

Bathford Mill

Bathford Mill is the only paper mill in the world totally specialising in the manufacture of high security cylinder mould paper for applications other than banknotes. Each year, Bathford Mill produces the paper for over 1,000 million security documents, including travellers' cheques, bank documents, postal orders, passports and vouchers.

The mill is situated in the village of Bathford in an attractive rural setting three miles east of Bath. Bathford Mill is recorded in the

Domesday Book of 1086. It was used to produce corn, cloth and leather for much of its early life until it was converted to a paper mill in 1809.

The mill was known for a long time as Trevarno mill, the name of a nearby house owned by Dr William Oliver. He was a well known doctor in Bath, and invented the Bath Oliver biscuit, which he prescribed for patients undergoing a special diet while taking a course of the waters. It is claimed that Dr Oliver used the mill to produce

flour to make his biscuits. More certain is that around 1740 he built a spa pavilion near the mill by a spring which had been discovered to be of medicinal value. The pavilion was designed by John Wood the elder, the famous architect, but no trace of it remains.

The mill almost certainly produced handmade paper initially, and some sources suggest that the mill produced paper for Treasury notes. In 1849 it was advertised as having 'established its long reputation for making the finest writing papers in the Kingdom'. At one time the mill was owned by Thomas Dewdney, who owned several mills in the west country and was one of the few British papermakers to be awarded a prize medal at the Great Exhibition. This was for the 'excellence of writing paper and the permanent dye of his blue papers'.

The mill was well located. Water and power were provided by the Bybrook, a tributary of the Avon, while the London turnpike provided ready transport. The opening of Brunel's Great Western Railway, which passes next to the mill, may have upset the rural peace, but improved communications still further.

Despite the location and early claims of the mill, it did not have a good commercial record. Up to ten occupiers failed there in its early years. In 1873, however, the business was bought by Albert Reed, who subsequently went on to found what is now Reed International. Reed gradually moved the production from thin coloured wrapping papers to the more profitable coloured printing papers for which the mill built up a good reputation. By the end of 1875 this strategy paid off, and the mill was operating profitably.

In purchasing the business, Albert Reed had substantial financial backing from Thomas Owen and Samuel Evans. Both men were strong Wesleyan Methodists and partners in Evans & Owen, a well known firm of drapers in Bath. The firm had close connections with what is now Owen Owen plc, the department stores group.



Trevarno mill in the early 1800s

... to treat for the same, apply to Mr. G. TOG- [29]
... Marshfield.

TO BE LET,
And may be entered on immediately, on Lease of Four or
Seven Years,
THOSE VALUABLE AND HIGHLY REPUTED
PREMISES, CALLED
TREVARNO PAPER MILLS,
WITH a comfortable FAMILY RESIDENCE and
Garden, &c., situate in the Parish of BATH-
FORD, in the County of Somerset, three miles from Bath
by the London Turnpike Road, to which the Premises
adjoin; and within four hours of the Metropolis by the
Great Western Railway (from London to Exeter), which
passes near thereto, the Box Station being only one mile
and a half from the Mill, so desirable for the London and
other markets.
The Premises and Machinery, which have cost the Pro-
prietor a very considerable sum of money, are in excellent
condition, and replete with every required advantage;
worked by a powerful stream of water, and possessing a
constant spring of perfectly pellucid water, that has esta-
blished its long reputation for making the finest writing
papers in the kingdom.
The Mill is also provided with a very superior Steam
Apparatus, lately erected by Messrs. Stothert and Co., of
Bath, on the most approved principle, for the purpose of
boiling rags, warming and drying in the lofts and work-
rooms, heating the vats, sizing vessels, and felt-washing
vessel: the whole so arranged as to produce the utmost
economy, cleanliness, and convenience in its several op-
erations.
An order to view, and further particulars, may be ob-
tained at the Offices of H. J. MANT, Esq., Solicitor,
Wood Street, Bath. (33)

PROJECTED NEW TOWN ON THE SEA COAST,
SOUTH WALES.
BIRMINGHAM

Advertisement for
Trevarno mill,
Bath Herald,
23 August 1849

