

HOME AGAIN!



Carding machine
from Lower Mill
Tal-y-Bont.

Photo: Stroud
Museum Associ-
ation, Feb 1988

The Stroud-Water, wrote Daniel Defoe, is "famous not for the finest cloths only, but for dyeing those cloths of the finest scarlet ... The clothiers lie all along the banks of this river for near 20 miles, and in the town of Stroud, which lies in the middle it, as also at Paynswick, ..."

The broadcloth industry for which this area was long famous, has largely vanished. Many of the smaller mills have been demolished or converted to other uses, and few of the more transportable remains of the manufacture (such as machinery) are now to be seen.

All is not lost! Readers will know of the proposals by the Stroud District Council, and other interested bodies, to develop the environmental and historic potential of the valleys, including the setting-up of an industrial museum. One such interested group (and which has supplied the material for this brief note) is the Stroud Museum Association Textile Group, whose prime objectives are to save and to preserve unique or unusual textile machinery, and to promote the retention of a cloth-mill operating by traditional methods.

It is encouraging to note that since the establishment of this group in August 1986, several machines of the textile industry have been transferred from Lerry Tweed Mills of Tal-y-bont, back to Stroud. "Back to Stroud" - because the roller milling machine so transferred (and thanks are certainly due to Lerry Mills) was made by James Ferrabee of the Phoenix Iron Works near Thrupp. Other machines include a teazle-raising gig (its function so important in the manufacture of fine cloth) and a small carding machine with an unusual wooden frame. The origins of this last piece are not known, but Winterbotham Strachan & Playne have donated a quilling machine, and other machinery acquired include a willey (wool opener) and an industrial lathe, which has been privately donated.

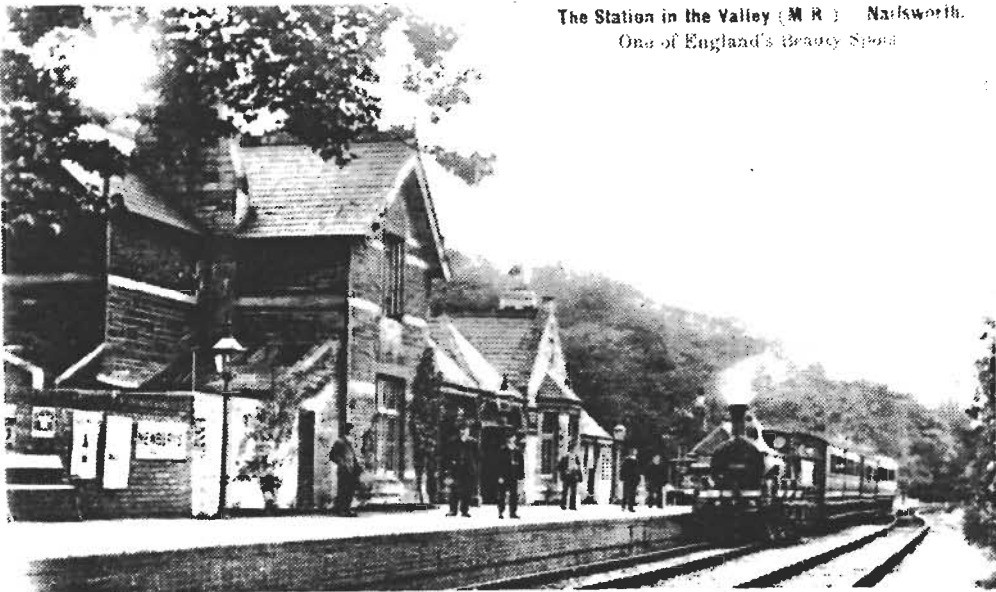
The Textile Group is entirely voluntary, has the backing of (and has received grants from) a number of local bodies. It would certainly be of great interest for local industrial archaeology to have at least one working mill of the cloth trade. The sub-committee of the Group includes teachers, (retired) factory manager, (retired) farmer, (retired) engineer, textile designer etc. If you wish to know more - or even to offer help of any kind! - contact the Group chairman, Ian Mackintosh, of 6 Castle Villas Stroud, GL5 2HP, tel. Stroud 6273.

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(The late Rex Wailes, who had so much to do with the setting-up of recording and preservation groups for "industrial archaeology, was, he told me, a descendant of the Ferrabees.)

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A CONTRAST IN COACHES - 1820 - 1910



The Station in the Valley (M.R.) Nailsworth.
One of England's Beauty Spots

Nailsworth Station c. 1910. The locomotive is Kirtley 0-6-0 No. 2595 with tender ready to depart with a passenger train of 6-wheeled coaches.

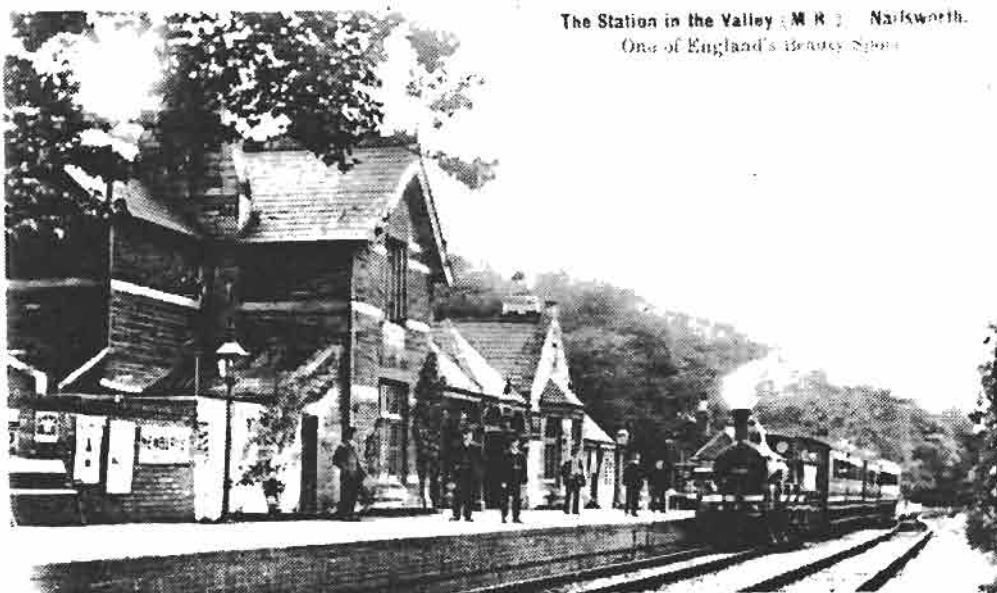
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