

CARTRIDGE ROPERY

A ropeworks, known as Cartridge Ropery, was established here at Brunswick Street by William Healey in 1843. The works were passed to his three sons in 1874, who formed the Healey Brothers Ltd. By the end of the 19th century, the manufacture of rope in Heywood was dominated by the Healey Brothers.

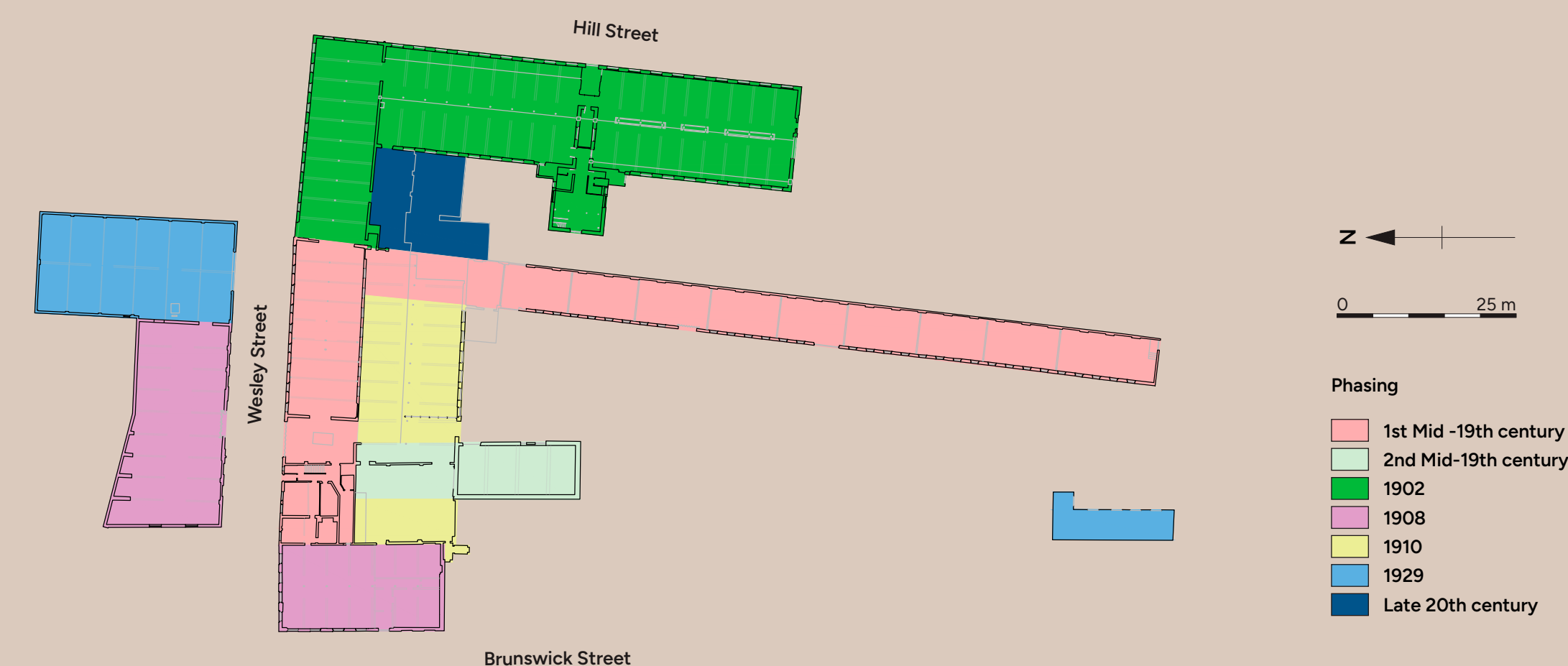
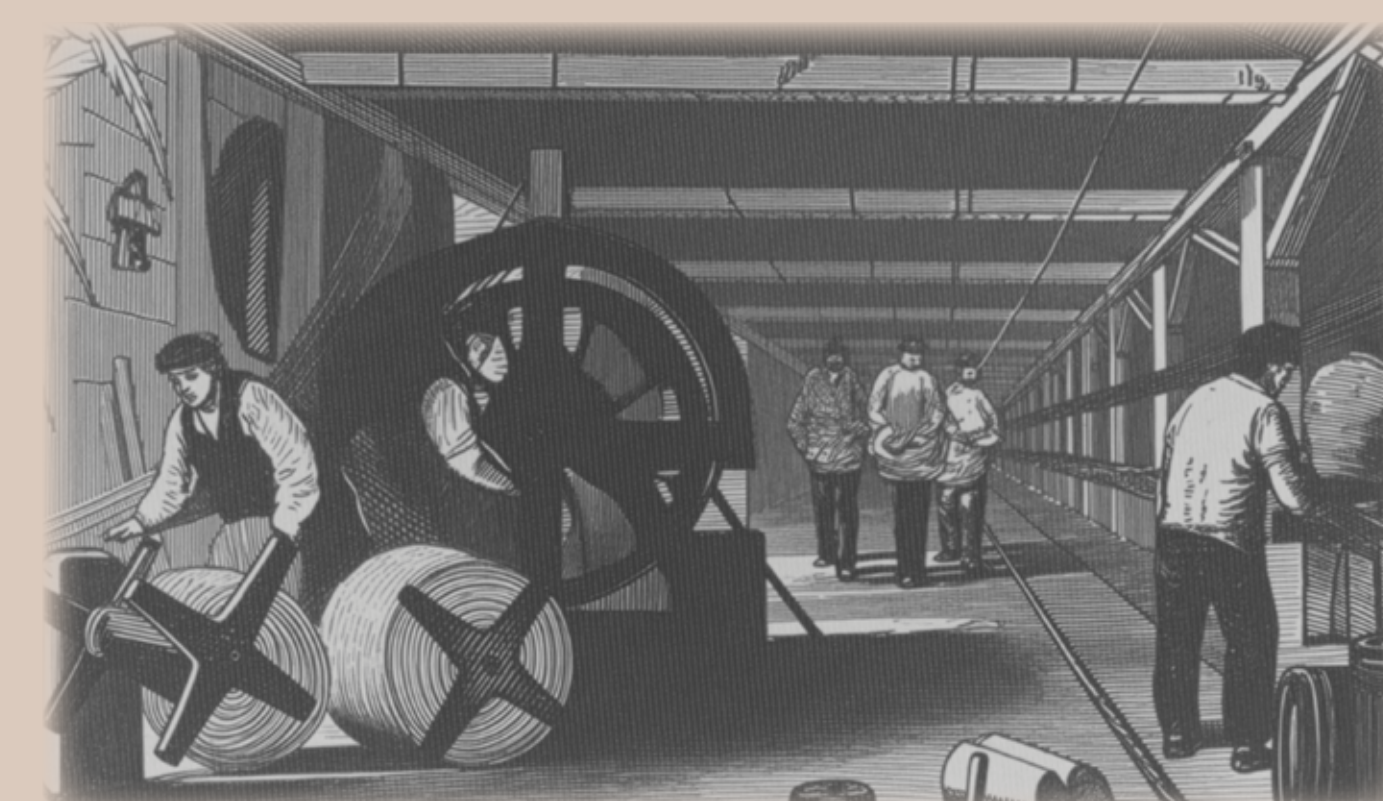
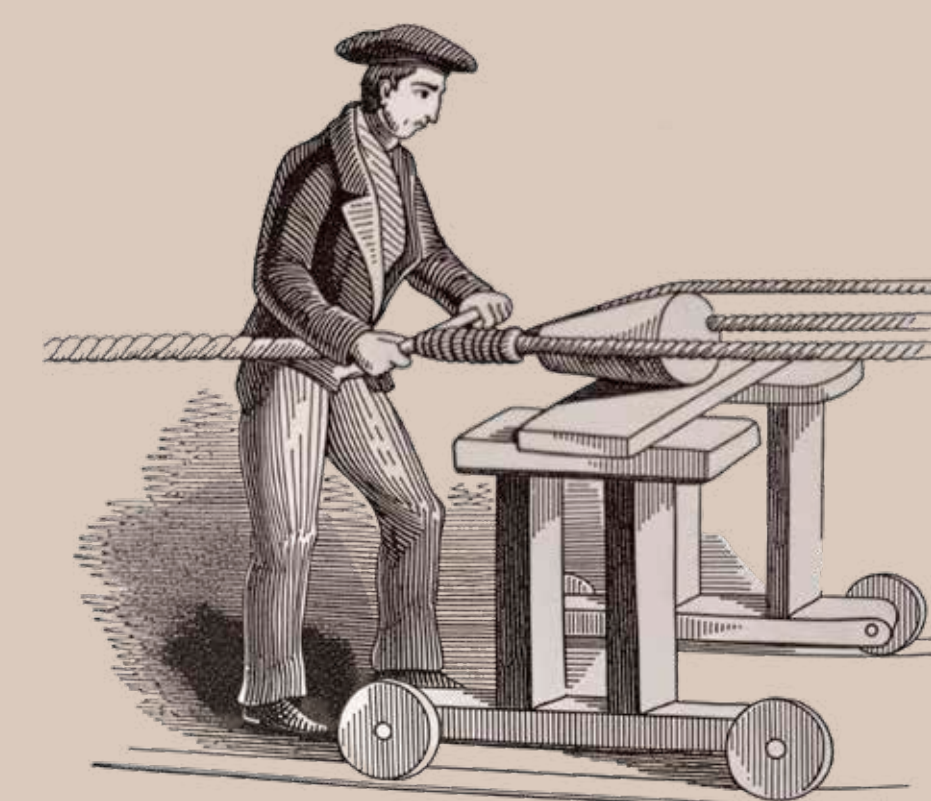
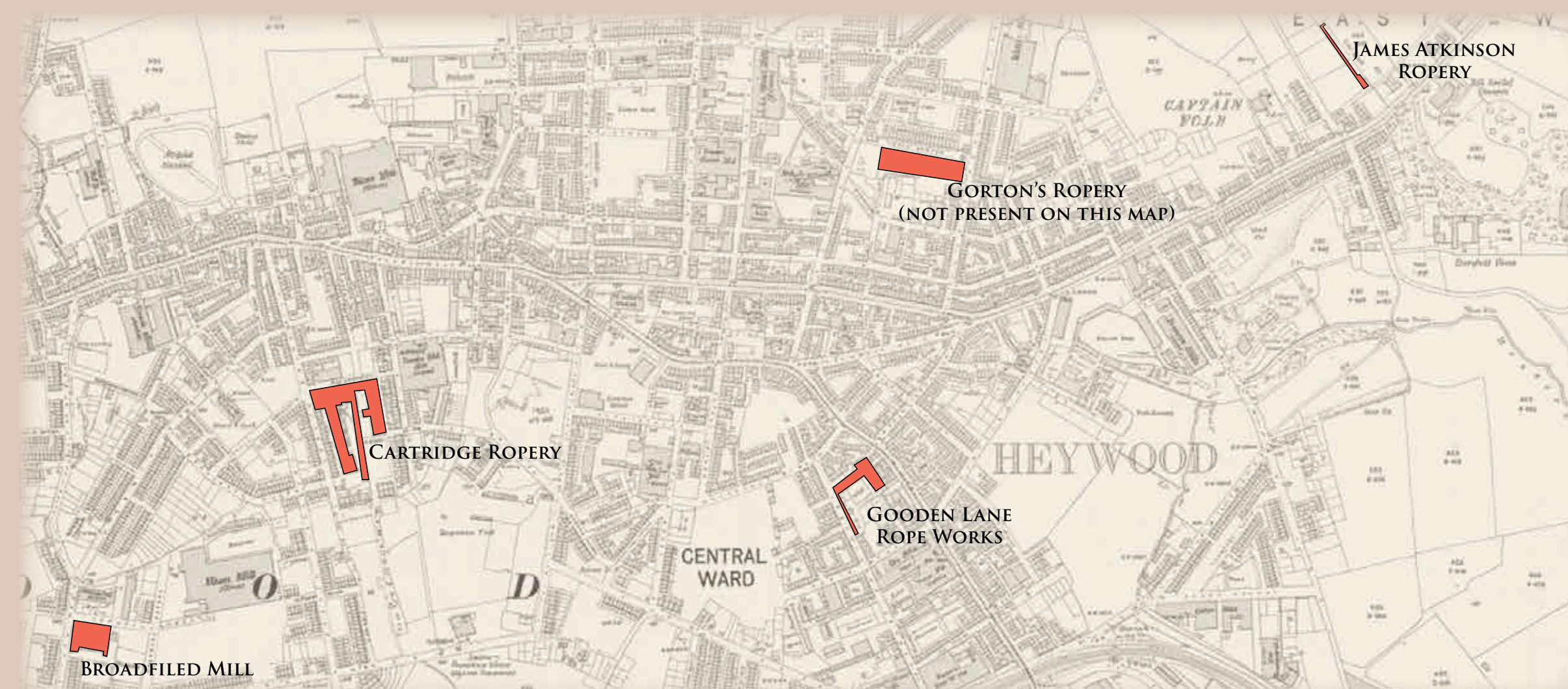
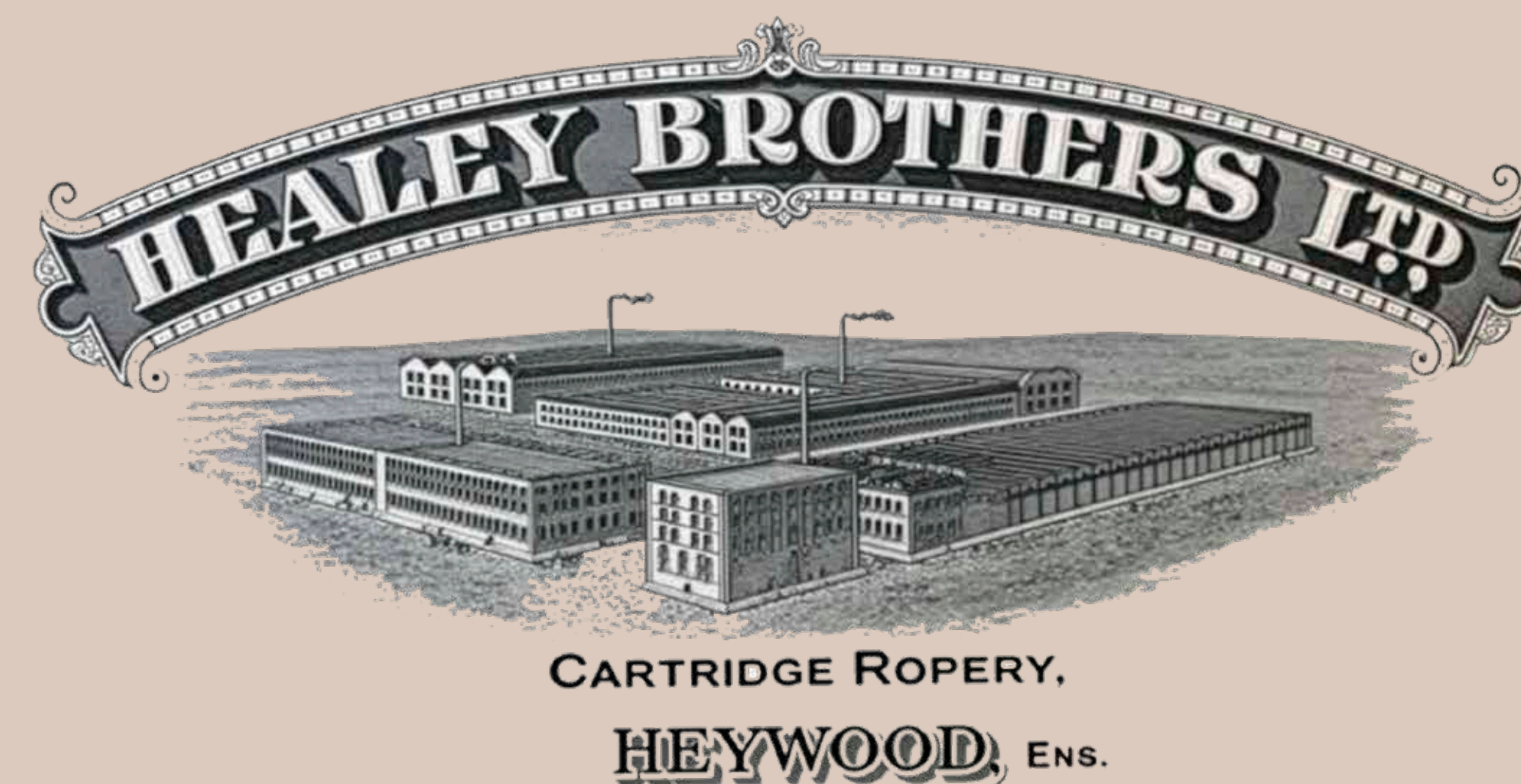
The development of the Cartridge Ropery is intertwined with the expansion of the textile trade in Heywood. In the late 19th century, Heywood was the centre for the production of low-grade cloth manufactured from cotton waste. Rope was required in the textile industry for power-transmission between the steam engine and machinery, and as binding for packaging. The increased demand for rope led to a concentration of the ropemaking industry in the area and by 1882, Cartridge Ropery was one of at least four established ropeworks operating in Heywood.

William Healey's ropeworks initially produced rope on a small-scale basis, taking place outside and using the traditional methods of twisting three or four strands of yarn laid out on a ropewalk. This would be carried out by hand with the strands attached to a revolving jack at one end of the ropewalk. As the strands twisted the ropemaker would walk backwards, controlling the closing of the rope.

The introduction of new spinning and twisting machines during the 19th century allowed for greater output. The Healey Brothers' success is showcased in the expansion and mechanisation of their works in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which extended the production and volume of rope being made. The company adopted steam power at Cartridge Ropery by 1882, and the works were producing the main driving ropes for mills and rope, twine and cotton bands.

Several extensions were constructed at the complex in the early 20th century, and the ropery was formed of a long narrow ropewalk, with twine manufacturing buildings, warehouses, offices, an engine house, boiler house and a gasworks for lighting. The company employed 700-800 people in 1914, coinciding with the peak of textile production in Heywood.

The Healey Brothers Ltd was acquired by British Ropes in 1971 and subsequently by Ibex Ropes in the late 20th century, when the Cartridge Ropery was renamed Ibex Marina Ropeworks. The ropeworks continued in operation until 2020, when the site was sold, marking the end of 177 years of rope production at Brunswick Street.



Images:

Left side: **Top:** Column capitals with the inclusion of the line shaft brackets; **Bottom left:** External view showing the Healey Brothers facade; **Bottom right:** Internal view of Ropewalk

Right side: **(top to bottom):** Letterhead from 1917; Ropeworks of Heywood from the early 20th century superimposed on the 1910 Ordnance Survey 25-inch to 1-mile plan; Engraving of a typical late-19th century ropewalk and an illustration of 'laying' or making a rope; Phased plan of the buildings