

HOVERINGHAM WATER MILL

By F. W. PATMORE, R. FINCHER AND N. SUMMERS

THE HISTORY OF THE MILL

By F. W. PATMORE

Milling in Hoveringham is documented back as far as 1086. Domesday Book records the existence of two mills in the manor, which, at that time, was in the tenure of Walter d'Aincourt.¹ Some time after 1140 his descendant, Ralph d'Aincourt, bestowed upon the Augustinian Priory of Thurgarton the whole of Thurgarton and Fiskerton, and all the churches of his demesne, including Granby and Coates in Nottinghamshire, with all their appurtenances.² This grant does not seem to have included Hoveringham. However, Archbishop Giffard of York (1265–79) confirmed to the Prior and Canons of Thurgarton, *inter alia*, the church of Hoveringham,³ which was included in the Taxation Roll of Pope Nicholas IV in 1291.⁴ A Thurgarton Rent Roll of 1328 records, among other things, the mills of 'Barailium' and 'Snelling', as well as two windmills, but under Thurgarton and not Hoveringham.⁵ In 1340, Edward III, in his Charter of Inspection and Confirmation, recited a number of benefactions made to Thurgarton Priory since its foundation, including the mill of Doverbeck by Robert de Cauz, of Snelling Mill on Doverbeck by Ralph de Beauchamp, as well as considerable lands, tenements and rents in Hoveringham.⁶ Whether both these mills were in Hoveringham is not certain, but it seems reasonable to suppose that they were.

When Thurgarton Priory was dissolved in 1538, much of the property passed to William Cooper of London.⁷ Whether or not

¹*V.C.H., Nottinghamshire*, I, p. 274, col. 1.

²*V.C.H.*, II, p. 120, quoting Foundation Charter. Dr. Cox may very well have fallen into error here. The only Coates in Nottinghamshire identified by the Place Names Society is near North Leverton (Cotes juxta Northleverton in 1302 Feet of Fines). The Cotes held by Walter d'Aincourt in 1086 was probably Gotham, where there was a church (*V.C.H.*, I, p. 273, col. 1). This seems the more probable.

³*Ibid.*, p. 123.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 121.

⁵W. A. James, 'The Mills of Doverbeck', *The Lowdham, Gunthorpe and Caythorpe Parish Magazine* (1936).

⁶*V.C.H.*, II, p. 121.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 125.

he received the Hoveringham estates, members of the Cooper family, as will appear later, certainly held extensive lands in the village later in the century. However, in 1546, Henry VIII established Trinity College, Cambridge, and by his ' Charter of Dotation ' ¹ transferred to the College, among other possessions,

the capital mansion of Homerynham [*sic*] manor and all lands etc in Homerynham therewith demised to Richard Northe, the water mill called Snellynge Mill in the tenure of Bartholomew Orme etc

It would appear that this mill was the one mentioned in Edward III's Charter of 1340. Some six years earlier, however, in 1540, the Bailiff of the lands of the former Priory, in a return to the Court of Augmentations,

answered for the 46s. 8d. for the farm of one water mill called ' Barell Mylne ' situated upon the water of Earbecke [*sic*] within the bounds of the parish of Hovyngham aforesaid

It is clear that these two extracts refer to the two mills recorded in the 1328 Rent Roll mentioned earlier as well as the Edward III Charter; what is in doubt is whether they were, in the 16th century, both within Hoveringham. The ' Barell Mylne ' was certainly so, since the 1540 Return specifically uses the phrase ' within the bounds of the parish of " Hovyngham " '. But what about the Snelling Mill? Mr. W. A. James, writing in 1936,² was of the opinion that the Snelling Mill and Caythorpe Mill were identical, apparently on the grounds that the Ormes were undoubtedly a Caythorpe family. But Caythorpe and Hoveringham are adjoining parishes, both mills were served by the same river, and the Trinity College Charter of 1546 does seem to imply that the Snelling Mill was associated with the lands of Hoveringham. It further appears that Bartholomew Orme was the tenant of the Barrel Mill, so that, in any case, a Caythorpe man was in occupation of a mill in Hoveringham. Is it not possible that both were in the parish, and that one was already in decay? Some force is added to this possibility by entries in a survey made for the College in 1576. We read, for example, that Mr. William Cooper

holdeth (in the West Field) ii ' landes ' containing iii ' roides ' lying in ' the myll furlonge '.

¹Trinity College, Cambridge, Muniments (T.C.M.). All references, unless otherwise stated, are to these archives.

²*Loc. cit.*

Again,

the same holdeth one ' pece ' containing one ' roide ' lying ' the overend of the ould myll medowe '.

Or again,

the same Mary Peper holdeth iiii lands containing one acre and a half lying in ' the ould myll field '.

the same holdeth ii lands containing — lying in the ' mylne furlonge '.

This distinction between the Mill Furlong, the Old Mill Field and the Old Mill Meadow and so on is frequently made. As late as 1745, a further survey recorded six Old Mill Closes, totalling in all 10 acres, 2 roods, 1 perch, while it also recorded two Mill Closes in addition to the Mill and Mill Yard and property appertaining. Moreover, a contemporary map, which was almost certainly drawn in connection with that survey, tells us where they were. The Old Mill Closes were on or near the bank of the Trent at the mouth of the Dover Beck, whereas the Mill and Mill Closes lay in that part of the parish nearest Gonalston, and where the present mill stands. The distinction continued as late as 1845, when Robert Faulkes held 7 acres and 22 perches in Mill Close and Pacey, while Ann Baines held 1 acre and 1 perch in Old Mill Close. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that there were still two mills early in the 16th century, but that one may have got out of use by 1576. The 1663 Forest Perambulation seems to indicate that there was only one mill by that time.¹ A further puzzle is presented by a law-suit of 1570, concerning some lands in ' Harrynham ' and ' Flyntham ' and one wind-mill (*unus molendinus ventritius*). What exactly this isolated reference to a wind-mill implies, whether it was in Hoveringham or Flintham, whether it was one of the two wind-mills recorded in 1328 as being in Thurgarton, is not clear. What is clear is that, by 1745, there was only one mill in Hoveringham, which stood on the site of the present mill. It was held by John Flinders who, in 1746, held in all 13 acres, 1 rood and 4 perches for which he paid an annual rent of £10 13s. 8d. It was rebuilt in 1779, and it is that building which exists today.

There is no further information until 1845, when Mr. Henry Teal, apparently agent of the College at that time, made a valuation of the property. The mill was then in the occupation of a Mr. Robert Faulkes, who paid rent as follows:

¹James, *loc. cit.*

				<i>ac. r. p.</i>	£	<i>s. d.</i>
Mill Close	..	..	..	7 0 22	5	12 4
Mill Yard	..	..	..	1 37		15 4
Mill House, Bake-House, Barn, Stables, etc.	..	..	..	1 26	20	0 0
Dam Head	..	..	..	1 2 32	1	14 0
Mill Orchard	..	..	..	31		6 9

In all, Mr. Faulkes held, on what seems to have been an annual tenancy, 50 acres and 10 perches, for which he paid a rent of £111 10s. 8d. In addition, he leased a further 19 acres and 34 perches from the College for £18 6s. 9d. per annum. He was certainly not dependent on the mill for his livelihood and could, indeed, be regarded as a farmer of some substance. A note added to the 1845 survey stated that

Mr. Faulkes' House was rebuilt in 1845. The College paid £100, Sir R. Sutton [who appears to have held the manor from the college] a further £100, and Mr. Faulkes the remainder, upwards of £130. The Estimation was £330 which was somewhat exceeded. The whole also put in repair by Mr. Faulkes.

Later evidence, referred to below, suggests that the cost of the re-building was more than £330, which adds force to the idea that Faulkes was a person of some financial standing. His family remained in occupation until 1881. On 6th April of that year, Mr. Thomas Faulkes was obliged to quit, having, as he himself said, been tenant only nine years. He applied to the College for an allowance in respect of buildings erected or repaired—on moral, if not on legal, grounds. The Senior Bursar requested Messrs. Smith-Woolleys and Wigram of South Collingham, then College agents, to investigate the claim. They reported that Mr. Faulkes had been an unsatisfactory tenant, frequently in arrears of rent. In any case, his claim had no substance, since

the house was built in 1846 [?], the barn dates from the beginning of the present century and the Mill as far back as 1778. The cost of the house was probably about £600.¹

If this figure is correct, then Mr. Robert Faulkes had had to pay some £400, not £130 plus, in 1845, and there does seem force in the claim to compensation in 1881. However, the College proved

¹It may be that Messrs. Smith-Woolleys and Wigram were quoting 1881 prices, but they specifically use the word 'cost', not the phrase 'is worth'. Mr. Teal said that the estimate of £330 was 'somewhat exceeded'.



PLATE 1(a) The Mill and the farmhouse from the ford downstream. The 1816 extension to the house forms the main frontage



PLATE 1(b) The Ford, immediately below the Mill and complex of farm buildings



PLATE 2(a) The Mill and the farmhouse from the north, from the main sluice and looking downstream



PLATE 2(b) Looking upstream from the Mill. The by-pass leat and sluice are in the centre and the main mill stream bank can be seen running to the right

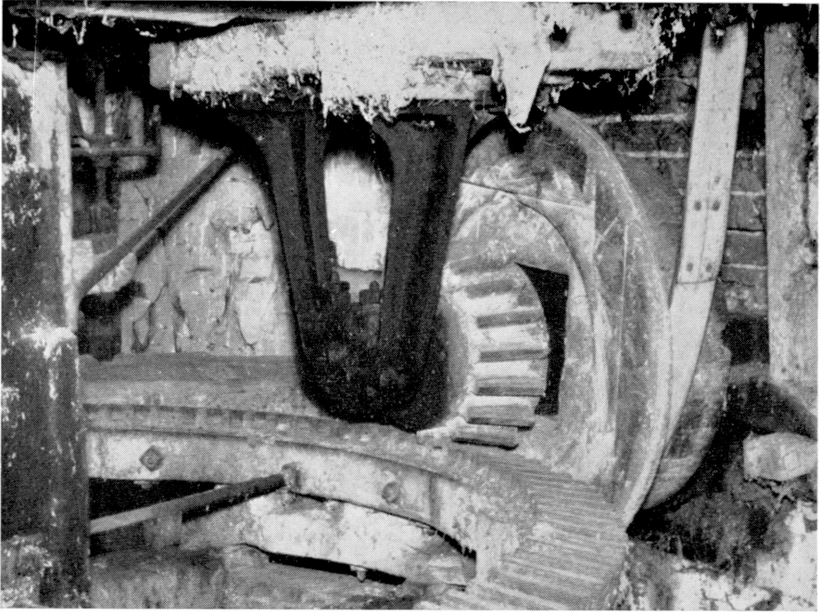


PLATE 3(a) The drive to the sack hoist on the face gear above the gear spur wheel



PLATE 3(b) The face-gear wheel and pinion drive to the dressing machine



PLATE 4(a) The upper driving wheel to the sack hoist mounted on the gable end of the mill.

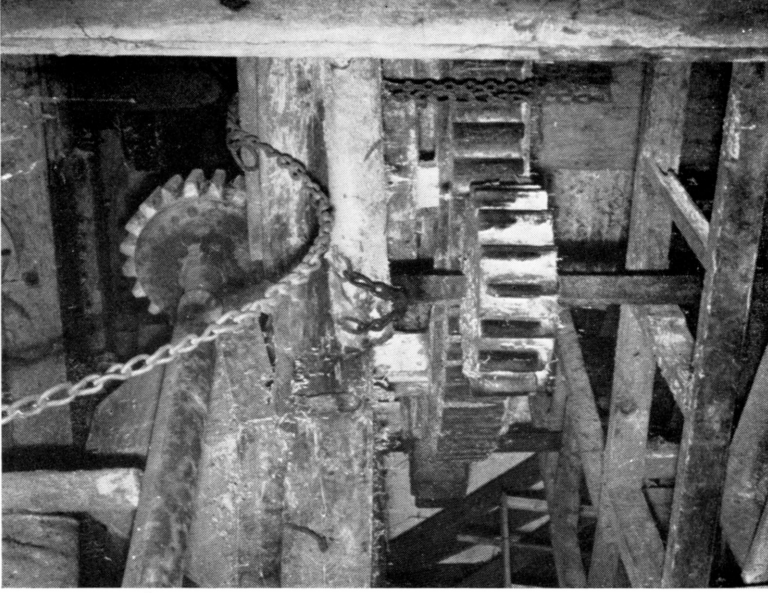


PLATE 4(b) The great spur wheel and two of the stone nuts driving the mill-stones

adamant, and Mr. Faulkes received nothing, though he returned to the attack later in the year, when he argued that his rent had really been too high—he had paid £125 per annum up to 1881, whereas the new tenant was paying only £75.

A clear picture of the buildings comes from a valuation survey made in December 1884. The whole was let for a rent of £15 per annum, including the mill.¹ A footnote, added in red ink, states:

The Mill is only used for grinding 'batches';² the machinery belongs to the tenant.

According to Messrs. Smith-Woolleys and Wigram, the buildings were as follows:

The House contains 2 living rooms, kitchen, 2 dairies and 4 bedrooms. The Buildings are 4 stand cow house, calf pen, barnhouse, cut house,³ 3 stand cow house, 3 stand stable, piggery, loose box, 3 stand feeding stall, fowl house and 2 bay open shed. The Cottage contains living room and 2 bedrooms on the same floor.

The whole was in the occupation of a Mr. William Lee. Two years after the survey, the buildings were insured for these sums, which give some idea of values at that time:

Dwelling House £550; WashHouse [not mentioned above] £50;
Mill & Lean-to Sheds £600; Range of Farm Buildings £650; Cottage adjoining £200.

In the same year the agents reported that there had been complaints from Earl Manvers and from Mr. Francklin about damage caused to their land by flooding due to water being held back by the mill stream. The agents suggested (10th June 1886) that the waste weir should be widened from 3 feet to 6 feet, and that the bridge carrying the road over the stream should be rebuilt with a wider span. The cost was estimated at between £20 and £30. The following November, they advised the construction of a new culvert and sluice, the cost for which was £29 19s. 0d. The work was apparently carried out.

At that point, the records cease. The story has, however, been taken down virtually to the opening of the present century. The mill

¹The reduction in rent from £125 per annum in 1880 to £15 per annum in 1884 is a startling indication of the collapse in the prosperity of British agriculture during the 1880s.

²'Batches' here seems to mean stone-ground flour used for common household purposes; that is, inferior (in 1884) to the produce of a roller mill.

³The cut house or chop house is the building in which fodder is cut for cattle.

was still working during the early years of the present tenant's occupancy. It stands as a reminder of methods which were used for hundreds of years, but which now do not seem to fit into the modern economic structure.

The property is still owned by Trinity College, Cambridge; the present tenants are Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Poole. To them both we are very grateful. The College generously gave access to their records, and offered hospitality during the necessary stay at Cambridge. Mr. and Mrs. Poole have always been most willing to permit visits to be made to the building and to allow measurements and photographs to be taken. Without their co-operation, this survey and description could not have been completed.

DESCRIPTION OF THE MILL AND ITS MACHINERY

By R. FINCHER AND N. SUMMERS

The mill is sited within the parish of Hoveringham and on the Dover Beck, where the boundaries of Hoveringham, Caythorpe, and Gonalston meet (map ref.: 1-inch ordnance sheet 112; grid ref.: 685466). At this point the river is forded by the bridle path connecting the roads through the villages of Caythorpe and Hoveringham (Plate 1b), and the border siting explains the frequent pleas of trespass against the miller in the 16th-century court rolls of Gonalston Manor.¹

The present mill building is dated by a stone set in the south gable B^FC 1778, the machinery being contained in a three-storied structure of brick walls and pantiled roof, with a two-storied wing on the west. The wheel is housed in the single-storey link between mill and farmhouse, the three planned in line and of one build. The house is a low, two-storied brick structure which has been doubled in plan by a similar range built in the 19th century along its east facade, dated by a stone set in its south gable RF 1816 (Plate 1a).

A sluice, about 100 yards upstream from the mill (Plate 2b) diverts the main beck to by-pass the mill and so take off storm water, but there is no impounding or storage reservoir apart from some widening of the stream bed immediately upstream from the wheel (Plate 2a). This area is now greatly reduced in capacity by silting, but even so

¹W. A. James, *loc. cit.*

it is apparent that the present flow of the beck is insufficient to drive machinery except in the wettest seasons. The lack of surface water today in streams of this section of the Trent valley is commonplace, and can be seen at all recorded mill sites of the Dover Beck and the River Greet. It is usually attributed to pumping operations associated with 20th-century mining development and to the lowering of the water table by pumping for domestic supplies from the Bunter Sandstone.

On the upstream side of the mill wheel two sets of gearing operate adjacent hatches worked by vertical spindles and geared hand-wheels to control the flow of water on the wheel (operated from beside the pit wheel inside the mill) or through the channel beside it (operated from the external passage-way beside the wheel house).¹ The 11-foot diameter water wheel is undershot, and is framed in oak with elm boards and paddles driving a pit wheel of iron teeth on an oak frame. The drive is then transmitted through a bevelled pinion (the wallower) to the 6 feet 6 inches diameter great spur wheel below first-floor level. The two pairs of milling stones placed across the building are 4-foot diameter peak stones, and the third pair in the centre of the floor and forming a triangular layout of the whole are 4 feet 6 inches french stones.² All are driven by 2-inch square wrought-iron spindles from wooden pinions (or stone nuts) which, having limited horizontal movement, can be brought into mesh and locked against the spur wheel as required by wedging the driving spindles into slots in the fixed beam above (Plate 4b). The spacing of the millstones, which determines the fineness of grinding, is controlled from fixed beams (or bridge-trees) located on the ground floor; adjustable wrought-iron spindles stand on these bridge trees and pass through holes in the centre of the lower fixed stones to support the upper, or driven, stones at the required tolerances. The french stones milled maize, beans, and peas, and the peak stones milled oats and barley, or sometimes wheat.

Above the great spur wheel, and framed axially with it, a face-gear wheel provides the driving power for a sack hoist and a dressing machine. The power for the sack hoist, which operates from ground to top floors, is from a flexible belt around the pegged pulley mounted

¹Illustrated in David Smith, *Industrial Archaeology of the East Midlands* (1965), p. 218.

²*Ibid.* 2 What the trade call 'peak stones' are cut from Derbyshire millstone grit as whole stones. 'French stones' are imported from France and are built up in pieces bound with iron hoops.

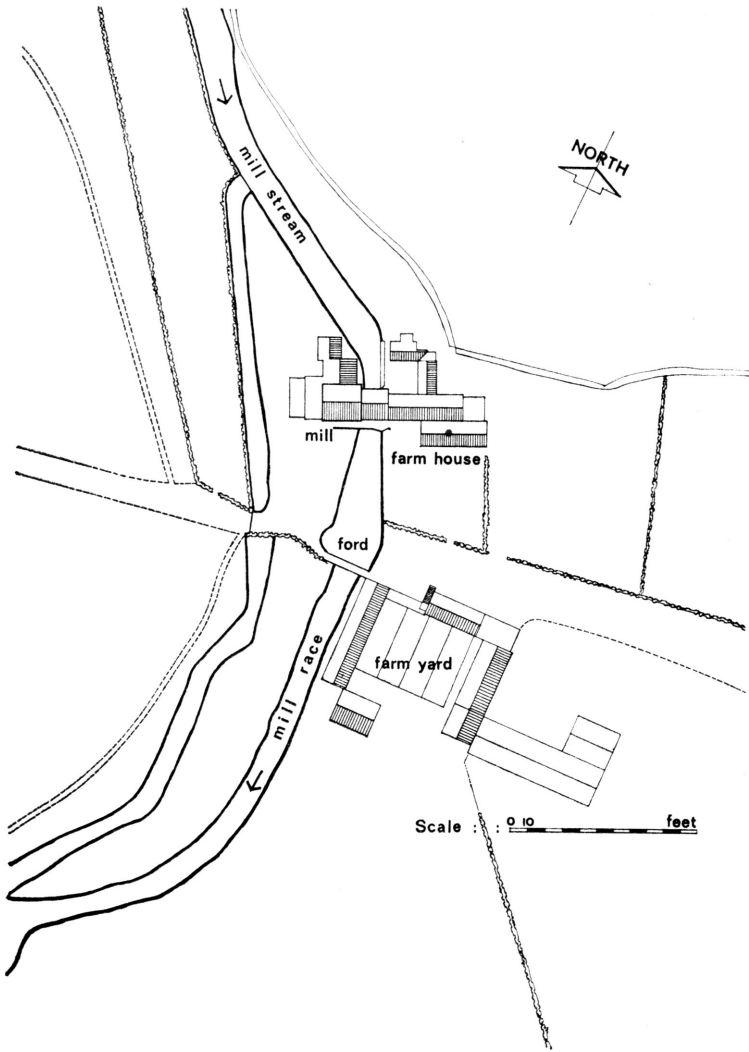


FIG. 1 Hoveringham Mill: Site plan

inside the north gable wall (Plate 4a). The axle of this pulley is extended across the top storey at high level to wind in the hoist rope, the drive being engaged by lifting the whole pulley by leverage so that the belt becomes taut to transmit power. The lower loop of the flexible belt passes around a second pulley which is permanently engaged through a wooden pinion on the face-gear wheel (Plate 3a),

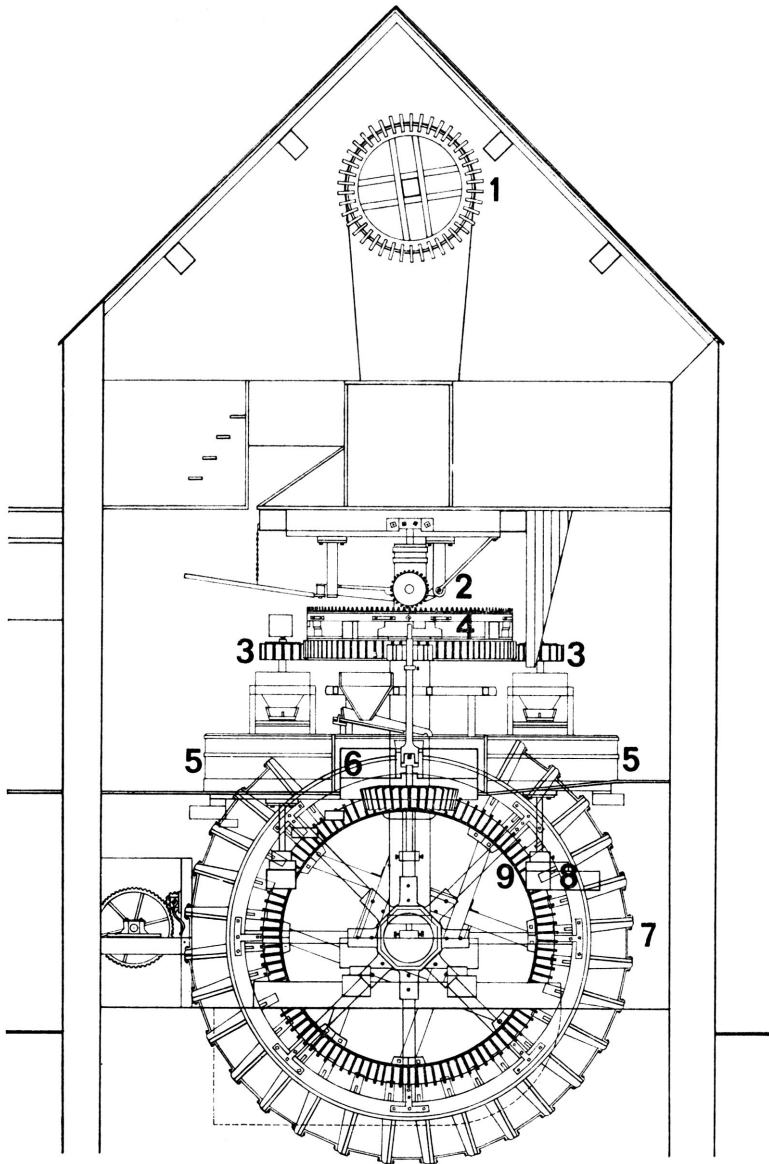


FIG. 2 Hoveringham Mill : cross section

1. Drive to sack hoist. 2. Pinion for drive to dressing machine. 3. Stone nuts.
 4. Great spur wheel. 5. Peak stones. 6. French stones. 7. Water wheel.
 8. Bridge tree. 9. Pit wheel.

the pulley idling within the belt loop until the latter is brought up taut. The dressing machine on the first floor is similarly driven from a wooden pinion on the face-gear wheel, except that in this case the drive may be disengaged by lifting the pinion and driven shaft by a lever in a slotted frame (Plate 3b).

The present tenant, Mr. F. W. Poole, who has been in occupation since 1932, worked the mill until 1961. The modern small hammer or steel rolling mills driven by electricity have now superseded these traditional water- or wind-driven mills over most of the region. The mill building at Hoveringham is at present a corn store, but the milling machinery and equipment remain virtually intact; the dressing machine has disappeared, and some of the hoppers and chutes have been cleared away to provide more storage room, but wood-worm and decay are attacking much of the timber through lack of use. The mill is, however, still the most complete example remaining of the many originally working on the Dover Beck and the River Greet.