

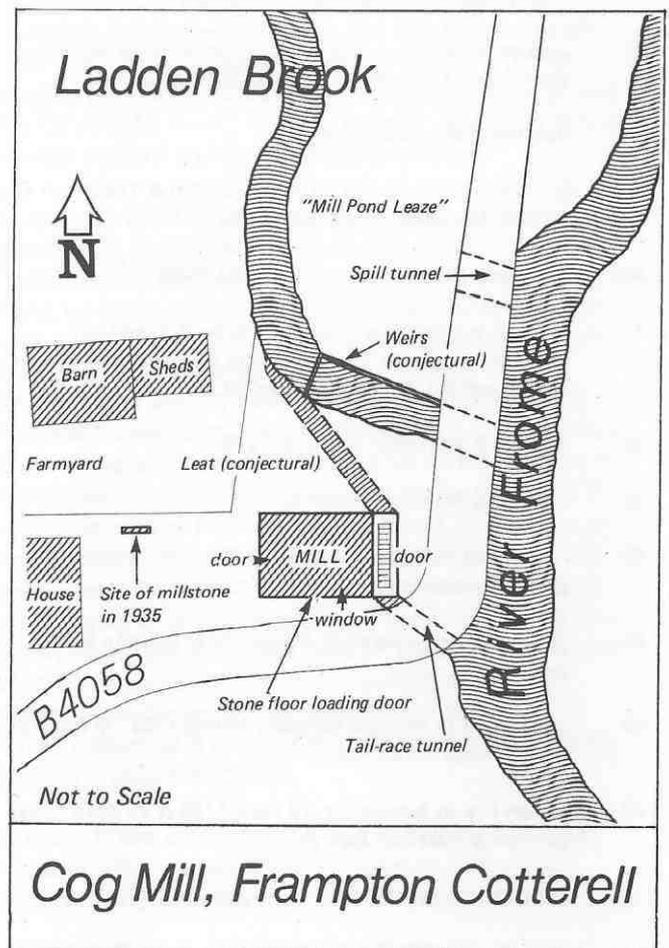
Cog Mill on the River Frome

As a follow-up to Owen Ward's article on 'The Mills of the Bristol Frame' (BIAS Journal 11), additional information on some of the sites has been received from Mr H B Hopkins of Church Road, Frampton Cotterell. Frampton Mill was Mr Hopkins' birthplace. He spent the first eleven or twelve years of his life there and still retains clear recollections of his childhood in the area. Eventually he hopes to provide further details of Algar's Mill, Nibley Mill and Cow Mill in addition to the following description of Cog Mill (ST 665829)

This was a small mill situated at the confluence of the River Frome (shown on a map of 1776 in my possession as the River Stower between this point and its source) and the Ladden Brook. On the Apportionment Roll of the 1841 Tithe Map it is called 'Cock Mill'. I was in the mill several times during the 1930s and it was a small mill with one upper or stone, floor, although I am not able to give any information about the ground floor as all the windows were blocked up and it was dark. The stone floor was clear at the time, but at the eastern end the vertical shaft still stood, and a line shaft was also in place. This latter was to the right of the vertical shaft when looking east towards it and I have the impression that the vertical shaft was offset to the left rather than in the centre of the floor. If this was so it could indicate that the waterwheel may have had an internal tooth rim gear (and may well have driven only one pair of stones).

The Ladden Brook still runs in the same channel and the mill stood some way off so a leat would seem to be the only way by which water could have been brought to the wheel, although I have never been able to find anyone who remembered the leat being open, the area having always been a garden within living memory. Possibly it was a culvert, as was the tailrace, which went under the road the water issuing into the River Frome. The tailrace was still in existence prior to roadworks, and a visit on 7 September 1980 to establish whether it survived revealed that, although the site was hidden by thorn bushes and nettles, water was still running from it. Probably the wheel was housed at the eastern end of the building, but again no one could be found who remembered it, and there were no remains. The Ladden Brook ran under a bridge as it still does, but further towards Iron Acton there was a spill tunnel, and on the eastern side of the road the top of the arch may still be seen, although recent works by the Wessex Water Authority have covered the lower part. The weirs were probably just west of the road where there has always been a strong piece of wall left in situ. The banks here have also been raised recently by the Wessex Water Authority.

In 1935 a millstone still stood on edge in between the house and the mill and half-buried. I remember it being of quite small diameter, but it is no longer there. On the road corner there was a triangular piece of land where carts could have been backed under a door at stone floor level to be loaded or unloaded, with possibly a hoist worked from the



lineshaft or a sack chute. At ground level there was a small window here, but it was always boarded up in living memory. In the early 1960s Gloucestershire County Council demolished the mill in order to eliminate the sharp corner, and at the time the vertical shaft with gears of wooden construction were put out in an adjoining field, with perhaps the hursting also, and photographed by a local paper which mentioned that plans were in hand to preserve these items. A conversation with a former resident of the old mill house indicated that the wooden gearing ear-marked for preservation had gone to Bristol Museum as had the 'bottom stone' (by which he would have meant the bedstone) and possibly the one which had been outside the mill.

It is likely that it was only ever a grist mill, although the existence of a lineshaft makes this uncertain. The wheel was probably undershot but depending on weir levels, it may have been low breastshot. I do not think that the mill has operated in this century. My father, born in 1868, could not recall it ever working and had never seen the leat; neither could older inhabitants remember it ever working. However, this must not be assumed to be fact as the site is fairly isolated, and a mill serving one or a few local farms could have worked away quietly without much outward sign of activity.