

## Shepherds Mill Burnley Road Bacup

George and James Shepherd started their Cotton Manufacturing in Bacup in 1854 at Blackthorn Mill and Spring Gardens Mill. In 1861 the first part of the Holmes Mill site was purchased this part of the mill was known as Shepherds No1 Mill. now the site known as Bacup Leisure Centre. During the American Civil War 1861-65 supplies of raw cotton from the southern states of American became very poor and as a result many mills in Lancashire had to close. This period was known as the Lancashire Cotton Famine, the closer of mills led to mass unemployment and starvation for many families. At Holmes Mill the work was spread out so that the workers had some work and pay rather than having to have parish relief. The effort shown by James and George Shepherd to keep their workers in pay was rewarded in March of 1865 when the employees of Holmes Mill presented the brothers each with a copy of "Cassels Illustrated Bible" together with a letter that read:

*Gentlemen, We the work people, take the present opportunity to present each of you with a copy of "Cassels Illustrated Bible" as a token of our sincere esteem. We desire to express to you our sentiments which impel us to take this step. "You have been to us kind masters and the utmost good feeling has ever existed between us. That this mutual amity may be perpetuated is one of our most ardent desires, and we believe the more this feeling is fostered, will master and servant alike be benefited. Your conduct towards us during the great commercial depression of 1862-1864, has been worthy of imitation by many of the manufacturers in Lancashire. You have at great risk used the most strenuous and unceasing efforts to keep us employed when many of our fellow men were suffering the most terrible privation's through lack of work caused by the disastrous war in America. While many have suffered complete shipwreck we through the blessing of god descending on your efforts have been comparatively sheltered from the storm. For this inestimable boon we feel most grateful. Etc. Etc. Signed on Behalf of the work People. John Shepherd, Thomas , Hindson, Wm. Greenwood, John Harrison. February 25th 1865.*

Shepherds Mill No2 was bought in 1880 and by 1887 the Cotton Spinners and Manufacturers Directory listed Holmes Mill as having 30,000 Spindles and 750 Looms Pay day was the Third Tuesday and Third Wednesday. Holmes Mill was one of the biggest for its time in Bacup being made up of two mills known as Holmes Mill no1 and Holmes Mill no2. In 1910 the company purchased a new motor lorry the original carter had been sent away to learn how to drive the lorry. In 1915 Messer's G&J Shepherd were registered as a Limited Company the directors being the sons of James Shepherd one of the original founders of the company. It was announced in 1927 that G&J Shepherd Ltd were to close their spinning departments at Holmes Mill. Within a couple of weeks of my Great Grandfathers retirement in 1929 the Mill had been put up for auction after 75 years of cotton manufacturing. In January of

1933 The new owners Messer's J.H Schofield Ltd of Rochdale made approach to the council with the view of making Holmes Mill into flats and the building of Dwelling Houses the council rejected any such move. In 1934 the part known as No1 mill was taken over by Maden and Ireland as a closing room and production began in the November of 1934. The mill came in useful again during the second world war when it was known as Lumb Hall Engineering used for the manufacturing of ammunitions and another part for storage by the Woman's Land Army.



**Munitions Workers of Lumb Hall Engineering** After the war Holmes Mill No2 had been taken over by the firm of Valona Fabrics Ltd who occupied the bottom floor of the mill dying, printing and processing rayon fabrics. Whilst the three upper floors were used by the Government as storage. In February 1973 the mill was demolished and the site cleared the mill chimney which had stood 225 feet was also demolished.

### **Fires**

Throughout it's history the Mill had been plagued by fires so much so that a Fire Brigade of twenty men was formed.

**1872** A fire in the Scutcher room caused £300 to £400 of damage.

**1881** First fly was caught alight but was quickly put out.

### **Dec 19th 1898**

I have to report that about 8.45am this morning a fire occurred at Holmes Mill in the cotton room in the occupation and owned by Messer's G Shepherd cotton spinners and manufacturers. The fire was discovered by one of the workforce who raised the alarm and the fire appliances of the mill were quickly brought into use and as the mill is fitted with automatic sprinklers which came into use no further help was required. The fire being ultimately extinguished by their own appliances. The cause of the fire is unknown. Damage done amounting to £800.00. The brigade was not called. Signed your obedient servant. Eng. Jackson. Built in 1846 by John Maden Springholme Mill had a rocky start when shortly before completion the roof was blown off during a storm and walls partially demolished. Like many other mills in

Bacup during the great flood of 1881 Spring Holme suffered from flooding when the weaving shed looms were almost covered by water.

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