CHAPTER 6

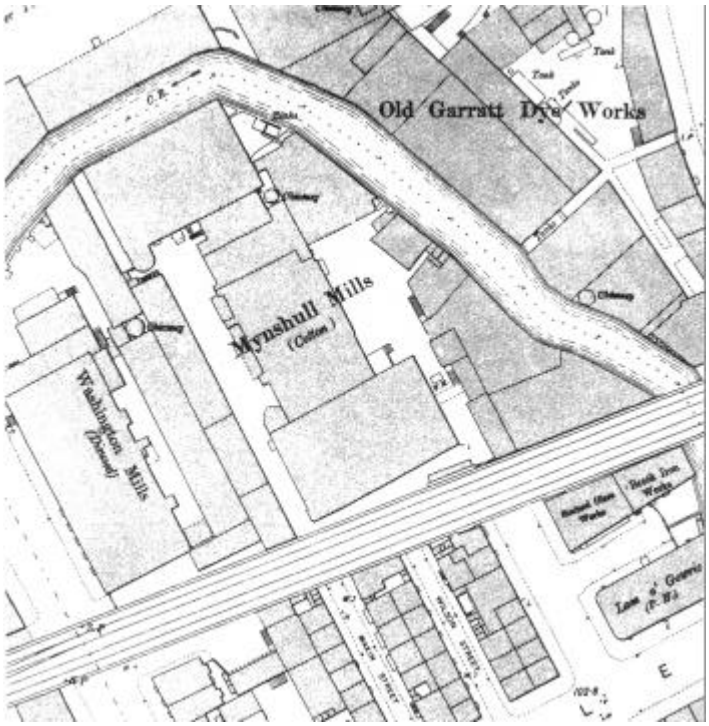
JAMES AND WAINWRIGHT BELLHOUSE LTD.

COTTON SPINNERS

The business venture started by David Bellhouse (1764 – 1840) that seems least related to the rest is cotton spinning. This business was passed to his sons, James (1796 – 1874) and Wainwright Bellhouse (1800 – 1885), about a decade before the father's death. By 1833, David Bellhouse had ceased to list himself as a cotton spinner in the Manchester directories. Wainwright Bellhouse first appeared in the Manchester directories in 1832 with his occupation given as cotton spinner; James Bellhouse followed in 1836. The firm was know as Messrs. Bellhouse by 1831[1] and as James and Wainwright (J. & W.) Bellhouse by 1833.[2]

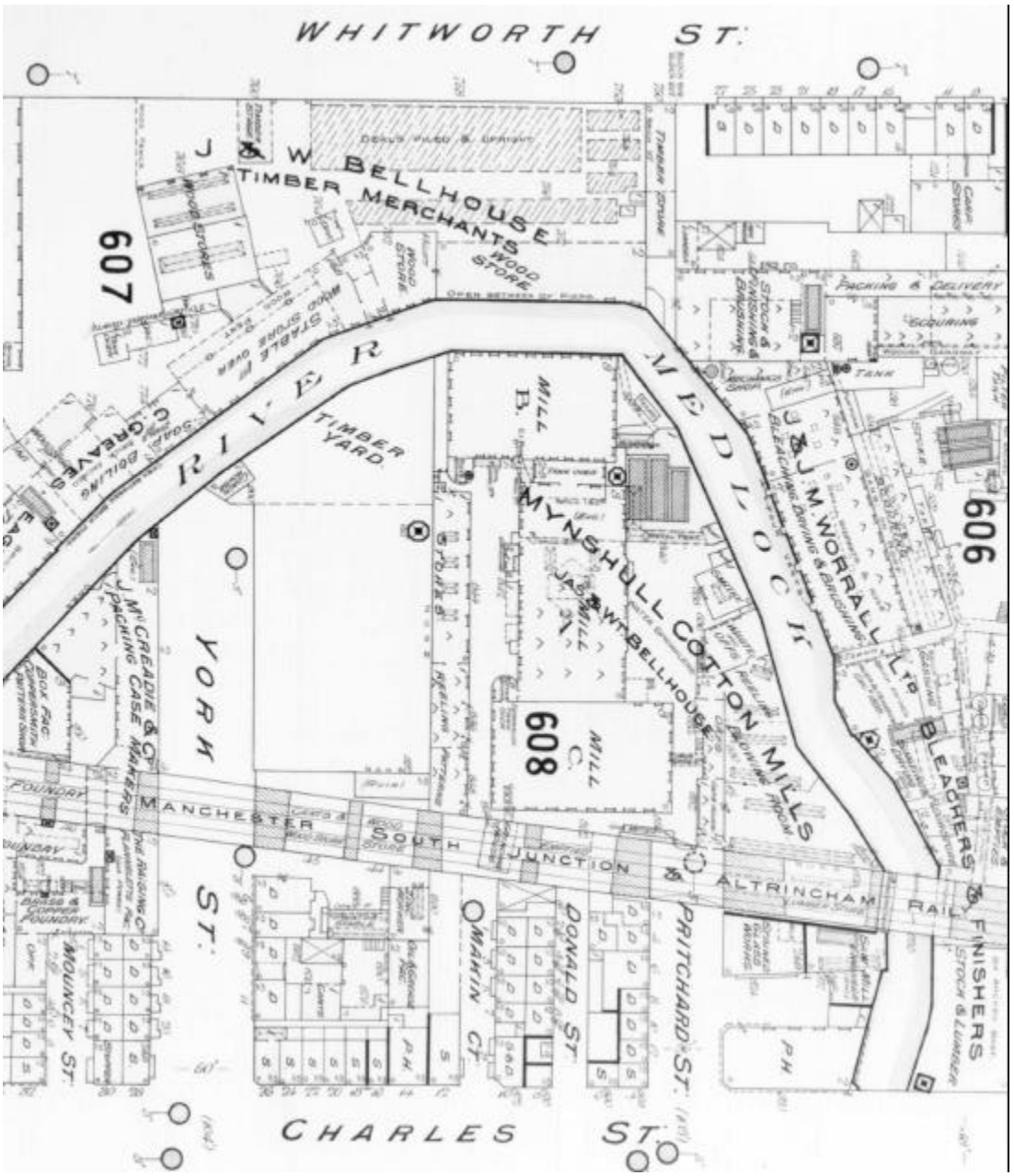
Advertisement for the Medlock New Mill[3]

The traditional date for the start of J. & W. Bellhouse is 1792.[4] However, this is the year in which David Bellhouse senior took up residence in Faulkner Street and began to work independently as a joiner and builder, not the year the spinning business started. David Bellhouse built the original mill, associated with the firm known as the Medlock New Mill, in 1806 and so the beginning of the firm should be dated from that year. The mill was just outside the boundary of the Township of Manchester as defined in 1800.[5] It was bounded by the Medlock River and by Pritchard, York and Charles Streets in Chorlton on Medlock or Chorlton Row. The mill was situated directly across the Medlock River from all the other Bellhouse enterprises, which were in Hunt or Whitworth Street. David Bellhouse senior built a second mill at this location in 1836.[6] Sometime before 1851 a third mill was added. Collectively, they were known as Mynshull Mills. The set of mills is shown on the 1851 Ordnance Survey map of Manchester. An 1893 insurance maps lists the mills as A, B and C. The railway line running diagonally at the bottom of both maps is the South Junction Railway built by David Bellhouse junior (1792 – 1866) in the years 1846 to 1849.



Part of the 1851 Ordnance Survey Map of Manchester[7]

From the 1850s through to the 1890s and probably beyond, the physical layout of Mynshull Mills remained the same. This may be seen by comparing the 1851 Ordnance Survey map with the insurance map from the 1890s. The same was not true of production. In 1882 J. & W. Bellhouse were operating with 60,000 spindles. By 1890 they had increased their capacity to 80,000 spindles.[8]



Part of Goad's 1893 insurance map of Manchester[9]

The Medlock New Mill was originally operated in partnership with John and Richard Runcorn under the name "Runcorn, Bellhouse and Runcorn."[10] The actual work carried out in the mill was done by a succession of tenants.[11] By 1819 the partnership had dissolved. Bellhouse was operating the mill on his own and the Runcorns were operating a spinning business out of Ormond Street.[12] Within a few years Bellhouse's sons had become his partners.

Working conditions in the Medlock New Mill were typical of the time.[13] Some children were employed in the factory from the age of five or six. The working day was fourteen hours long, summer and winter, with one hour off for dinner, generally from noon to one o'clock. Of a total of 22 Manchester mills surveyed in 1816, all had 14 working hours per day or at most one hour more, except two whose working day was a half hour shorter during the summertime. In summer the day began at 5 a.m. at the Medlock New Mill and ended at 7 p.m. In winter, the working day began and ended an hour and a half later. A witness named John Pilkington, in a Parliamentary enquiry into child labour in 1833, reported working in Bellhouse's mill in Oxford Road in about 1810 – he was about six years old at the time.[14] Pilkington also stated that he had worked in several cotton mills and that working at Bellhouse's was his first job. When asked by one of the commissioners of the enquiry to name which mill had treated him the worst, Pilkington mentioned another factory owner.

A detailed snapshot of the spinning business of J. & W. Bellhouse is available for the year 1833.[15] This has come about because several cotton mills, including J. & W. Bellhouse, replied to a questionnaire drawn up by the Factories Enquiry Commission in the Parliamentary enquiry investigating child labour practices in that year, the Commission before which Pilkington appeared as a witness. The responses to the questionnaire reveal that the two brothers rather than the father were in command of the operation.

The mill was powered by a 30 horsepower steam engine. Dangerous parts of the machinery were fenced off. The workers were free to regulate the temperature inside the mill, which was usually between 75º and 80º Fahrenheit. This was achieved by opening the windows whenever necessary.

In 1833 the mill was open 307 days of the year with a 12-hour working day from Monday to Friday and a 9-hour day on Saturday. The working hours were in line with an 1831 law, known as Hobhouse's Act that regulated these hours. Over the time between 1816, the time of the earlier factory survey, and the passing of the 1831 law, there had been a series of Acts (1819,

1825 and 1831) in which the working hours had been reduced from 14 per day, six days a week, to the hours followed at the Bellhouses' mill. Also in the legislation one half hour had been added for the time allowed for meals. At the Bellhouses' mill this amounted to one half hour for breakfast and a one-hour lunch break; the workers were free to leave the mill during these breaks. The Bellhouses objected to any further decrease in the number of working hours that the mills might operate.[16] This had been proposed in what was known as the Ten Hours Bill that was before Parliament. Most mill owners were opposed to the bill. The Bellhouses claimed that the cost of production would increase and that this would put them at a competitive disadvantage in the market, particularly with French spinners. This Ten Hours Bill died in Parliament. Over a 15-year period, several attempts to reduce working hours were made until a Ten Hours Bill was passed by Parliament in 1847.[17] To the end, James and Wainwright Bellhouse, along with several other mill and factory owners, opposed the introduction of this legislation. Just prior to the passing of the 1847 Act, a letter from this group, outlining reasons against a reduction in the working day, was sent first to the First Lord of the Treasury and the to Lord John Russell, the Prime Minister. The two letters contained 353 and 483 signatures respectively, with the Bellhouses among them.[18]

The pay at the Bellhouses' mill was higher than most other mills in the county.[19] An 1833 survey of cotton mills in Lancashire shows that the average weekly pay at J. & W. Bellhouse was 148.46 pence. This was the highest in Manchester and seventh highest among the 151 mills surveyed. The higher average wages could have been due to one or both of two factors. The first factor was children; mills that employed more children had lower average wages since children were paid less. The second factor was related to the method by which workers were paid. Since the workers were paid by the amount produced rather than an hourly wage, a mill with modern machinery could produce more in a given period of time, and hence pay its workers more, than other mills. The same survey showed that the Bellhouses' mill was of medium size. In terms of the number of people employed at the mill, it ranked 70th among the 171 mills surveyed. The three largest mills employed over 1,500 workers each; the Bellhouses employed 211.

In 1833 James and Wainwright Bellhouse employed children from the ages of nine and up. They did not feel that children between the ages of nine and twelve were necessary to the operation of the mill. On the other hand they stated that those who had been employed since infancy in the mills were better skilled at their jobs than those employed at a later age. They felt

that the responsibility for children's employment lay with the parents. The law allowed children aged nine to work. Since these children could earn up to four shillings sixpence per week working at the mill, the parents took advantage of the law and sent them to work. The Bellhouses also believed that many parents would take advantage of any compromise law that would try to lessen the working day for children. For example, in response to a suggestion that children could work in relays in the mills to shorten their working day, they replied that this would easily be open to abuse. Some parents would send their children to one mill in the morning and then go to another in the afternoon, but in a different part of town. They argued that the end result would be that children would work longer rather than shorter hours.[20] The Bellhouses maintained this belief for at least the next three or four years. By 1837 the relay system had been tried in several other mills, but not the Bellhouses' mill. In a survey in that year taken by the government-appointed Superintendent of Factories, J. & W. Bellhouse does not appear in a list of factories where the relay system had been in practice regularly since July 1 of 1836 or in another list of factories where the system had been instituted since July 1.[21]

Discipline at the mill was strict, but not severe. Unlike some mill owners, James and Wainwright Bellhouse did not use corporal punishment; it was unheard of in their mill. Children who were disobedient were dismissed.[22] There is one example from 1831 that shows how the Bellhouses handled problems with their employees.[23] Late in December of that year, it was found that six sovereigns were missing from a drawer in the counting house. To catch the thief a trap was set in the week after the discovery of the missing money. Just before closing time some money was put in the same drawer from which the original theft occurred. Then the counting house was locked. The next day at opening time the money was discovered missing by Wainwright Bellhouse. The chief suspect was a woman who cleaned the counting house every morning. She was questioned by Wainwright Bellhouse but denied having any connection to the crime. After the woman's interrogation by her employer, the police were called in. When the police searched the woman it was found that she had two sovereigns in her shoe and more than 14 shillings hidden in her pocket. She begged for forgiveness saying that this was the first time she had stolen anything. The police proceeded to her house where they found two sovereigns and a half-sovereign hidden in a glove that was put away in a locked trunk. She was arrested and taken by the police.

The cotton mills of J. & W. Bellhouse were situated on the south bank of the Medlock River. From Laurent's map of Manchester (shown in Chapter 2), it may be seen that the area where the mills were situated was not at all built up in 1793. Moreover, it appears from the map that there were sloping banks that could accommodate a significant rise in the water level after a heavy rain. Over the years several buildings were erected on the banks of the Medlock including the Medlock New Mill and the additions to it. Consequently, the river could carry a smaller volume of water before flooding, than at the time prior to the build-up of this part of the city. There were floods in 1833 and 1838, but they caused little damage. At about this time a wall was built which separated the mills from the river. Then in 1854 the city government of Manchester built a tunnel that partially obstructed the flow of the river near the location of the Bellhouses' mills. Wainwright Bellhouse wrote to the Town Clerk about the tunnel when it was constructed but received no reply. Some others had objected to the construction but it had proceeded. Two years later there was a very heavy rainfall one night in August. The river rose almost two feet above the retaining wall and flooded the mills. There was extensive damage to the machinery as well as to a large quantity of cotton. The Bellhouses sued Manchester Corporation for damages. The case went to trial in April of 1857 and lasted two days. It came out in testimony that the mills were often flooded, but the damage due to flooding had become worse and the frequency of flooding increased since the building of the tunnel. Since a great deal of technical evidence was presented, both sides were given the option of a different tribunal to judge the case and both refused. At the end of the second day of testimony, as the counsel for defendants was about to sum up the defense the foreman of the jury interrupted and told the judge that the jury was prepared to give its verdict. They awarded damages of £4,500 to the plaintiffs.[24] Manchester Corporation unsuccessfully appealed the decision before the Court of Common Pleas in Westminster. The case occupied another full day in June of 1857.[25] The mill flooded again in 1894. There is an apocryphal story that the last person out of the mill in that flood came floating on a bale of cotton.[26]

The cotton famine of the 1860s, brought on in part by the American Civil War, had no visible effect on J. & W. Bellhouse. Despite much that has been written on the cotton famine, no information has come to light so far on the activities of the Bellhouses during this time. The origins of the cotton famine were actually prior to the Civil War. The years 1858-61 were boom years for the cotton industry and so production capacity was increased. By 1860 the market was saturated. The first signs of problems occurred in that year; the summer of 1860 was cool in

England so that demand for cotton goods declined. During the Civil War the northern states of the United States had blockaded southern ports from 1862 through 1865. As a result imports of raw cotton to Manchester from the United States were reduced substantially. In addition, because of the blockade there was a reduction in the export of finished cotton goods to the United States. However, there was no shortage of cotton goods because of the substantial buildup of inventory over the previous few years. The combination of the blockade and excess inventory resulted in much hardship in Manchester mainly to the factory workers. For the mill owners themselves large firms had an advantage over smaller ones and spinners had an advantage over the manufacturers of cotton goods so that J. & W. Bellhouse, a medium-sized spinning firm probably suffered comparatively little as a result of the famine.[27]

The only information about the firm during the 1860s is that James and Wainwright Bellhouse subscribed £25 to a Manchester memorial to Prince Albert who had died in 1861. Later, on request, they increased the amount to £40. This is in contrast to brothers John and William of the timber J. & W. Bellhouse who initially subscribe £20 and then refused to give more when requested. Their objection was that another memorial was being erected in London; money should go to that instead.[28]

When the railway was first introduced to Manchester in 1830, the Bellhouses were participants, but rather as builders and not as investors. David Bellhouse senior was part of a committee in the Manchester government that was negotiating with the Manchester and Liverpool Railway over their line into Manchester. David Bellhouse junior built the railway warehouses for the Manchester terminus of the railway at Liverpool Road Station. The Bellhouses continued to shy away from investing in the railways throughout the 1830s.[29] During the 1840s all the Bellhouse brothers who were engaged in the family business made substantial investments in new railways being built. Among the brothers, Wainwright Bellhouse invested the most, a total of £5,180. He invested in two railways being built in Scotland, the Stirling and Dunfermline Railway and the Scottish Central Railway as well as one closer to home, the Midland Railway from Ely to Lincoln, and another closer yet, the Manchester and Buxton Railway. David, James, John and William each invested £1,000 in various railway schemes, John and William the timber merchants both choosing the Midland Railway from Ely to Lincoln. Further, William and David jointly invested nearly £2,000 in the Midland Railway from Ely to Lincoln and another £500 each in two other ventures.[30]

In terms of social status and evolution, James and Wainwright Bellhouse were typical of cotton masters of their time. A brief description of the typical master in the years 1830 through 1860 is that he was born in Lancashire (true of 80% of the masters) into a family in which the father was also in the textile industry (70% of masters). He remained a local resident in the town in which his mill was located (95%) and was equally likely to be an Anglican as a Nonconformist by religion. Typically he was married with two or three children.[31] With the direction in religion leaning to Nonconformity, the two Bellhouse spinning partners followed this pattern even down to the numbers of their children – three for Wainwright and two for James (compared, for example, to seven and eight children respectively for brothers David junior and William). After the mid-nineteenth century many masters became non-resident owners and tended more toward Anglicanism in religion. This trend was followed by the only male offspring of these partners – James Bellhouse's son, Charles Hatton Bellhouse.

Wainwright Bellhouse moved in Manchester society circles. Like his brother David he voted with the establishment for the Tory candidate in the election of 1832.[32] He also voted with his brother and father for the liberal candidate Mark Philips. Like his brother John, he married a daughter of the Manchester surgeon Gavin Hamilton.[33] This daughter was named Sarah Ward Hamilton after her grandmother Sarah Ward the noted Manchester actress. The Manchester novelist Elizabeth Gaskell in a letter to her daughter remarked on Sarah Ward Bellhouse's death in 1851. Eight years later, Mrs. Gaskell wrote to the same daughter describing a fox hunting party she attended at a country house with Wainwright Bellhouse, Sir Philip Egerton and Lord Grosvenor.[34] The Gaskells and the Bellhouses were also neighbours for a time. From about 1845 to 1855 Wainwright Bellhouse lived at 48 Plymouth Grove in the Victoria Park development of Manchester.[35] The Gaskells moved to 42 Plymouth Grove in 1849.[36] Earlier, Wainwright Bellhouse had lived in Grosvenor Square in a house built probably by his brother David.[37] The house is currently one of the buildings in the Manchester Metropolitan University.

Another example of the society in which Wainwright Bellhouse traveled was his involvement in the Manchester Athenaeum. This was a kind of literary club where younger middle class men could read, attend lectures and concerts, and take courses in music and languages such as French, German and Italian.[38] In 1843 the Athenaeum instituted an annual Grand Soirée, which was intended to be the great literary and social event on the year. The general fare for the evening consisted of readings, speeches, dinner and dancing. In the first year Charles Dickens

was the chief attraction, or President of the Soirée, followed the next year by Benjamin Disraeli. In each year there were a number of vice-presidents including both local dignitaries and regular members, who made up the organizing committee. Wainwright Bellhouse was a vice-president of the Soirée in at least 1845 and 1846.[39] In excess of 1,700 individuals attended the 1846 Soirée. One of the perquisites of the vice-presidents was to have a dinner table near the head table at the Soirée. By 1846 the Soirée had turned into what seemed an all-day affair. The day began with a breakfast at the Albion Hotel. Among the 50 invited guests for breakfast was Wainwright's nephew Edward Taylor Bellhouse.

Wainwright Bellhouse took part in the Manchester Music Festivals of 1828 and 1836; he and his brother David were on the management committee for the second festival.[40] Wainwright, rather than William, was probably the W. Bellhouse who sang tenor at the Manchester Gentlemen's Glee Club in 1831.[41] At the costume ball associated with the 1828 festival, Wainwright came dressed in an East India costume. He was married at the time of the next festival eight years later. This time he was dressed as Malin de Bon Sens and his wife Sarah was dressed as a Circassian slave. Several other family members attended the ball in 1836. All brothers, except James, were in attendance. William Bellhouse was accompanied by his wife Ann. The two eldest children of the next generation, Edward son of David Bellhouse junior and Fanny daughter of Henry, were also there.

Like his brother Wainwright, James Bellhouse also lived in Victoria Park. In 1840 he had his residence in Plymouth Grove. Six years later he had a mansion built in the same area but on Park Road.[42] The ground plan for the property, measuring approximately 60×40 yards, shows a coach house, a stable, a greenhouse and a tool house in addition to the main house.[43] The house itself was built in the Tudor style; the fronts were of tooled stone and the back was of rough pier-repoints or squared stone.[44] James Bellhouse seems to have speculated in the development of Victoria Park. He financed the building of five mansions there.[45] His brother David probably did the actual work.

Again like his partner brother, James Bellhouse was also a horseman. But there is no evidence he rode to the hounds. What is recorded is that he was involved in a serious riding accident in 1831.[46] He was riding a spirited horse through Heaton Park and lost control of the horse. The horse galloped too close to a tree and James was thrown from the horse after being struck in the

head by a branch. Unconscious, he was taken by some doctors to a nearby house and remained in that state for at least a day.

James Bellhouse's will shows that he was an art collector.[47] Unlike the will of his nephew Ernest Bellhouse, there is no list of the artists. What is stated is that "all the pictures, drawings, sculpture and plate" were left to his wife Eliza (née Satterfield) Bellhouse for her lifetime. At her death these items were to go to the son, Charles Hatton Bellhouse. A list was to be drawn up of these items, but it has not survived. One record of James Bellhouse's art purchases has survived. At an art exhibition at the Royal Manchester Institution in 1843, James Bellhouse purchased two beach scenes by William Shayer the elder for 55 guineas each.[48] The two paintings were entitled *Beach Scene – Morning* and *Market People on the Beach Awaiting the Tide*. A painting by Shayer entitled Beach Scene, possibly the same painting purchased by Bellhouse, sold in Birmingham in 1933 for £115. Both James and his brother Wainwright were shareholders in the Manchester Royal Institution, each subscribing 40 guineas in 1825.[49]

Both James and Wainwright Bellhouse left sizable fortunes – £40,000 in 1874 and £48,600 in 1885 respectively.[50] None of Wainwright's children, three daughters, were associated with the family business. James Bellhouse's only son, Charles Hatton Bellhouse (ca 1845 – 1924), had a minimal connection with the business. He was sent to Harrow in 1858 to be educated.[51] From there he entered Oriel College, Oxford.[52] He left in 1864 without taking a degree. Initially he appears to have been closely connected with the family firm. He first appears as a cotton spinner at J. &W. Bellhouse in the 1871 Manchester directory. He was living at his parents' home in Victoria Park at the time. By the late 1870s he had moved to the town of Buxton. Early in the next decade he was living in Newberry in Berkshire. All this time he is listed as a cotton spinner at J. & W. Bellhouse. After 1891 he does not appear in the Manchester directories.[53] At the turn of the century he was living at Bircher Hall in Leominster and ten year later was in Weymouth.[54] Charles Hatton Bellhouse had two sons, neither of whom had any connection with the spinning business. The elder son, James Hugh Bellhouse, followed his father to Harrow and then to Oriel College, Oxford.[55] He obtained a B.A. in 1899 and an M.A. the following year. James Hugh Bellhouse was ordained a priest in the Church of England in 1901 and held curacies in various dioceses.[56] His younger brother, Charles Stewart Bellhouse, attended Malvern College. There is no evidence that he was associated with the spinning business.

Registered Trademark[57]

The business remained within the wider family. William (1832 – 1891) and Walter (1838 – 1915) entered J. & W. Bellhouse as cotton spinners in 1863 and 1871 respectively.[58] Both were sons of the timber merchants, William the son of William Bellhouse (1803 – 1893) and Walter the son of John Bellhouse (1798 – 1863).[59] William Bellhouse junior was an executor of James Bellhouse's will so that it is likely that he was the senior partner in the firm. As senior partner he obtained a patent in 1868 with one of the mechanics at the mill, Richard Ashworth.[60] The patent was related to improvements to carding engines that would decrease wastage in the carding process. William Bellhouse also registered a trademark for the company in September of 1882.[61] There is no information on what role Walter Bellhouse played in the firm. What is known of his activities is outside the firm. He served as acting magistrate for the Altrincham Petty Sessional Division from 1879 and was a Justice of the Peace by 1897.[62]

Only one of Walter Bellhouse's three sons went into the spinning business. The eldest son John Bellhouse (b. 1869) followed a military career. After attending Bolton Grange and Repton public schools, he entered the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich. He received his first commission in 1888 and was made a lieutenant in 1891. He served with the Royal Artillery. He was invalided out after service in India and retired on half-pay in 1903.[63] The second son, Arthur Lyon Bellhouse (1870 – 1918), decided to become a gentleman farmer in Canada after attending Fettes College in Edinburgh.[64] Attracted by letters in the English press written by Edward Michell Pierce, who was himself an English gentleman farmer living in Cannington Manor in the Province of Saskatchewan, Arthur Bellhouse left for Canada in the spring of 1888 on the steamship *Circassian*.[65] Pierce, a retired British Army captain in substantially reduced circum-

stances, had earlier immigrated to Canada. To help finance his lifestyle in his new country, Pierce taught English gentlemen how to be farmers on the Canadian prairies for a fee of £100 per year.[66] There seems to have been more emphasis on sporting activities rather than actual farming techniques. Arthur Bellhouse played tennis, was a member of the Cannington Manor cricket team and raced horses.[67] Bellhouse remained in Cannington Manor at least into the 1890s and at some point returned to England where he died in 1918.[68] He wife and children remained in Canada. They were in Chatham, Ontario in 1913.[69] The youngest son of Walter Bellhouse, Ernest Walter Bellhouse (1871 – 1920), did enter the spinning business. He attended Repton, the same public school as his oldest brother.[70] He joined the firm of J. & W. Bellhouse by 1897.[71]

Both of William Bellhouse's (1832 – 1891) sons, Gerald Bellhouse (1867 – 1946) and Maurice Geoffrey Bellhouse (1870 – 1900) entered the spinning business. Both attended Fettes College in Edinburgh and both went on to Trinity College, Cambridge.[72] Gerald obtained his B.A. in 1888 after reading mathematics and Maurice in 1891 after reading natural science. Gerald's career as a cotton spinner was short-lived. He sold his interest in the business in 1891 and went into the Civil Service, beginning as an Inspector of Factories in the Home Office.[73] His younger brother stayed with the firm. When J. & W. Bellhouse was first incorporated in 1897, Maurice Geoffrey Bellhouse was secretary to the firm.[74]

Gerald Bellhouse went on to have a distinguished career in the Civil Service. His rise through the ranks was rapid.[75] Four years after joining the Civil Service, he was promoted to District Inspector in Dublin. He was Superintending Inspector for the Manchester District in 1908 and Deputy Chief Inspector at the Home Office in 1917. He held the position of Chief Inspector of Factories from 1922 until his retirement in 1932. Four years after his retirement he was appointed chairman of the Unemployment Assistance Board Advisory Committee for Southeast London. During his career he was known as a man of great integrity who was trusted by both the employers and their workers.

In the course of his work Gerald Bellhouse sat on several government committees and was the author of many government reports on the working conditions in factories.[76] For example, in 1913 he investigated the working conditions of what were known as van boys. These were boys who were hired to guard vans against theft while the driver delivered parcels from the van. Several recommendations were made to improve the lot of these workers. At about the same time, Bellhouse sat on another committee that investigated a practice in the weaving industry call

"shuttle kissing." In order to thread a shuttle on a loom, the threader or "shuttle kisser" placed his mouth over the eye of the shuttle. The shuttle kisser drew the thread through the eye by inhaling deeply. Since this procedure was carried out in a mill several hundred times a day by various people on the same shuttles, there was concern that this unsanitary practice might contribute to the spread of disease, especially tuberculosis. The committee that investigated this practice found no conclusive evidence that shuttle kissing was linked to the spread of contagious diseases but expressed the hope that alternate forms of threading the shuttle would be used. The alternative was long in coming. Shuttle kissing was allowed to continue, and indeed remained a fairly common practice until the mid-1950s.[77] During the 1920s Gerald Bellhouse was investigating a type of cancer among the cotton spinners on the shop floor. These latter two investigations touch on a general topic that was close to Gerald Bellhouse's heart – industrial safety.[78] He gave many lectures and attended many conferences in promotion of this cause. In recognition of his work Bellhouse was made of Commander of the British Empire in 1918[79] and was knighted in 1924.[80]

Sir Gerald Bellhouse (1867 – 1946)[81]

During the First World War Gerald Bellhouse served his country, but not in a military role. He was a member of the Health of Munitions Workers Committee in 1916.[82] This committee was responsible for finding a scheme that would allow munitions workers to take holidays that would not interrupt or decrease the output of the munitions factories. The next year he was appointed National Service Commissioner for London and Southeastern Area. This was part of a

recruiting campaign to attract more volunteers to become soldiers for the war effort.[83] In about the same year he was appointed chairman of the Demobilization of Civil War Workers Committee that was under the Ministry of Reconstruction.[84]

The Committee for Demobilization was charged with making recommendations to the government that would facilitate the transition of the civil workforce from a war footing to its normal peacetime role. The committee made five interim reports and a final report, all in 1918. In an early report Bellhouse and several others came out strongly against a scheme that would give munitions workers the same treatment as demobilized soldiers, essentially one month's severance pay at the end of the war. In the last interim report and the final report, the committee considered the problem of demobilization of women, almost 600,000 of them, from war industries. This was a great problem since prior to the war women had not been in the labour force in great numbers. During the war their numbers increased substantially as they were hired to replace men who left the factories and clerical positions to serve in the army. The committee made several recommendations regarding the demobilization of women both in the public and private sectors of the economy. Despite these recommendations, within a year or two of demobilization many women had been put out of work by returning soldiers. This occurred even in industries that had traditionally employed women.[85] Although these recommendations appear to have been generally ignored in the private sector, Bellhouse was involved, at least in part, in implementing these recommendations in the Civil Service. In the Factory Department, prior to 1921 the men and women's sections of the Department were completely separate, each with their own inspectors. Also they were often in competition. When amalgamation of the two sections was brought about in 1921, women become eligible to fill any post in the Department. Bellhouse, as the new Chief Inspector in 1922, was responsible for putting the amalgamation into practice. Hilda Martindale, one of his Deputy Inspectors after the reorganization, recounted that Bellhouse "took care that I should have exactly the same opportunities and responsibilities as his men deputies." Bellhouse's handling of the reorganization was done so well that it became an example for other departments in the Civil Service to follow. The victory for the status of women in the Civil Service was not complete. When Bellhouse retired as Chief Inspector in 1932, the senior Deputy Inspector Hilda Martindale should have been considered for the position but was passed over.[86]

On the death of William Bellhouse junior in 1891, his nephew Vernon Bellhouse (b. 1863) became managing director of J. & W. Bellhouse.[87] Vernon Bellhouse was the son of

Robert Bellhouse (1828 – 1898), the timber merchant. Vernon joined the firm in 1881 after leaving Marlborough College the year before.[88] He became a partner in 1888. Under the directorship of Vernon Bellhouse the company, which had been a partnership, was incorporated in 1897 as James and Wainwright Bellhouse Ltd.[89] The original partnership had begun in 1856 with an agreement among the sons, and at least one son-in-law, of David Bellhouse senior. The partners at the time of incorporation were Charles Hatton Bellhouse, Maurice Geoffrey Bellhouse, Vernon Bellhouse and the Walter Bellhouse who was the cotton spinner and not the timber merchant. These partners sold their interests in the firm's properties, contracts and trademark to the newly incorporated company. The new company issued a combination of preferred shares, ordinary shares and mortgage debentures to cover the sale price of £64,000. The new firm retained the services of Vernon Bellhouse, Maurice Geoffrey Bellhouse and Ernest Walter Bellhouse. The remaining former partners had no further connection with the firm other than some ownership of stock.

Vernon Bellhouse (b. 1863)[90]

The same year that the Bellhouses incorporated their spinning business, two other cotton spinners, Herbert Dixon and Scott Lings, came up with an idea for an association of companies that were engaged in cotton spinning.[91] Some other spinners from Manchester and surrounding area joined in with them. The idea bore fruit in the next year when the Fine Cotton Spinners and Doublers' Association Ltd. was formed. Fifty years later the name was changed to the Fine Spinners and Doublers Ltd. One of the members of the original executive board of this company was Vernon Bellhouse. James and Wainwright Bellhouse Ltd. was sold to the new company and was reincorporated under the same name as part of the Fine Cotton Spinners and Doublers' As-

sociation. Vernon Bellhouse was instrumental in the sale of J. & W. Bellhouse Ltd. and also in bringing many of the independent mills into the Association. Vernon Bellhouse remained in the position of Executive Director of the Fine Spinners and Doublers Ltd. for many years.[92] Mynshull Mills, the property that comprised J. & W. Bellhouse Ltd., remained part of the Association until 1938 when it was sold. The name of the company remained the property of the Fine Spinners and Doublers Ltd. for some years more. In 1962 James and Wainwright Bellhouse Ltd. was liquidated. The buildings that constituted Mynshull Mills were destroyed by bombing in the Second World War.[93]

Mynshull Mills, James and Wainwright Bellhouse Ltd.[94]

The industrial combination or trust that was formed by the establishment of the Fine Cotton and Doublers' Association had several advantages. The new Association was vast compared to other firms in the industry. This protected them to some extent against foreign competition and against potential competition that might arise from within the United Kingdom. Also, because of its size and hence its economic clout, the Association was able to secure its sources of supply. This was essential since fine spinning and doubling required the best grades of cotton and these came from only two areas, Sea Island and Egypt.[95]

Both of Vernon Bellhouse's sons, Robert Leslie Bellhouse (b. 1897) and William Stewart Bellhouse (b. 1901) joined Fine Spinners and Doublers Ltd. Both attended Marlborough College, like their father and grandfather before them, before going into business.[96] As managers working the way up the company ladder, both made some improvements to the machinery in the mills. The patents that Robert Leslie Bellhouse obtained were relevant to the whole range of the spinning process. Two of his patents, one in 1921 and another in 1928, relate to the beginning of the spinning process.[97] They were patents for improvements to the combing machines that were used to straighten the cotton fibers before spinning. Another 1928 patent was related to an intermediate process.[98] This was for improvements to the frames that held the twisted cotton, either the slub (slightly twisted) or the roving (end product). At the end of the process the yarn is wound onto cylindrical tubes or cones. The final patent that granted to Robert Leslie Bellhouse was a 1932 patent for improvements to the yarn-winding frame used in the final process.[99] William Stewart Bellhouse was also granted a patent for this final part of the spinning process. His patent, obtained in 1930, was for improvements to the thread winding machines.[100] It eliminated the necessity of two windings of the cotton onto the final tubes or cones. He also obtained an earlier patent in 1928 that appears unrelated to the spinning process.[101] It was for improvements to an apparatus in a textile machine.

Robert Leslie Bellhouse[102]

Robert Leslie Bellhouse served in both the First and Second World Wars. He was awarded the Military Cross during the First War. He eventually rose in the management of Fine Spinners and Doublers Ltd. to run the Houldsworth Group of mills. These were three large spinning mills, two in Stockport and one in Stalybridge.[103] Robert Bellhouse was also a Director of Fine Spinners and Doublers as early as 1932.[104]

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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[8] *The Cotton Spinners' and Manufacturers' Directory and Engineers' and Machine Makers' Advertiser*, Oldham, J. Worrall, 1882, 1890.
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[11] *Manchester Guardian*, April 7, 1857.
[12] Manchester Directory, 1819. There is no listing for Runcorn and Bellhouse. For the first time David Bellhouse lists "cotton spinner" as one of his occupations in his directory entry.
[13] *Parliamentary Papers* 1816 [395] iii.108.
[14] *Parliamentary Papers* 1833 [450] xx.D.2.4.
[15] *Parliamentary Papers* 1834, *op. cit.*
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[24] *Manchester Guardian*, April 7 and 8, 1857.
[25] *The Times*, June 4, 1857.
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[33] Speight Pedigree, *op. cit.*
[34] Elizabeth Gaskell, *op. cit.*, pp. 545 – 547, 830 – 832.
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[37] D. Brumhead and T. Wyke, *op. cit.*
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[52] J. Foster, *op. cit.*
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[55] R.C. Welch, *op. cit.*; J. Foster, *op. cit.*
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