

A DRIVER and WEATHERHEAD family history

Silsden, West Yorkshire, England

Tracing the story of two Silsden families, through six generations of change

Written and compiled by Ian Stimson and Kate Mawer

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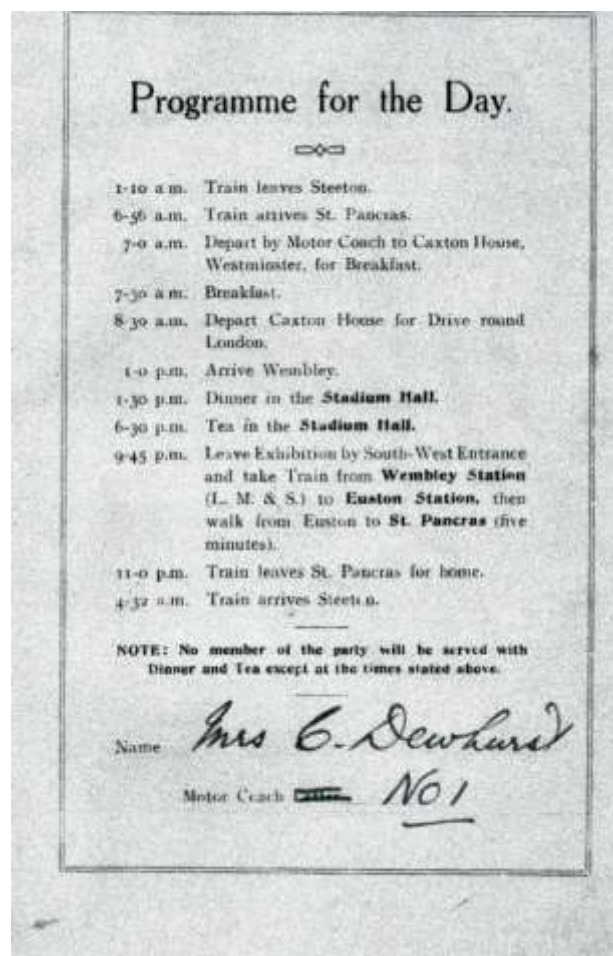
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Appendix 8b

Driver family businesses

A second day out happened in 1924 when the British Empire Exhibition took place at Wembley.

The programme of events started with a train journey from Steeton and Silsden station at 1.10 in the morning, arriving at St Pancras at 6.56am, a 'motor coach' tour



around London arriving at Wembley at 1pm, departing the exhibition at 9.45pm to start the return journey, arriving at St Pancras in time for the 11pm train.

The 11pm train to Steeton arrived at 4.36am. The party were each given a metal badge to wear and a photograph of one is attached. Unfortunately, this one had been lost and had been discovered by a metal detectorist many years later.

TOUR OF LONDON

(Motor Chara)

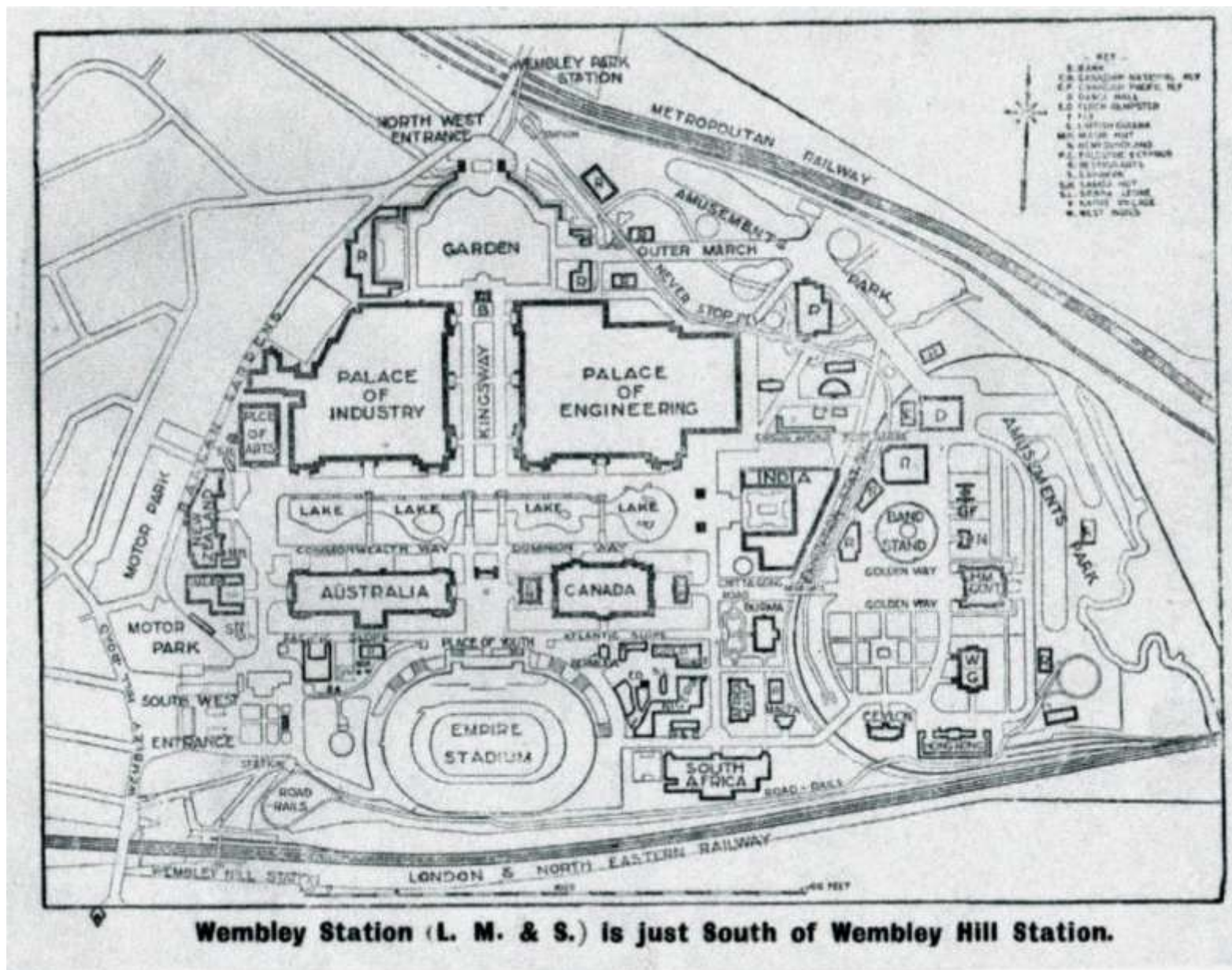
Terminating at **WEMBLEY**.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY.
HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT.
WHITEHALL.
CENOTAPH.
TRAFALGAR SQUARE.
STRAND.
FLEET STREET.
LUDGATE HILL.
ST. PAUL'S.
CANNON STREET.
MONUMENT.
LONDON BRIDGE.
TOOLEY STREET.
TOWER BRIDGE.
TOWER OF LONDON.
MARK LANE.
THE BANK.
MANSION HOUSE.
CHEAPSIDE.
HOLBORN.
NEW OXFORD STREET.
OXFORD STREET.
MARBLE ARCH.
EDGWARE ROAD TO **WEMBLEY**.

A Suggested Itinerary for the Exhibition Grounds.

FIJI ISLANDS	<u>SOUTH AFRICA</u>	<u>INDIA</u>
NEWFOUNDLAND	PALESTINE - CYPRUS	<u>BURMAH</u>
<u>BRITISH GOVERNMENT</u>	<u>WEST AFRICA, &c.</u>	<u>CANADA</u>
WEST INDIES	BERMUDA	<u>AUSTRALIA</u>
BRITISH GUIANA	THE STADIUM	PALACE OF ARTS
<u>HONG KONG</u>	SARAWAK	<u>PALACE OF INDUSTRY</u>
CEYLON	<u>MALAYA</u>	<u>PALACE OF</u>
MALTA	NEW ZEALAND	<u>ENGINEERING</u>
EAST AFRICA	<u>ORNAMENTAL LAKES</u>	AMUSEMENT PARK

While this has been presented as a Driver Brothers Mill outing it is understood that this was arranged on a much larger scale with other mills participating. Presumably it involved special trains and charabancs being arranged in Silsden and in London. A photograph has been seen of one of the charabancs passing the Houses of Parliament.



In 1927 a third day out was to celebrate Frank's son Norman's 21st birthday. He was working in the business and we have a photo of a mill day off when the employees were taken to the Lake District on 6th July and the event was set on record by the group photograph. Unfortunately, we do not have any further details of the outing. In the front row in the centre, sitting slightly more forward than the row is Henry Ripley, with Frank on

his right, head slightly looking up. On Henry's left is a lady who is thought to be his sister Mary Anne. Then comes Arthur, slightly looking down and holding his legs, and Norman is on his left, slightly looking up and legs very evident. This group of about 220 people looks as if it has been arranged on a structure which is causing the unusual arrangement of the group.





Transcription of timeline written by Norman Driver and subsequently extended to closure in 1993.

1880 Acquisition of Primitive Methodist Chapel in North Street by James Boyes

1888/1892 Purchases of land from Lord Hothfield by James Boyes. Weaving shed and offices erected thereon.

1890/1903 Mortgage of properties to Craven Bank.

1898 "Room & power" from J Boyes to Henry Ripley Driver and Frank Driver.
Maximum loom reed space 47". Dobbies at 11 pennies per loom week. 54 dobbies
Jacquards at 1 shilling per loom week. 26 jacquards.
Maximum 144 looms in 6704 square feet.

1906 Acquisition of premises by HRD and FD from Craven Bank

Up to 1914 HRD managed weaving and production. FD managed commercial and sales.
Goods woven were largely dress and from cotton with some other fibres. There were about 230 looms, 3 looms per weaver (There may have been 2 looms per weaver Jacquard at some stage). The Jacquards were coarse pitch 300 Rooks. Weft was largely "pincop". No weft feelers nor warp stop motions. Power came from a twin cylinder steam engine in "chapel" driving a central shaft in shed from which bevel gearing distributed drives to looms by line shafts and belts. Preparation of warps by hand dressing and "dry taping" from beams.
Lighting was by high pressure coal gas.
About 1908 Courtaulds commenced viscose "artificial silk" which the firm strongly developed as weft across cotton

warps and as extra warp stripe figuring. There was considerable success with this then new fibre.

Cloths were sold via agents in London, Manchester, Glasgow and Belfast to wholesale houses garment makers and shippers. Driver Bros Warehouse set up at 35 Swaine Street Bradford, Tel Bradford 6919. Production was augmented by extensive external "commission weavers".

1914 HRD retired, conveying his share of firm to FD.

War with Germany declared. This led to a temporary slump followed by considerable activity limited by availability of materials and workers.

1918/1920 Boom followed by very severe and prolonged slump. There was a reduction in overseas trade which never recovered.

Weft pirn winding installed.

1920/1925 "British Celanese" formed to develop acetate "Artificial silk" from aeroplane dope.

"Brysilka" at Guiseley spun cuprammonium very fine filament "artificial silk" from cotton linters etc by cuprammonium cellulose process. Celanese survived – Brysilka did not though Driver Bros used large quantities.

1925/30 Many public companies started to produce viscose AS (artificial silk) encouraged by Courtauld success. Firm developed cloths based on acetate warps and crêpe wefts, artificial silk (viscose) or natural silk.

1930/1934 300's jacquards converted to 400's. Installation of 'NEW' Hattersley looms. Machine knitting of warps. Evaluation of new looms – Crompton and Knowles – St Colombe Diedericks – Northrop – Ruti Silkauto warp and weft stop motions. Electric lighting and power from group driving

	retaining loom belt drives. Advanced fancy cloths piece dyed.	1941	Introduction of "Utility Scheme". Bogus exports. Scarcity of yarn supplies.
1935	Death of F Driver. Metal healds and reels.	1941-45	Defence production including yarn dyed RAF shirtings and nylon parachute fabric.
1936/1938	Purchase of small premises in Sykes Lane for experimental weaving plant. <i>(This would have been at 39 Keighley Road when Wm Drivers moved out).</i> Experimental viscose crêpe twisting followed by installation of four crepe uptwisters at Sykes Lane after removal of Ruti plant to North St Mills. Building of extension to N S Mills after removal of barn and cottage. Severe competition from subsidised European manufacturers – Germany – Italy – Czecko-slovakia. Purchase of small fancy weaving plant from Lyons France installed in Waterloo Mills, Silsden. Consolidation of offices.	1944/5	Destruction of chapel warehouse by fire. <i>(Loose fly in a mill is always a fire hazard)</i>
		1945	Norman Driver demobilised 31st November 1945 and returned to Silsden.
		1946	Alan Jackson joined Driver Bros as trainee.
		1951	Collapse of utility scheme and post war boom. Removal of Waterloo machinery to North St. Boiler moved to Chapel lane. Rebuilding of Chapel premises with additional floor. Warp sizing machine. Individual loom motor drives. Installation of pickpick Rutis with continuous paper Jacquards. Dropper pinning machine. Introduction of CMC weaver loading. Respacing of looms.
1939	Attack on Poland by Germany led to declaration of war by France and England. Severe slump in demand for fancy cloths. Endeavours to obtain defence orders. Black out. Emergency measures. Storage of customers' stocks		Shift working
1940	"Concentration" of production. Waterloo fancy plant closed and premises used for food storage.	1955	Conversion of Ruti looms to Fischer automatic. Limited company formed. Directors were Norman Driver and his wife Molly.
1941	Norman Driver Joined the RAF Sept 1941 for the duration of the war and Arthur Driver became manager of the mill.		Introduction of polyester and acrylic fibres. Demand for wider widths.

Expansion of knitted fabrics.
Severe competition from Far East.

Reconstitution and reduction in capacity.
Closure of creping plant in Sykes Lane and transference to North St.

- 1970 Alan Jackson and Irwin Cowling were made Directors, with Alan Jackson becoming Managing Director and Irwin Cowling Company Secretary, (later succeeded by Dennis Wilkins).
- 1970s & 80s Cottages in Chapel Street and North Street, sold piecemeal.
- 1977 Approximate year when Sykes Lane Mill and 39 Keighley Road premises were sold.
- 1979 Molly Driver resigned her Directorship.
- 1979-1987 Nine rapier looms introduced at total cost of about £175K which provided better quality fabric with fewer faults, thus achieving better efficiency whilst running at greater speeds. They were for producing plain styles and did not have the versatility of other looms.
- 1984 Martin Jackson, son of Alan, joined Driver Bros.
- 1980s Last mill-owned house in Chapel Street sold but garage, adjoining double cottage and adjoining small single cottage retained.

1990 Martin Jackson appointed General Manager.

1993 March Norman Driver resigned his Directorship.

1993 Summer Decision made to close the Mill after completing all contracts. Customers advised and notice given to employees.

1993 Sept Number of employees now down to about 55. Bank refused to continue overdraft causing the mill to incur significant additional liquidation costs. The mill ceased operation three weeks before planned closure.

This was the last privately owned mill in Silsden to close. Weavestyle, a business owned by Courtaulds, which many years earlier had incorporated the two Fletcher mills, closed a few years later.



Locations of Driver and Weatherhead businesses in Silsden

Nailmaking N

Wm Driver and Sons, Ltd.
Highfield Lane,
Canal Wharf,
39 Keighley Rd,
Highfield Works Pickard Lane.

Weaving Mill D

Driver Brothers,
Airedale Sheds,
North Street Mills,
39 Keighley Rd and Sykes Lane
Waterloo Mills

Hotel H

Weatherhead family
Red Lion Kirkgate.

Shop S

Charles Weatherhead
50 Kirkgate.

