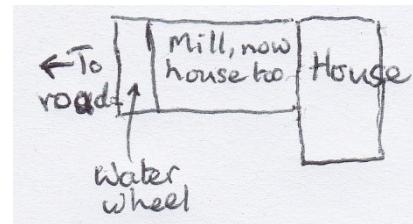


Note on Hyde Mill, Brewood, Staffs (near Wolverhampton) Grid Ref SJ 8767 0806. On Chillington Brook (tributary of R. Penk, which runs into R. Sow(e) and thence into R. Trent).

1. When I called at this mill, on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1968, I was met by a Mr Hayden, aged about 19-21. I was myself 19. He was very helpful in showing me remaining bits of machinery and the photos of the exterior and of the stone floor (inside) that someone had taken before the mill was converted to a house by his father who lived there but was not present at the time of my visit. He told me that father would not be at all happy if he knew I was taking such an interest in the mill, which presumably explains why I did not take any photographs except for one colour slide, taken, if I remember right, looking back from outside the property. I did make notes though on a small piece of paper and the same evening transferred them, rather untidily, along with details I had remembered, to an SPAB watermill survey questionnaire form; I did not send the form in however.
2. From the pictures and remains of machinery and what Mr H jnr told me I was able to ascertain that the mill had had an all iron overshot waterwheel which drove two pairs of millstones and a wire machine (dresser), and a lot of other details. The photograph of the stone floor (which I sketched roughly in the SPAB form, see below) is interesting in that it showed that (unusually in Staffordshire) the stones had been driven from above and the spur wheel had had a ring of bevelled teeth as well as the normal teeth, instead of the usual separate crown wheel. The large diameter iron upright shaft (no doubt hollow) is also interesting. Such shafts were common locally for waterwheel shafts but rare for upright shafts, which were usually wooden or small cross-section iron. I believe Bates of Compton, nr Wolverhampton favoured hollow iron shafts so perhaps it was their work. The horses over the millstones, with two legs instead of four were also unusual for Staffordshire.
3. The information in the SPAB questionnaire form is as follows –
  - [The mill is] down a track from the public road. 3 floors, bottom, middle and top. Unglazed [=non-shiny] red brick, and tile. Bits of weatherboarding added in conversion. Now a house set in a

lovely garden with millpond at side. NB doors, one to waterwheel, other on floor above at end facing public road (now windows) (photo of outside)[this refers to the gable end seen in my colour slide. A pre-conversion photo shown me by young Mr Hayden showed that where the bottom two windows now were, there used to be two doors, one above the other, the bottom one being an entrance to the waterwheel and the upper one presumably a loading door]

- Owner Mr Hayden, Hyde Mill (the father of the Mr Hayden jnr whom I met). He makes tubes in the Black Country. Last miller Mr Smith: brother and son still live in Brewood, but he is dead.
- The date 1823 carved on a brick in the wheelhouse is the date of the last waterwheel. I understand the same date, and the maker's name was on the waterwheel. Some of the machinery including the gt spur wheel set in concrete [also] had the maker's name and date. The mill ceased work about 1936.
- [Rough site plan, copied from notes>]  
The mill is on a Domesday site. Present building thought to be 18<sup>th</sup> century and machinery to be not original. The mill was that of the Chillington estate (the Giffards). They used to own most of the land around . (I suppose they built it). The Smiths continued to live at the house adjoining the mill for some years but buildings became decrepit and they left. The Haydens bought the mill eleven years ago and [in the course of two years] converted it into a house , making it one with the existing house, which they also renovated extensively. Mr H jnr helped his father do the conversion [he said] "I was about 10 at the time".
  - [At the conversion] the machinery was dealt with as follows- Waterwheel was badly rusted. The upper half was cut off and the lower half is buried under the garage floor. The pitwheel is likewise half buried but the upper half (or nearly half) can be seen protruding through the floor of the workshop. Wallower, upright shaft and other machinery of the meal floor went for scrap. The



stones are distributed round the garden and make various features. The gt spur wheel is embedded in the concrete outside the front door so that its "silhouette" can be seen (effective). The stone nuts (2) make features in the hall, in the stair bannisters. The iron geared ring [that was] on the gt spur wheel is in parts, thought to be lying around the outbuildings somewhere. The tuns: one appears to have gone, the other is in two parts, (or [maybe] one half of each), semicircular, which are used (against the wall of the mill) for flower boxes. No other machinery is to be seen except for two little pulleys in the roof presumably for sack hoist cords, and a wire machine cylinder which was found in the top floor of the mill and is now in a shed.

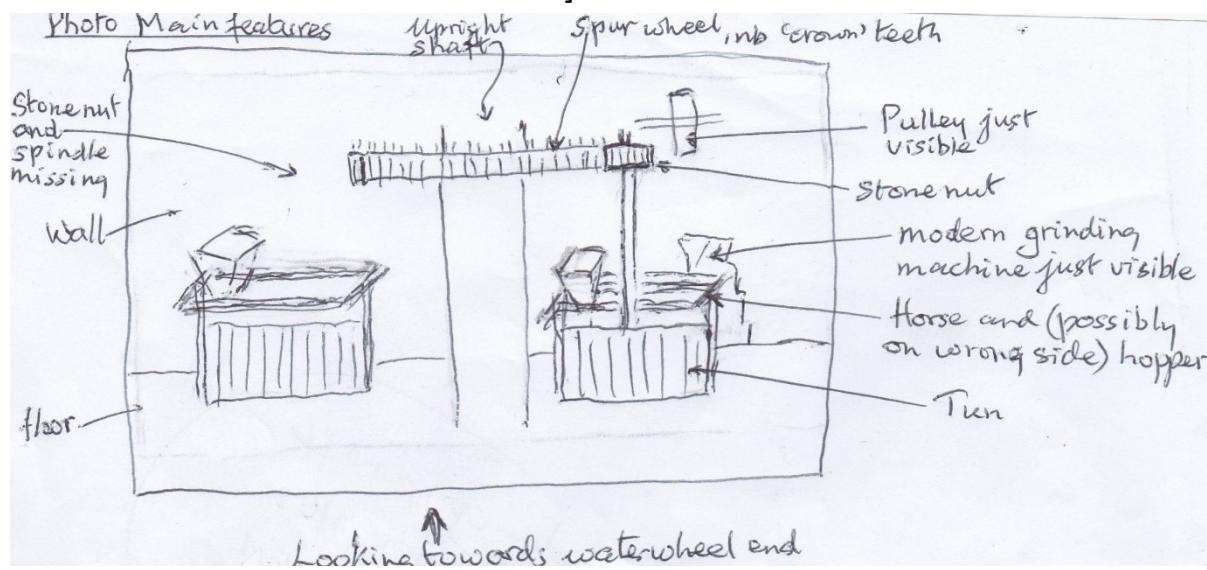
- The building was dealt with as follows-  
Wheelhouse: various doors/windows altered, is now garage. One used to go down 3 steps from door at gable end to get to wheel; now filled up with concrete to height of doorstep (door now a window [as mentioned above]). Meal floor (=ground floor, same floor as waterwheel) part workshop, part house. Stone floor: bedrooms etc. Bin floor had walkway as at Cannock Mill, and walkway, but not bins, has been left in original form, a general room.
- Originally the millpond bank came right up to the mill; on conversion a path was cut between (ie as a gulley, spanned by a bridge for the house). The pond was left as it was. It seems to be about two acres or more; reedy over substantial area. It is now about to be dredged by a contractor using two enormous steam traction engines (made 1912 and converted to diesel since) with a cable and bucket stretched between them. It is rich in fish especially trout, eel and roach. When Mrs Smith was still living in the mill house local boys opened the sluices, flooding the house, water and fish feet deep. Mr H jnr says the pond is flagged with stone underneath [I suspect that was just where there was a significant amount of current, especially where the channel to the waterwheel left the pond]. Was culvert from pond to wheel.

Overflow from pond at corner, mill side, rt looking from mill to pond, with grid to stop fish getting out.

- Waterwheel (all information from Mr Hayden jnr). One part now gone and other part buried [as mentioned above]; within the building, not in separate wheelhouse; overshot, entirely iron, including shaft and buckets about 18ft dm x 4ft wide. [I wonder now whether it was not more like 16ft dm: with the loading door in that gable end there was obviously a floor over the wheel, and I doubt whether an 18 footer would have fitted under.] Apparently there was an inscription on rim, not known what it said. Bronze bearings for shaft. Pentrough was iron. There was a wooden sluicegate, thought to be oak, at the wall. [It is unclear from the notes whether there was a second gate, in the pentrough itself, but one of the gates at least was raised by a lever thought to have been raised in turn by pulley blocks]
- Gear wheels [I did see and measure pit wheel, gt spur wheel and stone nuts] - Pit wheel, still partly visible, about 9ft 6in to 10ft diam, 2 castings (or just possibly more), solid teeth. Gt spur whl, set in concrete, 45½in overall radius, 8 radial arms, solid teeth. Stone nuts, both iron, one casting each, with keyway, 4 radial arms, wooden teeth [cogs], 9½in radius (minus ¾ in [across pitch circle]). Wood of teeth is darkish and slightly reddish; said to be holly by Mr H jnr. On one stone nut at least the teeth are held by nails part driven into the shanks against casting thus >  

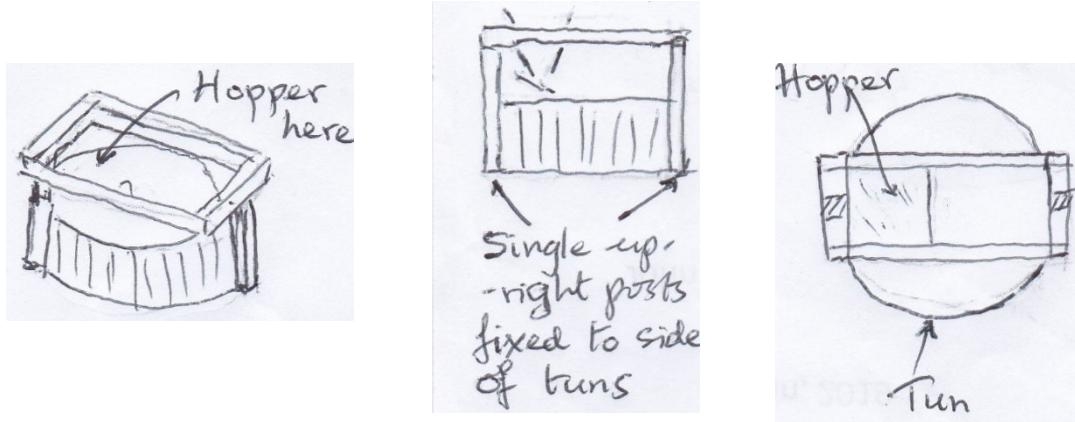
- Crown wheel, geared ring on gt spur wheel. Photo shows it to have been same diam as gt spur whl, i.e edge of its teeth right above spur wheel teeth.
- Upright shaft: round, iron, (Mr H jnr and photo). Hole in middle of gt spur wheel is 1ft 1½in diam and there are keyways outside this diam; from photo too it appeared shaft about 1ft dm or even more.

- [below, sketch (reproduced from notes) of Mr H's photo of the stone floor before house-conversion]

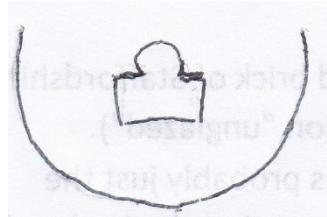


Millstones: 2 pairs burr stones; one pair is 4ft 2 in, other 4ft 4 in dm. One bed stone worn very thin with plaster falling away is a table in the garden; the other bed and one runner are on the ground in the garden. The other runner is reared up attractively near the gate. Photo shows them to be overdrift, on floor, head and tail [= upstream and downstream] of the upright shaft. Mr H jnr showed me some very thick (about 3in) floorboards that had been under stones one having a hole for the stone spindle with notch for grease wedge and marks of "box" of bedstone.

- Also outside the mill is a blue stone 3ft 1½in dm; another stone of 3ft 1½in dm, apparently peak or local, is in the workshop floor where it was found. The eyes are worn, but it would appear that the blue is the runner and the peak the bed.
- Hoppers and horses: [Mr H's] photo shows both hoppers to be small and the horses (wooden) to have been of unusual design [various sketches below, reproduced from notes]



- Tuns, round, wooden, vertical boarded as usual, round hole for shaft and square hole by side in top, thus>
- Sack hoist, in roof, gone. Mr H jnr thought it was manual [unlikely].
- Cylinder of wire machine: 5ft 2in long overall. 1ft 4in internal dm. Various grades of mesh as usual.
- Modern metal corn-grinder – [gone], driven by pulley and belt off offshaft from crown-geared ring; [see sketch above of photo of stone floor; Mr H jnr could remember it too]



3. It is interesting to look at the site of the mill on the OS maps, old and new. The mill is very near the beginning of the stream, less than a mile away apparently. One wonders whether the mill did not often run out of water.
4. Staffs Record Office's catalogue indicates various documents that may contain information on Hyde Mill. There is some historical information on the internet. There is a bit of information contained in the entry for the mill in MV Cooksley's article on Mills of the R.Penk and tributaries in Midland Wind and Water Mills Journal no 15 (1996).

John Bedington, 2021

My photo relevant to this note:

*Colour slide:* Taken 3<sup>rd</sup> Sept 1968 – ST ah 1, The waterwheel end of the mill.