

Note on **Standon Mill** (Staffordshire, near Eccleshall)

Grid ref: SJ 8233 3505 on a tributary of the R Sow (also spelled “Sowe”), here or nearby called Meece Brook. R. Sow is a tributary of R. Trent.

1. I visited this mill on 31st August 1967. It was then being used as a mill (presumably for provender) by a firm called Smith and Morris. I evidently talked to someone in the office, but otherwise did not see inside the mill, and was given to understand that none of the old water-driven equipment remained.
2. To extract what relates to Standon Mill from the SPAB questionnaire that I filled in in respect of the visit—
 - From my own observation: The mill had three or perhaps four floors and was built of red brick and blackish tiles. There was a half-door at the front and a loading door at first floor level at the front. It appeared to me that the waterwheel had almost certainly been against the east gable of the mill, and the fall of water might only have been about three feet. The water channel to the wheel had been diverted.
 - Information given me by a man in the office: When Smith and Morris came to the mill, the millpond was still there, but otherwise all traces of the use of waterpower had gone. In particular the millstones and gears had been removed and the milling equipment, a plate mill, was driven by a diesel engine. He also said the mill was on a Domesday Book mill site.
 - Information given me by Charles Howell, then miller at Worston Mill (also near Eccleshall) when I visited him there the same day (He was born in 1926 and could remember Standon Mill working): The waterwheel at Standon Mill was undershot, the water coming in at about the 4 o'clock position, and had been used till 1946. The millers at that time were Malkin Bros, who also had had Millmeece Mill at the same time. If I understood correctly, Malkins still in 1967 had some relatives in milling at Luke Street, Burslem. An entry in a 1904 trade directory gives A Malkin and Sons at Millmeece and Standon.

3. According to items on the internet, it appears that the mill is now occupied by Youngs Animal Feeds Ltd; also that a Walter Malkin of Standon Mill is buried in Standon churchyard (apparently died 1952).
4. Staffs Record Office online catalogue shows a number of items on this mill.
5. The Staffordshire Past Track website includes extracts from a study on the mill done between Nov 1946 and Dec 1947 by a trainee teacher, Mr TJ Bayliss, which gives an excellent account of the work of a thriving country mill at the time. Photos of the mill taken in 1933 by Dr Godfrey Malkin and used in the study are shown, namely two of old lorries at the mill, an interior view of “the oat sieve” and one of “the flywheel”, presumably of a diesel engine. No mention of the waterwheel is made in the extracts, the source of power “for all the machinery” being given as “a Baker and Scholes 65 hp diesel engine”. It is not clear when the engine was installed: it looks clean as new in the picture. All the pre-1947 pictures are captioned 1933, but the text describes them as taken in the 1930’s and 40’s. The engine could, of course, have been installed for auxiliary power before becoming the sole source of power.

John Bedington, 2019

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Items relevant to this note;

B/W photos: Taken 31st August 1967 – ST54a, Mill seen from east; ST54b, Mill seen from south west (village side); ST 54c, mill seen from E (slightly more distant view).

Colour slides: Taken 31st Aug 1967 - STs1, front of mill