

## A possibly unique Daverio Roller Mill at Wath Mill

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Pictures by Rob Light

*During this year's National Mills Weekend I was privileged to be given a personal tour around Wath Mill. My thanks go to Rob Light for his time and enthusiasm and for his permission to use these photographs and for proof reading the text. Thanks are also due to the owner, Tom Wheelwright.*



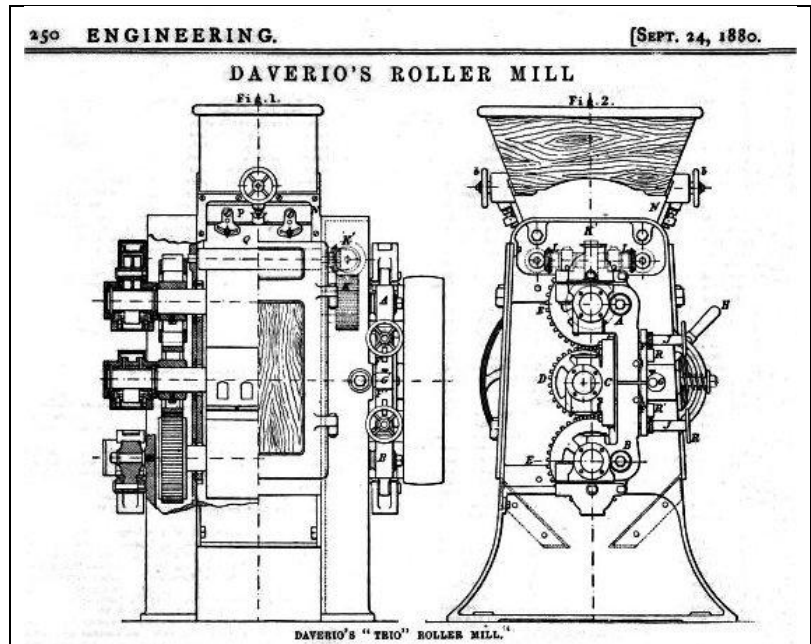
Wath Mill (formerly known as New Bridge Mill) in the village of Wath in Nidderdale (near Pateley Bridge) stands to the north of Dauber Gill, a tributary of the River Nidd. It is a late 19th century watermill built on the site of an earlier 16th century mill. Wath Mill is a Flagship Heritage Site within the Upper Nidderdale Landscape Partnership Scheme, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, and work is ongoing to conserve the mill machinery.

The mill has a diverse history; initially a corn mill, it has also been used for linen and bobbin making before returning to corn. The surviving machinery, specifically the iron line shaft, and internal waterwheel with ring gear, are of particular interest. But for me the star attraction was a Gustav Daverio roller mill sitting in the middle of the meal floor.

The mill was destroyed by fire in December 1878 it opened again in 1880 after being rebuilt and equipped with the existing machinery including two pairs of French burr stones and two pairs of Peak stones. It may have been that at around this time or some time later that a Gustav Daverio roller mill was installed (the history of this unit is unknown). It was probably introduced to regrind middlings (reduction) to try and improve the extraction rate of endosperm.



The Daverio roller mill is not one that I have seen in any other mill in the UK and is possibly unique. In April 1879 Henry Simon was advertising 'Daverio's Patent Roller Mill System'. Henry Simon used Daverio three-high roller mills in his first complete all-roller mill plant to operate in England without the use of millstones. This was purchased by McDougall Brothers for their Manchester mill in 1878.



Further reading: *A History of Wath Mill*,. Nidderdale Chase Heritage Group 2016

The mill is privately owned. Thanks to the owners and volunteers the mill is open on select days during the summer months. For details go to

<http://uppernidderdale.org.uk/historic-nidderdale/flagship-heritage-sites/wath-mill/>

### **Editor:**

There is a more detailed article about Wath Mill and the Daverio Roller Mill in *Mill News* 156, SPAB Mills Section, July 2018, which includes this explanation:

*"The machine's arrangement has several innovative features, a lever for the instantaneous regulation of the rollers whilst at work, hand wheels on each side so the rollers could be accurately adjusted vertically, separately, and at either end with ease, and improved form of both the smooth rollers for softening and grinding middling to the grooved rollers for granulated wheat."*

Spurred on by Nigel's article, I looked in the HMG library and in *Flour Milling* by Peter A Kozmin (1917, translated from the Russian) I found a slightly different diagram and a detailed explanation of what made this mill different from other three-high mills.

Nothing to do with Wath Mill or Daverio's Mill, but an interesting note written in the front of Kozmin's book says:

*"Owned by John Keevil (1915-2009), 20 Edgar Road, Winchester. His parents bought Abbey Mill, Winchester in 1928 but had to close in 1932. John was the last miller to grind corn (oats and maize) at Abbey Mill. He then worked at Wharf Mill, the last working mill in Winchester and at the Rank Mills in Southampton until they were bombed. His father was F J Keevil, a miller in Calne."*