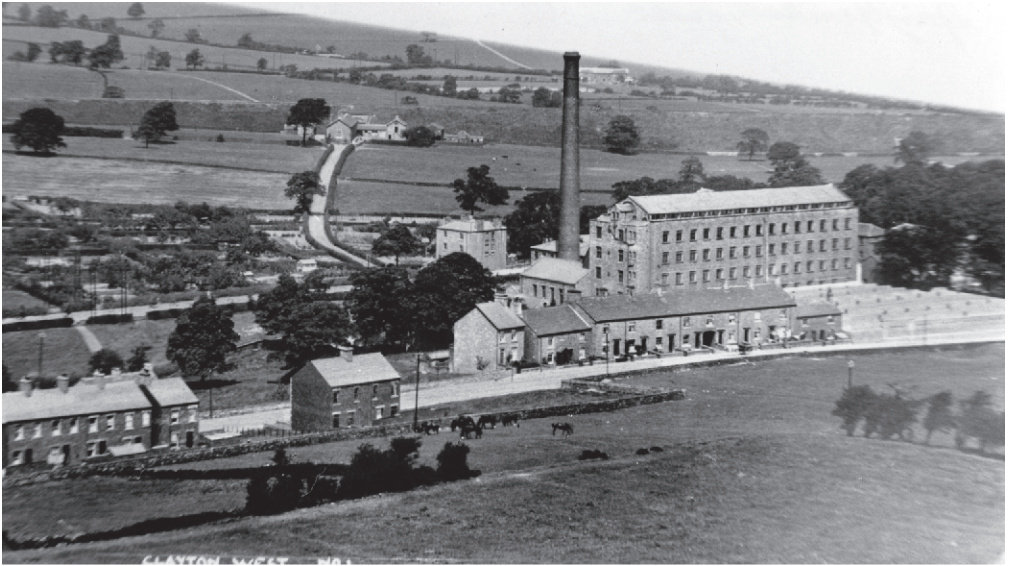
Spring Grove Mills

Front cover:

Spring Grove Mills – an aerial photo originally for magazine publication.

Note the 1825 gas-holders on the right (then an innovation).

*The building at the top at one period served as the temporary
Scissett School Headmaster's House.*



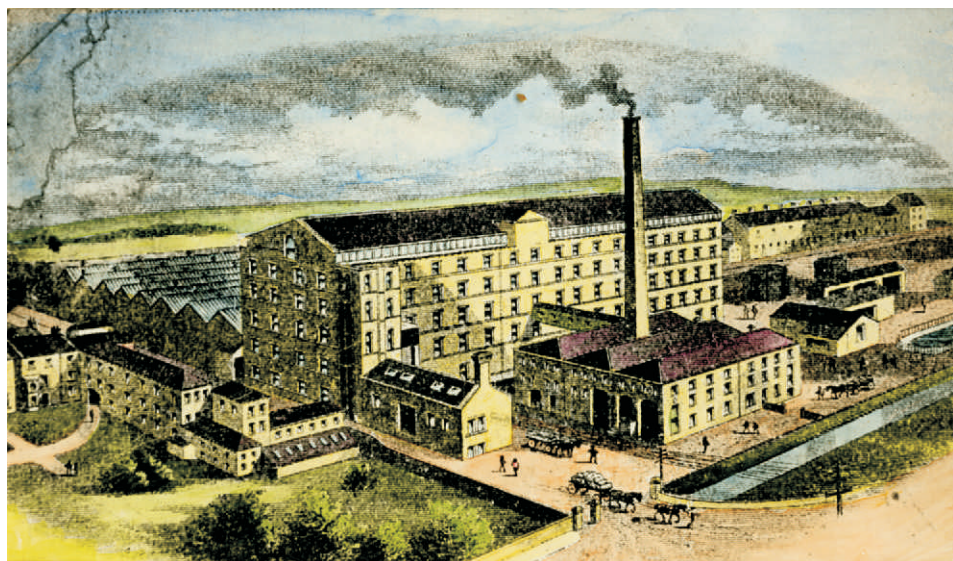
Spring Grove Mills, with Spring Grove (Barnsley Road) in the foreground.

Bottom middle: A newer, Scissett School Headmaster's House

Know your village :
Clayton West in times past

SPRING GROVE MILLS

By Leslie Robinson



Author's note

This booklet along with others, all having the same focal interest of local village history, was not intended for publication but written solely for family interest and gratification - hence the personal references which sometimes occur.

Denby Dale Parish Councillors, however, think that perhaps a wider public might also be interested in such recordings and have taken it upon themselves to print a limited edition.

Leslie Robinson ©



The 1803 Clayton West Enclosure Act -

No mills, no Wakefield Road, but showing the sizing house (see page 9)

A project too far?

The birth and history of Spring Grove Mills

The local textile industry has, over the years, given us many colourful characters to observe and discuss; and amongst that number William Norton (1791 – 1864) must surely find a place. William was the second son of Benjamin Norton of Cuttlehurst. Of his boyhood years little has been handed down, other than at one period he attended High Hoyland School; that he was of a lively disposition; and on occasions in summertime he would go swimming, along with his brothers, in the River Dearne in Highbridge Wood. Like his brothers Thomas, George and Joseph, as soon as he was able he helped his father in the textile trade at Cuttlehurst, then trading under the name of Benjamin Norton & Sons. When his eldest brother Thomas joined the Army, he became, so to speak, his father's right-hand man. It was most likely in this capacity that he developed his skills in the manufacture and design of patterned cloths, as against the plain "Tammy" cloths and woollens then being woven in large numbers all around the district. This developing interest, and the skills involved, were of course quite understandable, since his father Benjamin was well to the fore in the manufacture of patterned cloths, then being used in the making of fancy waistcoats, and where, at the time, the demand far outstripped the supply.

A glimpse into the earliest surviving Stock Book of Cuttlehurst Mill of 1821 show how deeply Benjamin was involved in the trade. For therein, 80 "witches"* are listed as being operated, as well as there being, in the warehouse, 136 old "witch" pieces of cloth and 53 new "figured" pieces; these, along with hundreds of other more simple patterned cloths, capable of being woven on multi-treadle looms by highly skilled weavers. This then was William's introduction to the trade, and William was eager to learn.

**Witches: an early 19th century device used by hand-loom weavers to facilitate their more complex "treadle tramping" patterns, whereby the action of one main treadle could be transferred by mechanical means to activate any other pre-selected treadle and heald. A very early form of mechanical computer, with much strong evidence of its development taking place in Skelmanthorpe.*

Whether Benjamin encouraged his sons to launch out into their own businesses or whether they themselves foresaw the expansion and profitability of textile