

EBENEZER SAMUEL RUSSELL, 1829-1883.

References: Helen Wilson, letters of John Russell and others.

EBENEZER SAMUEL, the second son of John and Elizabeth Russell, was also born at Chiddingley, East Sussex. He moved to Cranbrook with his family at the age of three, when his father bought Union Mill. He married SUZANNA OYLER, 1821-1903, of Goddards Green, Cranbrook.

After his marriage, they took *Rose Cottage*, now known as *Dane Mead*, in Waterloo Road, where all their four sons, CALEB, GEORGE, SIDNEY and HUGH, were born. In 1871, when his father retired, father and son changed houses. John Russell moved out of the *Mill House*, beside the windmill, into *Rose Cottage*, and Ebenezer took over both the *Union Mill* and his father's house, *Mill House*. Ebenezer also either leased *Hartridge Watermill* for a while, or worked it for his uncle George Russell.

Commercial flour grinding by wind, which had been increasingly unprofitable and was beset by increasingly stringent health regulations, ceased completely by this time at the *Union Mill*. But the firm continued to subsist on grist milling, producing animal feeds for the outlying farms. They also sold on bought-in animal feedstuffs, some of which they mixed with their own grains ground at the mill.

By 1880, the original wide, wooden stage, which was required to set the earlier common sails, was deteriorating. As it was no longer required, it was replaced by a narrower iron structure.

Further innovations were introduced at *Union Windmill* in the hope of making the business more viable. The old Beam engine was replaced in 1890, by a rotary steam engine made by Clarke of Elwick Ironworks, Ashford. However, this proved unsatisfactory and lasted only a year. A Fowler Horizontal engine replaced it in 1891, but proved no better. A Cornish Boiler was installed at this period to increase efficiency. The watermill in Hawkhurst, *Slip Mill*, which had been owned by Ebenezer's cousins, sons of George Russell, came into his ownership during this period.

Ebenezer died young, in 1883, at the age of 53 and is buried in Cranbrook Churchyard. His eldest son, Caleb, had moved away and was milling at various watermills, which he had leased in the Ashford area. George, the second son, had run away to the United States. So, after Ebenezer died his youngest son, Hugh, took over the *Union Mill*, jointly with his third son Sidney. The latter continued to live with their widowed mother in *Mill House* and helped to run the windmill, for Hugh had recently married and had moved to *Slip Mill*, in Hawkhurst.

