



Deanshanger Oxide Works

The 'red dust' village



Aerial view of the Oxide Works c1999



Oxide blending worker

Photo courtesy of Alan Cooper

In 1935, having stood empty for nearly 8 years since the closure of the world renowned E&H Roberts Iron Foundry, the village site was occupied once again. It was purchased by Morris Ashby and Hans Wreschner to manufacture the production of red lead and iron oxide, used in such well-known products as roof tiles, paving slabs, paint, colouring pencils, make-up, bank notes and crystal glass.

As the Deanshanger Oxide Works, business flourished, the plant grew, becoming the largest producer of pigments in Western Europe, exporting products all over the world, just as the Iron Foundry had done before it.

New investment came in 1982 when the multinational Harrison Crosfield (HarCross) corporation brought the company and eventually re-branded it as Elementis Pigments. However, the basic process of taking scrap metal and chemically extracting the oxides to make pigments remained the same, albeit with more sophisticated machinery.



A brand stamp applied to bags of Red Oxide for dispatch

The closing of the Works saw the final order shipped on 30th March 1999. Demolition began in August 1999 and led to the selling of vast areas of the village for housing development. 95 jobs were lost and the infamous 'red dust' that covered areas of the village is now history.

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