

The 5 Mills of Twyford in 1346

continued from issue 106

How the mill of North Twyford became Hockley Mill

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In my [article](#) on the Mills of Twyford in 1346 in the last issue, there is no mention of Hockley Mill, which many of you know well. You may have thought that today's Hockley Mill is one and the same as the mill of North Twyford, the name having simply changed over time. This is not quite the case; the mill of North Twyford was in a different place. So this article explains how Hockley mill came to be built where it is as one of a series of changes that took place around it between 1710 and 1840.

As the HMG's own "Mills of Hampshire" notes, the present mill building has a date on it of 1803; this is supported by documentation (Mildmay papers HRO) which identifies Richard Hockley Lavington as its builder; he was the son of Frances and Sophia (nee Hockley) and was born in 1758 and was still living in 1828. The mill seems to have been built completely new; Gavin Bowie describes it as "state of the art; no expense spared". [Post publication note : Richard Hockley Lavington died in 1814, but had a son also called Richard Hockley Lavington 1783-1832, thanks to Jan Church for this information]

The site of the new mill had to be assembled by purchase together; the Mildmay papers in of the HRO refer to a "piece of waste ground in North Twyford...on which part of corn mill and part of rick barn were erected by Richard Hockley Lavington" 10M69/T172. The waste ground was what was by then the disused approach to the ford from the east.

John More's Map of 1618

The date of 1803 predates the earliest Ordnance Survey map but there is a map of 1618 by John More. It is of the river Itchen between Winchester and Woodmill... It is about 8ft long and 1ft wide in a roll, beautifully drawn to a scale of about 1:7500 or 8 inches to the mile.

It seems to have been drawn to establish ownership of the river as part of the efforts of the Winchester citizens to make the Itchen navigable between the two cities. (See Edward Roberts's article in Hampshire Studies vol 42) The course of the river, the main side streams, roads running alongside and across the river and ownerships all appear accurate. Buildings such as mills, churches, and St. Cross and village houses are shown by symbols. Names of places and buildings and owners are written on the map. The mill of Twyford is identified by name; its location is shown at Hockley but only by a symbol.

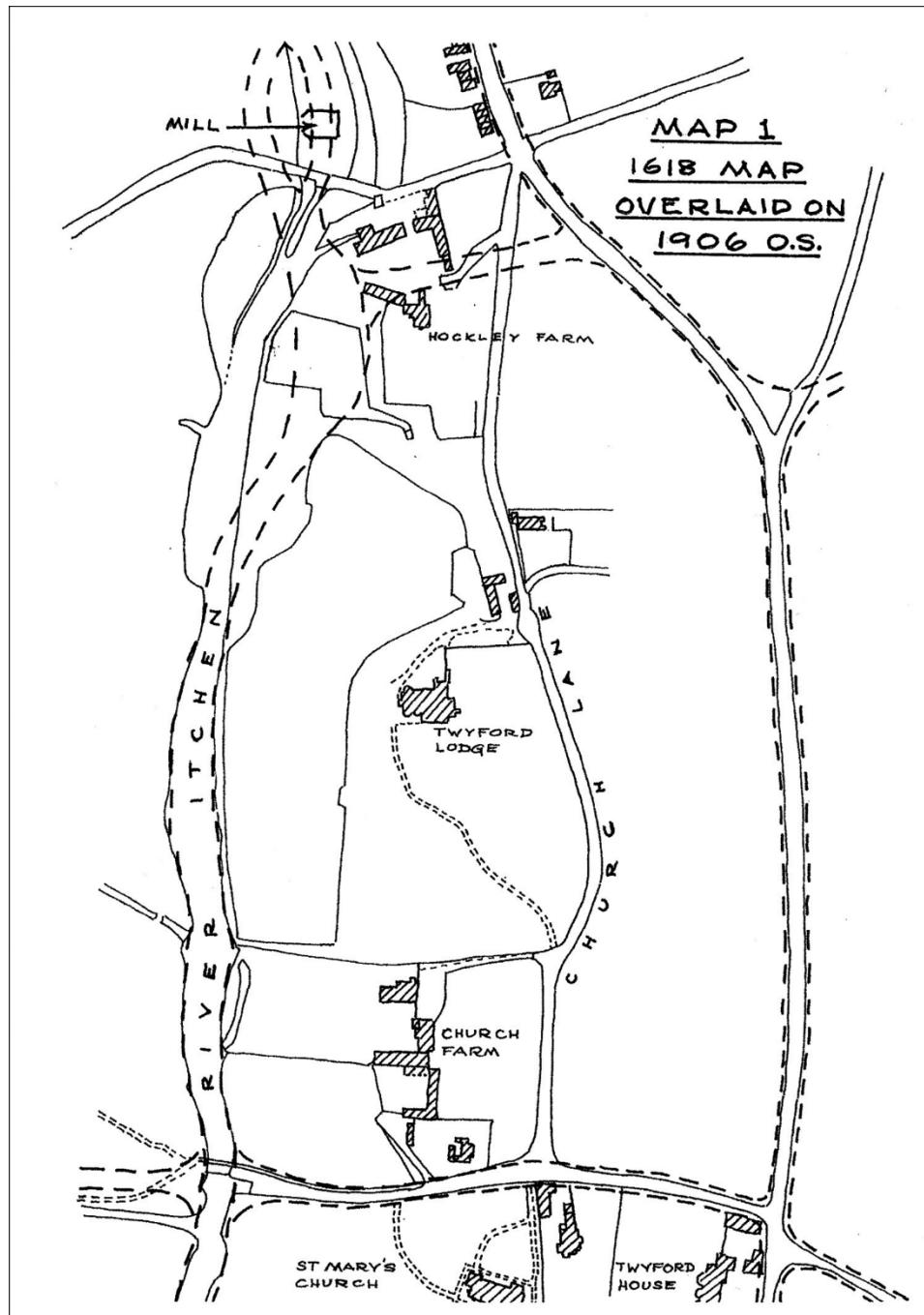
More's map shows a track going west to Compton lock and names it Nethen Lane. To the east, it shows a track 50m or so to the south of the present link to the B3335 which, to my surprise, was on the same alignment as it is now. None of the plans locate the position or width of the ford; it will have been downstream of the mill, between the two tracks, as shown of the plan 2.

Comparing the 1618 map with the 1908 OS

The next step in understanding the map of 1618 (so as to compare it with what is there today) is the scaling

Apart from the unusual scale (perches to the mile), another problem is selecting points on the 1618 map which are the same today as they were then and so can be used to verify the scaling. Much has changed but three roads are clearly the same now as they were 400 years ago, Berry Lane, Queen Street, and the B3335 (Cox's Hill).

The junction of White Lane and the B3335 is also in the same place. Mike's Map 1 overlays the 1618 map on the 1908 1:2500 OS. It is an excellent fit and shows the main changes clearly.



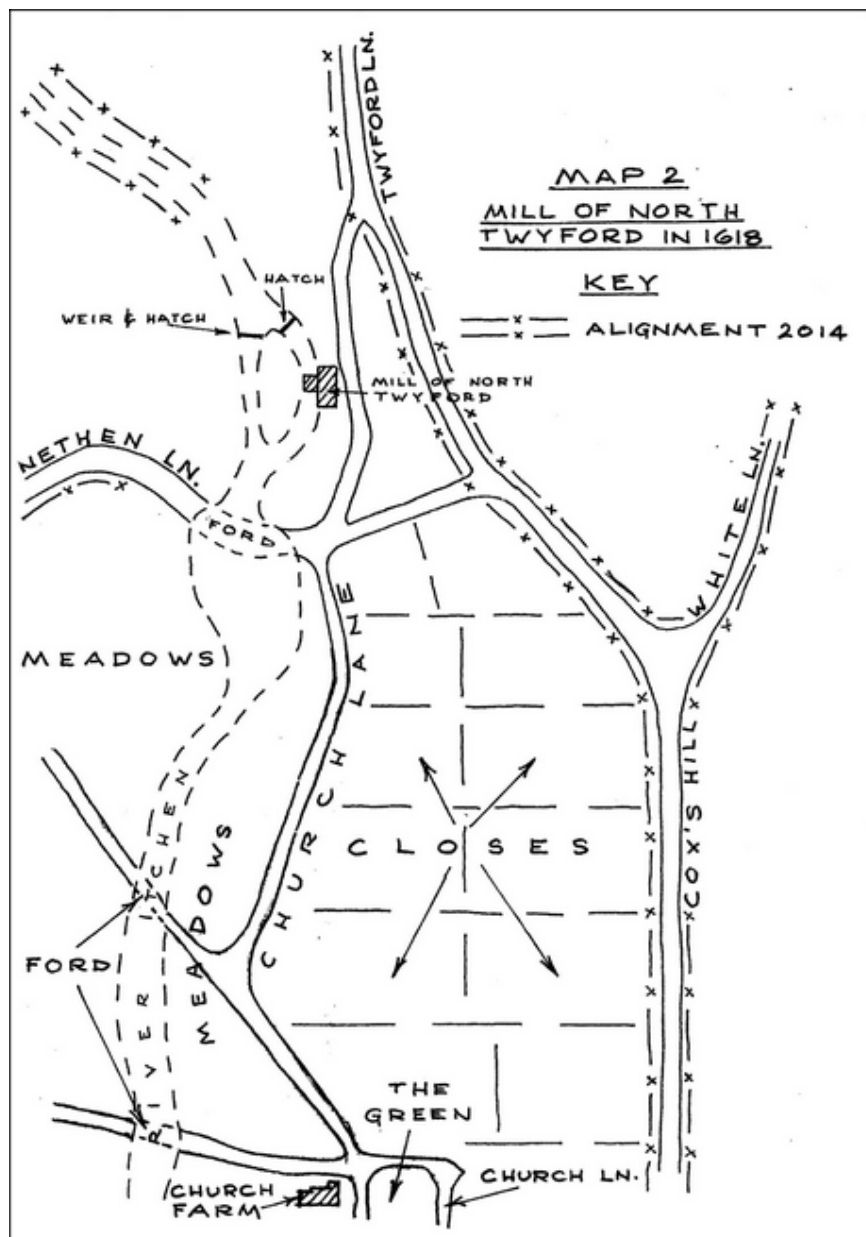
In 1618 the river was angled north west/south east and came tight up to the present mill right over onto (what is now) the garden of Hockley House and the lower walled garden of Twyford Lodge; Twyford Mill seems to have been on the land between the present mill leat and the dry pond which is to the north of the present causeway (of which there is no sign).

There is also no sign of the current leat to the mill. The arrangement for driving the mill was quite different; it was fed by a short leat to its west with the river to the west of that, the leat forming a small island.

It appears that the present east bank of the dry pond was the east bank of the mill leat. I have not figured out the route of the discharge into the river and whether the banks to the south of the causeway are remnants of it.

The road down to the river from B3335 is south, of the present mill, probably through the little granary. Church Lane is not shown.

So Map 2 shows what the area north of the Church might have looked like in 1618 in rather more detail than John More's map; those features which were there in 1618 are highlighted.



The Changes of 1803

All of this indicates a major re-configuration of the local infrastructure; this is a list of the changes between the map of 1618 and that of 1908; the numbers are the same as on Map 3 and give the locations;

1. Causeway built extending Nethen Lane to B3335

2. Leat for new mill built with bridge for causeway

3. Ford put out of use

4. New mill constructed using some part of the old ford

5. River diverted into new mill leat

6. Old mill closed and demolished

7. New alignment of east bank of river established below new mill

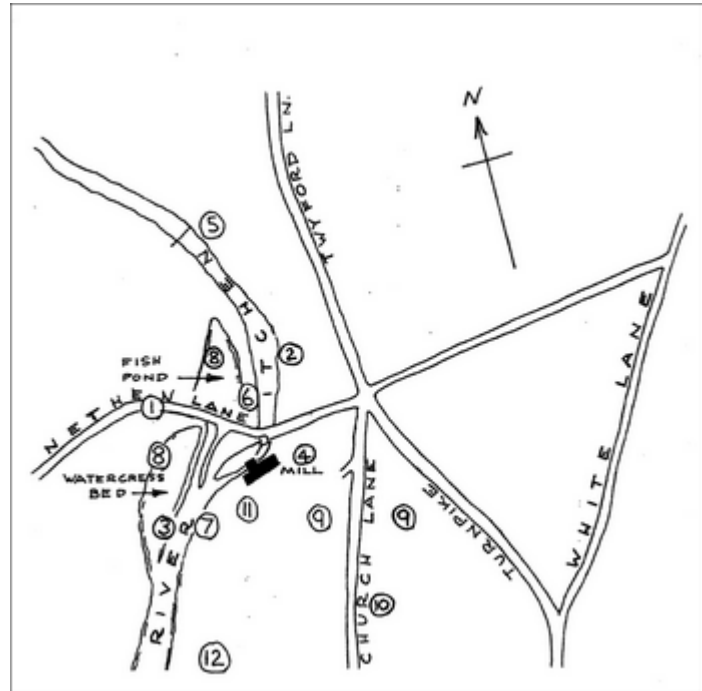
8. East bank of old river dug out above the causeway and west bank below; spoil used to reclaim land on east bank.

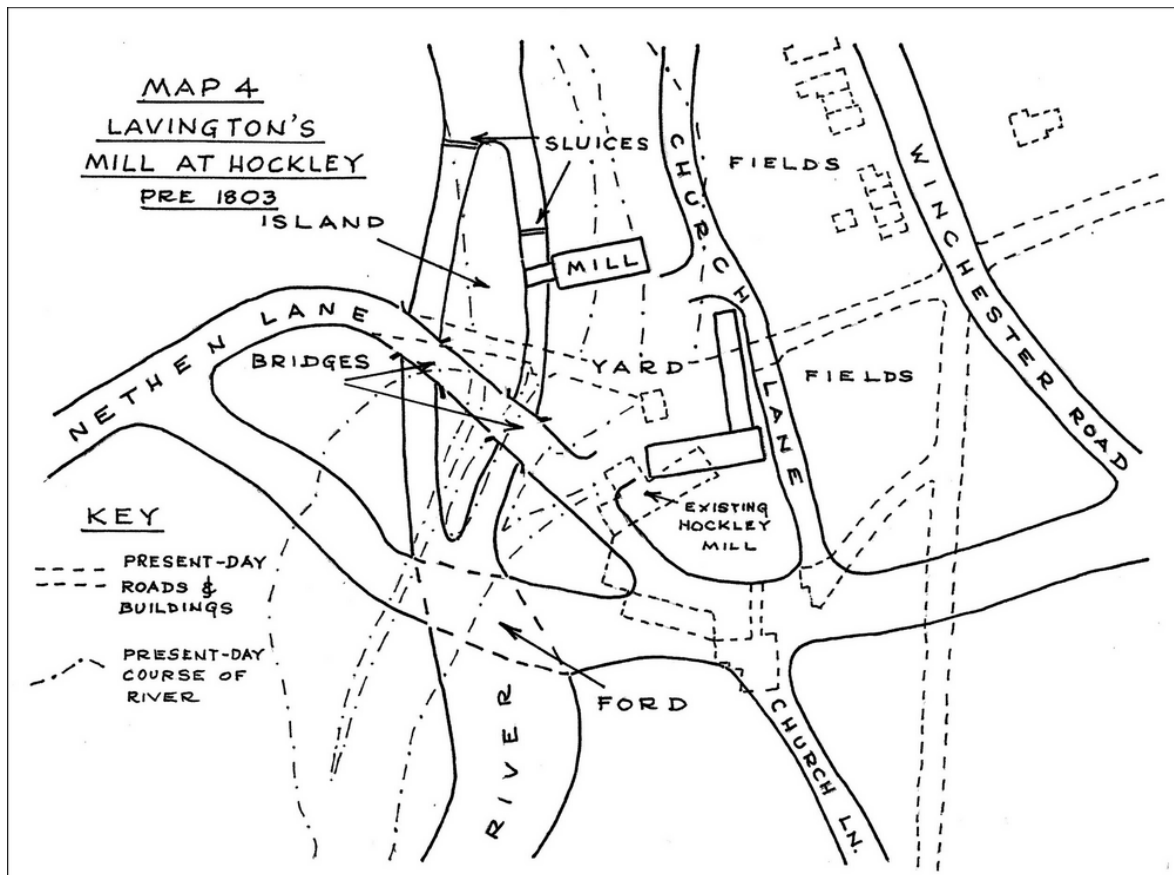
9. Old road to river restored to field

10. Church Lane diverted away from Hockley Farm

11. Hockley Farm improved with new buildings.

12. Twyford Lodge landscaped and walled garden built





In addition to all this but rather earlier, was the building of the Itchen Navigation in 1710 and Lady Mildmay's new water meadows constructed to the east of the river, with the leat you can cross Nethen Lane today.

Map 4 shows this area before all these changes in more detail than Map 2. The modern layout is shown dotted.

George Hoar of Twyford Lodge and the Mill

My guess is that the story runs thus:

In the 1790's, the new owner of Twyford Lodge, Mr George Hoar, a senior employee of the East India Company recently returned from India (where he had been paymaster of the British Army) saw the potential for creating a small landscaped park, then the height of fashion and in the style of Humphry Repton. Repton was then in Hampshire and working on Hackwood Park. Repton's landscapes required views uninterrupted by utilitarian buildings such as mills or by too many people. The layout of the park thus enabled the owner to appear as the lord of all he surveyed. There were a range of obstacles to George Hoar realising this vision for the landscape of Twyford Lodge, - the mill and the ford and the alignment of Church lane, being three. Also, he needed more land to extend his ownership in the north-west corner so that he could build up his northern boundary and plant it to block out the view of the adjacent farm buildings and of Twyford Mill.

George Hoar and Richard Hockley Lavington.

The owner of the farm and the mill of North Twyford was Mr Lavington. He had married into the Hockley family and was a prosperous farmer. He was quite happy to co-operate provided it was to his benefit. Mr Hoar was a wealthy man who could well afford the works. So the two agreed that Lavington would sell Hoar various parcels of land and tracks and river crossings so Hoar could consolidate his park; that Hoar would pay for the removal of the mill of North Twyford and its replacement over the river.

Lavington did not want his milling interrupted while the new mill was being built; this affected the design of the works and necessitated constructing the new leat well to the east of the working mill; the works on the river bed and banks could be done much more easily with the flow diverted.

Between them, Hoar and Lavington arranged and carried out most of the works I have listed above, and approximately in that sequence, and mostly around 1803.

The odd ones out are no's 9 and 10, the stopping up of the old track from the B3335 to the ford and the diversion of Church lane; these were carried out later by Mr Newton who seems to have bought out Lavington in the 1830's and become the miller.

Apart from the building of Hockley House and the conversion of the farm buildings to offices and the mill to dwellings, this is how Hockley has remained to this day. From 1803, Hockley Mill ceased to be the ancient manorial mill of North Twyford.

What further work remains to be done?

There is lots more to discover and research by those who feel inclined.

a. The life and times of Charles Hoar of Twyford Lodge; he occurs in the Collected Letters of Jane Austen 2011 4th edition in the biographical details and had a messy divorce in 1800, with no less than three trials (Hoar v Hoar and Hoar v Allen) The ideal would be to find the designs for his park and evidence of his interest in landscape gardening.

b. ditto for Lavington

c. looking for evidence of the foundations of the mill of North Twyford and deciding what it looked like and how it worked.

d. the use of the mill of North Twyford before 1803

e. establishing a date for the construction of the Cox's Hill stretch of B3335.

Notes 1: The reference to John More's map is in the late Chris Currie's article on an ancient water channel at Woodmill in Vol 52 of Hampshire Studies 1997. The map itself is HRO 102M71/P1.

Note 2: Evidence for earlier tracks crossing the Itchen as shown on map 2 is in a c 1845 map showing land acquisitions for Twyford Lodge. HRO 40M78/P1

Note 3: The closes shown in map 2 and "the Green" are based on a small archive in the Surrey Record Office K84/39 1-23 1625 to 1786.

Note 4: Hockley is both a place name and a family name. Hock - leigh in OED of Place Names is "spur of a hill - meadow" and is firstly the name given to the area along the line of the B3335,

north of Twyford. Hockley is also the name of a Twyford farming family who farmed land at Hockley in the 1600 and 1700's. Hockley Mill seems to be named for the mother of its builder, Lavington.