

Felin Geri, Cwm Cou

Ruth Andrews

Photos by Keith and Ruth Andrews

When Edwin Course took a group of industrial archaeologists to Mid-Wales in 1989 they visited this 16th century watermill near Newcastle Emlyn which was producing semolina for the adjacent bakery. Edwin's notes mention occupied pigsties, geese, and other animals. Keith photographed two chained hawks, but not the mill! There was also a 19th century water-powered sawmill in a shed.



According to the Coflein description (the online database for the National Monuments Record of Wales, NMRW, <https://coflein.gov.uk/en/>) the mill was altered or rebuilt in 1805 and repaired in 1879. It was restored from dereliction in 1972-5 and opened to the public for a number of years until 1991. It is now part of a country park and a centre for discogolf, with a heavy emphasis on its use as a catering venue for events such as weddings.

In 2010 the corrugated iron roof of the sawmill shed collapsed under the weight of snow, making it much easier to photograph this feature.

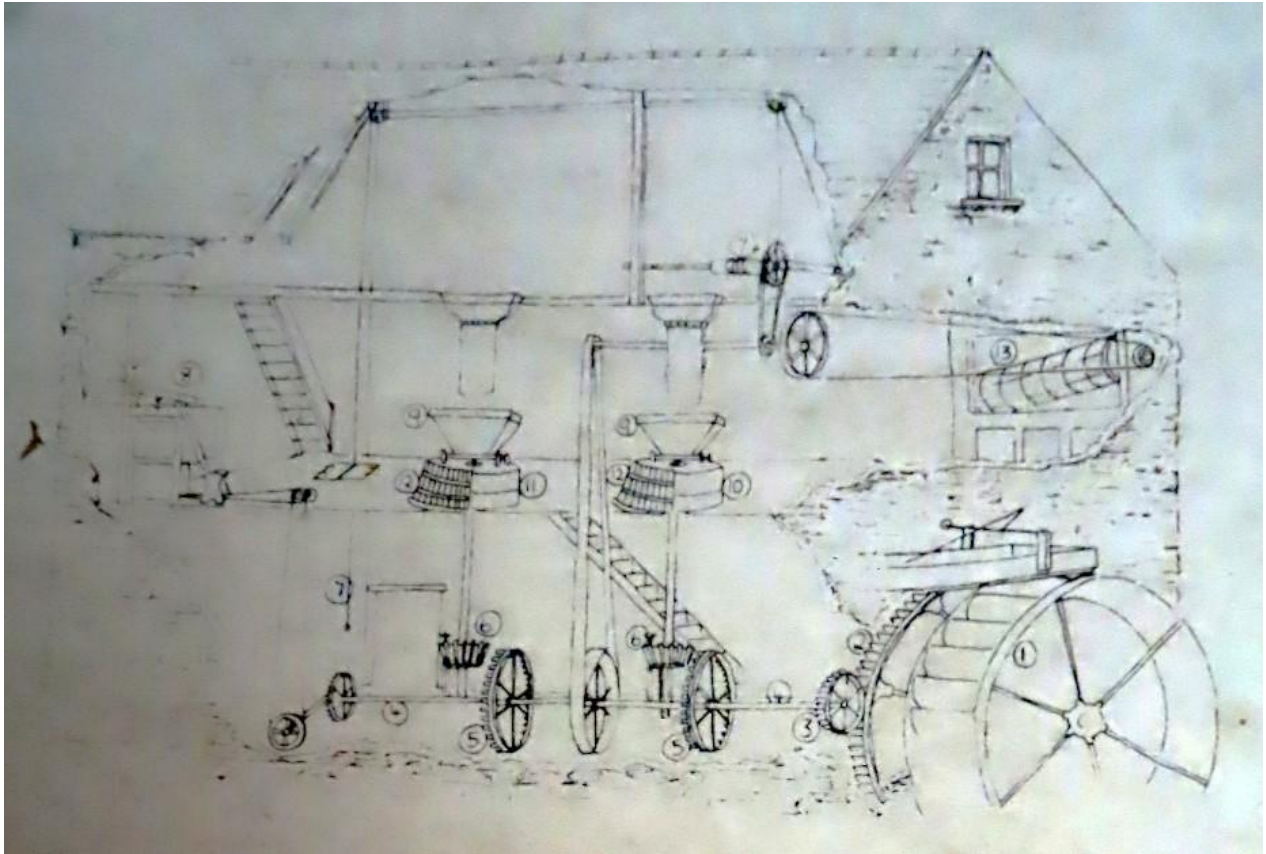


It had an overshot waterwheel dated 1880 which drove the sawmill through a pit wheel and pinon and then a belt drive. This sawmill wheel, on the right in the picture, is in much better condition, and completely separate from the similarly-sized backshot waterwheel, on the left, for the corn mill, which is said to be dated to 1872.



(The Coflein listing NPRN 406737 describes them both as overshot, but this is clearly wrong.) They have two adjacent water supplies, each controlled by its own sluice.

Inside the mill there is a substantial pit wheel which connects via a layshaft to two vertical gears that mesh with the stone nuts for the two pairs of millstones on the floor above. There is also a belt pulley on this shaft which worked a dresser (wire machine) and the sack hoist, so there was no need for an upright shaft.



This fading diagram on the wall explains the situation. In the picture below left you can see one stone nut and its spur wheel, immediately behind which is the pulley for the belt drive to the sack hoist and the dresser. In the foreground is the drive to a smutter and separating machine that you can just make out on the left of the diagram.



The current owner, Alan, was happy to show us round, but it is not clear if the mill is generally open to visitors. It is essentially watertight and secure but it needs a makeover if its unusual features are to be appreciated in the future. The mill and all its contents are said to be listed.

Other Welsh Corn Mills that we saw

Cenarth Falls, as seen on the front cover, is a much photographed beauty spot, but how many people notice the 17th century flour mill on the bank of the River Teifi?

It has an undershot timber and iron waterwheel which has recently had new floats fitted. SPAB says it drives two pairs of millstones, one for barley, the other for oats. It last worked commercially in 1964.



The mill is included in the National Coracle Centre, and is supposed to open from Easter to October, but was closed when we visited in May.



Melin Trefin is a ruin in a splendid location at Aber Draw containing a pair of millstones. During the eighteenth century there were dozens of mills like this one dotted around the Pembrokeshire countryside. According to Coflein, there was an overshot wheel on the western gable. The mill is believed to have ceased working by 1918.

