

Birds at Ashlett Tide Mill

Ruth Andrews



On a rather cold day in late March, Eleanor Yates and I visited Ashlett Tide Mill to find out what types of birds feed in the mill pond. We arrived as the silt in the pond was just beginning to be covered by the intruding tide (photo), and were amazed at the number of waders present. We stayed for a couple of hours before deciding that it really was too cold to continue.

In that time we counted 15 redshank and 2 greenshank, with a bunch of about 20 black-tailed godwits, and a solitary little egret. The godwits, having longer legs than the redshanks, stayed in a group in the middle of the pond until they were almost afloat. We also counted 5 Canada geese, up to 20 mixed teal and widgeon, 2 shelduck, 2 mallards, 2 moorhens, and 5 black-headed gulls. On land there were house sparrows in the brambles, pied wagtails on the roof of the mill, and the usual magpies, collared doves, and blue tits in the bushes, plus an unexpected roe deer which stood completely still for the whole time we were there. Two oyster catchers flew in after the pond had filled and a kingfisher perched on an upstanding branch, just long enough for a (rather poor) photograph.

None of this has much to do with the mill, of course, except to demonstrate how birds are attracted to the undisturbed and sheltered mill pond. In contrast the open water on the seaward side of the mill was completely devoid of visible wildlife, apart from 15 Brent geese on a far off mud bank.



Ashlett mill pond



Black-tailed godwit

Ashlett Tide Mill – An Update on the Retrieved Millstone

Sheila M Viner

You may remember reading about the millstone found in a garden path and the saga of digging it out and transporting it to the tide mill. That was a couple of years ago; now, Tim Woodcock has advised us that the millstone has been mounted on a teak plinth made from the old sluice gate that used to control the flow from the millpond and sits proudly on display in the mill's foyer. A plaque is being made to cover the concrete-filled eye of the stone.

The 200th anniversary of Ashlett Tide Mill will be celebrated with a weekend of family fun and music on 18 and 19 June. An excellent chance to see the millstone so why not put the date in your diary and join in the festivities?

Meanwhile, the great grandson of the boat builder who occupied the mill in the early 20th century is writing an extensive biography of his ancestor which may be completed later this year.