CHAUNTRY MILLS – EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES

Charles Claydon – Factory Hand, Warper, Store keeper,

Charles Claydon

Charles Claydon was born in Haverhill in 1857 the son of Thomas and Emily.

Thomas Claydon was a silk weaver and he and his wife Emily brought up their nine children at their home in the High Street. The children all followed in their father's footsteps working with silk: as weavers, winders or, like their sixth child Charles, a silk factory hand.



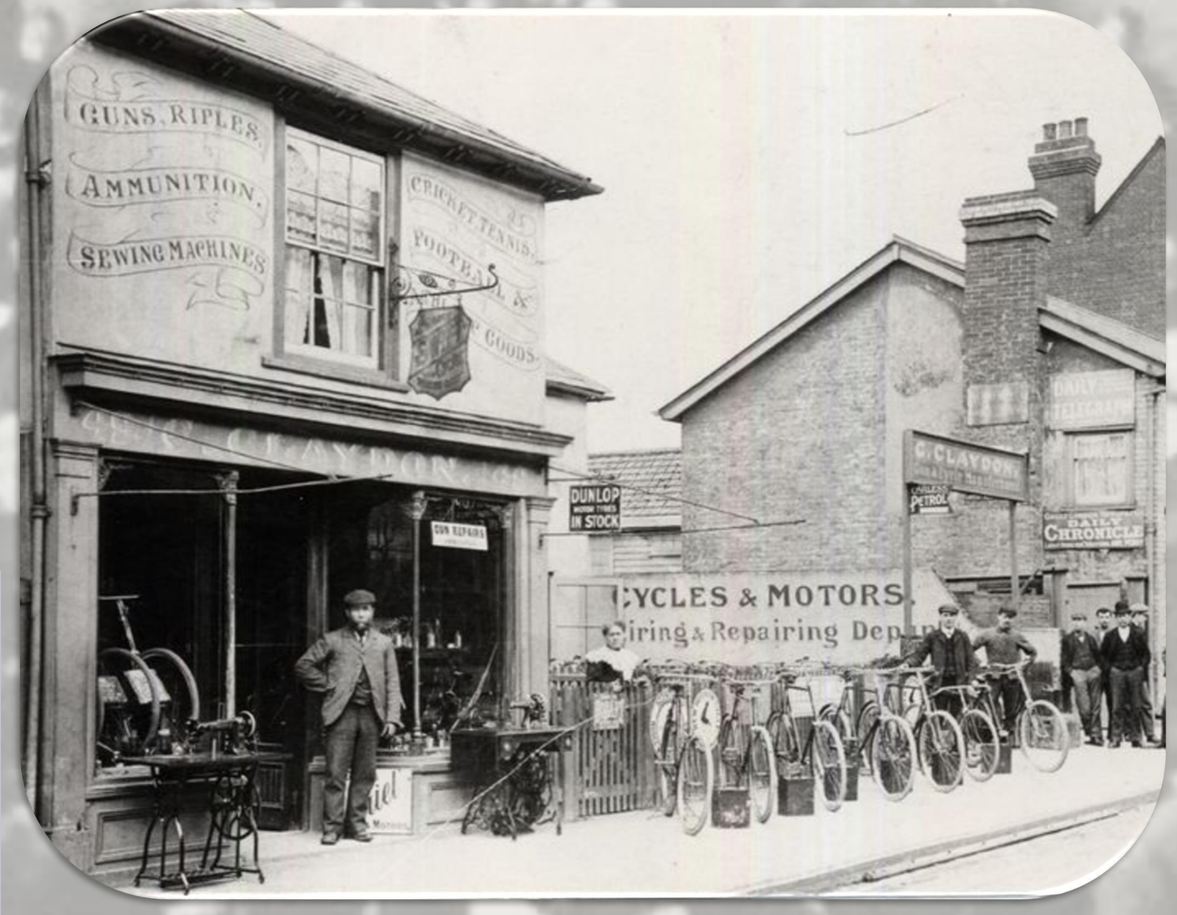
By the time Charles married local girl Eliza Page on 5th March 1875 he was working as a Factory Hand (presser, tailor) in Chauntry Mills. By 1891 he was employed there as a warper. Eliza was employed in the Mills too, working as a Jacket Maker.

They set up home at 10 Eden Road, where their four children, Charles, Ada, Grace and Albert were born.

1888 An eye witness account: 'The great ground floor building lit by skylights facing north holds about 200 looms and the rattle of the machinery makes conversation almost impossible. The shuttles are flying across and across and the woof (weft) is gradually covering the warp.' Here at one loom a red flowered border is being worked on a towel, and the red pattern grows under our eyes but I am afraid I would be at a loss to explain exactly how it grows.

By 1901 Charles and his family were living at 124 Withersfield Road. Still employed at Chauntry Mills he was now working as a store keeper. Son Charles who had been employed as a winder had moved to Banbury where he worked as a printer compositor, son Albert, then 15-years old, was employed as a cycle maker. Daughter Ada was working as a hair weaver and Grace was working as a machinist making trousers.

In 1904 Charles had a change of career, prompted perhaps by his son Albert, who was employed a cycle maker. Charles established a cycle agents business which by 1908 was advertised as C. Claydon & Co., Gun, Cycle & Motor Works, incorporating Websters, it seems, who had been gun & cycle makers at 67 High Street and where Albert learnt his trade perhaps. Father and son worked together in the successful family shop at 49 High Street.



F.K.8



In October 1916 son, Albert, enlisted as a 1st Class Air Mechanic in the newly formed 35 Squadron, a reconnaissance squadron flying Armstrong-Whitworth FK8s. The squadron was attached to the 3rd Army H.Q.

Albert went on to serve in the Royal Flying Corps for some 20 months and saw action in France. At the beginning of November 1918, as Germany was seeking an early armistice, Albert was granted a well deserved 14 day leave. He returned home at a time when Haverhill and the surrounding areas were gripped by a major influenza epidemic. Almost immediately Albert showed signs of illness, dying shortly afterwards on Sunday 10 November 1918. He was buried in Haverhill Cemetery.

DEATH OF AIR-MECHANIC A. CLAYDON.—The epidemic was responsible for another particularly sad death during the week-end. The victim this time was 1st Air-Mechanic Albert Claydon, of the R.F.C., who was 33 years of age. He joined up some twenty months ago, and for the past twelve months had served in France, where he had experienced a number of very narrow escapes. On Sunday week he arrived home for fourteen days' leave. Almost immediately he showed signs of illness and took to bed, from which he never rose again, death occurring about three o'clock on Sunday afternoon. Deceased was well known in the town and neighbourhood, as prior to joining up he was his father's chief assistant in the carrying on of an extensive cycle business. He leaves a widow.



When Charles Claydon died on 1st August 1930 and Eliza on 22nd November 1953 they were both laid to rest with their son Albert in Haverhill Cemetery.

Family History Haverhill Group (Member of the Suffolk Family History Society) · Haverhill Town Council · Pro Bono Publico · Gurteen Since 1784