

Proceedings of The Hampshire Field Club

VOL. XXI, PART III

1960

Windmills and Watermills in Hampshire

by A. KEEBLE SHAW

PART 2.

WINDMILLS IN HAMPSHIRE

PORTSMOUTH:

Quite a few windmills have stood in or near Portsmouth during its history, in fact a newspaper cutting claims that 18 stood in the area. The last windmill to disappear was a large tower mill that stood in Wisborough Road near Albert Road. This mill was pulled down in 1923 having stood for over a century. It was built in 1816 by Admiralty shipwrights to replace a mill that stood on land required by the Admiralty. The first mill was built in the 18th century to provide cheap flour for the poor.

The very first windmill in Portsmouth was erected in about 1212, and was built near the harbour. In the same century the Lump family built a windmill on the site of the present fort. Records show that a windmill was purchased by the Government in 1714 to provide flour for the armed forces. Two windmills used to stand at Stamshaw, and were known as Byerley mill and Emery mill, and a windmill is reputed to have stood on the northern shore of the harbour more than a century ago. Two mills used to stand on Southsea Common, one being the Lump fort previously mentioned, and the other being Ballard's mill. The site of Ballard's mill was near the Queen's Hotel and the Royal Albert Yacht Club. I believe the mill at Lump's Fort was known as White Mill, and that it overlooked the cattle pond that is the present canoe lake. A small windmill used to stand near the site of the present Guildhall, and old maps show that four or five windmills were scattered along the top of Portsdown Hill.

The earlier Portsmouth mills would have been small post-mills, but Ballard's mill was a tower mill, as were the other later mills—White mill and Wisborough Road or Dock Mill. Dock Mill (Wisborough Road) was equipped with fan-tackle and was a very tall structure. The mill cottages can still be seen to this day, and are the only visible remains left out of all the windmills that existed in Portsmouth. Dock Mill stopped working by wind in 1905, nearly twenty years before it was finally demolished.

SOUTHAMPTON:

At least four windmills have stood at one time or another in Southampton. One stood in Canshut or Windmill Lane leading from Above Bar down to Western Shore causeway. The old lane is now followed by the line of Regent Street and Clifton Terrace.

HAMPSHIRE FIELD CLUB PROCEEDINGS

In 1550 the Court Leet commanded one Thomas Wykes to 'scowre his Diche in Kayne-shoyt by the Wyndmylle by Michaelmas upon pain of 3s. 4d.'. The mill was probably removed in late Georgian times when the town was enlarged.

Another windmill existed on the causeway road across the Salt Marsh which stretched between God's House Tower and Cross House where the Itchen Ferry plied.

In 1600 a new windmill was built upon the town lands, although the exact location is not known. It is thought that a windmill once stood on the hill site of the old castle near Bargate. A mill is seen in this location on a panoramic view of the town dated 1723.

WESTON:

Just off the London Road, south of Petersfield, a little lane leads to Weston. At one time a windmill stood in a farmyard in this isolated village, but it has now all but disappeared, being incorporated in a modern farm building.

TIDE MILLS

The Tide Mill makes use of tidal water as a source of power. Tidal water passes through an opening in a dam as the tide rises, and at the ebb, gates automatically close, and the impounded water is used to drive a water wheel. The gates are similar to canal lock gates and work on the system of the flap valve. In 1936, 23 tide mills remained, ten of which worked by the tide, and two of these were in Hampshire. The two working mills were at Beaulieu and Eling; two others existed in Hampshire, being at Fawley and Emsworth. Slipper Mill is often connected with Emsworth, but it is actually in Sussex, and was working in 1936.

Tide mills that have existed, or still do exist in Hampshire are listed below, together with brief notes where possible.

ASHLETT MILL, FAWLEY:

Built about 1618, and last worked about 1890. None of the gearing now remains, but evidence shows that two water wheels existed to drive two pairs of stones. It is now a recreation club.

BEAULIEU MILL:

This mill is built on a bridge across Beaulieu river. The river separates the Abbey from the village. The mill used fresh water, as well as tidal water, and was therefore able to continue working for a longer period of time during the day than many tide mills. Only one wheel remains, 12ft. 4ins. in diameter by 4ft. 6ins. wide with 24 buckets. The wheel is mounted on an 18in. diameter wooden shaft, and drives two pairs of stones. Another wheel existed once. The wheels are located under the floor of the mill. Two further pairs of stones and a sack hoist are driven by an 8 h.p. electric motor.

ELING:

Eling mill is situated on the Test. It is built of red brick and stands on a toll bridge, and is the property of Winchester College. The tide gates are operated by hand, and the head of water is about 12 feet, filling the river to a distance of about two miles back especially in spring tides. At the beginning of this century two iron wheels were installed 11ft. 6ins. in diameter by 5ft. 2ins. wide, with 24 Poncelet floats. These replaced the old wooden wheels, with the exception of the great spur wheel which was iron at the time, the other gears

WINDMILLS AND WATERMILLS IN HAMPSHIRE

were also replaced by iron gears. In 1936 only one wheel was being used to drive two French burrs, aided by a 10 h.p. Blackstone engine, and most of the gearing from the other wheel had been removed.

EMSWORTH:

This mill ceased working by tide about 1919 when power working commenced. It was built nearly 250 years ago for the production of flour for biscuits during the war with the French. The wheel was undershot and drove four stones, two of which were later removed. I don't know if the mill has ceased working for good now, but in recent years I have never seen any signs of life around it.

FAREHAM:

The Old Cams Mill that used to stand at Fareham was pulled down in 1920. It was built some time before 1620.

GOSPORT:

A tide mill used to stand at Forton in Gosport, and was very similar to King's Mill, Portsmouth.

HAYLING ISLAND:

A tide mill stood on the eastern shore of Hayling Island opposite the present May Pole Inn. The mill was restored in 1876, and fitted with an iron water wheel with wooden floats. The mill worked three pairs of stones. In 1877, on 5th January, it was destroyed by fire, the cause of which was a great mystery.

PORTSMOUTH:

King's Mill, Portsmouth, was driven by water collected in a tidal basin situated near the present Sun Wharf. A mill owned by the Naval Victualling Office stood on piles on the shore in 1817, and most of the grain for the Navy was ground there. I believe that the present United Services' Sports Gound was part of the mill pond.

SOUTHAMPTON:

In the eastern suburbs of the town a street still retains the name of Millbank from a mill near the site. One of the most interesting mills was situated close to the eastern wall of Southampton, the mill basins being formed by the town ditches, on the east and north of the walls. This may have been Northam Tide Mill, first recorded in 1220. The mill may have passed to the town at the Dissolution.

WATERMILLS IN HAMPSHIRE

Most of the watermills in Hampshire are listed here, brief details being given where possible.

ALLBROOK:

Situated on the River Itchen. A corn mill.

ALTON:

A fulling mill used at one time for preparing flax for weaving was situated behind the Swan Inn on the River Wey. Also, on the road to Worldham was a paper mill and a grist mill under one roof. These mills closed down in 1909.

HAMPSHIRE FIELD CLUB PROCEEDINGS

ANDOVER:

Situated on the River Anton at Andover are two mills, possibly both still working. One is in full view from the main road in Bridge Street, and the second is a few hundred yards further downstream, but this one can only be seen from by-roads.

ANSTEY:

A grist mill situated on the Wey. Now in ruins.

BARFORD:

Mills stood at both Upper and Lower Barford. The mill at Upper Barford ceased work about 1830, having been a paper mill for some years.

BEDHAMPTON:

Now a private residence, but this mill was at one time a paper mill.

BENTLEY:

Shown on Ogilby's Road Map of 1675. Although the mill is not mentioned in Parish Records, two advertisements in the 'Post Boy' in 1712 and 1713 advertise the sale of 'Bentley Paper-Mills near Farnham'.

BISHOPSTOKE:

A corn mill used to stand on the Itchen at Bishopstoke.

BERE:

This mill is famous for its connections with Henri Portal, the paper-maker.

BISHOP'S WALTHAM:

The Abbott's Pond at Bishop's Waltham was formed by damming one of the tributaries of the Hamble, and so now has become the headway of the river. In 1954 this mill scrapped its turbine, and turned over to grid electricity for power.

BOARHUNT:

In a lonely spot about half a mile north of Boarhunt Manor are to be found the remains of a small watermill. The wheel is under cover, and decayed, whilst the mill building is uninhabited and ruinous.

BOTLEY:

Botley mill stands on the Hamble, and I have information that a paper mill there ceased work in 1948. Many bread shops for several miles around Botley sell Botley Mills wholemeal flour, so I can only presume that the mills have reopened—unless there are two separate mills there.

BRAMSHOTT:

A paper mill from very early times. In 1761 an apprentice tried to burn down the mill, but it was saved. The mill is last mentioned in 1924 in an edition of a Directory that was for many years made at the mill.

BULLINGTON:

A corn mill stands here on the River Denver, but it has not worked for many years.

WINDMILLS AND WATERMILLS IN HAMPSHIRE

CHRISTCHURCH:

A mill stands here, but it is now used as a boatmen's store. The machinery is still in place, but there is no wheel (1949).

CLATFORD:

A paper mill once stood here. No other information.

CLATTERFORD:

This mill in the Isle of Wight was a paper mill, built at the beginning of the 17th century, but later abandoned.

CURDRIDGE:

Frog Mill, Curdridge, was a paper mill. It ceased work in 1841.

DROXFORD:

A mill once stood here on the River Meon. It has been pulled down.

DURLEY:

I believe that this mill stopped work in 1954. It was used until then for grinding cereals.

EVERSLEY:

The 'New mill' is actually situated in the parish of Finchampstead in Berkshire, and on the Blackwater. The original mill was destroyed by fire in 1760. The mill still works, having an undershot wheel of iron with wooden floats, turning on an iron shaft. The two stones in the mill grind five tons of flour per week.

FAREHAM:

Mills by the name of Bishop's Mills stood near the railway viaduct over Fareham Creek. Apparently the mills were tidal, and facilities enabled ships to unload at them. They were pulled down about 1930.

FROYLE:

This mill, standing on the River Wey, was a grist mill.

FULLERTON:

A very attractive mill, standing on the Anton—a tributary of the Test.

GOODWORTH CLATFORD:

When working, this mill on the Anton was said to be a very lovely looking mill. It is now a residence.

HINGTON:

According to *Country Life*, April 1950, the wheel of this mill is still in place. The mill is built of brick, with oast houses added in the 19th century. The wheel is of cast iron, and overshot.

HOOKE:

A mill was situated on White Water at Wolson Bridge, and was last referred to in Records in 1816. The mill was a paper mill.

HAMPSHIRE FIELD CLUB PROCEEDINGS

HORSEBRIDGE:

An attractive brick structure. No other information.

HOUGHTON:

This mill has been fitted with modern machinery, and is still at work, using, I believe, the old water wheel. It is situated on the River Test.

HUNTON:

Hunton mill, on the River Denver, has been pulled down after standing derelict for many years. Its wheel is still in position in the brook, left possibly to preserve water rights.

ISINGTON:

An attractive ex-grist mill, now the home of Field Marshal Lord Montgomery. Situated on the River Wey.

ITCHEN ABBAS:

This mill, on the Itchen, is now used to generate electricity.

ITCHEN STOKE:

Situated on the River Itchen.

LAVERSTOKE:

This ancient Doomsday mill is now used for the manufacture of paper. In fact, along with Bere Mill, it is used for the manufacture of Bank of England Treasury notes. The process was started by a French Huguenot—Henri Portal—who, as a child, had to flee from France after the murder of his parents. Henri learnt the trade of paper-making at South Stoneham mill on the Itchen, and in the course of time found a method of water-marking paper. He leased Bere Mill and started manufacture on his own account, and so prosperous was his business that he was able to buy the corn mill at Laverstoke and convert it to paper-making also. The Bank of England gave Henri Portal the contract for Bank of England notes as they were at the time troubled by forgeries, and had no way of water-marking their own paper. Later the mills also manufactured Treasury notes, and currency papers for many countries. The silver thread now put into all Bank Notes is a clever device which is part of the paper itself, and its reproduction has completely baffled modern forgers.

LONGBRIDGE:

This mill stands at Sherfield-upon-Loddon and is of the 16th or 17th century, whilst the machinery is 19th century. The building is T-shaped, with the working part of the mill in the body of the T. Two of four pairs of stones are worked by a breast wheel made of iron, and having wooden floats. The stones are 4ft. diameter Peaks and grind 5 cwt. an hour.

LONGSTOCK:

Longstock mill on the Test has now been fitted with modern machinery, and is still at work.

LOWER NEATHAM:

This mill is really at Holybourne. White flour was ground by a turbine installed on the river bed until 1957, but more recently the mill has been concentrating on wholemeal bread. The wheels, once two in number, have long been removed. Both wheels were overshot and situated at the rear of the mill. Some modern machinery has been installed.

WINDMILLS AND WATERMILLS IN HAMPSHIRE

MICHELDEVER:

Built about 1390, this mill belonged to Hyde Manor.

MILL COURT:

A fulling mill, leased in 1583 by Lord Wyndesor to John Wheeler.

NORTHINGTON:

This mill stands on the Test, and is about half a mile downstream from the Town Mill at Overton, but it has not worked for many years. It was once the property of Izaak Walton the fisherman.

OVERTON:

Two mills are mentioned in Domesday. One was called 'Quedemenstone', and is probably the present Quidhampton mill, which still stands although it has not worked for many years. The second mill was the 'Town Mill', which was rebuilt about 50 years ago for other purposes and is now a factory.

OLD BASING:

Two mills stand at Old Basing. The one seen from the railway has an interesting history, as it was burned by the Roundheads lest it be used to provide food for the Royalists besieged in Old Basing House. The mill was rebuilt and still stands.

PICOT:

The breast wheel of this mill still existed in 1950. The building was weatherboarded.

ROMSEY:

A map of 1899 shows seven mills at Romsey, these being on the Test. Abbey Mill Number 1 can only be traced back to 1708, when the owner introduced the new bolting machinery for the first time into this part of the country. In 1841 the mill was worked for flax spinning. There was another mill once on a site close by.

The Test Mill can only be traced back to 1708 when it was stated to contain one small water wheel for fulling. It was later turned into a corn mill.

Abbey Mill Number 2 appears to have been erected in 1683, but none of the building now remains. The mill was used as a tannery, sawmill, paper mill and parchment factory, and leather-board mill during its time.

Burnt or Mead Mills is referred to in 1733 as being a corn mill. It was rebuilt in 1755, and in 1760 a paper mill adjoined it.

The present Sadler's mill was built in 1748 on the site of a small grist mill. Close by on the east side of the river was an oil and skin mill, afterwards used as a sawmill, which has now disappeared.

Fox Mill may have been the most modern of the mills, as the canal supplying water was built towards the turn of the 18th century.

SHAWFORD:

This mill stands on the Itchen, and is now used to generate electricity. I rather think that a great part of it has been pulled down, as the present building left standing is rather small for a watermill.

HAMPSHIRE FIELD CLUB PROCEEDINGS

SHEET:

Sheet mill, near Petersfield, stands on the Rother which is mainly a Sussex river. Sheet had an overshot wheel, and does not now work.

SOUTH STONEHAM:

It was at this woodmill on the Itchen where Henri Portal first learnt the art of paper-making.

SOUTHAMPTON:

Doomsday mentions a mill at Shirley on Tanner's Brook although the building is not used for grinding today. Also on the same brook were other mills, and the name Millbrook speaks for itself.

There were complaints in 1594 of two breaches in the wall between the bulwarks and the grinding mill. It is suggested that the bulwarks concerned comprised the East Wall, and that the location of the mill was near God's House Tower.

A fulling mill stood on the Salt Marsh which stretched between God's House Tower and Cross House.

Westend mill, Up Mill or Gater's Mill (however it be called) at Mansbridge is reputed to be the mill at which Henri Portal learnt the art of paper-making. It is however more likely that South Stoneham mill, as mentioned above, was Portal's mill, Westend mill being turned back to corn milling during the late 19th century.

STANDFORD:

A paper mill, last referred to in Records in 1890.

SUTTON SCOTNEY:

The site only of this mill is left. When standing the mill was thatched and gabled, and of great beauty. It stood on the Denver, a tributary of the Test.

TITCHFIELD:

This interesting mill just outside the town of Fareham is still working. As far as I could see when I visited the mill, only one set of stones is in permanent use, although a second pair are in position. The mill is worked by two large undershot wheels, only one of which is in working order. The second is out of use owing to a break in the drive from the wallower. Electricity is installed and can be used to drive the mill, but I believe that it is not used now for such a purpose, all the work being done by water. Both wheels are iron, and they are placed side by side in a rather unusual position.

UPPER NEATHAM:

Upper Neatham mill on the River Wey is now a private residence. It was at one time a corn mill.

WARNFORD:

This mill was mentioned in the will of John Knight of Chawton in 1619. A building still stands at Warnford known as the Paper Mill.

WEST MEON:

West Meon mill on the River Meon is in a dilapidated condition. It is noted for its large overshot water wheel.

WINDMILLS AND WATERMILLS IN HAMPSHIRE

WHITCHURCH:

Three mills are listed in Domesday. Town mill, which ceased to work between the wars, and the Lower Mill which ceased shortly after. The Silk Mill is still working, as it does not have to compete with the competitive flour trade, its work being to weave silk. The textile industry has flourished in Whitchurch since the 17th and 18th centuries, and was probably first introduced by the Huguenot refugees who were able to find religious liberty here. The Silk Mill contains 16 looms only. At one time the mill concentrated on making silk linings for raincoats. It is now concerned with producing silk material for cable coverings and the like. Until two or three years ago, a steel-shafted wooden-bladed water wheel provided the necessary power, but now electricity is used. The firm is endeavouring to retain the water wheel as a curiosity.

WICKHAM:

The Chesapeake Mill at Wickham is so named because when it was rebuilt in 1820 the timbers of the American Man-of-War *Chesapeake* were incorporated into the building. The story is that H.M.S. *Shannon* on 1 June 1813 engaged the *Chesapeake* at 5.30 p.m., and within a quarter of an hour gained a victory over her. This was entirely due to the fine discipline and splendid shooting of the *Shannon's* men. After the war the *Chesapeake* was broken up, and her timbers used to rebuild the mill at Wickham. The deck beams, some over 30 feet long and 18 inches square, were placed in the mill almost unaltered, and the deck purlins were used as joists. Traces of the damage caused by the *Shannon* can still be seen in some of the timbers.

WILLEY:

Willey mill on the River Wey is now a private residence, having stopped work as a corn mill in 1956.

CORRIGENDUM

Line 7 of the second paragraph on p. 125 should read :

being the Lump mill previously mentioned, and the other being Ballard's mill. The site of