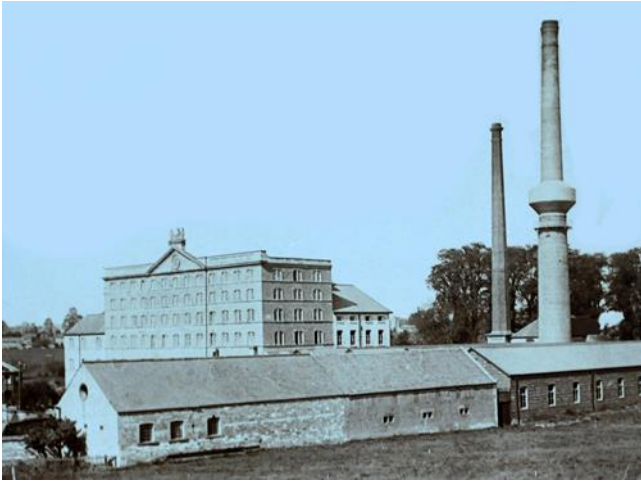


Staverton Mill - Then and Now



We continue with the history of Mill in our second feature of the Staverton workplace. Newly installed machinery helped with the finishing of the cloth but it led to the shearmen riots in 1802. People were concerned that they would lose their livelihoods to the new machinery that was starting to appear in the textile industry. Local dragoons were even called out to dispel the rioters and there was a great deal of bad feeling towards the owner. John Jones was declared bankrupt in 1812 and died soon after, at which point the mill was put up for sale. It was bought at the second attempt to auction it by the Cooper family in 1813 for £14,000. Business soon picked up and by 1816 it employed 273 men and women. Tokens were produced to the values of 2 shillings, 6d. and 1d. and depicted the mill standing over the river with a clock tower in the centre of the building. They even installed gas lighting in 1817. By 1820 only weaving was still carried out in the local

cottages and by 1824 the mill could employ over 1500 people both on and off site. It was demolished by fire in 1825, was rebuilt and continued to prosper until 1847.

The main building was six stories high and had a stone phoenix rising from the flames on top of the building. The first inspection of the mill by factory inspectors, after the factory act of 1833, gave a good report saying that the workers were well clothed and the children 'fit and healthy'. The first power looms were installed in 1839 marking the beginning of the end of weaving as a cottage industry and the mill was the biggest in the area with an estimated working capital of £200,000.



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