CHAUNTRY MILLS – EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES

William Starnes – Loom Tackler/Fitter



William Starnes

<u>William Starnes</u> was born on 29th February 1862, the son of Joseph and Mary Ann nee Farrant. His father Joseph was a silk weaver who later became a sweep. The family lived in the Crowland Road home of William's maternal grandfather.

William was working as a loom fitter when he married Susan Lorking a sewing machinist in 1882. They made 32 Primrose Hill their home.

A Tackler worked in the weaving shed, setting up a loom ready for weaving.
In some places the name refers to someone who installed the machinery.
A Tackler was also the overlooker or foreman of the weaving shed workers.

William and Susan had 7 children, five of whom survived to adulthood.
Emily was a cord trouser machinist.
Son, William, was a winder (cotton).
Cissie was a dress maker.
Ernest Robert was a cycle apprentice.

173 Years' Service in one Department.

Wonderful Record at Haverhill Factory.



[*Photo by Godden, Haverhill.*

The photograph here given is of three employees who recently retired from the service of Messrs. D. Gurteen and Sons, Ltd., of Chauntry Mills, Haverhill, after a combined period of service totalling no less than 173 years. From left to right are Mr. Frank Poole, 19, Crowland Road, Mr. Walter Basham, 38, Primrose Hill, and Mr. William Starns, 32, Primrose Hill.

Mr. Poole's length of service, all of it in the textile department, came to 47 years, including the first four years as a "half-timer."

Mr. Starns was at Chauntry Mills' textile department in all for over 56 years, but his was not unbroken service, as a good many years ago he was in other employment for a short time. He is now 68 years of age.

Mr. Basham, who reached the age of 80 in June last, is a wonderfully well preserved man for his advanced years. Had he remained with Messrs. Gurteen and Sons until January next his length of continuous service with the firm, all of it in the textile department, would have amounted to 70 years. He started work at ten years of age, being the first "half-timer" to enter employment at the Haverhill factory. This part of his working life was entered upon before he had attended school at all.

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ONLY 23 BIRTHDAYS IN HIS 91 YEARS

MATHEMATICS show that although Mr. William Starnes, of 32, Primrose Hill, Haverhill, is 91, he has only had 23 birthdays.

He was born on February 29th in the leap year of 1862 and his birthday has only come round once every four years.

Intent on reaching his century, he is a non-smoker and has seldom touched alcohol. His aim is "to live so that I can live again."

For 60 years he worked for Messrs. D. Gurteen and Sons, and to-day he is remarkably agile.

He is fond of walks and maintains his eight rod garden.



A half-timer was a child who spent half the day at school and the other half earning money in a mill. Typically they would start work at 6am, work in the mill until 1pm, then go to school until 4pm. It was quite common for them to fall asleep during lessons.

William died in 1955 aged 93 years. His wife Susan had died in 1932.

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