

# The History of Shirley Mill

*Eleanor Yates*

## **Report of talk by Madge Smith of Shirley Local History Group at Shirley Parish Hall, St James Road SO15 5NS.**

Madge Heath has been researching the history and structure of Shirley Mill in great depth. Her sources include the Hampshire Record Office, Southampton Archives and the Southampton Library.

The first mention she discovered for the mill is in Domesday in 1086, where the manor included 12 households, 8 ploughlands, 16 oxen for ploughing, 12 acres of meadows, woodlands (rent 6 pigs), 1 fishery, 1 church and 1 mill, valued at 2 shillings and 5 pence. After William the Conqueror's victory the Manor passed to Ralph de Mortimer and Madge has traced the various owners, including Winchester Priory, landlords and tenants of the mill over the last 950 years.

The water supply for the mill came through a leat from the Hollybrook and Tanner's Brook streams which confluence at the mill site. There were 3 ponds, one of which was the fishery, but all 3 seem to have been used by the mill. It is now difficult to trace the route of the leat as the roads have been widened since it was first created.

The mill has changed roles during its existence including being rebuilt several times on various alignments. It has been a corn-mill and a forge or ironworks which produced edged tools and imported coal and bar iron, both for use and sale to customers in the area. By 1863 it was a flour mill again using both water and steam engines for power.

Alongside the mill was another building used as a brewery and a maltings. There was an ice-house in the grounds.

In 1937 the mill was turned into 4 flats until it was demolished in 1965.

The lecture was given to a large audience of members of the Shirley Local History Group, which grew out of, and is affiliated to the Friends of St James' Park (and some visitors from HMG). The local residents were very knowledgeable having memories of 'old' Shirley and useful information for the meeting.

We hope that Madge will be able to turn her lecture into a paper to be published by the Hampshire Papers or a Southampton or Shirley equivalent.