

A History of Paper Making

The Chinese Discovery

Paper making is one of the oldest crafts in the world and was discovered in China around 105AD. We know this date because it was recorded in an Ancient Chinese **chronicle**. We also know that they were looking for writing materials better than bamboo, silk and tortoise shells. A court official for Ts'ai Lun noticed that some old rags, which had been left out in the rain, first broke down into fibres and then dried as a flat sheet in the sun. So, paper making began, with old ropes, fishing nets and rags being used to make paper!

Before this time, important records were recorded on **papyrus** in the east and **parchment** in the west.

Some people believe paper may have been invented before this date, but no-one recorded any information about it!

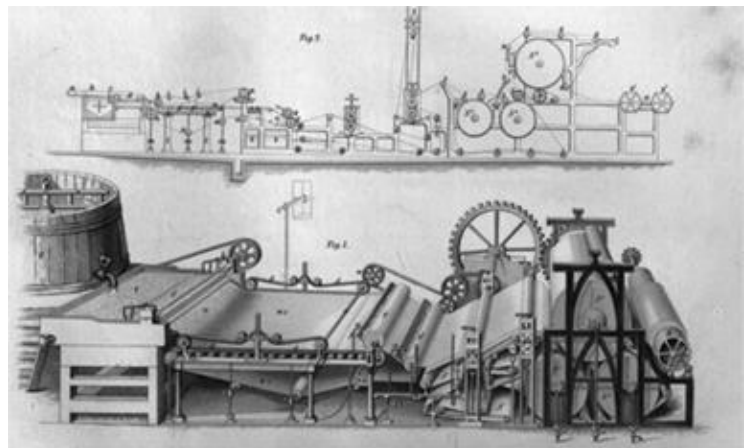


European Paper making

In around the twelfth century, paper making reached Europe. In 1494 John Tate opened the first paper mill in England and just four years later he received a very special visit from the first Tudor king, Henry VII. Henry saw the importance of keeping records, in particular he wanted to keep an eye on his taxes and finances!



Henry VII



Paper Making Machine

The First Paper Making Machine

In 1798 Nicholas-Louis Robert, owner of a paper mill, invented the paper machine. Now many sheets of paper could be produced at once. This helped people all over the world to write down, share and pass on their knowledge.

Look at these different paper mills

Here are two very different paper mills. Describe any differences you see.



Paper mills are built next to water. Why do you think this is?

Did You Know?

Today paper machines can make one mile of paper in just one minute!

For 1500 years every piece of paper in the world was made by hand.

Glossary

Chronicle: A chronicle is a written account of important events.

Papyrus: A marshy plant grown on the banks of the Nile which was dried and made into scrolls in Ancient Egypt.

Parchment: Parchment is a material made from animal skin; often calfskin, sheepskin, or goatskin which was used for writing.