From 'a History of Samuel Heap & Son Ltd." 1823-1964"

Bridge Mill) was Brookside Mill, which had been built about 1835 as a cotton spinning factory.[1] In 1887 the owner was willing to sell and Heaps' were asked £3,000 for it. Charles wrote: 'There is always a scarcity of water for the mill in summer time and it is impossible to tell what it might cost us to get sufficient water there to work it by.' He went on to state bluntly: 'as we are only requiring one room for machinery it would be cheaper to build in connexion with our own place and save carting to and fro'. He got it for £2250. Within six years the mill was to contain over £11,000 worth of machinery.[2]

Shortly afterwards, in 1888 or 1889, Charles obtained control of another mill, one several miles from the Caldershaw site. Bentfield Mill, Greenfield, in Saddleworth on the Yorkshire side of Oldham was taken over as a going-concern. For some years previously it had been run by James Robinson who became the manager of the finishing business there under Charles Heap. The mill itself was leased from Andrew Beaumont at £450 per year. The original lease was extended for six years in 1895 and well in advance of the expiry of this Beaumont wrote offering Charles an extension at £650 per year. Charles considered this too much - he later wrote to a third party that Beaumont 'threatened to double the rent'. About this time Charles began the moves that were to result in the purchase of Healey Hall Mill by the company in October 1899 for £3,750. The idea was that machinery should be moved from Bentfield to this mill, on the Spodden close to Caldershaw, which would take the place of the distant mill. However, in 1900 Beaumont died, and his widow offered to sell the mill for £4,000. 'The interest', Charles wrote as if nonchalantly, 'will not be half the present rent'. Bentfield was bought, the additional attraction being that Beaumont's widow provided a mortgage for the purchase price. A third new mill was bought in 1893 for £2,700. This was Spotland

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[1] Some of the finance for this was put up by the same John Elliott who lent money to William Heap in 1825 after he had bought Caldershaw. See above, p. 4 . The freehold of Brookside was still owned by a descendant of his.

[2] See below, p. 17 . This figure includes steam-power.

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Bridge Mill, a few hundred yards from Caldershaw. It was sold by the cotton spinning firm from whom Brookside had already been acquired, Joseph Butterworth and Son Ltd., now in liquidation. Yet another mill was obtained at the end of the 1890s. Smallshaw Mill at Lanehead on Rooley Moor, erected in the 1840s as a cotton mill was purchased by Charles in 1897 for £100 and sold to the company for £500 in 1899. The company did not intend to work it. Its water-rights were valuable and stone from the demolished building was found useful during the alterations at Healey in 1900-01. Thus by the early years of the twentieth century, what up to the 1870s had been a rather small business had become a sizeable industrial undertaking of six factories.

This account of the firm's expansion in terms of fixed capital in the form of its buildings has however jumped ahead of other important developments. It is impossible to say anything from the records that remain of the bleaching and dyeing side of the firm's activities, aspects of finishing that must have been affected by the development of cotton raising. The change in this period that produced the most records was that change in the firm's legal status from a partnership to a limited company in 1893. By this time Charles was no longer in sole control of the expanding concern. In 1889 he had been joined in partnership by his brother, William Tweedale Heap, who had been out of the business since he broke off the partnership with his father twenty-two years before. William Tweedale had not totally cut his ties with the family firm: he was a trustee of his father's estate, which for some years legally owned the mills; in 1887 he had joined with Charles to buy Brookside Mill and he was financially involved in his brother's American ventures. For a period before 1889 he had devoted some of his time to assisting Charles generally and in return received 5 per cent of the profits. The new partnership of Charles and William Tweedale lasted less than four years since before the end of 1893 they set up a limited company, keeping the old name of Samuel Heap and

NOTE: The value for buildings at Brookside Mill includes a number of cottages and that for Old Mill includes Caldershaw House and two other houses. Spotland Bridge Mill was bought in June 1893. 'Stores' include dyes and other materials used; there is probably some duplication here with the value of 'stock in hand' taken over by the new company on 1 January 1894.

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Separate trading accounts were kept for the Bentfield and Healey Mills.[1] Bentfield up to 1906 generally produced a profit of over a thousand pounds a year and had a growing output worth up to £7,000 per year. Under the management of James Robinson and his two sons, the mill was a good investment from the point of view of the Heaps. The knowledge that the Robinsons generally found plenty of work for Bentfield gave substance to their urging Charles to keep both mills working after Healey was bought in 1899.[2] James Robinson's son, J.B. Robinson, who had earlier written to Charles volunteering to go out to the American business, was appointed manager at Healey. The arrangement was that the three Robinsons should, in addition to their salaries, each receive 5 per cent of the net profits of the two mills. Healey however only once shows a profit from its commencement in 1901 until the war. Despite a rising turnover, losses, to be expected perhaps at the beginning, were never shaken off. This plant specialised in 'mercerising' cotton, a process whereby a glossy silk-like finish is given to the cloth. After 1906, the profits at Bentfield began to fall and in 1908, 1909 and 1911 losses were made at this mill too. (It may be that the downturn follows the death of the worthy James Robinson, which left his younger son Ernest in sole charge.) What passed between the Robinsons and the Heaps about this state of affairs is not known. Their relationship does not appear to have been a close one. Almost every year one or other of the Robinsons writes to Charles asking for a salary increase and this is usually refused. In 1912, J.B. Robinson's salary as

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[1] See the figures given in Columns 2 and 3 of Appendix A, Tables 2 and 3.

[2] See above, p.14.

manager of Healey abruptly stops and at the same time the Bentfield mill is let to 'Messrs. Robinson Bros. (Greenfield) Ltd.' for ten years at £450 per year. At the end of this period it was sold to them for £7,000, a loan to J.B. Robinson of £590 having been transferred to the Bad debts account in 1916. The firm was later to grow into competitors of the Heaps'.

The twenty years 1894-1914 saw then what is best described as steady progress. Everything the Heaps touched did not turn to gold, but the two decades saw solid expansion. By 1896 the output of flannelette was sufficient to be hitting the old-established Rochdale flannel industry.[1] The firm's fixed assets were added to at a rate that was to stand the concern in good stead when demand reached its wartime peak. In 1895 a new warehouse was built at Spotland Bridge (costing £3,000) to which a third storey was added in 1908 and a fourth in 1912. Another large warehouse was built in 1896 at Rake Bridge (for £3,240) and a third over the lodge alongside Brookside in 1902. These were the three mills producing flannelette, woollen goods being generally confined to Old Mill. The new warehouses contained the 'grey room' at each of the mills where the cloth arrived from the weavers to be prepared for raising, bleaching, mercerising or whatever was to be the particular way of finishing it. This extension in capacity seems to leap ahead of the level suggested by the sales figures in column 1 of Table 2 in Appendix A. It may be that the sales figures by value do not reflect real turnover due to falling prices. That these were made possible by falling costs would not be improbable in this time of competitive technical development. Falling costs and falling prices would have to go together since profits (Column 1 of Appendix A, Table 3) generally correlate with the sales. There is however no specific evidence for this and statistics of turnover by volume as well as by value are not available.

Technical developments of considerable importance were certainly made

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[1] Rochdale Household Almanac and Corporation Manual for 1897, Rochdale 1897, p.5.

III: The Firm's Vicissitudes 1914-1939

Additional demand created by the first world war was responsible for the boom in output in the years 1914 to 1918 - a boom very evident in the figures for the company's assets, turnover and profits given in the tables of Appendix A. After 1918 the company was clearly operating on a new scale. Even in the darkest days of the 1930s output was maintained at a higher level than that prevailing before the war. In the second half of 1913 sales of the finishing services of the three mills at Caldershaw and the Spotland Bridge Mill reached £40,524, their highest value since the company was incorporated twenty years before. The steady growth of the previous years rapidly snowballed in wartime. Every half-year between 1914 and 1917 the sales figures reached a new peak culminating in £120,308. In 1918 and 1919 output (by value) was about three times that of the pre-war level. The increased output of these years was immediately reflected in the company's profits. They reached five figures comfortably in the first half of 1915 and attained a peak of over £60,000 (before tax) in the first half of 1918. The very high profits of these years were subjected to the first piece of heavy company taxation, the Excess Profits Duty.[1] The effects of the wartime boom in government and military demand are to be seen in the bounding figures of the company's net assets for these years and those immediately afterwards. The total equity of the company was slightly under £120,000 in 1914; by the early 1920s this had doubled to nearly £240,000.[2] In these circumstances even the mill at Healey began to show a profit after 1915. Its output, already higher in 1913 than in the preceding years, bumped up considerably in the period of the war.[3]

The increased capacity built up in the period 1894 to 1906 was fully

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[1] See below, p. 60.

[2] See Table 1, Appendix A. For information as to how these figures have been derived, see the notes to Appendix A.

[3] See Column 3 of Table 2 in Appendix A.