

Once Made In Walthamstow – The Story of Andrex

In 1932, *St. Andrew Mills Ltd* of 34, St Andrew Road, Walthamstow, London, E17. (Telephone: Larkwood 1014-15-16. Cables: "Samarita, Walsstreet") makers of paper and paper goods, opened in St. Andrew Road, Walthamstow.



Ah! Andrex

Ten years later, in 1942, they introduced a toilet roll that was made of 2 ply paper. Originally, the new product was called *Androll* (A St Andrews Road made toilet roll) but later the company introduced an improved version called *Andrex*. This was a toilet roll with paper so soft that it was widely advertised as ‘cotton wool soft’ to be used to dry and clean babies bottoms.

At the 1947 British Industries Fair at Olympia, the company exhibited an extensive product range. The products included: *Andrex, Androl, Samaritan, Marvo, Santex* Toilet Tissues, *Camelia* Soluble Sanitary Towels, Facial Tissues, Paper Handkerchiefs, Paper Towels, Cellulose and Wadding for all purposes. All of these were manufactured from wood pulp to the finished products at the St Andrew Road, Walthamstow mill and factory.

In 1949, a factory was built near the mill and in 1955, when the mills were taken over by the *Bowater Company*, there were 400 employees. Business prospered and a new factory was built in 1964.

The Bowater Company

This company had its origins in 1881, when William Vansittart Bowater started a business as a paper wholesaler and newsprint purchasing agent. In 1926 the company expanded into the business of paper manufacturing when it opened its first mill. In 1936 the company acquired two more paper mills that gave it a 60% share of the UK newsprint market and made it the number one newsprint company in Europe. In 1938, the company expanded into pulp manufacture with the purchase of pulp mills in Sweden, Norway and Canada. In 1947 the company bought the various *Bowater* owned companies under one umbrella with the formation of the *Bowater Corporation*. In 1954, it began its first US operations with a paper mill in Tennessee and in 1955, the *Bowater Company* bought the *St Andrew Mill* company in Walthamstow.



The Andrex Puppy

In 1972, in stroke of advertising genius, the company ran a television advertisement that showed a puppy taking the end of an *Andrex* toilet roll between his teeth and running off with it. This was accompanied by the slogan that said

‘New *Andrex*, it goes a long, long way’

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bdm_hmqp0Ao

The Bowater-Scott Company.



The *Bowater Corporation* had grown progressively throughout Europe and in the North Americas by its acquisition of paper mills and by diversifying into other enterprises like building and packaging . The acquisition of the *Walthamstow St Andrews Mill* and factory gave them an entry into the rapid growing tissue market and in 1956 they joined forces with a US company – the *Scott Paper Company* of Philadelphia.

The *Scott Paper Company* had been one of the pioneers in tissue development and had developed its North American base. The new company gave the *Bowater Company* better access to the North American market and gave the *Scott Company* better access to the European market. The combined companies gave them the financial muscle and manufacturing capacity to develop their business on a world- wide basis.

The Rexam Company

The period between 1956 and 1995 was a period of large changes. World overproduction of newsprint in the 1960's & 70's caused a period of retrenchment and diversification with *Bowaters* divesting itself of involvement in the paper industry and it lost its right to use of the corporate *Bowater* name in North and South America. In 1994 they acquired a company called *Rexam* and in 1995 they changed their name to *Rexam PLC*.

Kimberley Clark & Co

In 1995, as part of the 1995 *Bowater Scott* company process of divesting itself from involvement in the paper industry , the *Kimberley Clark* company bought out the *Scott Paper* company. The *Kimberly Clark* company is an American company that has its origins in the paper industry and in 1914 developed a product called cellu-cotton. This is a product that was used by the USA as surgical cotton in WW1 and was the base and fore-runner of *Kotex* (Disposable sanitary napkins) and *Kleenex* (Disposable handkerchiefs)

After acquiring *Bowater Scott* in 1995 *Kimberley Clark* transferred its production of *Andrex* to its paper mill in Barrow that *BowaterScott* had built in 1967 and which in its heyday had employed 1400 people.

More than a third of all toilet rolls sold in the UK are made by Kimberly-Clark. In Barrow, the mill manufactures almost half of all *Andrex* mainline toilet rolls (blue packaging) and all of the *Shea Butter*, *Aloe Vera*, *Puppies on a Roll* and *Gorgeous Comfort Quilts* product lines.

Be Kind To Your Behind (*Andrex* slogan)

Over the years there have been a series of *Andrex* adverts featuring the puppy. My favourite is possibly the 1994 the advert that showed a little boy sitting on the toilet when the *Andrex* pup takes hold of the toilet roll and runs away with it leaving the little boy without a toilet roll. The advert ends with the pup sitting entangled in the toilet roll and a female voice over saying 'Soft and strong and long, *Andrex*'
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zYKLhM4UcWw>



The Diamond Jubilee

In 2011 there was a new Andrex advert that featured a digital dog with the slogan 'It's the little things that make the difference' and recently, the company celebrated the Diamond Jubilee by partnering with *Sainsbury* to host a Family Festival in Hyde Park. They also introduces a new limited edition *Andrex Jubilee* range

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=brZ88Byh544>

Paper Mill Place

In recent times the derelict former *St Andrew Mills* site has been developed by entrepreneurs as a private industrial estate and housing site and is appropriately named *Paper Mill Place*.

Bill Bayliss

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