

Chatsworth Mill

Ruth Andrews

Keith and I photographed this old corn mill on the Chatsworth Estate in Derbyshire on a day in January when the surrounding hills were covered in snow. Also known as Edensor Mill or



Paine's Mill, it was built in about 1761-2. It replaced an older mill nearer to Chatsworth House, and was designed by James Paine who created a number of other features in the park including two bridges and the spectacular curved weir for the mill. It was designed as an eye-catcher within the park and still serves that function. It was nearly destroyed in 1962 when a beech tree was blown down in the great storm. The Duchess of Devonshire prevented it from being dismantled and had it made safe as a ruin.

The mill took several years to complete as the weir and leats had to be constructed. The weir across the river Derwent is perhaps unnecessarily grand, but it provides a distinctive feature in the landscape in its own right.



The underground head race is still easy to trace from a hatch above the weir (which appears to be blocked) to an open section of leat leading to the mill, which can be seen in the picture below right. The leat may be blocked but a fair bit of water still gets through. The tail race is invisible but discharges back into the Derwent via an arched stone culvert.



The mill is believed to have fallen out of use in 1950 when the corn miller was Wilfrid Johnson.



At the rear of the building an ornamental wheelhouse now houses the remains of a metal breastshot waterwheel. The wheel was 14ft in diameter and about 3ft wide on a metal axle..It looks a bit modern for 1761



Internally there are several remains of machinery, which again look comparatively modern. I can't find any information about what they might be, although several belt pulleys are visible, and what I assume is the pit wheel.



'S Gregory' must have left his mark on this archway inside the mill within 40 years of it being built. There are several more graffiti dated 1808: one is just visible on the left.

It is not possible to get inside the building, and there are no meaningful remains of the upper floors, so no way of knowing where the stones were situated, although there is the obligatory mill stone leaning on the wall outside. It is made of millstone grit like the rest of the building, which is not surprising as there are several gritstone edges nearby – like this one in the snow.

