

## MULTIPLE MILLS (PL. XXXI, A, B)

In 1653, a case was heard in Chancery concerning 'severall ancient water mills, grist mills and fulling mills to ye number of twenty three, all lying within ye . . . several parishes' of Stonehouse, King's Stanley and Eastington in Gloucestershire. These mills were owned by four men and their wives who complained that part of their water-supply had been diverted into another course to feed other mills and that 'ye complaynants were much damaged and at sundry times in ye year wanted water to drive their mills and by ye slowing of theyr gearing theyr corn was but half ground and theyr cloth spoyled for want of fulling'. During the course of investigations, witnesses mentioned that there were twelve more mills in the parishes concerned. This made the total thirty-five. The stream on which these mills were situated is the River Frome which, after flowing swiftly down the Cotswold scarp in a deep valley, meanders slowly across the Severn plain and finally enters the Severn at Framilode. The parishes of Stonehouse, King's Stanley and Eastington are situated in the Severn plain, only a few miles from the mouth of the Frome and, because of the slight gradient of the river, mills were built some distance apart, so that long leats could be constructed to give a fall on to the water-wheels. The existence, therefore, of thirty-five mills along about five miles of sluggishly flowing river seems most unlikely. A search in deeds and court rolls in addition to investigation in the field revealed that there were at the most fourteen mills on the two branches of the Frome in the parishes concerned.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, on some manors which are described in Domesday Book as possessing several mills, it is not always possible to account for more than half the number stated on the ground or in other surveys and court rolls.

Some time in the early middle ages the gearing in corn-mills was improved and it became possible for several pairs of stones to be worked from one water-wheel. Charters and rolls of the 12th to the 14th centuries are not usually specific about the number of pairs of stones per mill building, but from the 15th century the descriptions become more detailed. In 1450, Katharine Stafford leased 'duo molendina mea aquatic sub uno tecto' at Fromebridge in Gloucestershire to Richard Hille.<sup>33</sup> In 1504, the town corn-mill on the bishop's manor of Salisbury was described as 'four water mills called the Bishop's Mills'.<sup>34</sup> It is clear that in these instances the machinery was the 'mill' and not the building. Thus the 'duo molendini granatici' of earlier charters may well have been two pairs of stones in a single building.

During the 12th century, water-power was harnessed for fulling cloth in England and, by about 1400, water-driven bellows were in use in the iron industry. Shortly afterwards, the tilt-hammer was being used, working on much the same principle as fulling-stocks and, in the mid 15th century, the gig-mill was adopted by the west of England clothiers. In some cases, new buildings were erected or corn-mills converted to these new uses, but in others the new machinery was installed in a working corn-mill and the milling machinery retained. A survey of Sudeley manor, Gloucestershire, made in 1547, records 'duo molendina aquatica quore unum est molendinum fullonic(um). . . viz unu (m) messuage edificate et ij molendina aquatica sub uno tecto'.<sup>35</sup> 'One gryst mill with a fulling mill called New Mill' in Stonehouse, Gloucestershire, was leased by the earl of Arundel to Richard Fowler in 1542.<sup>36</sup> At ironworks, tilt-hammers and water-powered bellows were installed at the same site. E. Straker records ten such sites in the Weald.<sup>37</sup> Ironworking was also combined with corn-milling as at Handsworth, Staffordshire, where

<sup>32</sup> Gloucester City Library (G.C.L.) RF 289.6. The sites are Churchend, Millend, Bond's, Beard's, Stonehouse Lower, Stonehouse Upper, Bridgend, Ryeford, Stanley, Oil, Ebley, Hawkers Mills and two unnamed sites, one near Stonehouse Church, the other near Oil Mill.

<sup>33</sup> Gloucestershire Record Office (G.R.O.) D149/149/172.

<sup>34</sup> *V.C.H., Wilts.*, vi, 90.

<sup>35</sup> G.R.O. D621/E1/9.

<sup>36</sup> G.R.O. D214/6.

<sup>37</sup> E. Straker, *Wealden Iron* (London, 1931), p. 84.

a corn-mill and 'hamer mylle' called Boyshall were granted to Henry Grove in 1549.<sup>38</sup> Iron-slitting and corn-milling were carried out in the same building at Framilode, Gloucestershire.<sup>39</sup>

John Smyth, steward of the Berkeley estate, was probably the first person to call these combined mills 'double mills'. In so doing he used the word 'mill' in its modern meaning: 'In the easterne part of the village of Nybley arise divers springs of excellent sweete water, which united and brought into one streame make a pretty river; whereon are seated seaven tuck mills and grist mills, most of the double mills before the said streame be passed through the village; the like whereto I knowe not within this county.'<sup>40</sup>

In some double mills the different operations were powered by one water-wheel. Dursley Mill (PL. XXXI, A) is the smallest surviving double mill in Gloucestershire. Built of stone and two stories high, it is lit by small mullioned windows. From the 17th century (when the surviving deeds begin) to the 19th century it contained one pair of stocks and a pair of stones.<sup>41</sup> They were driven by an external water-wheel, fed by a long, high leat. The imposing gabled residence, formerly occupied by the clothier, which stands near by (PL. XXXI, B) testifies to the wealth that such a small mill could generate. A deed was drawn up for the erection of a sickle-mill in Staveley, Westmorland, in 1689. A corn-mill was to be built adjacent to the sickle-mill, under the same roof and using the same water-wheel.<sup>42</sup> In other instances, usually in the larger buildings, two or more wheels provided the necessary power. Egypt Mill, Nailsworth, Gloucestershire, was formerly a fulling- and corn-mill.<sup>43</sup> It consists of a single long range, and the two wheels were fed by separate leats.

Double mills were usually run by a single owner or tenant and his family, but there are instances where two or three sections of the building were run as separate enterprises. Ebley Mill, Gloucestershire, is known to have been a double mill from 1537, when a grist-mill called Derehurst's Mill, 'the tuckmill excepted' was leased to William Bennett. Bennett gained possession of the tuck-mill in 1538, but thereafter the mills were sometimes leased to the same tenant and on other occasions separately until the late 18th century, when they were run as one concern.<sup>44</sup>

When double mills were let to separate tenants, problems of sharing the water arose. A fulling-mill in Doynton, Gloucestershire, was leased in 1647 with 'such quantities of water as was conveniently spared from a grist adjacent to the said tuckmill without prejudice or hinderance to the said grist mill when water should be scarce or wanting'.<sup>45</sup> In 1786, the tenant of the grist section of Stanley Mills agreed to draw one head of water for every two heads drawn for the fulling-stocks.<sup>46</sup>

The addition of machinery unrelated to the former function of a building may sometimes be attributed to a depression in the market for the product. During the 16th century Abbey Mill, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, contained four pairs of fulling-stocks, but by 1622, two pairs of stocks had been replaced by stones for corn-milling.<sup>47</sup> John Smyth described the functions of Stone Mills, near Berkeley, as 'ffirst a blademill, after a corne grist mill, after a paper mill, nowe at this day both a<sup>o</sup> 1639, (such have been the alterations for profit)'.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>38</sup> *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Edward VI, v, p. 333.

<sup>39</sup> G.C.L. R135. 1.

<sup>40</sup> J. Smyth, *Berkeley MSS*, III, p. 269.

<sup>41</sup> G.R.O. D1681/T9, D897/1; G.C.L. Box 26, bdl. 15.

<sup>42</sup> John Somervell, *Water-Power Mills of South Westmorland* (Kendal, 1930), pp. 6-7.

<sup>43</sup> G.R.O. D1265.

<sup>44</sup> G.C.L. 289 (21), (24), (43), (45), (46).

<sup>45</sup> G.C.L. Box 65.

<sup>46</sup> G.R.O. D373b.

<sup>47</sup> G.R.O. D674b/L2, T21.

<sup>48</sup> J. Smyth, *Berkeley MSS*, III, p. 362.

It is clear that the word 'mill' frequently meant the machinery in a building and not the building itself. This is proved by the descriptions of several mills as being under one roof in the 16th century. Earlier documents, although not so specific, clearly mean this in some cases. A 'water and fulling mill' in Lincolnshire in 1264-5, which was worth £11 1s,<sup>49</sup> and the two water-mills and fulling-mill at Enfield, which were charged with a rent of thirty-five quarters of corn in 1349-50,<sup>50</sup> are examples. Certainly the case concerning the twenty-three mills cited at the beginning of this note only makes sense if it is interpreted as meaning twenty-three sets of machinery in an unspecified number of buildings. It is perhaps significant that it was stones and stocks, not the mill buildings which were chargeable for tithe. It seems reasonable to question whether Domesday 'mills' should always be regarded as separate buildings.

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#### A CONTRACTION IN PLAN AT ARCHBISHOP CHICHELE'S COLLEGE IN HIGHAM FERRERS, NORTHANTS. (PL. XXXI, C; FIG. 73).

Among the several foundations of Henry Chichele, archbishop of Canterbury, was a chantry college for eight fellows or chaplains (one to be master), four clerks and six choristers at his birthplace, Higham Ferrers, for which he received licence in 1422.<sup>51</sup> The buildings were described as partly built in 1425, and the college functioned from then until it was surrendered to the crown in 1542. After various vicissitudes the fragmentary ruins were acquired by the Duchy of Lancaster in 1911, who carried out quite extensive alterations to the reduced S. range in order to convert it into cottages. At that time the site was a working farm and so it remained until 1948, when the Duchy placed the college in the care of the Ministry of Works, who since then have gradually been clearing the site of later accretions.

An Elizabethan view of Higham Ferrers showing the college almost intact exists,<sup>52</sup> and there is the early 18th-century print by the brothers Buck<sup>53</sup> that shows far more extensive remains than survive today. Contemporary with this view is a description by Bridges,<sup>53</sup> and there is a more detailed description in the *Victoria County History*. The present remains consist of the E. part of the S. range, some of the E. wall of the E. range on the College Street frontage including the gateway (PL. XXXI, c), and a ruinous gable end standing to the north-west. The plan was frankly confusing, particularly the position of the N. range; my wife and I spent three weeks with three workmen in October and November, 1966, in attempting to elucidate it.

Fortunately the stone wall-footings had not been robbed and were always just below the turf. Except at the W. end of the S. range, where the jambs of a doorway survived, there were no interruptions in the 3½ ft.-wide footings which evidently represented a continuous foundation below threshold level. The long ranges clearly had been subdivided by timber-framed partitions as in the contemporary Oxford or Cambridge colleges. The W. wall of the E. range with the jambs of the inner gate arch and the junction of this wall with the S. wall of the N. range came to light in a day or two, and so within quite a short time the plan became clear (FIG. 73, based on a thorough new survey by M. F. Kilburn).

<sup>49</sup> The mill was at 'Calsewat': *Cal. Inq. Misc.*, I, p. 238.

<sup>50</sup> *Cal. Inq. P.M.*, Edward III, ix, p. 311.

<sup>51</sup> A history, description, plan, photographs, and reproduction of the Bucks' view, will be found in *V.C.H., Northants.*, II, 177-79. See also Norman Groome, *Borough of Higham Ferrers, The College* (n.d.). There is a small chartulary, mainly of foundation documents, in the British Museum (Stowe 931). Two visitations have been published by the Lincs. Record Society. For colleges generally and in this area in particular see A. Hamilton Thompson, *The English Clergy and their Organisation in the later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1947), pp. 152 *et seq.* (I owe this reference to Mr. R. Gilyard-Beer.)

<sup>52</sup> Reproduced in M. W. Beresford, *History on the Ground* (London, 1957), pl. xiii.

<sup>53</sup> J. Bridges, *The History and Antiquities of Northamptonshire . . .*, compiled by P. Whalley (Oxford, 1791), II, 178a.