

The Water Mills of Alton on the Northern River Wey

The summer newsletter carried a report of the walkabout around Alton and we are pleased to reproduce, with Jane Hirst's permission, potted histories of the mills. Sadly, most are gone but one, Neatham Lower Mill, you will be able to see for yourself at one of our next meetings.

Upper Neatham Mill

First probable mention in 1235.

1633 'All those two water corne mills both under one Roofe called or knowne by the name or names of Neatham Mills'

1834 Inventory:-

To a Pair of 3ft 8in French Millstones on the House side, upstream with rising Screw Bridgen Box and Brass. Stone Spindle. Stone Nut. with Stone Hoop. Horse & Shoe. Bin etc. with --- Beater. Cross Bar and Box. Tin Feed Screw Bell etc. To Hoop. Horse and Bin to the Down Stream Mill same side. To 2 Hoops. 2 Horses. 2 Shoes & 2 Bins the other side. To a Flour Machine with a Seal Case. wainscot Oak Cylinder 5ft. long 16in. diameter wired complete with Cast Iron Bridges and Poppets. with Brasses etc. Spindle, Arms, Brushes etc. To a set of Bevil driving Gear for driving Machine with Spindle, Brasses, Pulleys etc. with Crank and Pulley for driving Jogling Screen. To a large Jogling Screen with Bouys, Hooks and lines and Strap for driving Do. To a long Strap 4in. wide for driving Flour Machine. To a Grist Machine with wainscot Oak Cylinder wired etc. with Brushes, Spindle Pulley etc. complete with Hooks and Lines. To a bolting Mill with Real Beaters Pulley and Strap for driving to Do.. To 2 Hoisting Chains and 2 Straps one of Do. on each side for Hoisting Grain etc.. To 2 Wood Hoisting Pulleys for Straps on Fly Wheel Tackle. To 4 Meal Troughs at Bottom of Mill. To a Deal Partition Round Flour Pentry. To 2 Wheat Screens over Stones. To 3 Sack Carts. One weighing Machine and a quantity of Iron weights, one Bushel Measyre. One half Do. and one Gallon. 2 Wire Siaves and one Cane Do. several Hair Brooms. A Quantity of Mill Bills. Truffs, Chissels etc. To 3 Stone Staves 2 Meal Shovels. and Flour Do. with Tin Scoop.

To 3 Sack Bouys with Chains. To one Iron Ladle. One Stone Level. To a Quantity of Ouses. with Lines Hooks etc. for Sacks. To a Pair of Iron Vice. A Iron Grating at Mill Head for obstructing weeds etc. from Water Wheel. To 2 Iron Crow Bars for lifting Mill Stones etc. and one Door Bell. A Strap for driving Grist Machine.

mid-1930s Mill burnt.

Neatham Lower Mill

pre-Dissolution a fulling mill.

early-1700s water from the Bourne taken to improve the meadow land to the north and milling stopped. Later became corn mill.

1892 Acquired by Denyers.

1895 Joseph Armfield & Co. fixed a 30" British Empire double horizontal turbine.

1948 Wheels and pit gear were out 60 years ago. Had two wheels. Roller plant and a good many machines including a fan shifter by Whitmore and Binyon, Whickham Market, which was put in 1898 or 9 and has given continual good service since. Armfield turbine which has needed no attention since 1914.

The Denyers put in the turbine and roller plant because people wanted white flour. There was a 22ft breast wheel and a 11ft wheel. On the first floor was a seed riddle and dresser. The mill cat was called Tin Ribs. (talk by Mr.Ellis - 1996)

Mill Court Mill

Fulling mill from, at least, 1584.

1699 agreement to rebuild the mill in stone.

late 1700s possibly ceases fulling?

Mill demolished.

4 Hydraulic Rams made by Vulcan Iron Works

Froyle Mill

1262 first mention found.

1372 Nicholas Husee took crops from lands in Froille late of Walter atte Boure, suicide. On the same day the said Nicholas committed waste on a water-mill by pulling down and carrying away all the wheels and ironwork and 2 French millstones to the value of £18.

1609 One wheat mill and one malt mill with the stones, the housing and implements for the mills and a tenement near the mills.

1667 Two wheat mills and one malt mill, 3 beddes and 3 runners with housing, lodging, binns etc.

1885 Froyle Mill with two 16ft. Breast Wheels driving 4 pairs of French Burr Stones, etc.

1911 Mill and mill house attached. Brick built, painted white, part stone, tiled roof. All machinery except undershot water wheel *in situ*. Mill leat filled in. Now private house.

Road moved away from building.

Binsted Popham/ Isington Mill

The miller may have always lived on the site of the Millers House.

1368 first mention

1609 two watermills under one roof

1686 carved on the sluice on the opposite side of the road - TN 1686. Thomas Newman.

1899 For sale. Freehold water mill, 4 pairs of stones, 2 hop kilns, together with house £1800.

1899-1942 used it for chaff cutting and oat crushing for his horses.

1948 - Two sets of gear in mill. Present is:-

Wheel - 2ft 9in x 10in iron floats - 10ft x 9in rim - wood starts - undershot

Shaft - wood, 1ft 6in near bearing, roughly square at pit.

Pit Wheel - 6ft 6in, all iron.

Crown Wheel - 5ft iron wood teeth on top, two piece.

Stones - two pairs. No machines and stones up. stone floor continuity.

Bridge Trees - wood, screw heavy for tentering.

Wallower - three foot, iron.

Converted into a dwelling for Field Marshal Lord Montgomery.

Binsted Paper Mill /Bentley Mill/ Turk's Mill/Grovelands

1586 probably a fulling mill

1666 paper mill until mid-1700s

1759 on I.Taylor's map marked as 'Corn Mill olim Paper Mill,' ie. Corn Mill formerly Paper Mill

c1917 - the mill was demolished.