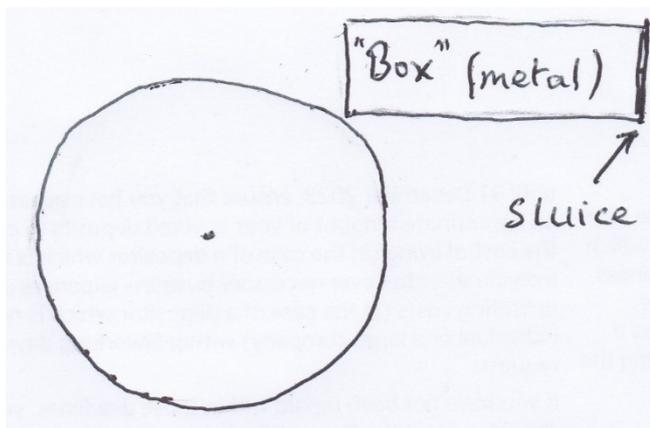


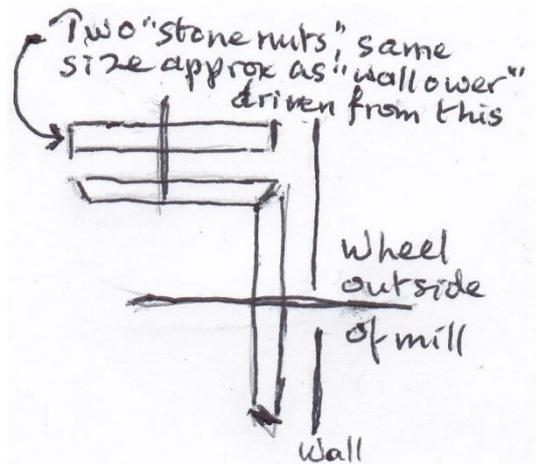
## Note on Coppice Mill, Stone, Staffs

Grid ref: SJ 9082 3470 Scotch Brook, tributary of R. Trent.

1. One of the joys of being a young mill enthusiast in the 1960's was that information on mills was much less readily accessible than nowadays and it was not uncommon to have the pleasure of coming across complete, and even working, mills unexpectedly. One such occasion for me was at Whitsun 1964 when my friend John Hall ("Squeak") and I, both aged 15, were pedalling from our homes in Wolverhampton to the Youth Hostel at Rudyard Lake. Coming down the hill out of Stone we suddenly spotted the mill wheel of Coppice Mill, and went to investigate. A bit further on we saw Hayes Mill and Ivy Mill, which were both working then, though closed for the holiday, and nearer to our destination we saw the picturesque Cheddleton Mill (which had worked till 6 months previously) – all of them flint-grinding mills for the Staffordshire potteries.
2. The layout of the main gears at this mill followed the spur gear pattern typical of a corn mill, and my note (see below) uses the same terminology: but the ratios of the gears were entirely different from those of a corn mill; in fact as seems to have been common in flint grinding mills, the sweeps of the grinding pan must have turned at about the same speed as the waterwheel.
3. I made a note soon afterwards about the mill which (with clarifications in square brackets and rough sketches traced from the note) reads as follows:  
"Exterior. Breast wheel, 25ft dm approx [probably less], 5ft wide approx. Apparently no pond, but wide stream. Sluice [gate] on far end of box [=pentrough] from wheel, operated by long wooden horizontal lever terminating in a vertical iron rod passing through the roof to floor below (single storey



building). Wheel has wooden spokes [arms], metal rim, metal shaft, and metal hub. Wooden “casing” [= sole boards] and non-curved wooden buckets. Instead of millstones are two crushers [grinding pans] for flint and for animal bones. “Wallower” is about same dm as spur gear and so are “stone nuts”.  
History: (according to lady who works at house in whose grounds the mill stands) built 1705; oldest of such mills in the valley. The [ground] flint and bone was sent to the Potteries. A kiln on the site.



Mill last worked 10 years ago. People at the house have a photo of the mill wheel. The mill will probably be taken down.”

4. Happily, the mill was not demolished as envisaged by the lady in 1964, but still stands. When Midland Mills Group visited there in August 2018, the owner, Tony Bonser (not to be confused with Tony Bonson, chairman of MMG!), was hoping to restore the waterwheel to working order.
5. For further details see the booklet “Watermills of the Moddershall Valley” by Barry Job (published by Midland Wind and Water Mills Group, but currently out of print, copy in MA library), various internet sites, including Staffordshire Past Track, Staffs Record office, etc  
 John Bedington, 2020

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 My photos that go with this note:

*B/W photos:* Taken 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1964 - ST 13a Exterior; ST13b Main gears

*Colour slides:* Taken 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1969 – ST av 1 The side of the mill by the road (tail side, waterwheel end)

*Other pictures:* Digital photos taken August 2018 – A. Waterwheel, B. Mill seen along headrace, C. Gears and grinding pans, D. Wash tub, E. Settling arks, later swimming pool, F. Calcining kilns. G. gears and downstream grinding pan