



Family History Tourism – Episode 3

Finding Ball Grove Mill

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Family History Tourism – Episode 3. Ball Grove Mill

Perhaps the business that had the most influence in the lives of four generations of our Cockshutt forbears was the Ball Grove Mill in Colne in North West Lancashire. It was at the heart of the “Ball Grove Estate” that Edmund Cockshutt the Elder (1729-1821) and his son, Edmund Cockshutt of Ball Grove (1753-1825) built for their extended families.

So when my wife, Joan and I planned to visit the UK in August – September 2018, the site of Ball Grove Mill was on our itinerary.

We had booked accommodation at the Alma Inn, just North of Colne for the nights of 3rd and 4th of September 2018 and so early on the 4th took the short drive down Emmott Lane, right onto Keighley Road and then left into Cottontree Lane and Winewall Road to what is today Ball Grove Park.



The approach to the site of the Ball Grove Mill is very different to the environment in the area as recently as the 1970s.



The view of Ball Grove Tannery from Winewall Road prior to its demolition in 1974



The view from Winewall Road of the approach to Ball Grove Park today

We parked in the car park and walked down to the Kiosk where there are several signs providing information about the Park and its history.



The building that is now the Kiosk is the last remaining building of the Tannery

Looking out across the lake (once the mill pond), the transformation from a grim 19th century industrial site to a nature reserve and recreation park is very impressive.



THE HISTORY OF BALL GROVE



BALL GROVE TANNERY, COTTONERIE, COLNE
BUILT AND DEMOLISHED COMPLETELY 1860-1974

Ball Grove Park and Local Nature Reserve was once the site of one of the largest light tanneries in Europe.

Built in 1860 by William and John Sagar the main buildings of the tannery were located in the area which is now Ball Grove Park.

The business was declared bankrupt in 1970 and the tannery was demolished in 1974 but the two lodges were retained.

What happened after the Tannery was demolished?
The lower lodge was dredged in the early 1980's and now forms an important feature within Ball Grove Park and is regularly used for fishing.

The upper lodge located 500 metres upstream is now the upper end of the Local Nature Reserve.

A footpath was added along the edge of the upper lodge in the late 90's and forms part of the Ferndean Way, a 3 mile route from Waterside in Colne to Wycoller.

The ruined Wycoller Hall is thought to have been the inspiration for Charlotte Bronte's Ferndean Manor, hence the name of the walk.

Funding
Following flood damage the Council successfully applied for a New Opportunities Fund grant through English Nature's Wildspace! fund with the aim of reinstating a water supply to the upper lodge. The work was carried out during 2003 and in May 2004 the pump was connected restoring the lodge to its original state.

Who are the Friends of Ball Grove?
In July 2004 the 'Friends of Ball Grove Group' was established to help manage the Park and Local Nature Reserve for the benefit of nature conservation and the local community.

The notice boards at the kiosk tend to focus on the most recent use of the property by W and J Sagar as a tannery but there were also minor references to the previous site as the location of Ball Grove Cotton Mill, once owned by our Cockshutt family.

History

What's now Ball Grove Park was once the site of one of the largest light tanneries in Europe. The tannery complex was built on the site of the former Ball Grove cotton mill in 1860 by W and J Sagar. The mill was greatly extended and took up much of the site and neighbouring residential areas. It was powered by water that came from two lodges. These can still be seen in the park and in the nearby nature reserve. Sagar's Tannery Mill stopped trading in 1970 and was demolished in 1974.

In the 1980s the lower lodge was drained and moved to its current position. Landscaping works were carried out to create the vibrant park that we see today.

Perhaps the central features of the restored Ball Grove Park are the lake (once the mill pond that provided the water to drive the mill) and the restored Colne Water stream that fed the mill pond.

In recent years, Pendle Council, with assistance from the National lottery Fund and local volunteers have returned Colne Water to an environmentally sound stream by removing some of the stones that diverted the water flow into the mill dam.

My wife and I walked around the lake and along the stream looking for the location of the weir where the water had been diverted into the mill pond.

With help of a local couple we soon found the weir and the recently created gap where the Council had removed some of the stones to allow the stream to flow more freely.

The local couple who we had met explained that since the stones had been removed and the stream cleaned, trout and other fish had been able to re-establish migration routes in the stream. They pointed out the stones that had been removed and that some were now used as seats in the park.

Finding the weir and the stones was a special moment in our visit because it was these stones that had been the subject of documents I had previously found in the Lancashire Archives which detailed an 1835 legal dispute between the quarry owners and Joshua Cockshutt (1785-1865), the second son of Edmund Cockshutt of



Total Quantity of Stones from Winewall to Ballgrove Mill 1835 for repairing the Galls			
The first Four Pages Contains			Cubic Feet
5 th	"	"	144 8 5
6 th	"	"	148 14 9
7 th	"	"	96 0 3
8 th	"	"	69 7 2
9 th	"	"	136 6 11
10 th	"	"	103 3 8
11 th	"	"	114 5 8
12 th	"	"	102 2 7
13 th	"	"	100 7 4
14 th	"	"	86 7 1
15 th	"	"	89 8 6
16 th	"	"	27 - -
17 th	"	"	38 - -
18 th	"	"	1545 2 0
19 th	"	"	27 - -
20 th	"	"	1518 2 0
Total Feet			1545 2 0
There is 27 solid feet which has been calculated			27
stones which will have to be taken off			1518 2 0

Ball Grove (1753-1825) during the separation of waterworks for the Ball Grove Mill and the Bough Gap Mill in 1835.

The documents indicate that Joshua Cockshutt, our Granny Flack's grandfather, was in dispute with Winewall Quarry in 1835 over the

quantity of stone delivered and the amount he owed. The outcome of the dispute is not recorded.

The location of the Winewall Quarry is shown on the following 1850s map.

It is not clear when the Ball Grove Mill was sold but it seems likely that the Cockshutts' remaining financial interest in the Mill was sold by Joshua Cockshutt (1840-1916) in 1857, sometime after the long-running legal dispute over the Estate of Edmund Cockshutt of Ball Grove (1753-1825) was finally settled.

It is also unclear when the "Bough Gap Mill", mentioned in Edmund Cockshutt's Will in 1825 was demolished. It is present on a map of Colne dated 1835 but not on the 1858 map.

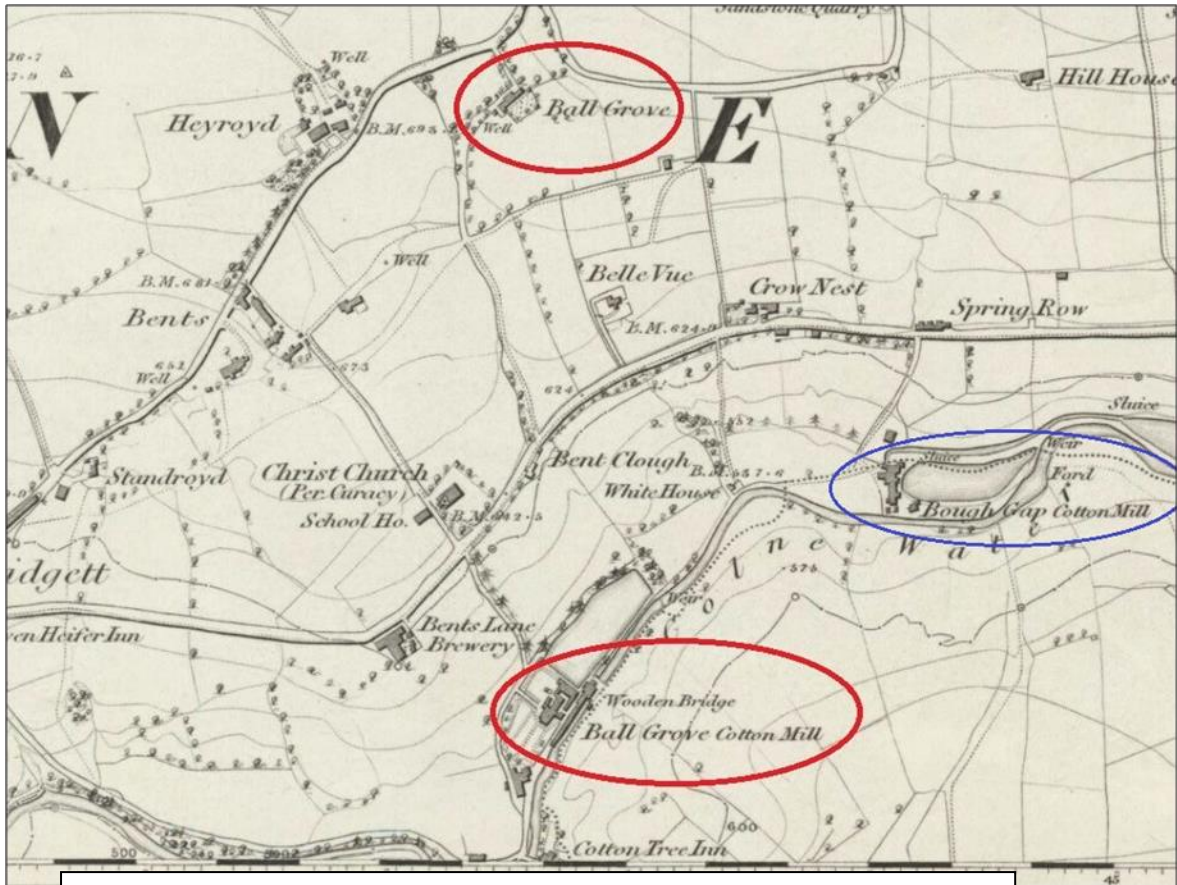
TO COTTON AND WORSTED SPINNERS.—
TO BE SOLD, OR LET, BY PRIVATE TREATY, and may be entered to on the 29th of May next, all that COTTON MILL or FACTORY, known by the name of BOUGH GAP MILL, within the Forest of Trawden, in the Chapelry of Colne, and County of Lancaster, comprising a good Stone Building, Three Stories High, 116 Feet in Length within, including Engine House and Rooms over it, with a good and Powerful Water Wheel, 27 Feet in Diameter by 8 Feet within the Buckets, and all the heavy Gearing: Four Cottages adjoining, and 1a. 3r. 37p. of good Land lying up to the Mill, now in the Occupation of Mr. N. England; and also Five other Cottage Houses, recently erected for the convenience of the Mill Hands, situate at a short distance.—There is a powerful Stream of Water connected with the Mill, capable of turning 18 or 20 Horse power, during Nine or Ten Months in the Year; and in order to secure a better supply, upwards of Three Acres of Land is covered with Water, in Lodges and Goits.—The Mill is at present used for the Spinning of Cotton Twist and Woft, and may at a moderate expense be adapted to the Spinning of Worsted; it stands very near the line of the Turnpike Road leading from Colne to Keighley, about One and a Half Miles distant from Colne, whence Coal may be had.—For a view of the Premises, and for other Particulars, apply to Joshua Cockshutt of Bailgrove, near Colne, the Owner, who will Treat for the same.
Bailgrove, March 31st, 1842.

PARTNERSHIPS DISSOLVED.
William James Butler and Joseph Wilson Morgan, Bristol, wholesale stationers—Thomas Mallinson and the Brooksbanks, of Almondbury, Yorkshire, fancy cloth manufacturers—Joseph Rowland and John Brown, of Sheffield, electro-platers—George Schofield and Edward Shaw, of Hyde, Cheshire, grocers—George Bentley and James Beckett, of Wetherby, Yorkshire, grocers—John Mercer and James Mercer, of Clitheroe, Lancashire, cotton spinners—Giles Thacker and John Brown, of Melbourne, Derbyshire, plumbers—William Bailey and Thomas Collinson, authors and joint proprietors of the "Graduated Series of 14 Books"—Francis Thomson and Thomas Chapman, of Ryalls, of 2, High-row, Kensington Gravel-pits, 74, brokers—Robert Stoward Forster and William Lawson, of South Shields, Durham, cabinet makers—Frederick Seddon and Henry Watson, of Deptford, Durham, glass bottle manufacturers—Thomas Dart and Jos. H. Dart, of Michael's, Azores, merchants—John Clarke and Thomas Norton, of Leicester, brick makers—Nathan Jowett and Edward Parker, of Leeds, ironfounders—Mary Jenks and Robert Jenks, of 54 and 55, Bread-street, City, upholsterers—Joshua Cockshutt and David Cockshutt Wilkeson, of Bough Gap Mill, near Colne, Lancashire, cotton spinners—James Cooper and William Potter, 3, Copthall-cum-

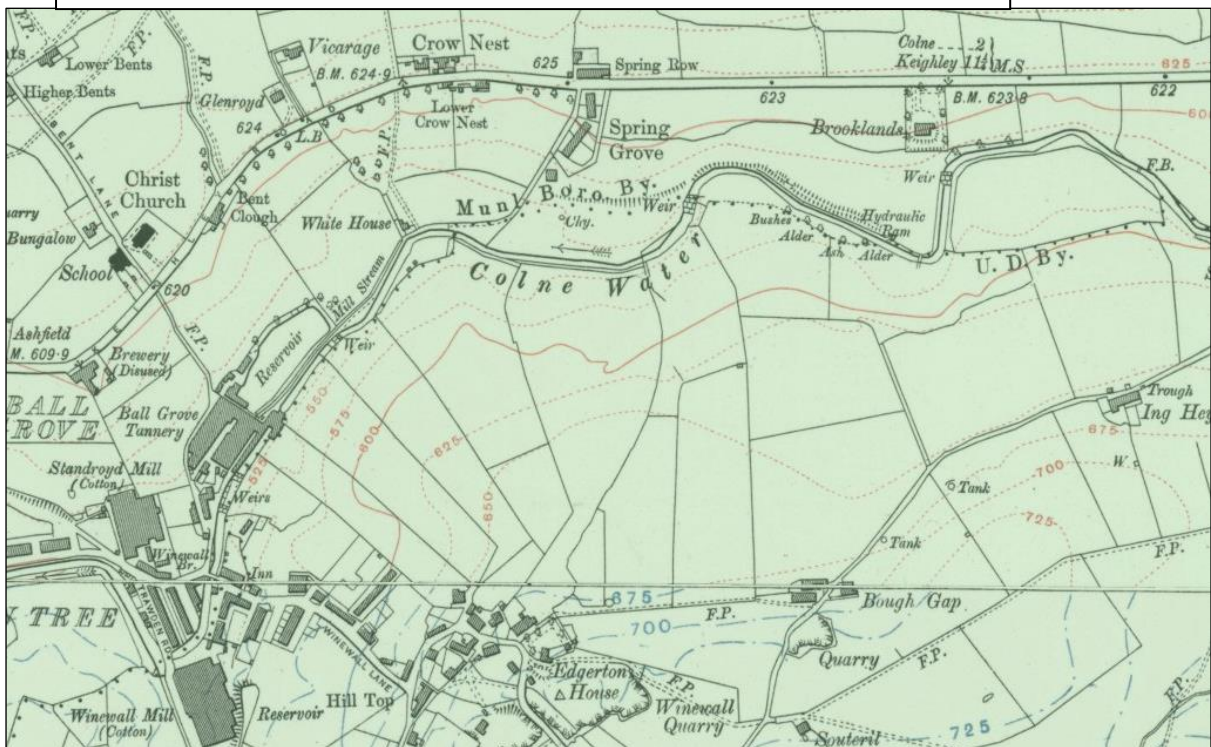
These newspaper notices in the Morning Chronicle in 1842 and 1857 suggest that Joshua Cockshutt may have been trying to sell Bough Gap Mill for some time. It is most likely that both Ball Grove and Bough Gap Cotton Mills were demolished prior to the Tannery being built on the site in 1860.

The following maps show how major changes occurred between 1825 and 1850 following the death of Edmund Cockshutt of Ball Grove.

We continued our walk along the bank of Colne Water, past the end of what was Ball Grove's Mill pond and weir (and now the Ball Grove Park lake) and, as we turned a bend in the stream, were able to identify the dip in the ground where the Bough Gap Mill pond would have been.



1835 Map showing the locations of the Ball Grove Cotton Mill and Bough Gap Cotton Mill and their mill ponds.



1850s Map showing Ball Grove Tannery and the absence of the Bough Gap Mill and its mill ponds

Further along the path, we were able to identify where the weir would have diverted water into the old Bough Gap Mill pond.



And so our visit and exploration of the sites of Ball grove Cotton Mill and the older Bough Gap Cotton Mill was an exceptionally rewarding experience.

As we left Ball Grove Park, I did feel a little disappointed that the history of the site on the various displays had not included the names of our Cockshutt ancestors nor the older Bough Gap Cotton Mill. I do recognise that the Council needed to summarise that history and and focus on the future of Ball Grove.

Council and the Friends of Ball Grove Park have done a great job in restoring the area.

There are some questions that remain unanswered – Where did “Arthur Cockshutt, Miller of Colne Water” operate his mill in Colne between 1621 and 1641? How did our Cockshutt family come to own mills in Colne? Was Arthur Cockshutt related to our Simonstone Cockshutts?