

THE ASTINS OF WEST HILL

Fashions changed after World War I and heavy corduroys and moleskins became less popular. Local firms responded to these changes by producing clothing in a range of new materials including flannels and derby tweeds, and some mills began producing boiler suits and overalls, made out of lighter weight cottons. Astin's Mill on Valley Rd (now the Medical Centre) who had previously traded exclusively in Snugfit Trousers began to make gentlemen's suits, swatches of which were found in the attic room of 1 West Hill, just up on the left, by its present owners when they bought the property from Brenda Astin in 2015. Brenda was the wife of one of the Astin Brothers Sons and so the house had been in the family for over 100 years.

Apparently, when their young racehorse 'Snugfit' won them a small fortune, Astins had the whole row of houses built on West Hill so they could see all the comings and goings at their mill and keep tabs on who was late for work! Of course, the view is now obscured by The Hebden Bridge Therapy Centre, Tia Greyhound Rescue and Marco's Pizza Place etc. but 100 years ago, you can imagine, it was quite a useful vantage point.

The houses got smaller from number 1 to 4, and as number 4 is still intact with service bells it suggests that the Astins housed their domestic staff here. Whole families were also housed on the ground floor of these properties. Recently the current owners of number 1 found a Victorian Rocking Potty in their basement! They are hoping to exhibit it at The Heptonstall Museum.