

MORE ABOUT MARK COOKE

Banbury-born cotton master

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In 1993 (Vol 12, pp 146-47) we published a short note on Mark Cook(e), the Banbury-born cotton master, who was one of the partners who took over from the Peel family the Old Mill at Fazeley which had been established by the first Sir Robert Peel (1750-1830) as part of a wide-ranging series of improvements on the estate which he purchased in 1790. On another part of the property Peel built Drayton Manor, which became the family mansion, and was inherited by his eldest son Sir Robert Peel (1788-1850), the prime minister. Cooke was baptised in 1788 and the 1993 note showed that he sprang from a family of poor labourers and shoemakers.

Kevin Cooke, who is descended from Mark Cooke's younger brother, James Cooke (1809-69) has passed on some information that he has gathered during research on his family's history. The *London Gazette* of 18 April 1848 includes a notice that a cotton-spinning partnership in Ashton-under-Lyme between Isaac Thorniley and Mark Cooke was being terminated, but that the former would be continuing the business. It seems likely that this was the same Mark Cooke. The Old Mill at Fazeley was taken over sometime after 1841 by Mark Cooke in partnership with Christopher Norton Wright (1789-1875), bookseller and auctioneer, who had married his sister Anne Cooke at nearby Tamworth on 12 February 1839. The *London Gazette* also records the dissolution of the partnership on 11 July 1855 after which, it appears, the Old Mill was taken over by William Tolson, a smallware manufacturer from Yorkshire whose family built the imposing Fazeley Mill in 1883, and continued in business until the late twentieth century. Kevin Cooke has also passed on the account from *The Times* (10 July 1850) of the funeral of Sir Robert Peel at which Mark Cooke was, with the steward of the Peel estate, one of the two horsemen who headed the two-by-two file of principal tenants at the head of the funeral procession which conveyed his coffin to the parish church at Drayton Parslow.

We are grateful to Mr Cook for this information which sheds more light on the career of an interesting Banburian.