

THE POUND MILL, STAINES.

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Staines is situated at the confluence of the tributary, the Hertfordshire Colne, with the Thames. This Colne receives, a short distance before it falls into the Thames, the waters of the Wraysbury. Before there was any drainage or embankment, this low-lying tract of country was intersected with many other rivulets and ditches (such as Sweeps Ditch and the Bonehead Ditch, which leaves the Colne at Bonehead and falls into it again near Hammond's Farm), and doubtless showed a large number of wooden plank bridges, which would possibly explain the Roman name of *Ad Pontes*; or the river and low-lying approach may have been crossed by pontoons.

Domesday states that the Abbot of St. Peter at Westminster held Stanes for nineteen hides, and that there were six mills and two weirs.

At the Reformation certain of the Abbey property, including this Mill, was appropriated by the Crown; and in 1610, by grant dated 19th May, the Crown conveyed the mill to Edward Ferrers, London, mercer, and Francis Phillips, of London, gentleman, their heirs and assigns for ever. (Patents, 7 Jas. I. Portfo. 16.)

The property is described as:—

"ALL THAT our Water Mill in Staines in our said
"County of Middlesex, together with our House Pightell'
"and two acres of land in Staines aforesaid to the same Mill

¹ Pightell, a little enclosure, usually less than an acre, serving as a backyard or barnyard.

“belonging and with all their rights members and appurtenances by particular thereof of the annual rent or value of Eleven pounds heretofore being parcel of the late possession of the late Monastery of St. Peters, Westminster.

“TO HOLD of us our heirs and successors as of our Manor of East Greenwich in our County of Kent by fealty only in fee and common socage and not in Chief nor by Knights service YIELDING AND PAYING every year to us and our successors of and for the aforesaid Water Mill in Staines aforesaid in the said County of Middlesex with the appurtenances Eleven pounds of lawful money of England.”

The Mill was purchased in 1900 by the Staines Reservoirs Joint Committee, composed of nine members, three appointed by each of the late New River, Grand Junction Waterworks and West Middlesex Waterworks Companies, under powers conferred by the Staines Reservoirs Acts, 1896 and 1898.

The Metropolitan Water Board took over the powers and properties of this Joint Committee under the Metropolitan Water Act, 1902.

The conveyance to the Staines Reservoirs Joint Committee, dated December, 1900, was as from Charles Waring Finch and Waring Finch, millowners, and the premises conveyed were described as an estate or inheritance in fee simple in possession subject to a quit rent of £13 10s. per annum and to certain rights of way. The hereditaments comprised a parcel of land with the water-mills, stream, warehouses, offices, etc., known by the name of the Pound Mills; and also an allowance of water thereto belonging from the Poyle Stream and Stanwell Stream respectively, viz., one allowance of water out of the Poyle Stream (otherwise mill-stream) containing in breadth 18½ inches and one allowance of water out of the Stanwell Stream containing in breadth 2 feet 4 inches, formerly in the occupation of the firm of Finch Rickman and Company, millers and mustard

manufacturers. There was also conveyed a tenement and cottages, a close and meadow and a strip of land between the premises of the Great Western Railway and the Pound Mill over which the railway company, their passengers, servants and others have right of way.

The property was leased for twenty-one years by one Mansbridge from the Staines Reservoirs Joint Committee in 1902. The Board took re-possession in 1912.

In 1915 the Board sold to the Staines Linoleum Company the land and water rights, together with the Board's liability for the proper maintenance and control of the river, including the two "allowances" (that is, the small sluices through which the river water can be drawn into the mill-streams). The Linoleum Company have the power to use water from the Wraysbury River for condensing purposes, and to return the water unpolluted to the River Colne before its confluence with the River Thames above Penton Hook. The Board have the perpetual right to draw water through their intake from the Wraysbury River at Staines Moor as at present, but to give reasonable notice to the Company of their intention to use this intake. The Company have to maintain a full and proper flow from the River Colne allowance. The effect of these conditions is that the Board is freed from the liability to maintain the river banks or the sluices, but at the same time retain their powers of abstraction for waterworks purposes.

The Abstract of Title recites Indentures of Lease and Release of 1813 and 1826 and later dates as to the sales of interests in the water-mills commonly called or known by the name of the Pound Mills and the mill-house and orchard behind and the allowances of water, together with the out-houses, buildings, wheels, gears, and also all that piece of ground where formerly the common pound stood,² situate

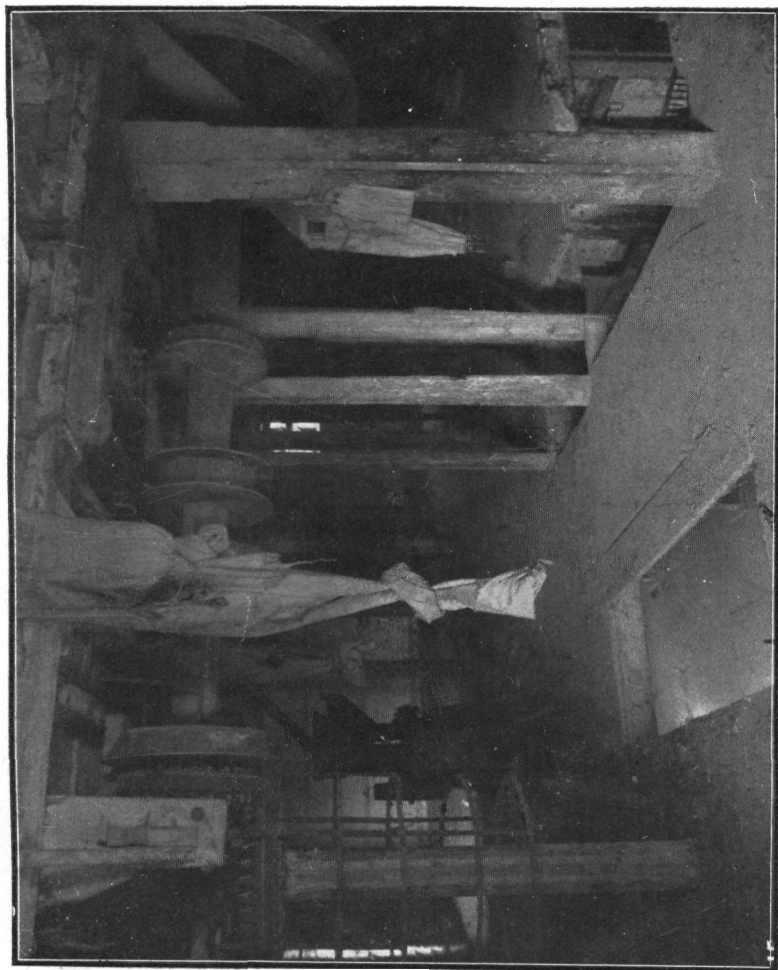
² This settles the derivation of the name of Pound Mill, which has otherwise been attributed to the pounding machinery in the

at the west end of the said mills, as purchased by John Finch deceased of John Taylor, Esq., Lord of the Manor of Staines aforesaid.

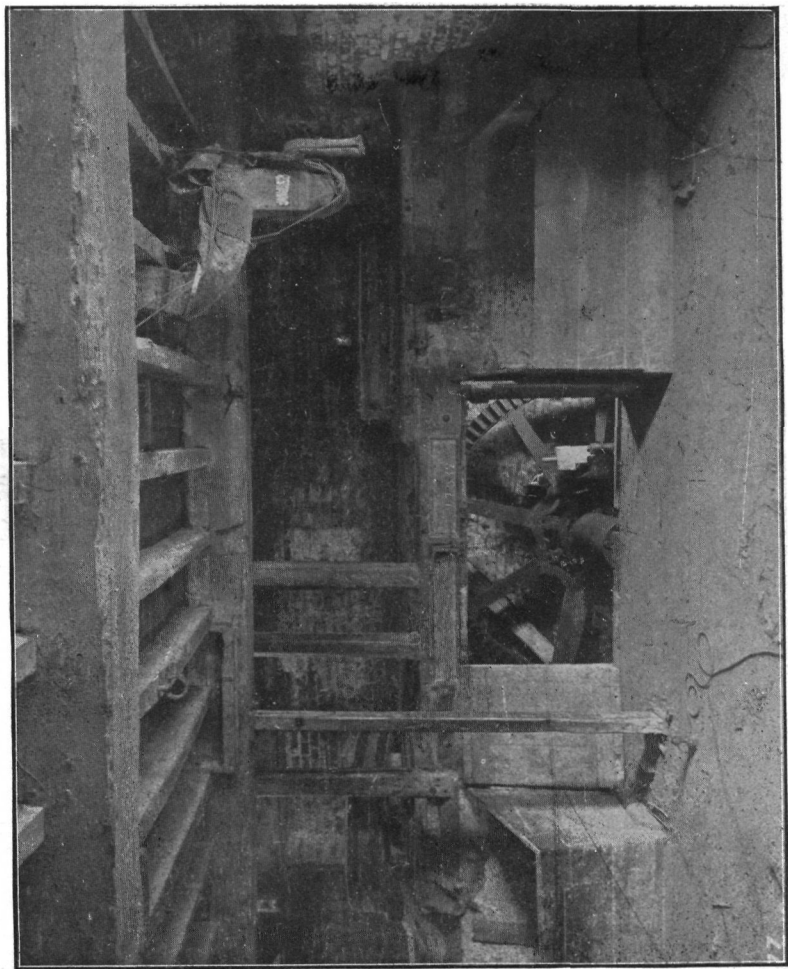
The right of way between the mill and the railway was acquired with other property (now part of the station site) from C. Waring Finch and Waring Finch by the Staines and West Drayton Railway Company (in effect the Great Western Railway) in 1884, when it was covenanted *inter alia* that should the working of the Pound Mill be interrupted or interfered with by the Railway Company to such an extent that the vendors should have to resort to steam power for the purposes of their business at the mills, the Railway Company were, without prejudice to their other obligations, to pay to the vendors the sum of £2 10s. for every day during which steam power was employed. This will account for the existence of a small steam-engine on the premises, which was rarely used.

The mill itself is certainly very ancient. The earliest date discernible is 1712, carved upon the timber casing of the main gearing from the water-wheel to the shafting. The building is divided into two portions; the western side was used as the flour mill and the eastern end for manufacturing mustard. The two water-wheels are each 12 feet in diameter, the larger 4 feet and the other 3 feet 6 inches wide. The wheels are of the breast type—that is, the water is supplied below the crest at the side of the wheel and kept in contact with it by a breasting or casing. Each wheel has its separate sluice, and can drive independently by bevel gearing. This gearing consists of ponderous octagonal wooden shafts hooped together with iron pivots. The gear wheels are remarkable for their wooden teeth, which in the

mill and also to the word "pound," a term in fishing signifying a net or weir, or rather the innermost compartment where the fish were finally entrapped and taken out in a scoup, technically known as "lifting the pound."



ANCIENT WOODEN SHAFTING AND GEARING.



DRIVING GEAR FROM WATER WHEEL. SHEWING DATE. 1712.

older specimens will be seen to have been worn to a razor's edge. The wood of the teeth is probably *lignum vitæ*; some of it may be hornbeam.

There were three ranges of stamper mills worked by cams and tappets in crushing the mustard seeds in iron tubs or pots. One set, cleaned up and in going order, is stored at the Water Board's works, as is also the main shafting. The machinery, all in wood, is remarkable for the way in which the water-power has been utilised and carried all over the building in working the millstones, screening cylinders, stamps or pestles into the tubs or pots, jigging hoppers and sieves.