

Mill sites on the Cam and Midford Brooks.

Mills on the Cam and Midford Brooks

Martin Bodman

Introduction

The Cam rises 426 feet up near White Cross, between Hinton Blewett and Bishop's Sutton, and flows east for about 13 miles to Midford. Here it is joined by the Wellow Brook, which runs roughly parallel in a valley to the south. The two streams join forces as the Midford Brook, which flows through Monkton Combe before its confluence with the River Avon north of Limpley Stoke. The average fall is 23 feet per mile over 15¹/₁ miles.

Sixteen watermill sites have so far been identified on the Cam, the Midford Brook and their tributaries. From a pastoral stream powering manorial corn and grist mills the Cam came - as early as 1700 - to provide the power for pumping coal mines. Fulling was also undertaken at Monkton Combe and South Stoke, near Bath. Paulton was the place where waterpower was harnessed to win coal: here too was a water-powered iron and brass foundry. Camerton New Pit also utilised water power.

Midford was a busy location with a mill on the Wellow and one on the Cam - the latter is referred to in this article; the Somersetshire Coal Canal - which took water from the river - had its weighbridge here and also the interchange wharves with its Radstock tramroad; the old Bath - Warminster turnpike passed this way before the A36 was built. And this was all before the Somerset & Dorset and Great Western railways crossed here.

This article began with research on newspaper files in 1987 together with field work. It cannot be definitive as new material is coming to light. It is possible, for in-

stance, that further sites lie undetected at Hallatrow and Rotcombe, High Littleton.

1. Combe Mill, Monkton Combe (ST 775 615)

Monkton Combe possessed two watermills in 1086, worth 13s 6d. They belonged to the church at Bath.¹ Combe Mill may have developed on one of these early sites. Its medieval history is not known, but James Bush had constructed a new grist mill here c1750:

*'To be sold in fee, the ESTATE and Lands of James Bush, situate at MONKTON-COMB, about two miles from BATH; consisting of a Grist-Mill newly built, and now in very good Repair, lately lett at 181. a year; a Dwelling-House, and seven Acres of Meadow thereto adjoining, and two little tenements in the village...'*²

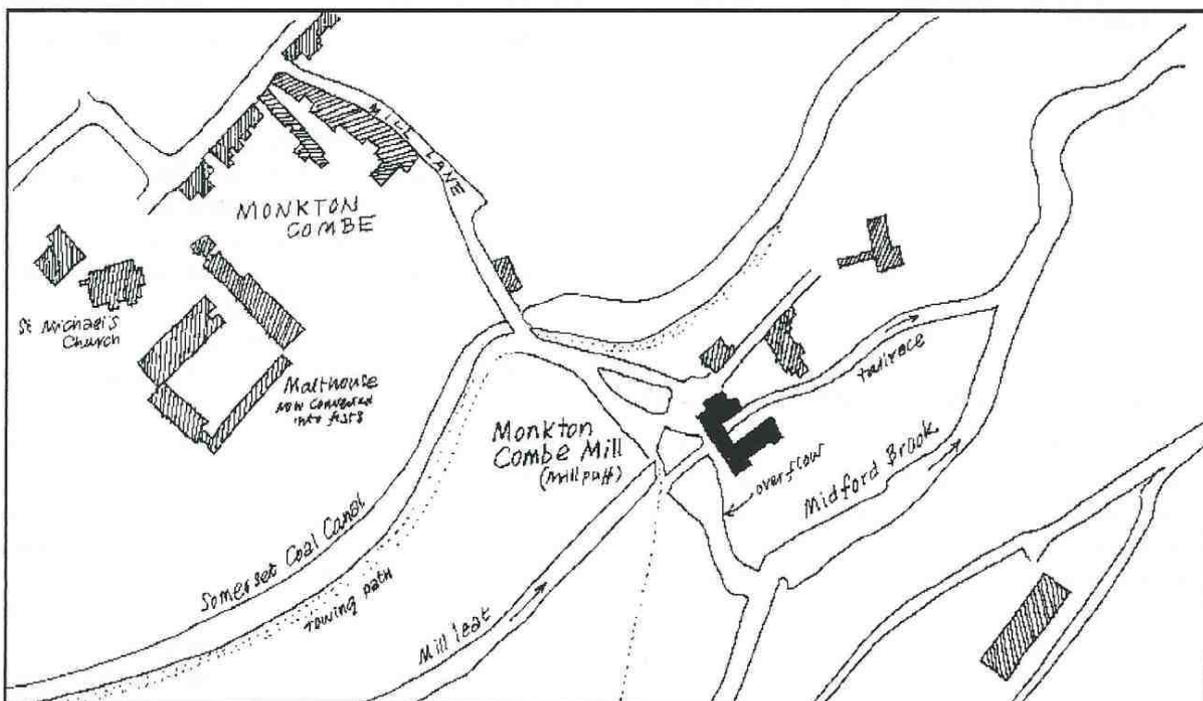
In 1771 the mill was leased to a Weston baker,³ but it was advertised for sale by auction in 1790:

'By Order of the Proprietor... All that very Eligible and Convenient FREEHOLD GRIST MILL, neat Dwelling-House...nw in the occupation of Mr John Lanham, miller and baker, as tenant at will (his lease having expired at Lady Day) at the very low rent of 60l. a year, and very moderately taxed.

The said premises is in a most desirable situation, and in excellent repair, the present tenant having been at a very considerable expense in making it every way convenient for carrying on an extensive trade in both branches.

*The mill has two pair of excellent French stones, with all other suitable conveniences; the Dwelling-house, two bake-houses, two good stables, and other proper offices are most pleasantly detached from the mill...to be let on 29 July 1790.'*⁴

The mill remained unlet and unsold in January 1791.



Monkton Combe Mill, OS 25in plan, 1888.

Indeed the rent at £60 seems somewhat inflationary compared with £18 in 1753, and might be accounted for in an improved and enlarged mill premises.

Philip Shrapnell, a clothier, occupied the mill from 1794 to about 1804. He appears to have introduced fulling stocks, while retaining the grist mill. From about 1805 to 1809 the mill was occupied by a Mr Perkins who was followed by the clothier Richard Whittington. In 1809 the mill possessed two fulling stocks and two pair of stones and new waterwheels had been installed. Whittington was bankrupt in 1815 and the mill operated with just one pair of stocks in that year.^{3,5}

Combe Mill had reverted to milling flour or grist when occupied by John Rees Jones in 1844.⁶ Rees Jones was here until at least 1851. William Hitchens was listed as miller at Combe in 1861.⁷

James Pepler, miller, occupied Mill House, Monkton Combe in 1868.⁸ In 1870 he was in Toronto where he applied for a patent for improvements to millstone-dressing machinery.⁹

The mill was converted to produce flock in 1875 and was probably substantially rebuilt at this time. Messrs T.R. Freeman & Sons traded at Combe from 1875 until its closure in the 1950s.¹⁰ On the day the nearby branch railway closed, Combe Mill sent three wagons loaded with flock to High Wycombe. That was on 15 February 1951.¹¹ The railway also brought coal inwards, probably from local collieries; a large brick chimney stack remains from the Freeman era, and it is not certain when water power ceased to be used here. The late Victorian ranges of stone buildings remain today. Water still flowed powerfully down the millrace in the 1980s, but in 1995 had reduced to a trickle.

References

1. Thom, C. and F., ed., *Domesday Book: Somerset*. (Chichester, 1980)
2. *Bath Journal*, 9 July 1753
3. Rogers, K., *Wiltshire and Somerset Woollen Mills*, (Edington, 1976)
4. *Bath Chronicle*, 8 April 1790
5. *Bath & Cheltenham Gazette*, 7 June 1815
Rogers K, note 3
6. *Pigots Directory of Somersetshire*, (1844)
7. *Kelly's Directory of Somersetshire*, (1851, 1861)
8. *Post Office Directory of Bath*, (1868-69)
9. *United States Patent Office Letters*, 1870 (courtesy Owen Ward)
10. Rogers K., note 3
11. *Somerset Guardian*, 16 February 1951

2. Midford Cliff Mill or Midford New Mill, South Stoke (ST 761 606)

Midford once had two railways and was the point where both branches of the Somersetshire Coal Canal met - albeit the southern arm in the form of a tramway. The Cam and Wellow brooks also meet at Midford and in the nineteenth century the village possessed two mills, one supplied by each river. Historically the mills probably served the needs of their respective manors - South Stoke and Hinton Charterhouse.

A grist mill existed on the Cam in 1787.¹ A map of the Somersetshire Coal Canal c1810 does not show the site, although it is close to the canal.² There is positive evidence of the mill's existence in 1820:

'Capital WATER CORN MILL with implements for immediate work, Granaries. ... and a new built DWELLING HOUSE on the banks of the CANAL in the parish of SOUTHSTOKE situated near Midford Bridge, Bath.

*To be SOLD by AUCTION by Mr STAFFORD, At the Castle Inn, Bath, on Saturday the 4th of November 1820 at one for two o'clock precisely ... An exceedingly compact & complete WATER CORN MILL, DWELLING HOUSE and premises, late in the occupation of Mr Harianshall [?]. the diameter of the waterwheel is 22ft ...fall of 10 ft from the head of the millpond..which extends for an acre and a quarter. '*³

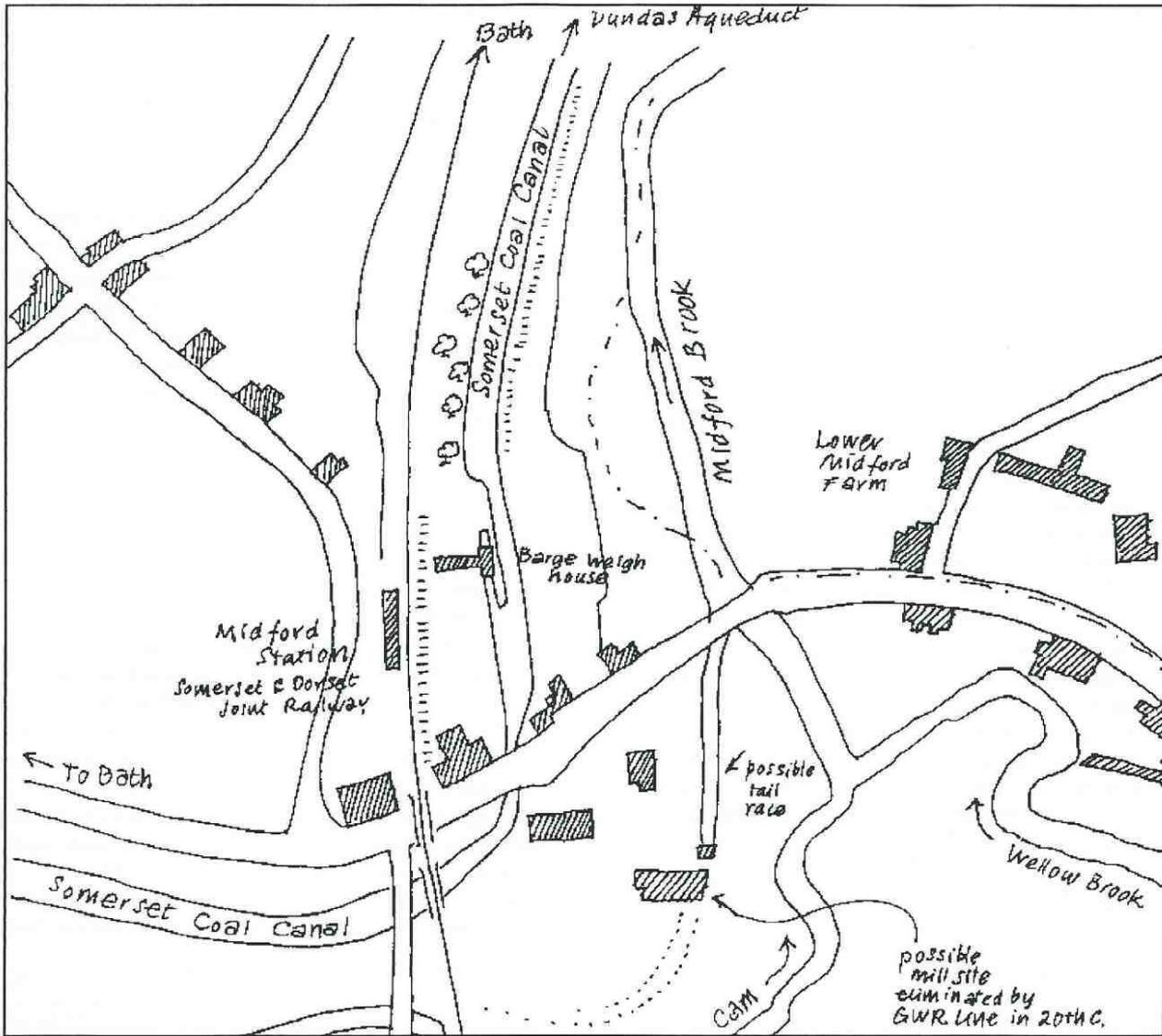
The South Stoke tithe map of 1840 clearly indicates the mill leat. The mill stream and tail race are shown running to the north west of the Cam, the tailrace rejoining the river by the turnpike road bridge, beyond the confluence with the Wellow. The ground between the leat and the Cam was known as Mill Ham. The mill was sited roughly south east of the Hope and Anchor Inn. The building was not indicated on the tithe map.⁴ This is apparent in a sale notice of 1854:

*'...Lot 2. All that capital Water Grist-Mill, called Midford New Mill on Coomb Hay Brook [the Cam], situate at Midford, aforesaid, with its machinery in full work, having a water power of 12feet fall, driving an 18 feet breast shot-wheel and two pair of stones, with dressing mill, flour and smut machines, flour and corn lofts, and every convenience for the business. Also a comfortable messuage or dwelling house, adjoining, two-stalled Stable, Cart-house, Garden and Orchard, the whole 3r 32p.. in the occupation of Mr Matthews as tenant... Also all that thriving young Orchard of about seventeen years growth... The Mill-house and machinery are of a most substantial character, having been newly erected in the year 1840, and the Dwelling-house has been built about 4 years... '*⁵

This 1854 sale also included the Hope and Anchor Inn and the second mill on the Wellow. There are inconsistencies between the 1820 and 1854 sale notices - the waterwheel diameter and the fall of water both vary - but the location appears the same and the rebuilding of 1840 may well account for these variations.

The mills at Midford were both on the market again in 1856, but on this occasion advertised separately, within a week of each other. Mr F Matthews was now established in the mill on the Wellow. The mill on the Cam was advertised:

*'... To be let or sold, the remainder of a lease (of which there are 77 years unexpired) of a mill, well situated, adjoining a canal, and to which there are good roads. The mill has been used as a grist mill, but is capable of being converted to any other purpose, as there is a powerful waterwheel. Apply to Mr Hill, Midford, near Bath, or to Mr Eve, 13 Cheap-St, Bath... '*⁶



Possible site of Midford Cliff Mill, OS 25in plan, 1888.

Midford New Mill had a short life: by 1888 only the tail race was indicated on the Ordnance Survey 25in plan. The extension of the Hallatrow branch railway to Limpley Stoke early in this century probably removed much of the remaining evidence at this site. 'Kozikott' lying below the tumpike road, near the Hope and Anchor may represent the former mill house.

In the nineteenth-century the requirement for tenants to use the manor mill lessened and with two mills in the same village on the open market, the more efficient concern - that on the Wellow - survived. This may explain the fate of this mill.

References

1. Bath Library (BL), Thomas Thorpe's map 'Five Miles Round the City of Bath', 1787
2. BL, Map of Somersetshire Coal Canal, c1810
3. *Bath Chronicle*, 2 November 1820
4. Somerset County Record Office (SCRO), South Stoke Tithe Map and Apportionment, 1840
5. *Bristol Mercury*, 18 March 1854
6. *Bristol Mercury*, 21 and 23 June 1856

3. Combe Hay Mill, Combe Hay (ST 778 596)

An eighteenth-century flour mill existed next to Combe Hay bridge and west of the village on the road to Wellow.¹ It had gone by 1886² and may indeed have ceased work by 1815.³ On the Somersetshire Coal Canal map c1810 mills close to the canal such as Stony Littleton, Foxcote and Timsbury were indicated. Combe Hay, equally close to the canal was not.

Walking the river bank here it is hard to believe the mill ever existed. There is no structure and no sign of any leat.

The manor mill was established by the thirteenth century: in 1249 Agatha de Hayweya made an agreement with Richard and Grecia de Mucegros, paying 18 marks 'for a mill and eight shillings and eight pence rent in Cumbehawya and Bath.'⁴

A dispute concerning the ownership of the manors of Halsewey and Combe Haweye resulted in a court case at Westminster in 1615. Court records refer to two mills, one of which was probably on this site. Francis Mansell Esq and Edmund Van Esq were granted 'full seizin' of the manors.⁵

Recently two millstones have been found near the mill site. One of these, intact, has been preserved in the grounds of Combe Hay manor.⁶

References

1. BL, Thomas Thorpe's Map of Gentleman's Seats, 1742
2. Ordnance Survey (OS) 25in plan, 1886
3. BL, note 2.2
4. Green, E., ed.. 'Feet of Fines for the County of Somerset', *Somerset Record Society*, VI, (1892) 143
5. Public Record Office (PRO), *Recovery Roll* 12 Jas 1, 1615, Common Pleas, RO 46
6. Correspondence from Barbara Robertson, 1996

4. Dunkerton Mill, Dunkerton (ST 702 590)

Dunkerton Mill was sited upstream of the village, in a similar situation to the mill at Combe Hay. Neither now exists.

Dunkerton was an eighteenth-century grist mill¹ which came to an early end in 1802, when it was bought by the Somerset Coal Canal for its water rights. It was then demolished and a steam engine installed above the river, near the canal which ran at high level along the valley. The engine's function was to supply water from the Cam to the Paulton arm of the canal.² The mill leat was still shown on the plan of the Somersetshire Coal Canal, c1810.³ A visit to the mill site reveals no more than an apparent 'ox-bow' in a field. Abstracting water here apparently had no adverse effect on downstream mills. There were none until Midford, by which point the Cam had gained from streams such as that in Horsecombe Vale. Much closer to the village at ST 7088 5934 is a residence called Millham House. This may indicate a second, earlier, downstream mill site.

References

1. Thorpe, note 2.1; Donn, note 7.2
2. Clew K.R., *The Somersetshire Coal Canal & Railways*, (Frome, 1986) 56-57
3. BL, note 2.2

5. Carlingcott Mill, Peasedown St John

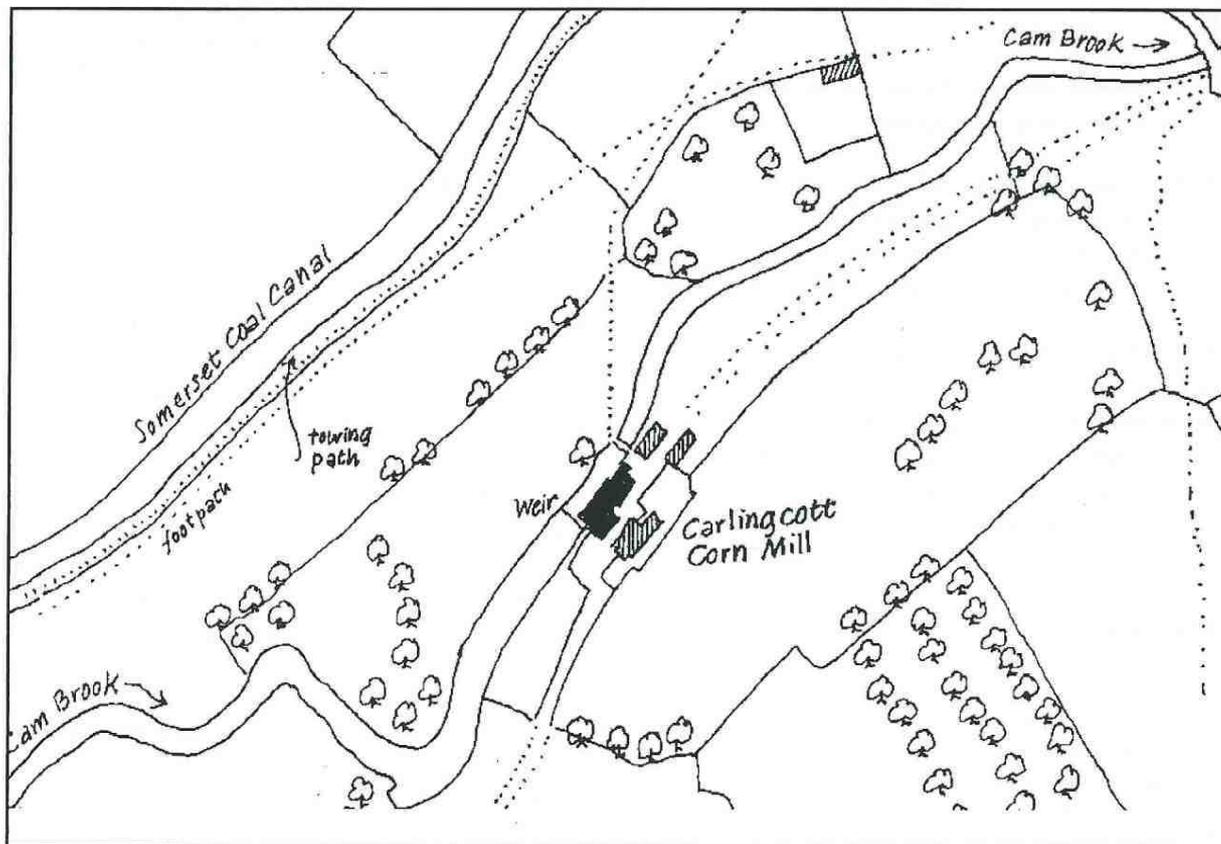
(ST 695 584)

Carlingcott, or Credlingcote as it was known in 1815, had a watermill at Domesday, worth five shillings.¹ Carlingcott was a separate manor which for many centuries formed part of the parish of Camerton. The present mill buildings probably date from the early nineteenth-century;-

'STONAGE MILL, 1815 TO be LET, and entered upon immediately, or at Lady-Day next, All that WATER CORN MILL, with DWELLING-HOUSE, and Stabling for five horses..all new and in excellent repair; together with about six acres of rich Pasture and Orchard Land adjoining...

*The Mill is very roomy, and has two pair of excellent French stones, with a good supply of water; together with extensive granaries for both corn and meal. The above premises are situated in the parish of CAMERTON..For further particulars, and to treat for the same apply to T PARKER, Highdown-Farm, near Radstock, Somerset. '*²

'Stonage Mill' is assumed to be one and the same as Carlingcott Mill as fields near the mill were named Stonedge in a map of Carlingcott c1800-1837.³ Deeds relating to the bankruptcy of John Parker of 'Carnicott Mill' indicate that Robert Sims, who occupied



Carlingcott Mill, OS 25in plan, 1886.

the premises in 1817, purchased the mill from the commissioners of the bankruptcy in 1822. In 1835 '*Kernicott Mill with dwelling house, near thereto and the outbuildings, yards and garden...all in Camerton*' were sold to John Jarrett. Documents relating to this sale refer to a deed of 18 May 1813 which strongly implies the mill was a new structure: '*a water-mill buildings and premises erected and built or then erecting on some part of the premises*'. This is the first clear reference to a mill at Carlingcott, and the mill thus appears to date from c1812.⁴

Thomas Veal was miller at Carlingcott in 1841.⁵ The mill was still owned by John Jarrett in 1844; Veal remained the occupier⁶ Thomas Veal grew corn, kept 20 horses and also brought grain from Bristol docks. He was churchwarden at Camerton, but this was after Reverend Skinner's time there.⁷ Later in the century the mill was run by Herbert Veal, who was followed by Mrs Eliza Veal, listed as of Carlingcott Fann in 1889. The mill continued in use this century and was run by John Banwell in 1910.⁸ Gilbert Veal bought Carlingcott in 1920 and renovated it; he restarted business in 1922. In 1951 he installed a diesel engine and subsequently the mill produced animal feed. It closed finally in 1966 when Gilbert ran it with his son Leonard Herbert Veal, great grandson of the miller in 1841.⁹

Carlingcott is now a private residence, and is not open to the public. The hamlet, long part of Camerton, was assigned to the new parish of Peasedown St John in 1955. The mill consists of a wheel pit, ground floor and attic, and is of three bays with a slate roof. A single-storey extension is at right angles to the main structure. The mill is built into the river and water flow is controlled by a weir and sluices which have been reconstructed within the last nine years. There is no millrace as such. Mills at Midford and at Portbridge, Chew Magna, follow a similar layout. The waterwheel is internal, 11ft 6in diameter and 6ft wide and is low breastshot. It was in pieces in 1988 but has since been restored by the present owner at some expense. He confirms that the waterwheel comes from the New Forest area of Hampshire. The restored wheel has an iron axle, six pairs of African hardwood arms, steel sole plates and buckets and revolves with the cast-iron pit wheel. The underdriven wallower and great spur wheel have not been restored. The mill house, above, stone-built like the mill, is of the same period.

References

1. Thorn, note 1.1
2. *Bath and Cheltenham Gazette*, 4 January 1815
3. Wedlake. W.J., 'Tithe Disputes at Camerton. Somerset 1800-1839,' *A Second North Somerset Miscellany*, (Bath, 1971) 35
4. SCRO. Deeds of Carlingcott Mill, DD/NCB 13, 15, 16, 17
5. *Somerset & Avon Guardian*, 22 July 1966
6. SCRO, Camerton Tithe Map and Apportionment, 1844
7. note 5.5
8. *Kellys Directory of Somersetshire*, (1889, 1910, 1922, 1931)
9. note 5.5

6. Camerton New Pit (ST 685 580)

Camerton was a manor belonging to Glastonbury Abbey in 1086, given to the Abbot in exchange for Tintinhull by the Count of Mortain. There were two watermills generating a revenue of five shillings a year.¹

Their location is not known and may have been lost under later mine developments. New Pit may have taken over one site; the evidence for a waterwheel here comes from John Skinner's diary for April 1811:

'...the colliers at the New Pit were so much afraid of the malicious disposition of the woman, mother to the person who had sworn the rape, that they refused to work, lest she should cut the rope and endanger their lives...'

*... and I read the advertisement which stated that the rape had been committed on a young woman of the name of Challenger by a collier of the name of Aslip; that he had taken her into the mill house of the coal pit and effected his purpose, her cries not being heard on account of the noise of the water...'*²

A weir downstream from Radford, fed a relatively long leat which ran to the north of the Cam Brook but south of the coal canal, to an apparent mill site (ST 685 580) near New Pit in 1844. New Pit coal works was owned and occupied by William Eleazer Pickwick and Horatio Davis at that date.³

References

1. Thorn, note 1.1
2. Wedlake, note 5.3
3. SCRO, Camerton Tithe Map and Apportionment, 1844

7. Radford Mill, Timsbury. Also known as Timsbury Mill (ST 671 578)

Timsbury possessed a mill in 1086, worth eight shillings a year, but it was not necessarily located on the same site.¹ There was a mill here in 1769.²

The mill or its predecessor was indicated on the Plan of the Somersetshire Coal Canal c1810.³ There is apparently a date-stone for this mill of 1815, but this may relate to a major rebuild or extension, rather than a new structure.

John Skinner, rector of Camerton, wrote on Friday 19 July 1822:

*'Collins of the mill looked at the corn I had to dispose of and declined giving £30 for the ricks of wheat and barley. Last year Parker paid me £40 when there were only forty acres of wheat tythed, instead of fifty. He said that wheat was now 20/- a sack and would be still lower; that lambs were 12s apiece; but I clearly perceived his object was to depreciate the tithe. This man was a miller; who has been keeping the price of bread in a very different proportion to the wheat he talks of; thus it seems I can depend on no purchasers in the immediate neighbourhood...'*⁴

In 1839 the mill was owned by William Collins, sen., and occupied by William Collins, jun.⁵

The structure was extended southwards at some date. Steam was introduced to augment the water supply during

the last century: no chimney for an engine remains. The Collins family lived here for over 110 years as William Nuth Collins was miller and farmer, Radford, Timsbury in 1861; William Collins was listed at Timsbury Steam and Water Mills in 1889 and by 1910 the business was known as William Collins & Sons (Millers) Ltd, Radford, Timsbury. The concern was still running in 1931.⁶ The present structure is now derelict and appears to be used as farm outbuildings. It is built of random lias stone, two stories high, of five bays, with a slate roof. The mill served Timsbury and Camerton. A track downhill from Timsbury village is known as Mill Lane.

References

1. Thorn, note 1.1
2. Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery (BCM&AG), Benjamin Donn the elder, *Map of the Country 11 Miles Round the City of Bristol*, 1769
3. BL, note 2.2
4. Coombs, H. & P., ed., *Journal of a Somerset Rector 1803-1834*, (Oxford, 1984)
5. SCRO, Timsbury tith Award and Apportionment, 1838
6. *Kelly's Directory of Somersetshire*, (1861,1889,1910, 1931)

8. Radford Colliery, Paulton (ST 666 574)

Radford Colliery was situated at Upper Radford not far from the present day 'Somerset' public house. It had its own tramway link to the Somerset Coal Canal.¹ In 1854 the colliery had closed and parts of the surface works were for sale. These included a number of pantile roofs, including that for a 'water engine house'. Lot 8 consisted of a condensing steam engine. Possibly the 31-inch cylinder steam engine undertook the winding function, while the water engine - presumably powered by a water wheel - managed the pumping function in the mine.² Benjamin Donn the elder indicated a mill site to the east of Withy Mills, Paulton in 1769.³ This is a small indus-

trial-looking hamlet lying a little below the 'Somerset'. It is still known as Withy Mills, designated as such by the Post Office letterbox nearby. Was the mill site to the east later harnessed as Radford's water engine, utilising flat rods?

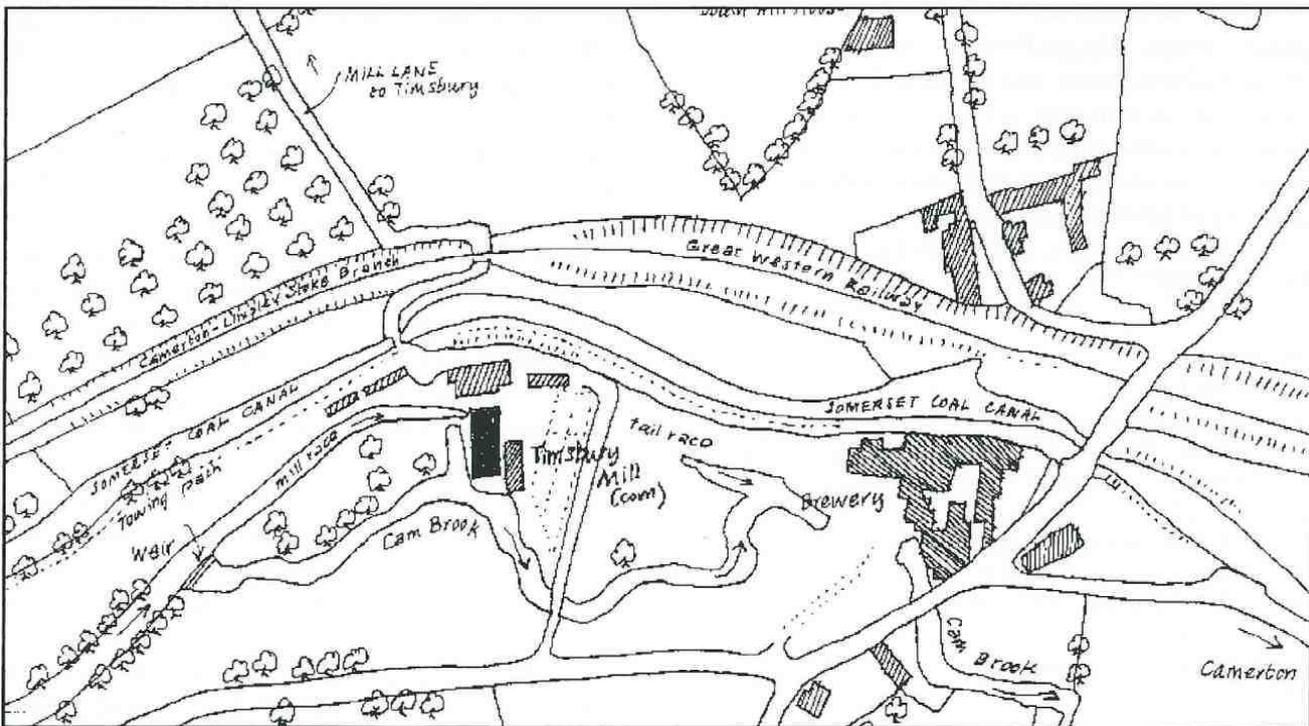
This theory appears unlikely following a site visit in 1996. The water engine was probably at the colliery at Upper Radford. A small stream flows down from Radford Hill to join the Cam a little to the east of the old mineral tramway. It appears that a leat from this side valley was brought round the hill to the mine; a leat course, albeit steep, is visible from Upper Radford. This could have powered a waterwheel in the otherwise dry valley above the colliery batch. Under the batch - which fills across the dry side valley - is a large and effective culvert which drains any run off from heavy rains and was clearly built before the batch was made, say by 1830.⁴

References

1. Clew, K.R., note 4.2
2. *Bristol Mercury*, 22 April 1854
3. BCM&AG, note 7.2
4. Discussion with the owner and Mike Chapman at Upper Radford, 1996

9. Paulton Brass and Iron Foundry (ST 658 576)

The foundry was built close to the Cam Brook and near the Paulton terminus of the Somersetshire Coal Canal. It was also adjacent to Paulton Engine Colliery. The foundry was established by Joseph Hill, Thomas Randall and William Rawlins and manufactured winding and pumping engines for mines in the Somerset coalfield. A winding engine manufactured here has been preserved in the Bristol City Museum.¹ It was opened in 1807: *'PAULTON IRON FOUNDRY SOMERSET. THIS FOUNDRY now being complete on a very extensive and impressive scale, and the proprietors having en-*



Timsbury Mill, OS 25 in plan, 1886.

*gaged many skilful and very respected workmen... CASTINGS. BOREING and TUBEING work [undertaken].. All orders entrusted to boatmen, or other persons, coming to the coal-works in the neighbourhood of the foundry, will arrive safe..*²

The whole area east and south east of Goosard Bridge was a hive of activity in the nineteenth century. Tramroads brought coal from collieries at Paulton and High Littleton; the coal was shipped eastwards to Bath and Wiltshire.

In 1815 the foundry was advertised to be let or sold. It included a loam and dry sand shop 60ft x 40ft and a green sand shop 40ft x 40ft, the latter worked by a steam engine of 2 hp. In addition a mill, driven by a waterwheel of 14ft diameter and 4ft width, bored and turned castings.

The waterwheel also appears to have powered a mill for grinding charcoal, blacking and coal dust. A pattern shop, store room and office were housed on an upper floor.³

Thomas Randall died in 1820 or thereabouts and in that year the Paulton Iron Foundry and collieries known as the Salisbury work, Lower Ham work and Paulton work were to be sold pursuant to the decree and subsequent orders of the High Court of Chancery.⁴

In 1839 the foundry was occupied by William Evans and the Paulton Coal Co. The owners were John, Elizabeth and Julia Hill and John Linton Simmons.⁵ William Evans later re-established at Lower Writhlington and then moved to Frome Hill, Radstock.⁶

There is evidence for a leat to the nearby Engine Colliery on a plan of the Somersetshire Coal Canal, c1810.⁷ However, by 1885 the leat had gone and the Engine Colliery was disused.⁸ The foundry survived until about 1895. There is little to see on this once busy industrial site; the canal terminus was - until recently, regrettably - a visible reminder of Paulton's nineteenth-century economy, as is the waste tip of the colliery.

References

1. Warrington, A.J., and Down, CG, *The History of the Somerset Coalfield*, (Newton Abbot, 1971)
2. *Sherborne & Yeovil Mercury*, 16 February 1807
3. *Bristol Mirror* 22 July 1815
4. *Bath Chronicle*, 7 September 1820
5. SCRO_Paulton Tithe Map and Apportionment, 1839
6. Gould, S., 'The Paulton Brass and Iron Foundry, part 1', *Five Arches*, 20, (1994) 3
Chilcott, R.J.C., 'William Evans of Paulton', *Five Arches*, 22, (1995) 15
7. BL, Note 2.2
8. OS 25in plan, 1885

10. Paulton Lower Engine Colliery (ST 658 574)

Like Upper Engine Colliery, this mine also appears to have been served by a leat in 1807.¹ The watercourse may merely have run on to serve the iron foundry nearby.²

The colliery had been established by 1736.³

By 1852 the plant at this mine included three steam engines, but there was no mention of a waterwheel in the sale notice that year.⁴ Some colliery buildings remained in 1886, but the mine was by then disused and all evidence of a water channel had gone.⁵

The mine's waste tip or batch now belongs to Wessex

Water and is being managed by the Cam Valley Wildlife Group. Nearby is an interpretation board erected by the Somersetshire Coal Canal Society in 1996.

References

1. BL, Note 2.2
The leats to this and Upper Engine Colliery are shown in: Chapman, M., 'The Somerset Coal Canal: A Cartographical Survey', *BIAS Journal*, 20, (1987) 4-22, where the Paulton section of the SCC map has been reproduced.
2. *Bristol Mirror*, 22 July 1815
3. Gould, note 9.6, citing: Rogers, K.H., *The Newcomen Engine in the West of England*, (Bradford on Avon, 1976)
4. *Felix Farleys Bristol Journal*, 3 January 1852
5. OS 25in plan, 1886

11. Paulton Upper Engine Colliery (ST 658 574)

The plan of the Somersetshire Coal Canal indicates a water channel running from the Cam to the colliery. Pumps are indicated at the colliery and it would appear a waterwheel or wheels were used to pump the mine water out.¹

It was in this area that a waterwheel was used to drain an earlier colliery in 1700:

'Paulton Wheel at Mr Brewer's works draws about 17 fathoms deep [about 102 feet]. The wheel, of 8 feet diameter, 3 foot broad, with two cranks. Water troughs 20 inches broad 10 inches deep.' [the launder, presumably].²

Brewer's works was near Goosard Bridge, as was Paulton Upper Engine. The steam engine here - assuming there was a water-powered pump - would have raised miners and coal.

By 1886 all evidence of the coal works had gone, together with the leat. The site is now a sewage works.³

References

1. BL, note 2.2
2. Hylton, Lord, *Notes on the History of the Parish of Kilmersdon*, (Taunton, 1910)
3. See note 9.4

12. Cloudhill Mill, Clutton (ST 633 575)

Clutton possessed a watermill in 1086, worth 30d.¹ The present mill lies just within the parish boundaries with Cameley and High Littleton but appears to be a relatively recent site and successor to Old Mill, Clutton (see 13).

Cloudhill appears to date from the mid-eighteenth century and is indicated on Benjamin Donn's map of 1769.²

The mill was supplied by a relatively short leat from a weir beyond the western embankment, in Cameley parish. The tail race runs in culvert. The Cam appears to have been diverted into the leat, but all mill machinery has long since gone.

In the 1830s or 1840s the mill was run by May Flower. She was later an insolvent debtor of Litton.³ An auction notice of 1845 may well refer to Cloudhill Mill:

'Clutton, Somerset. To be sold by auction... Eligible freehold property in the immediate neighbourhood of Coal Mines... All that messuage or tenement and garden now or heretofore called Tuckers Tenement,

subject to a lease for 99 years, determinable on the decease of the survivors of three lives, respectively aged 68 and 34 years...and also all that WATER GRIST MILL, standing near the said messuage...in the occupation of Mr Andrew James...at a yearly tenancy. For a view apply the tenant.¹⁴

Present evidence suggests that Clouthill was always a flour or grist mill. However 'Tuckers Tenement' raises the remote possibility of a fulling mill, but the house referred to was more probably owned by a Mr Tucker whose ancestors were fullers.

In 1855 the mill was offered to let:

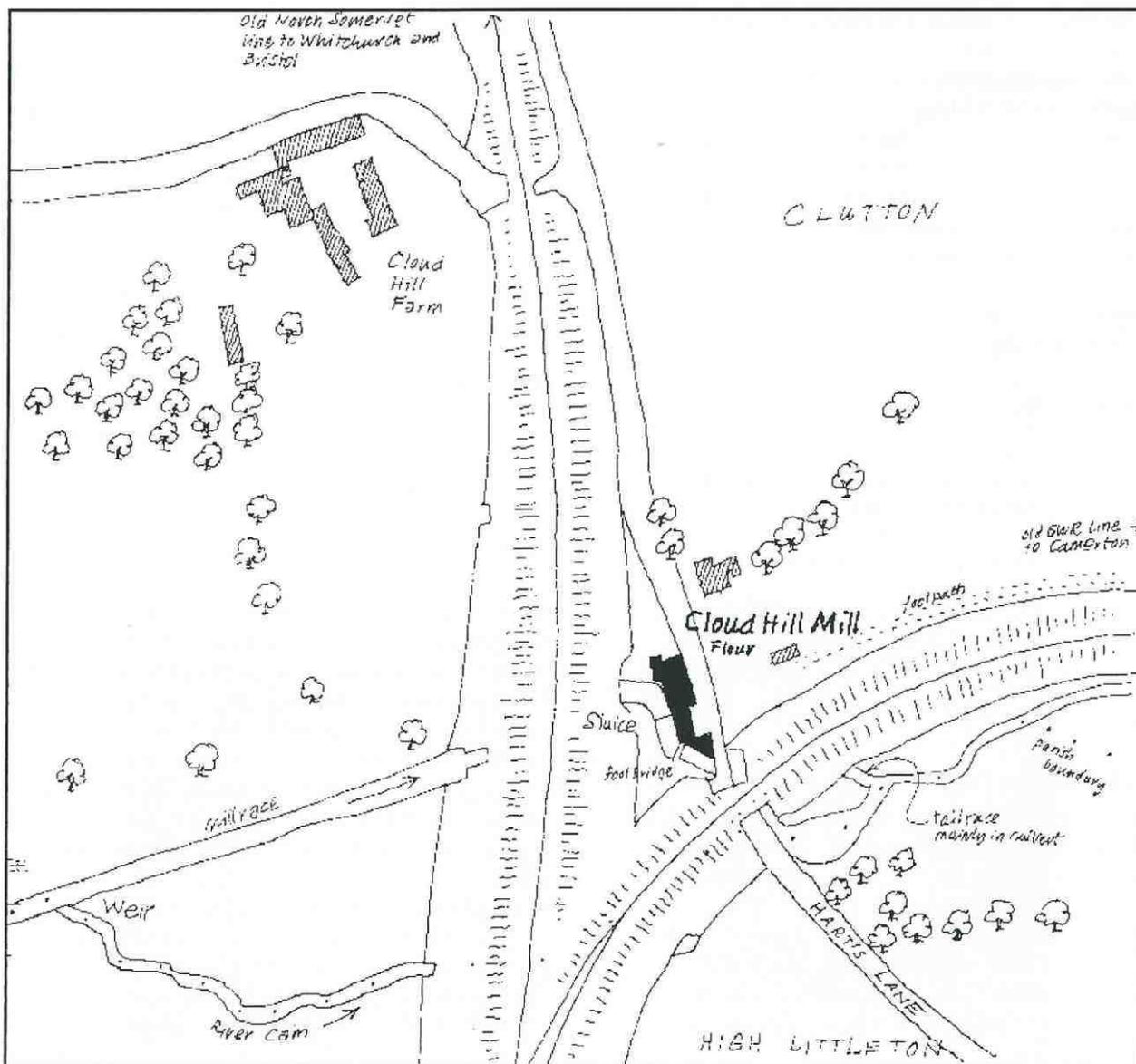
'To Millers, Corn-factors and others. CLOUDHILL, CLUTTON, SOMERSET To be Let ... a Capital WATER GRIST MILL, with two pair of stones; together with the machinery complete and in good working order, called Clouthill Mill; together with a convenient Dwelling House, Stable and Premises...several acres of land can also be let with the above mill... to view the same apply to Mr John Dudden, High Littleton. ...'¹⁵

John Dudden may well have been the owner in 1855. Clouthill was worked until at least 1910 and from 1866 Charles Carter was miller here. This is a relatively long period for one miller and it is possible that a father and son of the same name ran the mill successively, or just as likely, the directory entry was not updated.⁶ Today the mill is a private residence.

The main building is of seven bays and three stories; a two-storey structure of three bays extends on the south side. To the west and south the mill is hemmed in by disused railway embankments and bridges. These once carried the GWR's North Somerset line and Limpley Stoke branch respectively.

References

1. Thorn, note 1.1
2. BCM&AG, note 7.2
3. London Gazette, 22 February 1848, 28 April 1848: cited in Science Museum Library, H.E.S. Simmons collection, 'Somerset Watermills'
4. Bristol Mirror, 31 May 1845
5. Bristol Mercury, 25 August 1855
6. Kelly's Directory of Somersetshire, (1889, 1910)



Clouthill Mill, OS 25 in plan, 1886.

13. Clutton Mill or Old Mill, Clutton

The remains of a what is believed to be a grist mill have recently been discovered by Steve Willcox. This mill may have been built on the eleventh-century site. A water channel, waterwheel site and watercourse diversions are apparently evident here. Manorial records refer to a mill in 1633 and in 1667, which was then ancient, evidently. It is away from the present day village on a tributary of the Cam.

Reference

1. Conversation with Steve Willcox, November 1995

14. Cameley Mill, Cameley (ST 617 575)

Cameley was one of 70 manors in Somerset held by the Bishop of Coutances in 1086. The manor mill was then worth 5 shillings per annum.¹ The Norman mill may have been located at a less heavily engineered site, however. In 1703 Edward Buck of Cameley leased this mill from Preston Hippisley of Bassett Down, Lydiard Tregoze, Wiltshire. Buck paid £41 3s 6d for a 99 year lease on:

'...the water grist mill with garden and orchard thereunto belonging and close of meadow or pasture called Mill Hill containing by estimation 2 acres in Cameley...'

The lease also provided access to the mill. Buck was responsible for repairing the premises at his own expense, but was allowed to fell four oaks in Cameley Woods solely for this purpose. In 1722 Buck surrendered the right to the four oaks - possibly he had used them in repairs.

In 1742 the mill was owned by John Hippisley Coxe of Ston Easton, grandson of Preston Hippisley. He granted the mill on lease for 99 years to John Blacker the elder, a yeoman, also of Ston Easton, in exchange for other property. The mill was at that time occupied by John Bowditch. Blacker, who was then about 63, had two sons; John of Emborough and Edmund, who were included in the lease

for lives.

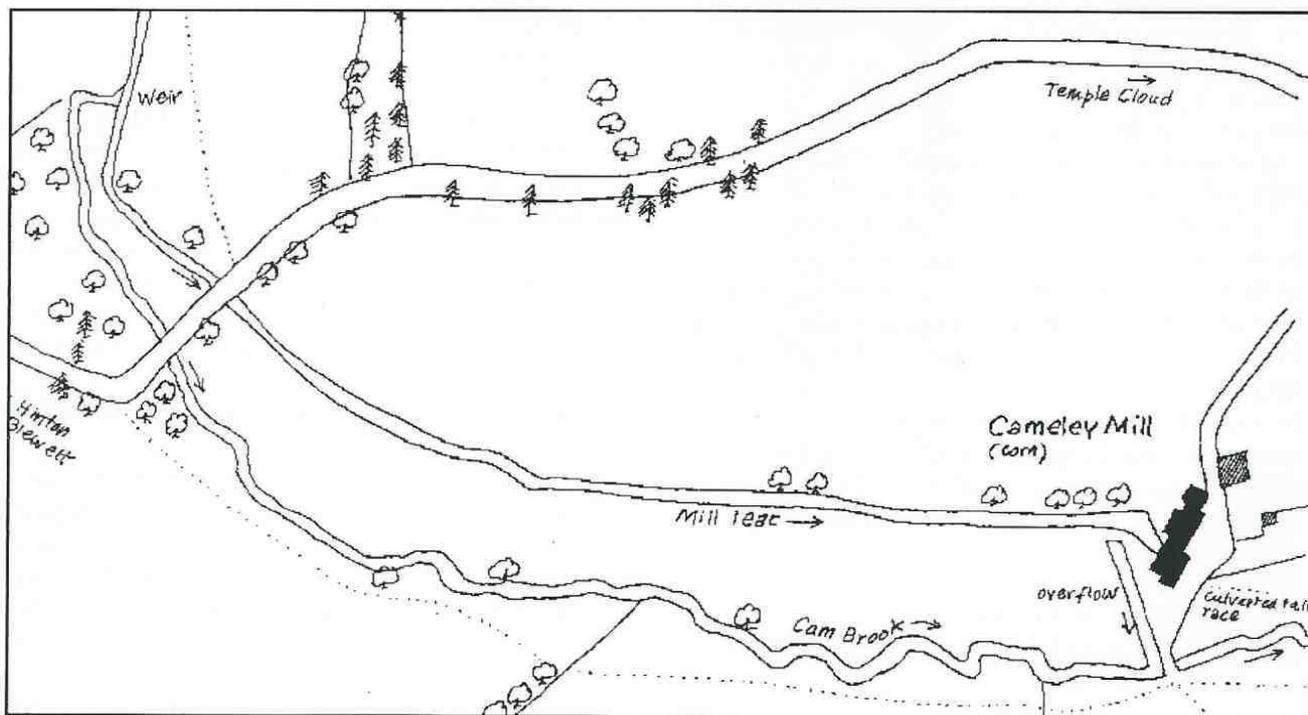
These two sons were referred to in further leases of 1771 and 1775. Edmund was no longer living in 1775 and John was no longer of Emborough but was described as a baker of Cameley. He occupied the water grist mill here. He was now aged about 52 and had a son John aged about 7 and daughter Elizabeth aged about 4. He paid £75 for a 99 year lease to the then owner Richard Hippisley Coxe of Ston Easton.² This mill is shown on Benjamin Donn's map of 1769.³

Fulsome details appeared in an 1814 sale notice:

*'To be Sold by Auction. On Friday March 25, ...at Farrington Inn, Somerset...one undivided moiety of a very valuable water grist mill called Camley Mill in the parish of Camley,..with a comfortable Dwelling House, Garden, Orchard and close of land adjoining. This mill was sometime since improved at considerable expence; is particularly well circumstanced as to its contiguity to the markets of Bristol, Bath and Wells.... and now in good custom both as a mill and as a bakehouse. The term of the present occupier, Mr Adams, will expire on the 25th March 1818, who is under covenant to leave the Mill and Premises in good repair. The above premises are now holden under Sir John Coxe Hippisley, Baronet, for three healthy lives... The premises may be viewed on application to Mr Adams..or Mr Langford, solicitor, Hallatrow...'*⁴

The main feature surviving today is the long mill race, which follows the contour like a canal. It runs from a long-vanished weir beyond the new bridge on the road to Hinton Blewett. The leat is dry and is referred to locally as 'the dry brook.' The tailrace was culverted and the leat had an overflow provided just above the mill. The leat is a small feat of engineering; its length and width appear to have rendered a millpond unnecessary.

Mrs Louisa Bennett was miller in 1889 and it was per-



Cameley Mill, OS 25in plan, 1886.

haps her daughter Miss Louisa Bennett who ran the mill in 1906.⁵ Local references to the dry brook and lack of further directory entries suggest the mill's closure before the first world war: or it may be that it was converted entirely for farm use, and hence not listed.

The mill building survived in 1989. It is no more than a large single storey outhouse - it may have been rebuilt as such - with the water supply coming in at a high level. The waterwheel, now gone, was probably overshot or pitchback type.

References

1. Thorn, note 1.1
2. SCRO, Deeds, DD/Hi 165, 168 and 169, referring to a mill at Cameley in 1703, 1742 and 1771-75
3. BCM&AG, note 7.2
4. *Bristol Mirror*, 19 March 1814
5. *Kelly's Directory of Somersetshire*, (1889, 1906)

15. Tucking Mill, Horsecombe Vale, South Stoke (near ST 765 616)

Thomas Thorpe, in delineating the estate of Ralph Allen on a map in 1741, gave the name 'Tuckin Mill' to the area at the foot of Horsecombe Vale, which lies on the boundary of the parishes of South Stoke and Monkton Combe.¹ Clearly, then, there had been a fulling mill established here. It was a good location for such a mill as fuller's earth, an ingredient essential to the process, was quarried locally.

William Smith, who was also surveyor to the Somerset Coal Canal, purchased Tucking Mill House and adjoining lands in 1798. The canal was constructed in front of the then existing mill and a wharf handled stone from a quarry opened by Smith at Kingham. Smith used the water-powered mill as a stone sawmill until 1814.²

The quarry development was a failure and in 1819 Smith was forced to sell all his property in the area. He moved to Doncaster and by 1818 the mill was apparently in ruins. However, by 1820 Charles Connolly owned the site and Tucking Mill appears to have been rebuilt as a flour mill, as in 1821 Richard Herinshaw, miller, '*late of Tucking Mill*' was declared bankrupt.³

The waterwheel was driven by a millrace fed from a large millpond which in 1838 was owned by William Hill and leased to William Hutchins.⁴ The pond had been enlarged by William Smith in 1811-12. It lay mostly in the parish of Monkton Combe. The property formed part of the de Montalt Mill estate, offered for sale by auction in 1841, following a High Court action between Messrs Poole and Allen.⁵

By the 1880s the mill had ceased to function. A waterwheel-powered pump was installed in 1881 to supply spring water to Combe Down.⁶ Midford Pullers Earth Works was built on the site of the former millpond in 1886⁷ and continued in production until after the second world war. The nineteenth-century mill was demolished either in 1927 or 1931.⁷ Lapoite Industries, who owned the fullers earth works, sold the whole estate to Wessex Water in 1976. Wessex Water subsequently built a new storage pond, completed in 1980. There is now a nature trail past the site and through Horsecombe Vale.

References

1. Broome, J., 'Tucking Mill', *BIAS Journal*, 20, (1988) 2-3
2. Ellingham, D., and George, J., 'Tucking Mill Trail Guide', (Bristol, 1986)
3. *London Gazette*, 10 February 1821
also at SML, note 12.3
4. SCRO, South Stoke Tithe Map and Apportionment, 1840
5. *London Gazette*, 19 March 1841 as note 4 and 12.3
6. Ellingham and George, note 2
7. Powell, J., 'Fullers Earth from Midford', *BIAS Journal*, 11, (1979) 22-26

16. de Montalt or Combe Down Mill, Combe Down (ST 762 620)

The mill is named after baron de Montalt who married Ralph Allen's niece in 1796 and inherited Prior Park and the surrounding estate. The mill was built at the end of the eighteenth century to manufacture paper - it was completed in 1805 and is of Bath stone.¹

Above the mill a small stream fed into a large stone-lined millpond which has since been filled in. A mill race led from the pond to the mill on an aqueduct, falling onto a 56ft diameter overshot waterwheel with a 36ft cog wheel. This was then thought to be the largest waterwheel in the country.²

John Bally, William Ellen and George Steart ran the mill from at least 1808 to 1816 and possibly later; from about 1822 to 1834 Steart held the leasehold.³ Bally was a bookseller and stationer of Milsom Street, Bath. ⁴ These partners were responsible for the production of Bath writing papers, possibly provincial bank note paper⁵ and other high quality hand-made papers. From the 1820s Steart was producing extra stout drawing boards. He died at the age of 70 in 1837.

The water supply proved inadequate and steam power was introduced as early as 1808. There is evidence to suggest that the waterwheel was out of use by the 1830s.⁶ De Montalt Mill was offered for sale by auction in January 1834:

'in consequence of the death of one of the proprietors, and the dissolution of the late copartnership... Also an extensive and convenient WAREHOUSE, in Bath, to which has been attached a wholesale stationery business in connection with the..mills.'

While this auction notice refers to: '*a good supply of the purest water, a Steam Engine, and every requisite Machinery for making and finishing, on an extensive scale, papers of the first quality,*' a waterwheel is not mentioned. This lends credence to an all steam-powered operation by the 1830s.⁷

The mill was again on the market in 1841, with Tucking Mill:

*'To be Sold pursuant to an Order of the High Court of Chancery made in a cause Poole v Allen. Valuable leasehold estate situate at Combe Down, near Bath, ..comprising the well known De Montalt Mills, with the cottage and tucking mill with its cottage called the Tucking Mill Cottage, ..on 20April, at Garraways Coffee House, London.'*⁸

From 1849 to at least 1853 Charles Connolly of Midford Castle owned the mill and leased it to Edmund White

who, it is thought, sub-let to the Bath Washing Company for use as a laundry. It was intended that gutta-percha was to be manufactured here in the 1850s but it is not certain that this industry was ever established at Combe Down.⁹ (Gutta-percha is a form of rubber first imported into Britain from the east in the 1840s: it was used to aid the safer ignition of gunpowder in the nineteenth century.) The mill was again advertised for sale in 1869:

*'...known for many years as the de Montalt Paper Mill for which purpose it is admirably adapted, but would be eligible for a Brewery, Corn Mill, Cloth Factory, or any other trade requiring space and water power, of which there is an ample supply...'*¹⁰

In 1875 John Whitaker, a cabinet maker from Dorchester Street, Bath, took the leasehold. Whitaker's staff in 1881 totalled 66 (45 men, 18 boys and 3 girls). Much of the furniture made here was exported to the colonies.¹¹ In the 1890s Patrick Alexander moved to de Montalt Wood. It appears he may have used the paper mill to manufacture balloons between 1890 and 1900.¹² He may have shared the premises with Whitaker, who one source suggests was still here in 1907.¹³

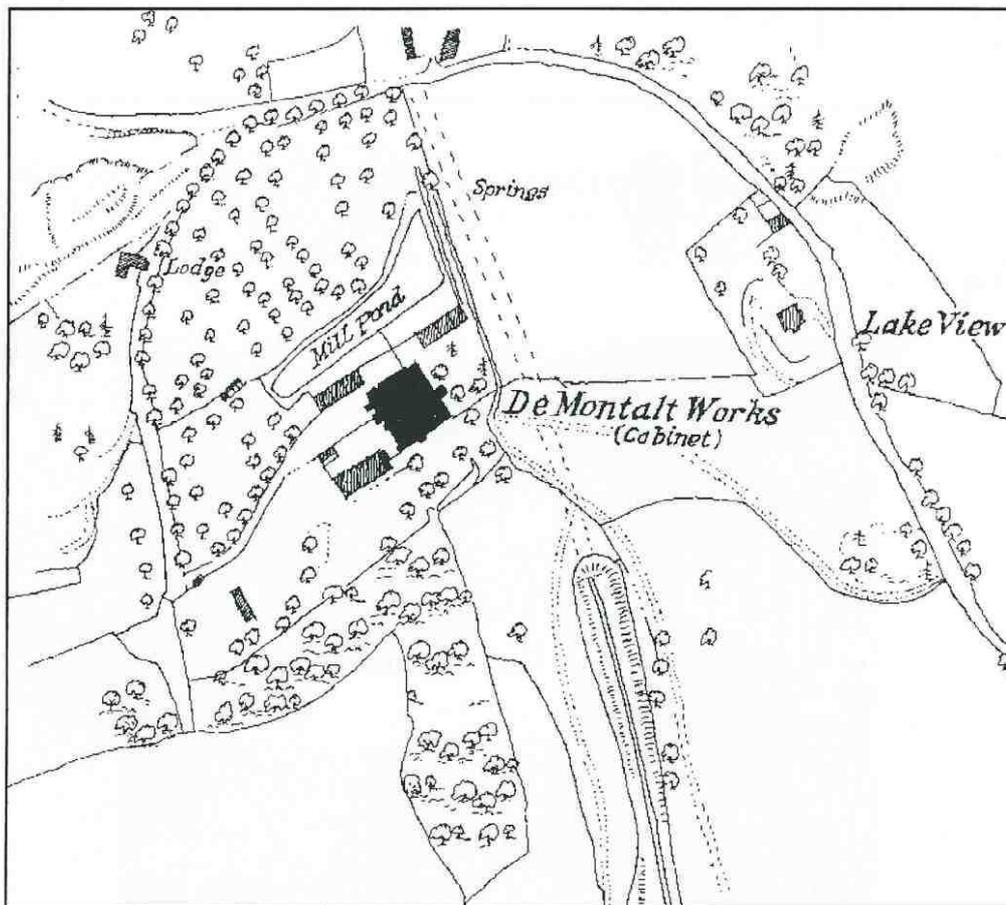
In 1995 the mill and several associated structures survive although in an empty and decaying state. The mill, a listed building, is of three stories, upper floors once serving as paper drying lofts. A cottage near the main building is occupied. The stone piers that once carried the launder to the mill wheel still stand as does the chimney stack, 110 yards away.

References

1. Addison, P., 'de Montalt Mill'. *Avon Industrial Buildings Trust Newsletter*, (1988) citing: 'History of de Montalt Mill'. *Somerset and Dorset Notes and Queries*, 25, (1950) 255, 296 and other sources
2. Bone M., 'Boulton & Watt Steam Engines in Bristol and Bath', *BIAS Journal*, 28, (1995) 24-29
3. Atthill, R., *Old Mendip*, (Newton Abbot. 1964)
4. SML. note 12.3, citing correspondence between Q. Tweney and R Atthill, 1961
5. Conversation with Peter Bower, paper historian of London, December 1995
6. Atthill, note 3
7. *Bristol Mercury*, 25 January 1834
8. *London Gazette*, note 15.5
9. *Bath & Cheltenham Gazette*, 22 March 1854
10. *Bristol Times & Mirror*, 29 May 1869
11. Addison, note 1
12. Cullingham, G., *Patrick Y. Alexander*, (Bath, 1984)
13. Addison, note 1

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de Montalt Mill, OS 25in plan, 1888.