

## Castle Mill, Dorking

***Susan Templeton***

I have loved water since I cannot remember when so not surprisingly I took up a water sport competitively. I am now in my 46th year of competing in Canoeing or rather kayak events. That love of water extends to use of water and in particular watermills (although I love windmills also). The use of raw power to turn machinery and create things just absorbs me. Over the years I have taken every opportunity to see watermills where they are near to my visits for canoe races or holidays.

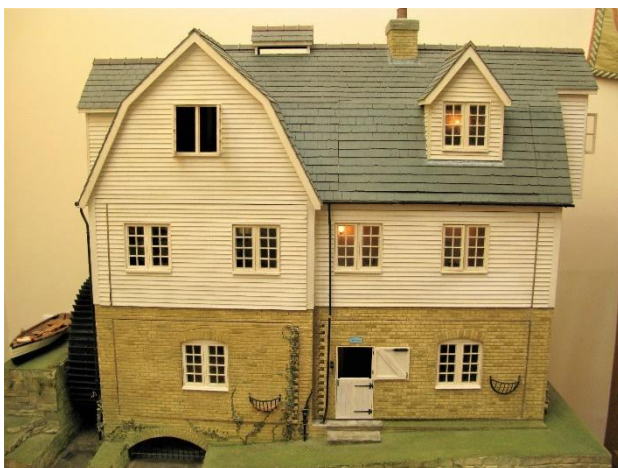
My dream has always been to live in a watermill or windmill and I watch with envy those converting them on programmes like Grand Designs. However, without the skills and perhaps budget to own a full scale one (plus a deprived childhood without a dolls house), when I grew older and more financially sound the time was right to invest in my dream homes, albeit at 1:12 scale.

My first mill was made by Graham Wood of Little Homes of England, who produces the most beautiful thatched homes and barns, and has in fact done museum commissions for replicas of homes. This mill is a three storey Tudor type build but is missing the machinery and fittings, as my master carpenter friend Danny has not yet done them!

Just over a year ago my eBay search flashed up yet another mill for sale and I went to look at it thinking this will be another poor example. The photographs blew me away. It was in fact the mill I could dream of owning. The mill by Roland Taylor is a 1:12 scale model house, 39in x 19in x 36in, constructed mostly in wood and based on Castle Mill in Dorking, Surrey.



*Susan Templeton*



*Courtesy of Knibbs Family*

The house is a full three-dimensional building with decorated elevations to all four sides. The elevations are of weathered brick with white painted weather board to the upper storeys. The roof is of individual slate tiles complete with lead flashing and purpose made metal rainwater goods. The windows are handmade, opening, side hung complete with brass latches and stays. Each window has milled glazing bars with individual panes throughout. There are 312 individual panes in over 42 windows.

Flooring throughout is timber planking with each plank individually nailed, the exception being the kitchen which has random cut stone flags. The doors throughout are hand-made, fully opening ledge and brace painted timber. Lighting is provided in every room and the lights are of high quality brass and glass with power connections to the rear. All the lights are fully operational. The kitchen even has a flickering fire in the hearth. All rooms are accessible via hinged panels (four front and one rear) and two lift-off roof sections.

The mill wheel is a purpose made soldered mild steel construction (18lbs) and is driven by a geared electric motor with separate power supply. A scale handmade wooden rowing boat is pulled up to the side of the mill. A family of swans has now moved into the mill race!

It lived in a guest house in Llangollen for many years until the owners retired and it moved with them to their new home. Having had the model for 20 years they decided to sell. I negotiated a price and arranged to do a 13 mile canoe race in South Wales then travel up to Llangollen, camp and pick up the model the next morning, and drive back to Southampton. Despite having the measurements there were a few moments of panic as the model would not fit in my van, but with some lateral thinking we managed to drop one side with the bed base closed then re-open it to provide stability: phew!

It now sits proudly in my dining room with new (old) furniture. My only sadness is there are no gear shafts, grain bins, tuns, horse, shoes and hoppers, like my other mill.

The real Castle Mill is now a very up market B & B and I hope to visit it in the near future. The information below about the mill comes from the Heritage and Design Statement that accompanied the listed building application dated September 2008.



From Mills Archive website, *photographer unknown*, where there are lots more photographs of the mill

*The main mill block, of brick up to mid first floor and weatherboard on a timber frame above was built by George Dewdney in the mid-18th century. The wing to the south, externally similar but with different floor levels, was added in 1836. Milling continued until the mid-20th century, but on a reducing scale after the First World War, and the building was then left to rot. The abandoned mill was repaired from near derelict and converted to a house in 1970, to designs by Michael Manser.*