3. THE UPPER CORN MILL

It appears that a corn mill had been constructed on this site by the early 1600s. The dam for the water-powered mill was supplied with water from the stream from Whitley, the tail goit of the Paper Mill dam and a small stream coming from the direction of Cowley. Little remains of the buildings on the site apart from an old stone building at the junction of the Common and Mill Lane (formerly Dog Leg Lane).

4. HALL & PICKLES HYDRA STEEL WORKS

Hall & Pickles were a firm of metal merchants and iron stockholders established in Manchester in 1812. In 1914 Hall & Pickles were a firm of metal merchants and iron stockholders established in Manchester in 1812. In 1914 Hall & Pickles' began to develop the site. The firm was started by Joseph Mellor and Roll was simply his surname in reverse. The firm manufactures bespoke print finishing machinery. Rollen Patent Products Ltd have recently relocated and the site is to be developed as an Aldi supermarket.

The plant was designed to produce coke oven gas for Sheffield Gas Company, together with 3,860 tons of coke, 100 tons of ammonium sulphate, 68,000 gallons of tar and 29,600 gallons of crude benzole every week. Its operation was continuous and an oven was discharged and re-charged every 20 minutes. It was linked to the ironworks by an over-head rope-way system. It was nationalised at the end of 1946 and closed in the mid-1970s. It was demolished in 1987. The site today, looking remarkably green, is occupied by the newly-completed Smithy Wood Office & Business Park.

5. SMITHY WOOD COKING PLANT

Many people will remember their trips to the site and remember their trade mark – a line drawing of a striding man rolling up his sleeves, known as the ‘go to it’ Hydra Man. The Hall & Pickles Works has now gone completely and the site is the Hyde Business Park.

This project is part of the East Peak Industrial Heritage Programme, which is co-funded by Defra and the European Union.
In 1587 a new owner moved into a house, called Londerdalehouse, on the site of the present Whitley Hall. His name was Thomas Parker. Thomas was the son of John Parker, a scythemaker, of Norton. Whether he built a new set of workshops, and constructed a dam to power the water-wheel where none had existed before or whether he was taking over an already existing water-powered site may never be known.

Thomas Parker’s will of 1510 reflects his trade of scythemaking. He left to his son John his waterwheel, bellows and troughs called coltroughs. Coltroughs were stone troughs full of water in which a smith plunged red hot iron to cool it.

For centuries, outside the village core, industry occupied land in the eastern part of the parish. Light metal working and papermaking. In more recent times engineering trades were important together with corn milling and papermaking. In more recent times engineering trades were important together with corn milling and papermaking. In more recent times engineering trades were important together with corn milling and papermaking. In more recent times engineering trades were important together with corn milling and papermaking.

A sale plan of 1848 stated that it was Ecclesfield Paper Mill, formerly Ecclesfield Flash Mill. By 1850 it was owned by John Gladwin, papermaker of Damflask, but from 1852 until records stop in 1907 it was managed by members of the Allen family. It was sometimes referred to as the Atlas Paper Mill and later as the Hallamshire Paper Mill. Initially the mill produced pasteboard and millboard (used in bookbinding). By the early 1860s the machinery was driven by steam power as well as water power. As part of the Childers Employment Commission (1865) young workers were interviewed. ‘One young girl, Mary Madin, aged 12, employed at the Paper Mill, worked from 7.30 a.m. until 9 p.m. with an hour for dinner. She said “I catch paper at the cutter. A big girl passes the paper into the rollers at the other end.”

At that time the mill employed 17 males and 17 females. Among later paper products made at the mill were “browns” (unbleached paper used in packing), cartridge paper, coloured and glazed paper, paper bags and even paper neckties and scarves. These were said in an advertisement to be available ‘printed in new patterns and fast colours in designs after the prevailing styles of woven fabrics.’

The business carried on until 1907 but the premises burnt down in 1915.