

Note on Consall Mill, Staffs (near Leek). (Flint grinding). Grid ref: SK 0046 4839.

On R. Churnet (apparently via a short stretch of the Caldon Canal). R. Churnet is a tributary of the R. Dove, which runs into R. Trent.

My visit on 2nd October 1965 as a member of a party from SPAB Wind & Watermill Section (whether the main section or the West Midlands branch of it, I forget). Someone high up in the firm that owned the mill (probably a member of the Podmore family) talked to us and told us that there had been three waterwheels there of considerable size, known as Jack and Jill and Old Bill. It was only recently that they, or at least the last of them, had been scrapped. He said grinding pans had been used at the mill, but currently they were only using ball mills (revolving metal cylinders with metal balls loose inside). I am not sure whether they were driven by the water turbine or turbines that I understand had replaced the waterwheels or by electricity, but I think the latter.

The Staffordshire Past Track website has several pictures of this mill. There are various documents about it detailed on the Stafford Record Office website too, and other items on the internet. Mills Archive have a picture, from the Miss EM Gardner collection, of two grinding pans.

A newspaper article on Consall Forge village that came into my possession (probably from the Birmingham Post, or maybe the "Express and Star", probably late 1960's), says "The flint mill is still used, and there is a romance about that too. It is 200 years old, and Wedgwood himself used material from it."

Robert Sherlock's book "The Industrial Archaeology of Staffordshire" (1976) has interesting information on this mill, (under "Ipstones", not under Consall) and implies that a water turbine was then in use.

The mill, or at least part of it, has been house-converted in recent years.

John Bedington,
2020.....

My pictures relating to this note-

B/W photos (negatives (and prints)): Taken 2nd October 1965 – ST 27a Mill seen along the canal; ST27b kilns for calcining flint (rather underexposed neg) >

Colour slides: Taken by my late father Hugh K Bedington in October 1965 – ST
bm 1, the flint calcining kilns; ST bm 2, the mill building.