

WATERMILLS ON THE RIVER LEN

By ROBERT H. GOODSALL

THE Len, the *Little River* as Harris called it, which flows from a charming spring in Affers Wood, north of Platt's Heath and a mile and a quarter south-west of Lenham, joins the Medway at Maidstone, a distance of eight and a quarter miles as the crow flies and some ten miles by the winding of the stream. Together with its several diminutive tributaries, the Len supported more watermills for its length than any other Kent river except the Loose stream which had no less than thirteen mills along its three-miles course.¹ For this there was a very good reason. Originally all were corn mills, but following the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, when so many foreigners flocked into the county bringing with them their Mystery of Cloth working, many settled in the Weald, at Cranbrook and the adjacent villages, and for their work the Len was, to quote Furley,² “. . . formerly of great service to the clothiers of the Weald, especially in dry seasons, as fullers' earth was found in Leeds . . . and its neighbourhood, where fulling mills were erected, and cloths were brought from different parts of the Weald 'to be thicked' at these mills.”

Of the veins of fullers' earth occurring in the Maidstone area of the county, that at Boxley was the largest and most famous,³ but the Leeds quarry situated immediately south of the Len downstream from the bridge carrying the Leeds road, must always have been an important source of supply. Even today it is occasionally worked. There are, no doubt, other deposits along the course of the stream. The writer found traces of fullers' earth at Polhill in 1939 when superintending the reconstruction of the house after a disastrous fire,⁴ and it occurs also at Fulling Mill.

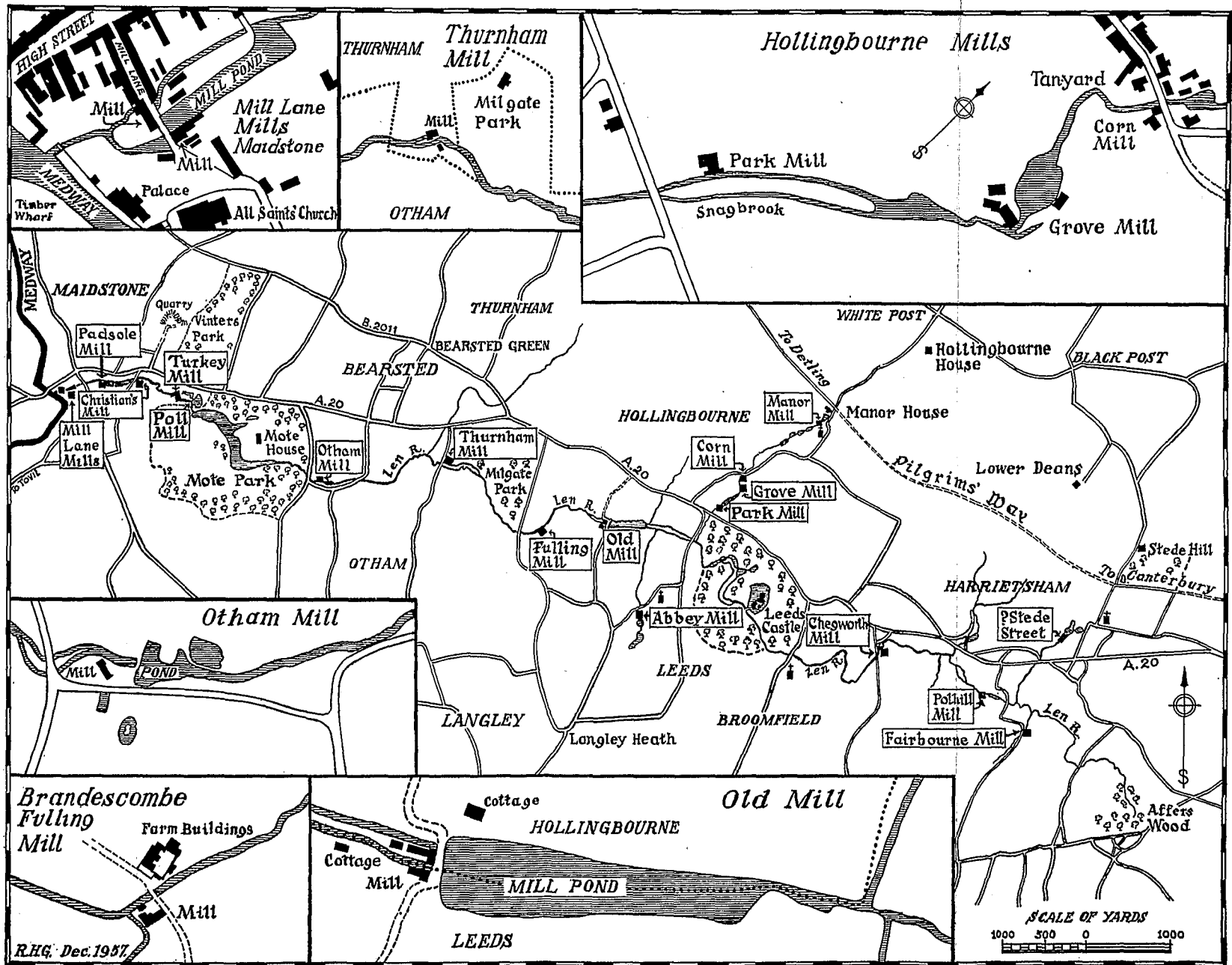
Fullers' earth is a soft friable granular clay having a greasy feel and consisting chiefly of silica, alumina and water. When wetted this breaks down into an impalpable powder which has the property of removing grease from woollen cloths and other fabrics. This cleansing property is entirely due to the alumine content in the earth which varies in colour from blue-grey to yellow, the latter being the more valuable for its purpose.

¹ *James Whatman—Father and Son*. Thomas Balston, p. 39, note.

² *History of the Weald of Kent*, Vol. II, Pt. I, p. 331.

³ *Victoria History of the County of Kent*, Vol. III, p. 331.

⁴ *Stede Hill*. Goodsall, p. 18.



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The operation of fulling—cleansing, scouring and pressing of woollen materials to render them stronger, firmer and closer in texture—was carried out in a fulling mill, operated by water power. In consequence the process was sometimes known as “milling”.

The primitive method of fulling was by foot or beating with the hands or with clubs, but early in the Middle Ages, if not before, mechanical means had been evolved by which two wooden hammers, alternately raised and lowered by the action of a revolving drum fitted with a “lift-hammer” mechanism, dropped on to the cloth as it lay in a trough. From this it was an obvious step to harness power to turn the drum by connecting it to the spindle of a water-wheel. The first fulling mills may well have been those mentioned in the earliest Pipe Roll of the Bishop of Winchester (1208-9).

The principal parts of a fulling mill (to quote from an early encyclopædia¹) are: the wheel, with its trundle, which gives motion to the tree or spindle, whose teeth communicate that motion to the pestils or stampers, which fall into troughs, wherein the cloth is put, with fullers' earth, to be scoured and thickened by this process of beating it.

After the cloth had passed through the fulling mill the nap had to be combed up, and this was done with the fullers' teasel. The wild teasel is, of course, a common plant of our hedges and copses, and the fullers' variety, *Dipsacus fullonum*, is probably a cultivated form of the wild species. Its difference is that the bracts are hooked instead of being straight, hence its value to the fuller. Our member, Mr. John W. Bridge, told the writer that in the past he found the fullers' teasel growing in the vicinity of Maidstone.

Of the mills working on the Len at the time of the Domesday Survey the following numbers are recorded:

Harrietsham	2
Ulcombe	1
Broomfield	1
Hollingbourne	2
Elnothington Manor in Hollingbourne and Bearsted	2½ ²
Leeds	5
Thurnham	1
Otham	1
Boxley	3 ³
Maidstone	5 ³

¹ *The British Cyclopaedia*, 1835.

² “Half a mill” denotes that the opposite bank of the stream belonged to a different owner and in such cases the mill had two wheels which belonged to their respective owners. *Chronicles of Wingham*. Arthur Hussey.

³ Of the Boxley and Maidstone mills not all were on the Len.

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Today the flow of the Len water is probably considerably less than it was once, but it can never have been sufficient to operate a mill-wheel until it reached Harrietsham parish. The two Domesday period mills in Harrietsham survived as working examples into this century, although now one, Fairbourne, is bereft of its wheel and machinery while the other, Polhill, was demolished in 1928. There is a possible third of much later date if, in fact, the charming Tudor period building below the "Woodlands" lake was ever so used. Certainly its position adjacent to this large head of water would suggest the possibility, but there are now no remains above ground to confirm this, as all the surrounding area has been converted into a garden pleasance.

The building almost certainly stands on the site of the first home of the Stedes before the family settled at Stede Hill. "The Steeds were of some note in this parish for more than a century before this (21 Hen. VIII); for *John Steed, senior* was resident here in 1460, when by his last will he devised his principal mansion at Steed-street in this parish, to *William* his son."¹

Starting with this doubtful mill site it will be convenient to consider in turn each mill downstream from this point to the Medway conflux. In addition to those which are still standing or, where they have been demolished, there are visible remains, others such as Christians at Maidstone have entirely disappeared.

In a survey, undated but made probably about 1656, of the manors of "Haresham and Harbleton," one item reads, "A New brick house, 2 water corn mills and three acres of land in y^e occupation of Will. Boyce at y^e yearly rent of 9^l 0.0." The two water corn mills referred to must almost certainly be Fairbourne and Polhill.

FAIRBOURNE MILL

From the south the Len is fed by a small brook rising in a quarry spring immediately above Fairbourne Court. This not inconsiderable head of water was reasonably sufficient to turn a mill wheel, although at some seasons it was necessary to pause for an hour or so to allow the mill pond to fill up. The Fairbourne mill still remains, but it has been shorn of its wheel and machinery. It bears the date 1796 and in construction is typical of its period, brick walls to the ground floor, timber framing and weatherboard above and a tiled roof. The wheel was overshot and operated two pairs of stones.

In the possession of Messrs. L. J. Clark & Co. Ltd. of Lenham is a "Purchase Ledger of Alexander Bottle, Corn Merchant and Miller of Dover and Fairbourne Mill, Harrietsham," dated 1782. The Bottle family was established at Harrietsham at least as early as the beginning

¹ Hasted, Vol. II, p. 456, note.

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of the seventeenth century. Alexander died at the age of 90 in November, 1797, and he must have been responsible for rebuilding the mill during the last year of his life. He is chiefly remembered as a skilful local cartographer, and a number of his beautifully drawn maps survive, including one of the parish in the writer's possession.¹

This ledger came to light among the papers of the late Thomas Clark (1838-1929) who worked the mill during the nineteenth century. The entries run from 1st January, 1782, to 9th December, 1784. As evidence of the price of wheat in those days the opening entries may be quoted :

Jan. 1.	Stock in hand unsold	£41 0 0
,, 22.	From Geo. Viney, Harrietsham. p. 8½ q ^r wh ^t at 37 per q ^r . w. 56 lbs ²	15 14 6
,, 22.	From Jn ^o Everfield, Harrietsham p. 5 q ^r wh ^t at 40 ^s p ^r q ^r w 59 lbs	10 0 0
,, 26.	From Tho ^s Weeks, Liverton p. 5 q ^r wh ^t at 40 ^s per q ^r w. 59½ lbs	10 0 0

Not unnaturally many local names figure in the entries over the two years as well as some farming at a distance. Tho^s Tassell of Ulcomb, Ed^w Chamber of Grafty, Robert Cuckow, Bocton Mallard, Rob^t Ellis of ditto, Jn^o Ashbee of Pluckley, Tho^s Filmer of Lenham, W^m Shrubsole of Harrietsham, Jn^o Pain of Throwley to quote a few. The gross amount paid for all the wheat bought during the year 1782 including "charges for carrying out flour £10.10.0" amounted to £277 18s. 6d.

Alexander seems also to have been engaged in general farming, for a slip of paper preserved in the ledger reads, "Sir, Please to cry for me 3 West Country Sheep Stray'd out of the Ground of Alexander Bottle of Harrietsham marked fresh with a B in a Roundall on the near side and likewise on the Rump. Stray^d away on Friday 7th of this instand. Whoever shall give tidings of them so as to have them again shall have reasonable satisfaction." There is no date to this memorandum and nothing to indicate who the village crier may have been.

Milling ceased to be carried on at Fairbourne about 1900.

POLHILL MILL

In 1542 John Stede, representing one branch of the Stede family of Harrietsham, acquired Polhill which earlier had belonged to the Polehilles. The property comprised a "mansion house," numerous farm buildings including no doubt the mill, although this is not specifically mentioned, and a considerable acreage of ground. This John

¹ See *Stede Hill*, pp. 148-9.

² Much later the standard weight of a bushell of wheat was fixed by law at 63 lb.

and his son Thomas, to judge by the Inventory made at the time of the former's death, were actively engaged in "husbendrie."¹

By his will Thomas Stede left to Matthew, one of his younger sons, "Holme Mill meade" which is shown on the Alexander Bottle map already referred to as Holmemill Green. This led the writer at first to suspect that in the immediate vicinity a water mill once stood, although there is no local memory of this. Close by a convenient stream flows down from the Synden spring to join the Len, and the large lake in the grounds of Park Wood which was artificially created within comparatively recent memory might have absorbed what was originally a mill pond. However, reference to the map of the Hundred of Eyhorne which accompanies the folio edition of Hasted's *History* seemed to dispel the suspicion of a mill having ever existed by Holme Mill Meade, for at the position of Polhill appear the words "Home Mill."

This seemed to be sufficient proof that Polhill Mill and Holme Mill were in fact one and the same, but when turning to the same map used in the second edition of the *History* it appears that the word "Home" has been deleted. Why? Had the descriptive prefix been an error? Incidentally, careful examination of the two impressions of the map under a magnifying glass seems to show that the original engraved plate used for the first edition was re-used for the second but with many alterations skilfully added to bring it up to date, the new toll road, for example, and many additional place names. Other maps of the period or earlier throw no additional light on the matter, but Mudge's, pre-Ordnance, Survey of 1801, which may be relied upon for considerable accuracy, marks "Stone Mills" at the exact position where Holme Mill might reasonably have been expected to have stood. Here, in the absence of additional evidence, the problem must be left, but it may be significant that Wallenburg gives the derivation of Holm Mill as OE hol(h) "hole hollow" +myln "mill" with early references from "de Holemiln" 1254 to "ate Holmelle" 1332. Certainly the description "mill in the hollow" might apply to Polhill, while the earlier date would indicate a Domesday site.

Sir Edwyn Stede, onetime Lieut. Governor of the Island of Barbados, while still in the Colony purchased Polhill as well as other lands and property in Harrietsham to add to the main Stede Hill estate which had been lost to the family owing to his father's support of the Royalist cause.² Thereafter down to the Baldwin family in the nineteenth century Polhill formed part of the Manor and the tenants in consequence paid quit rent. Unfortunately the manorial records are only fragmentary and mainly in the form of the Stewards' memoranda. Never-

¹ *Stede Hill*, p. 22.

² *Ibid.*, p. 100.

theless they do provide evidence of the names of occupiers of the house and mill from the middle of the seventeenth century.

The earliest entry is 1668 when the Homage of the Court Baron presented "that John Ruffen who held of the Mann^r One Mess: one Water Mill two peices of land and a Lane called Hillyfield and Jacksbrooke and two other peices call'd Penfield and Mill Dane late y^e land of John Watts by the yearly rent of 1^s 8^d since y^e last Court alien^{ed} to Paul Grant gent. who present in Court did his fealty and suit".

In 1690 the death was reported to the Court of Peter Theobalds gent. who had held the same. In 1700 the tenant was Stephen Weeks who died in 1726 and was succeeded by his son, John. At the 1824 Court the Homage presented the death of Thomas Martin who had held "by the service of fealty suit of Court" the Polhill estate as in the time of John Ruffens, "heretofore belonging to John Weeks and afterwards to Thomas Weeks formerly in the occupation of George Cronk and now of John Brazier."

A Lease for 21 years from Michaelmas, 1779, is among the Stede Hill muniments whereby Mrs. Elizabeth Turner, the widow of William Horsmonden Turner, the then lady of the manor granted Polhill with its mill to Mr. Thomas Knight.

The old photograph of Polhill Mill (Plate II) would suggest that the building which was demolished in 1929 dated from the eighteenth century or possibly late in the seventeenth century. The iron water wheel still remains as a garden feature.

CHEGWORTH MILL

From Polhill to within fifty yards of Chegworth Mill Pond, the Len forms the parish boundary between Harrietsham and Ulcombe. The boundary passes to the north of the pond so that Chegworth Mill is in Ulcombe parish and almost certainly represents the Domesday period site. On the derivation of the place-name Wallenburg comments: "I . . . interpret the name of Chegworth as the enclosure full of stubs or the like or as the enclosure belonging to *Ceagga*, a man perhaps so nicknamed because of his stumpy thick-set figure." Variant renderings range from "de Chaggewurd" 1200 to "de Chegworth" 1336.

A series of deeds in the Kent Archives Office¹ concern the ownership of Chegworth Mill in the middle of the seventeenth century. An Indenture of the 20th November, 1658, recites that "a messuage and mill commonly called the lower Mill²" situated in the parish of Ulcombe at a place called Checkwood "late purchased by Sir Cheney Culpeper"

¹ U 23 T 53.

² A second mill in Ulcombe parish was worked by a stream flowing down to the river Beult.

of Leeds Castle, co. Kent, Kt., had belonged to Thomas Hatche¹ and Richard Austen. The Indenture between Sir Cheney Culpeper and Thomas Stiles of Ulcombe, yeoman, is concerned with certain rights of way appertaining to the owner of the Mill "for all tyme whereof the memory of Man is not to the contrary" rights to "goe ride and drive and carriage with Wagons Carts Horses or otherwise at all tymes in the year from the said Messuage and Mill into over and through severall p^{cells} of Land and Closes" the property of Thomas Stiles. One such way led through a field called "Redhill" from the Mill "unto the Comon highway there from Chechwood towards Ulcombe Church, another through a wood called "Chequerwood" from the mill to two pieces of land called "Rushyfield" also "over and through a certain lane and the backside or backclose of him the s^d Thomas Stiles." By agreement Sir Cheney Culpeper agreed to accept only one way through the closes and over or through "two Hommetts or litle pieces of land of the s^d Thomas Stiles called his hempeplatt and his hopplot and into over or through the backside of the said house."

With so many mills established along the Len the control of the flow of water must have been an ever-present problem, and one which might easily occasion friction between one miller and another. It is therefore interesting to learn from another deed in the same series that legal and binding agreements were entered upon laying down the duties and rights in this respect of both millers and landowners.

This deed is an Agreement dated 10th Nov. 1657 between John Pecke of Ulcombe, miller and *the present owner* of a Corn Mill at Checkwood in Ulcombe, and Sir Cheney Culpeper. The use of the words "the present owner" suggest that Sir Cheney, who ten days later became possessed of the property, was retaining Pecke as his tenant for the agreement was to last for seven years. It has five clauses :

First The said John Pecke grants unto the said Sir Cheney Culpeper the right of having from time to time and at all times hereafter all the waste water not used for grinding corn to pass over a floodgate or penstock standing on the lands of the said Sir Cheney.

Secondly For the better assurance of the overplus the said John Pecke doth covenant and agree that he will at all times keep the watergutt of the said Mill pond soe pende up and at such height that the overplus of water which formerly hath and hereafter might pass through the waste gutter belonging to the mill pond may freely run over a flood gate or penstock standing on the lands of Sir Cheney Culpeper.

Thirdly. The said John Pecke will "at all tymes keep y^e mill gutt and y^e gutt that lies over the wheel of the s^d Mill with water soe close pende up and shut whensoever the said mill doth not grind any

¹ Probably the bell-founder and father of the more famous William.

corne that the water at the tyme when the mill gringes any corne passes or runs upon the wheel of the said mill from tyme to tyme and at all tymes may freely passe and run over the said ffloodgate or penstock standing in the lands of the said Sir Cheney Culpeper.

Fourthly. In case by reason of any great floode or raine hee (John Pecke) shall bee forced for the security of the bay belonging to the said millpond to draw up or open the said water gutt in this case the said John Pecke shall draw upp and open the said waste gutt in such manner and quantity as at other tymes when the mill doth not goe.

Fifthly. The said Sir Cheney Culpeper on his part agrees not at any tyme hereafter to draw up or open his penstock or floodgate whereby to draw downe the water lower than its ordinary height or any way hinder or deprive y^e said mill of its ordinary strength for y^e grinding of corne.

Chegworth is the only mill left on the Len which is still used for grinding corn by water power, although at times an agricultural tractor supplements this. The present iron overshot wheel is of nineteenth-century date. The building, which is of typical Kent type, brick and Kent rag walling to the first floor, timber framing and weather boarding above and tiled roof, was erected at three different periods. The oldest part which houses the machinery is probably of eighteenth-century date. A century ago the mill was worked by William Taylor who operated other mills on the river, including Padsale in Maidstone which he built as a flour mill.

LEEDS CASTLE MILL

The Domesday Survey records one mill in Broomfield parish. This was almost certainly the mill which formed part of the Outworks of the Castle. Wykeham Martin inclined to the view¹ that Hamo de Crevecoeur was the builder of the Barbican and Mill rather than his father Robert. "It never can be supposed that the first Robert de Crevecoeur built the mill in 1100." But as Domesday was completed in 1086 and if this mill represents the one recorded in Broomfield, it must either antedate Robert's work or have replaced an earlier building.

The mill stood abreast one of the causeways leading to the Inner Barbican, the weakest of three approach embankments. A channel conveyed the water to the mill wheel from the adjoining moat, which, of course, has always been fed by the Len, a deep pit being constructed to contain the wheel. While originally the mill was intended to grind corn, by the fourteenth century on the evidence of *Patent Roll* (Chancery) 46 Edw. III, m. 18, it was possibly adapted for fulling. The following is a translation :

¹ *Leeds Castle*, p. 71.

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For John de Beverley The King to whom, etc., greeting. Know ye that, whereas on the seventh day of March in the forty-first year of our reign over England (A.D. 1368) by our letters patent we granted and to farm demised for us and our heirs to our well beloved Thomas Burgeys, of Smarden co. Kent, one fulling mill with the appurtenances, which the same Thomas built on the water issuing from our out-pool next our Castle of Leeds, and three acres of land with the appurtenances in our manor of Leeds, through the midst of which the said water runs, To have and to hold (etc.) rendering for the same thirty-three shillings and four pence by the year at the feasts of Easter and St. Michael in equal portions. . . .

In witness whereof Witness the King at Westminster
on the 26th day of October.

By Writ of Privy Seal.

It must be admitted that the statement that the fulling mill was built by Thomas Burgeys is difficult to reconcile with the apparently earlier date of the Castle mill. Perhaps Burgeys converted this to fulling, or alternatively he may have erected another mill lower down stream, all memory of which has been lost, unless possibly "Old Mill" on the parish boundary between Hollingbourne and Leeds was his work.

HOLLINGBOURNE MANOR MILL

From the foot of the North Downs a tributary stream not much more than a mile and a quarter long known as Snakebrook or Snagbrook flows down to join the parent Len a little to the east of the Leeds road bridge. This water provided power for four mills.

The stream originates at the mill pond lying immediately south-west of the Manor House. The octogenarian occupant of the existing mill house told the writer that no less than sixteen springs maintain the water level of the pond which the deeds shortly to be referred to give as "3 roods 13 perches in extent."

It is most unfortunate that the Fairfax-Wykeham Martin muni-ments of the Leeds Castle Estate, although believed to be still in existence, are not available for research, for they would no doubt throw much light on the early history of the mills in Leeds and Hollingbourne when the land was possessed by the Culpepers and earlier owners. However, luckily at the County Archives Office there is one bundle of deeds¹ which cover legal transactions following upon the death of William Culpeper, concerning a leasehold interest in the "water mill, house adjoining and the mill dam" which became vested in John Spencer Culpeper, William's son, and towards the end of the eighteenth

¹ U 285 T. 14.

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century passed with the Manorial rights, the manor house and some land to Francis Child, the great London banker. Very briefly the story is as follows :

By his will dated 3rd February, 1709, a certain Abraham Beake of London, merchant, gave the sum of £2,000 to his wife Margaret and his kinsman, Samuel Winder, to be laid out in the purchase of lands and tenements for the use of his niece, Elizabeth Gill,¹ then Elizabeth Colepeper, wife of William Culpeper, during her life and then to her first-son. This bequest led in 1717 to a cause being heard in the High Court of Chancery when it was decreed that the £2,000 should be laid out in the purchase of land pursuant of Beake's will, and by a subsequent order of the Court of 8th July, 1727, it was directed that South Sea Stock and Annuities (in which the £2,000 had been invested) should be sold and paid to Thomas Freke, who was a trustee of the estate, upon his executing conveyances of two leasehold properties then held of the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury, one being of the site and demesnes of the Manor of Hollingbourne and the other of the Mill, Mill House and Dam. It was further recited that William Culpeper and Elizabeth his wife were dead, having left issue, John Spencer, Thomas, Francis, Elizabeth, Cornelia and Anne.

The end of the Culpeper association with the estates is told in an Indenture of 19th August, 1762, by which the three surviving trustees of the Marriage Settlement of John Spencer and his wife, Ruth, who was "the youngest daughter of Nathaniel Webb of the Island of Mountserat in the West Indies" in consideration of the sum of £4,732 13s. 10d. (which sum was applied to paying off a mortgage on the property) conveyed the two leases to Francis Child, the London banker. In 1839 the lessee was the Earl of Jersey, and in 1868 the Hon. Frederick William Child Villiers and Charles Fane esq.

The existing mill building with the adjoining house seemingly precariously situated below the high mill pond dam, is of brick with a slate roof. The mill has not worked for many years, but the water-wheel, completely overgrown by vegetation, is still in position, the water cascading unchecked to create a picture that would surely have rejoiced the eye of an early topographical artist. The mill was probably always used for grinding corn, and there is no evidence to suggest that fulling was ever carried out here.

CORN MILL, EYHORNE STREET

The six-inch Ordnance Survey map of 1898 marks this as "Corn Mill (Disused)." The building, a small one, stood immediately downstream from the Eyhorne road bridge on the east bank of the stream.

¹ Possibly a relation of George Gill, the Boxley papermaker.

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There is little if any evidence of this now. The Tithe Assessment Schedule of 1839 provides the information that the then owner was James Bunyard, and the occupier Symonds, who, no doubt, worked it in conjunction with the Abbey Mill. The property was described as "Corn Mill, House and Yard."

GROVE MILL AND PARK MILL, HOLLINGBOURNE

It will be convenient to consider these two mills, the one a little down stream from Eyhorne Street and the other just north of the main A20 highway, together.

During the whole of the nineteenth century and probably from the early part of the eighteenth century also, these mills were used for paper making, the highest up-stream mills to be devoted to the trade.

With the decline of clothworking in the Weald the Len fulling mills ceased to be needed for the purpose and, as will become apparent later, a number were converted or rebuilt to operate as paper mills. The moving spirits in this new local enterprise were Richard Harris, George Gill and his son William, and the Whatmans, father and son.

The long and somewhat involved story of these papermakers and their descendants has been told very fully in two books, *James Whatman—Father and Son* and *William Balston, Paper Maker*, by Thomas Balston. It is unnecessary, therefore, to cover ground already so amply traversed except to outline the story and add certain details that have come to the writer's notice.

In his recently published and exhaustive work *Paper Mills and Paper Makers in England 1495-1800*,¹ Dr. Alfred H. Shorter gives a number of references to paper makers operating in Hollingbourne parish during the latter part of the eighteenth and the early years of the nineteenth centuries.

A certain James Austen of Chatham insured his new-built paper mill in Hollingbourne in 1762 which two years later was in the tenure of William Avery, paper maker. Robert Williams, paper maker, occupied a house in Eyhorne Street in 1764 and in 1775 "insured his utensils and stock in the paper mill." It is not possible to say which of the two mills this might have been.

In 1803 the firm of Stroud and Newman were working "Cotterams Mill" (perhaps to be identified as Grove Mill), while in 1816 Thomas Stroud and Daniel Denny Newman were described as "master paper makers" of New Mill.

The Tithe Assessment schedule shows that in 1839 Grove and Park Mills were being worked by Edward and Charles Horsenails, paper-makers. The owner of Grove Mill was Richard Barnard with the

¹ Published by the Paper Publications Society, Hilversum, Holland, MCMLVII.



Fairbourne Mill.



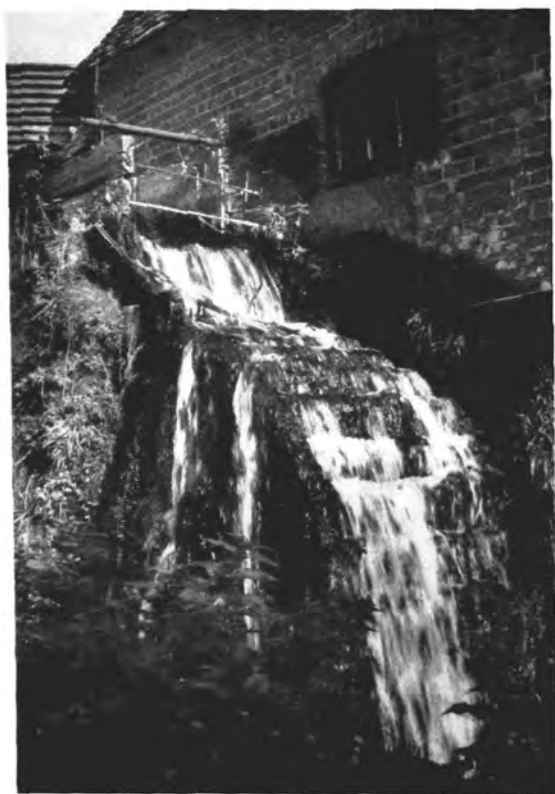
Polhill Mill, Harrietsham, about 1905.

PLATE III



Chegworth Mill.

PLATE IV



Hollingbourne Manor Mill.



Leeds Abbey Mill.



Thurnham Mill.

PLATE VII



The Spillway, Thurnham Mill.

PLATE VIII



Turkey Court, Turkey Mill.

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Horsenails as tenants, the property being assessed in three parts, Office and Mill, Paper Mill and Mill Pond.

At the same period Park Mill was both owned and occupied by the Horsenails, the property comprising a Paper Mill, Cottage and Garden.

A specimen of commercial wrapping paper preserved in the Maidstone Museum bears the printed inscription :

Park Mill
The New Hollingbourne Mill
Paper Mills Company Ltd.
Kent.

As Limited Liability Companies only came into being with the passing of the Companies Act of 1862, this paper must date from the late nineteenth century. It is valuable, however, as showing that "The New Mill" was an alternative name for Park Mill and may have been applied to differentiate it from "Old" Hollingbourne Mill.

The buildings of both mills have been demolished, but in each case some base walling remains. Grove would seem to have been the larger of the two establishments. Here the walling was of Kent ragstone laid in hard mortar of lime mixed with stone chippings. It would appear to be work of some considerable age, but no documentary evidence has been forthcoming to show if, originally, a corn or fulling mill stood on the site, and that such building was later adapted to paper making. Neither is it possible to say when either of the mills was first so used. In the case of Grove this may well have been when Richard Harris, as will appear later, was working at Old Mill. Park or New Mill perhaps represents James Austen's building of 1762.

LEEDS ABBEY MILL

On the northern slope of the Stone Hills immediately above the site of St. Mary and St. Nicholas's Abbey is a large spring-fed lake, surprisingly positioned at the 300 ft. contour level. From this water a brook flows down to the Len three-quarters of a mile away, and just before reaching Leeds village street provided power for the Abbey Corn Mill.

As a building this is perhaps the most interesting of all the remaining mills on the Len. It ceased to work some thirty or more years ago and has unfortunately become somewhat dilapidated and considerably overgrown, in common with the adjoining mill pond which receives its water from the big source lake above.

The base of the building is largely of medieval Kent ragstone masonry which may be contemporary or nearly so with the Abbey. The west wall, against which remains a very large iron undershot water wheel, is of comparatively modern brickwork, while the whole of the

first floor walling is of timber framing covered by weatherboarding of similar character and date to a number of the other Len mills.

As an example of a medieval monastic mill, which has worked continuously to within living memory, Leeds must be unique in Kent, and as such should certainly be restored and preserved.

In 1843 the owner of the mill was Charles Wykeham Martin and the occupier George Blinkhorn, presumably a miller.¹

OLD MILL, LEEDS AND HOLLINGBOURNE

The site of this mill—the building except for part of its substructure was demolished a year or so ago—is one of the most striking along the river. On either bank the hills drop sharply and the resulting ravine, where a farm road crosses over the lofty bay of the mill pond, is faced by a rocky cliff along the southern bank while a farm house, oast house and other buildings on the northern hill face overlook the present great sheet of water some acres in extent. At the bay the river divides, the southern arm marking the parish boundary between Hollingbourne and Leeds. The brick building recently pulled down abutted the bay and the southern stream was thus just within Leeds parish. The big iron shoot which conveyed the water to the wheel is still in position. On the “island” are the remains of another building, mill or cottage.

It is fortunate that one of the Whatman series of deeds² among the County Archives quotes an earlier “Indenture of Lease” dated 30th July, 1733, between Sir Roger Meredith of Leeds Abbey, Baronet, and Henry Jorden of Leeds yeoman and James Whatman, the elder, which provides evidence of the building of a paper mill here and, by inference, that a mill had stood on the site previously.

By this Lease Sir Roger Meredith demised, etc., to James Whatman for a period of sixty years at a yearly rent of £19 “All such part of that piece of land lying in the parish of Hollingbourne in Kent and then in the tenure of Henry Jorden as it was then set, bounded and lying between the two rivers North and North west of the Dwelling House of Henry Jorden on part of which land an Oast House then stood and now standeth And also all the Mill Bay Waters and Watercourses thereunto belonging with free Liberty for the s^d James Whatman to erect a new Dwelling House and Paper Mill on the s^d demised piece of land and also to erect make and build Bridges floodgates Bays Penstocks Sluices and all other proper conveniences for the use and supply of the s^d Rivers and Watercourses and the intended Dwelling House and Paper Mill. And Also a little spot of Ground at the north side of the Little Bridge at the Mill Bay sufficient to erect and build a Stable

¹ Tithe assessment schedule. Eighteen years earlier a John Blinkhorn was the occupier of Thurnham Mill; perhaps he was the father or brother of George.

² U 289 T 34.

on and a place to digg a Saw Pit on the north side of the said Mill Pond for the convenience of Sawing Timber and other materials And Also that Osier Bed or Osier Garden near adjoining to the Mill Pond and lying in the parish of Leeds then in the occupation of Elizabeth Crispe, widow together with the Well or Spring that served the Dwelling House of the s^d Henry Jorden and to make what alterations the s^d James Whatman should think fit leaving sufficient water to supply the s^d Henry Jorden or other occupier of the s^d Dwelling House. And Also free Liberty of Ingress Egress and Regress for the s^d James Whatman his workmen etc. with Teams Carriages or otherwise over and through those two Waggon or Carriage Ways, the one leading from the demised premises South towards Leeds Upper Street and the other leading North through the Broomfield to the Sandy Way leading from Harrietsham to White Heath with Liberty also to scour and cleanse the aforesaid two Rivers Watercourses and Mill Ponds and to take and carry away the Mudd and Sullage there arising in case the s^d Henry Jorden his exors. etc. did not think fit to buy it at the Rate of Cost And Also free Liberty to pen up stop and flow the s^d Mill Pond and Waters for his own convenience doing no hurt waste spoil or damage to the land then in the occupation of Henry Jorden by flooding above or beyond the bound Marks set up to prevent the same. And Also all that piece of Land called Penfield Meadow adjoining to the Mill Pond east and also a little spot of ground lying on the Bank on the North Side of the Mill Pond containing three rods square as then set out for a Garden with so much of that little Shaw lying on the aforesaid Bank as doth contain fourscore and five feet in length more or less from the Bridge.

AND WHEREAS the s^d James Whatman did build on the s^d Leasehold Land a Dwelling House and Water Mill and by Indenture of Lease 1st. October 1751 Did demise the s^d Dwelling House and Water Mill to Henry French of Hollingbourne, Paper Maker."

There are two significant points in this description of the property leased. Whilst the mill pond is mentioned there is no reference to any previously existing mill building although obviously there must have been one at some time. The availability of pure well or spring water so valuable for paper making was probably an important factor governing Whatman's choice of the site.

In *James Whatman—Father and Son*, Thomas Balston devotes a chapter to "Hollingbourne Mill" in which the names of various tenants up to the beginning of the nineteenth century are given as well as much other information. It seems clear that Whatman built his mill on the island between "the two rivers" and at some unestablished later date a second mill building (the one recently demolished) was erected against the south stream.

WATERMILLS ON THE RIVER LEN

As soon as Whatman became tenant of the property he appears to have put in as sub-tenant or manager to superintend the building of the new mill a certain Richard Harris who may have been the son of William Harris of Loose, paper maker, and so would have had some knowledge of the paper-making trade. Harris remained at Old Mill until 1736 and then, two years later, he purchased the more important Turkey Mill at Boxley.

By the middle of the nineteenth century the mill building must have been in existence for in the Leeds Tithe Assessment Schedule of 1843 a "Mill House and Garden," owner Charles Wykeham Martin and occupier John Hollingworth, are listed, whilst in Hollingbourne the same owner and occupier were assessed for a "Paper Mill and Offices, Roadway and House and Garden."

By the end of the nineteenth century paper had ceased to be made here and the mill was being used to grind cocoa beans. The machinery was removed during the last war.

BRANDESCOMBE MILL (FULLING MILL), LEEDS

By deed of gift Robert de Crevecoeur, the younger, presented to the Priory of Leeds Brandescombe Mill—*unum molendinum fullericum*—now generally known as "Fulling Mill." Because of its early use and the fact that the process of fulling has been perpetuated in its name it may never have been a corn mill.

The existing building is now occupied as a farm house, and there is no indication as to exactly where the water wheel may have stood. The building is of timber framing and characteristic fifteenth-century work. It does not appear to have been of the customary "hall house" plan common at this date throughout mid-Kent, but rather a combination of dwelling and mill with suitable storage for cloth. The present farm road, which is raised several feet above the land to the east, skirts the end of the building and has all the appearance of having been a wide "bay" designed to hold back the water of the mill pond which no longer exists. From this road a short flight of stone steps gives access to a door at first floor level and no doubt through this the cloth was carried into and out of the mill. J. M. Russell referred to the trains of pack-horses used to transport cloth from the Wealden looms to the fulling mills on the Len and the Loose stream and here at Brandescombe it is easy to picture such a cavalcade, having climbed Sutton Valence Hill and passed along the rough way past Langley Heath and Arnold Hill, halted at the mill door to await the unloading of many bulky packages.

The immediate surroundings of the farmhouse on the south side have been converted into a garden and any traces of a mill stream on this side have been swept away. The river itself lies a few yards to

WATERMILLS ON THE RIVER LEN

the north. Upstream numerous pockets of fullers' earth occur which would seem to confirm the early use of this mill for fulling.

By 1843 the building had ceased to be used as a mill, for in the Tithe Assessment Schedule it is described as "Homestead," the occupier being William Betts and the owners Sir William Brook Bridges and Major Henry Knight.

THURNHAM MILL, THURNHAM

On the west side of Milgate Park, situated in Bearsted parish, a projection of Thurnham parish runs south to a little beyond the Len. Here on the north bank of the river and against the road to Otham is the small weatherboarded and slate-roofed Thurnham corn mill. It no longer works, but the much rusted iron overshot wheel is still in place. Domesday records one mill, and as the Len is the only suitable stream in Thurnham parish on which this could have stood, the present building must occupy the site of its Norman period predecessor. During the Cage ownership of the Milgate estate and before, it had formed part of that property, but in 1825, when the Tithe Map was prepared, the owners were given as Sir Brook Bridges and Major Henry Knight and the occupier John Blinkhorn.

OTHAM MILL, OTHAM

The site of this mill is some hundred yards east of the Willington road and the eastern boundary of Mote Park. The writer is much indebted to Mr. Grove for bringing to his notice a most interesting Household book of Thomas Hendley (or Henley) of Gore Court, Otham, kept between 1529 and 1584-5. Among much other information concerning the household and family are the following particulars of the building of Otham fulling mill, which eventually was converted for paper making.

"*Mem* Bargened w^t Gregory Jenkyn of Craⁿebroke myllewryght the viii day of January A^o/xxx/XXVI Reg. Pdr of & for the making of a overshot fullyng mill w^t 11 Whelys every Whele to be vij fote & a haf over Stok^s w^t all maner of Gutt^o Franyages & all other maner of thynges & byldyngs belongyng to the occupacon of the said Gregory for the said mill & the said Gregory to dygg the place wer the said mill shall stand & the seyde mill to be well and substancially & workmanlyke done made & fynyshed before May Day next comyng & the said Gregory to have for hys Labor.....xi^l

Mem. Bargened w^t John Dunnyngs mason for making of a Stone Wall behynd the Clay Wall of v foote thyck at the bottom & III foote thyck at the topp to my myll to be well & substancially made & layd w^t lyme & sand the lyme and sand to be brought & leyd ryght unto

WATERMILLS ON THE RIVER LEN

the bay at the only coste & charge of me & the sayd John to dygg the place to the fowndacon wher the wall shall stand & also shall dygg & cary all the stone that shall serve for the seyde wall and the seyde John to have for his labor for every Rodd square of the seyde wall xxx^s & the seyde John to lay with good hewen stone the bottome of the Flodgate as the Milwryght shall hym apoynt the sayde John to have nothing for it In the presen^s of Thomas Ellys & John Mays xi die Decemb^{re} A^o xxxvi Reg. Henr. VIII. viii^l

geven hym in Rewarde. . . xi^s

Mem. If the seid John at thend & fynshyng of all the seid wall wyll say for hys honeste that he is a loser then I must give hym xi^d more in any Rodd

Mem. Bargened w^t Thomas Roper of Bersted carpenter of & for the makyng of a howse to cover my myll & to be of length wth lx foote & wide wth xx f^{te} & to be lofted & garrated at the south end w^t parti^{cons} in the chamber & in the Kechyn w^t as many wyndows as shall nede & a loft to go owtt of the hall into the myll & a parti^{con} w^t a loft over for a shopp on the north ende & to be gabeled at end. v^l viii^s

Mem. Bargened with . . . Roper of Bersted carpenter the xth day of Aprell (Anno xxxvi Re. Hen. VIII) of & for the makynge & full settinge upp & framing of the Barne of xxx ft wyde w^{hin} & xx fote wyde w^{thin} with a cove at one end for a Stable of wydness of the sayme to be well plankyd mangerd & racked the posts of the barne to be xiiij fote long & the seyde Roper to new saw & frame & sett it upp substancyally w^t all maner of Dores. vi^s viii^d

Mem. Bargenet w^t Lawnce (?) to make my chimney w^t my fyres there & a oven of 11 bushells xxxvi^s viii^d
Sume tot of all the charges of buyldyngs of my fullyllyng Myll

L xxxviij v^s iij^d

From 1700 to 1806 the occupants were apparently all paper makers. Their names have been identified from Rate books, Sun Fire Insurance Policies, and Apprentices' Lists.¹ It is significant that several are described as "miller and paper maker," while a number of the insurances cover both a corn mill and a paper mill. This suggests that there were two distinct mill buildings either close together or not far separated on the comparatively short length of the river within Otham parish. Three hundred yards or so upstream from Otham Mill is a cottage known as "Mill House" close by a large store building which, however, is not hard against the river. While there are no obvious signs of any mill building adjoining the bank, it seems quite likely that this was, in fact, the site of a corn mill.

¹ Smythe, MS. 1, Maidstone Museum, and news items in the *Kentish Post and Canterbury News Letter*, quoted by Dr. Shorter. It is unnecessary, therefore, to repeat the list here.

Early in the nineteenth century Otham Mill was occupied by the proprietors of Turkey Mill and early in the 1830's a paper making machine was installed, but this was removed to Turkey Mill in 1859, when the building was converted to house a 2-engine washing machine for cleansing and beating rags.

POLL MILL AND TURKEY MILL, BOXLEY

As in the case of the Eyhorne paper mills so here it will be convenient to consider together the two Boxley mills, Poll and Turkey, which, particularly the latter, became so intimately associated with the development of the Maidstone paper-making trade.

The site of Poll Mill was up-river about 200 yards and south-east of Turkey Mill. In the early part of the seventeenth century this fulling mill formed part of the estates of Sir John Astley which included the Palace and surrounding lands in Maidstone, Allington Castle and many adjoining acres and much property in the parish of Boxley.¹ In a deed of June, 1629, Poll Mill is described as "One dwelling house with the fulling Mill thereunto adioyneinge known by the name of Powle Mill with one barn one stable one yard one garden one orchard one Mill pond one Osier bedd with thappurtences." This formed part of the manor of Newnham Court which belonged originally to the Abbey of Boxley and after the suppression passed by royal grant to Sir Thomas Wyatt. Hasted traces its subsequent ownership down to Henage Finch, Earl of Aylesford.²

In 1640 Turkey Mill, an "Overloppe" fulling mill with 10 acres of land, was sold for £493 by Simon Smythe of Tenterden to John Fletcher of Boxley. Seventeen years later Richard Fletcher, John's son, conveyed the freehold to John Cripps upon his marriage with Fletcher's daughter, Catherine. Neither the Fletchers or Cripps appear to have worked the mill themselves, and from 1640 to 1675 it was let to a Thomas Tolhurst. In 1693 John Cripps mortgaged the property, described as a paper mill, which was then leased to a paper maker, George Gill. When Gill first acquired this lease is uncertain, but it may not have been many years after Tolhurst's had expired.

In September, 1695, John Cripps being then dead, Dorothy Cripps, his widow, and her two sons John and Christopher, granted a fresh lease for 41 years to George Gill who, as part of the bargain, undertook to spend £200 within two years on repairs and improvements to the buildings.

George Gill lived until 1725, but some ten years earlier he had surrendered the remaining period of his lease in favour of his son

¹ *Stede Hill Muniments.*

² Vol. II, p. 127.

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William, who much later, and after a protracted series of legal agreements, acquired the freehold from Cripps's heirs.

Up to 1723 at least William Gill appears to have been a man of considerable substance, described in various deeds as "of Maidstone, brewer" as well as paper maker. He owned the freehold of a paper mill in Sandling as well as "The Square" adjacent to Christians Mill, the next downstream from Turkey Mill.¹ By the mid-twenties, however, signs that his financial position was becoming shaky are provided by several mortgages which he entered into in respect of the Turkey Mill property. Notwithstanding, in 1728 he took on the tenancy of Poll Mill in succession to a certain John Swinnock.

Swinnock had taken a lease of the mill from the Earl of Aylesford in 1708 and this was renewed ten years later for a thirty-one years period at £30 p.a. on which occasion the noble landowner contributed £300 that "a good and substantial paper mill with six troughs a good and sufficient pond or mill pond with flood gates" might be built.

As a paper maker Swinnock cannot have been very successful, for by 1727 he was bankrupt and the tenancy of the mill passed to William Gill. When he in turn became bankrupt his successor was Joseph Cordwell who appears to have remained in occupation until 1756. Then the second Earl let the premises to a Soho watch maker, Abraham Fearon, when it was described as "one paper mill two cottages one rag house one waggon lodge one stable one hay barn one oast house one orchard one hop-garden seven acres of arable land five acres of meadow and five acres of pasture."

After a few years Fearon parted with the remainder of his lease to Clement Taylor who died at the mill in 1776, bequeathing the last year of the lease to his son, James. Subsequently James Taylor remained on as a yearly tenant.

In June, 1785, James Whatman, the younger, acquired the freehold, but it was not until 1787, after long drawn out negotiations and an action for ejectment at the Kent Lent Assizes, that he obtained possession. Subsequently Poll Mill was worked conjointly with Turkey Mill until 1836 when it was demolished.

By 1731 Gill was bankrupt and all his interest in Turkey Mill passed to the chief mortgagee, James Brooke. Five years later the tenant of the Mill was Richard Harris, paper maker, and in June, 1738, Brooke agreed to convey the freehold, together with "The Square," to Harris for £2,000. But this sum was to be left on mortgage and the mill, together with "The Square," was conveyed to two trustees, first to secure the £2,000 with interest to Brooke and then to the use of Richard

¹ At the bottom of Square Hill, Maidstone, where he built six houses.

Harris in fee. The two trustees were James Whatman of Loose, tanner, and Thomas Harris of Wrotham, tanner.¹

It seems probable that Richard Harris was connected by marriage with James Whatman.² He had occupied Old Mill, Hollingbourne, for three years from 1733, as noted earlier, presumably working there as a paper-maker, and so came to Turkey Mill with some experience. Upon acquiring the property his first step was to demolish the old mill and re-erect it "on a more curious and extensive plan."³ Before the work could be completed, however, he died—in November, 1739; and by the terms of his will his estate passed to his widow, Ann, who in the following year married James Whatman. Adjoining the mill was a house called Turkey Court, built in the late seventeenth century, and here the newly married couple took up residence. So commenced the Whatman association with the mill which was destined to have such an important influence on the paper-making trade of the country.

The success story of James Whatman, senior, and his more famous son, of the apprentice and protege William Balston, destined to become the founder of another great paper making firm, of the Hollingworth brothers, Finch and Thomas Robert and their successors, has been told so full in Mr. Thomas Balston's two books that any repetition is uncalled for. Today certain parts of Turkey Mill, notably the great drying shed and the delightful Turkey Court adjoining, remain, much as they were in the time of the Whatmans, as reminders of the long history of this great paper mill.

CHRISTIAN'S MILL, MAIDSTONE

A house at the bottom of Square Hill on the east side and immediately south of the river bears the inscription on its walls, "Fulling Mill 1567." This, almost certainly, marks the site of Christian's Mill, all traces of which have gone.

From evidence provided by one of the Whatman deeds,⁴ Christian's Mill at the beginning of the eighteenth century belonged to a Maidstone miller, William Pertis. The deed in question, dated 22nd December, 1716, provided for a Settlement on the marriage of William Pertis and Alice Dyer of Minster, Isle of Sheppey, spinster. The trustees were the lady's father Thomas the elder, a yeoman, and Thomas the younger, her brother, described as a surgeon, both of Minster. The property settled was Christian's Mill in Maidstone or Boxley "heretofore in the occupation of George Overy and now William Pertis."

¹ These particulars have been derived from an Abstract of Title of 1738 included among the Whatman deeds. County Archives.

² *James Whatman—Father and Son*, p. 10.

³ Hasted, Vol. II, p. 132.

⁴ County Archives, U 289 T 32.

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Three years later Pertis sold to William Gill, brewer, "All that one messuage with barn, stable and Mills thereunto belonging called Christian's Mills." The use of the plural in the description does not necessarily mean that there was more than one mill building. It probably indicates that two or more sets of mill stones were in use.

There is no evidence to show how soon after Gill acquired the property Christian's Mill was demolished and the houses forming "The Square" were erected. At the time of his bankruptcy in 1735, when the Assessors sold all the available equities to James Brooke, it was stated that the six messuages "commonly called by the name of The Square were sometime since erected by William Gill, then of Maidstone, papermaker where formerly stood a messuage and mills called Christian's Mills."

PADSOLE MILL, MAIDSTONE

This may well have been a Domesday period mill site. The mill was one of the two in Maidstone which belonged to Christ Church, Canterbury, the other being Church Mill which stood close to the Archbishop's Palace and the conflux of the Len and Medway. Evidence of this is provided by a Lease for 21 years granted 18th Richard II by Archbishop Courtenay to William Walbelton and Richard Haute.¹ By 1650 Padssole had become the property of Sir William Culpeper² according to J. M. Russell,³ who further stated, "It fell into a dilapidated condition towards the end of the last century (i.e. the eighteenth), and on the site thereof a paper mill was erected by James Smyth in 1796."

Russell would appear to have been a year wrong in the date, for in the course of his business Smythe issued a halfpenny token. One of these is preserved in the Maidstone Museum. On the reverse it bears a view of the mill and the inscription "Payable by J. Smythe at Padssole Papermill 1795."⁴ Paper-making was carried on for a short time by Smythe in partnership with the Hollingworth brothers, who subsequently acquired the property and in 1799 disposed of it to John Wise and John Hayes.⁵ "The Padssole Mill, after long remaining unoccupied, was demolished ten years ago, and rebuilt as a flour mill,"

¹ Cathedral Library, Reg. S.f.20.

² Presumably Sir William of Aylesford.

³ *History of Maidstone*, p. 327.

⁴ Illustrated in *Provincial Token Coinage of the Eighteenth Century*. R. Dalton and S. H. Hamer. p. 61, No. 37.

⁵ *James Whatman—Father and Son*, Balston, contains the note, p. 121: "In *The Paper Trade* (1907) Mr. Dykes Spicer states that in 1786 Finch Hollingworth and James Smythe rebuilt Padssole Mill, in the centre of Maidstone, as a paper mill, and that shortly afterwards Thomas Robert Hollingworth took over Smythe's share. But it is doubtful whether Padssole had become a paper mill till some years later."



The Mill Lane, Maidstone mill demolished in 1903.

which would have been about 1871, for Russell published his *History* in 1881. The rebuilding was carried out by William Taylor, the Chegworth miller, as previously stated. Today Padsole is known as Lenworth Mill and operated by Messrs. Bradley Taylor and Youngman Ltd., although not by water power.

THE MILL LANE MILLS, MAIDSTONE

Prior to the widening of Mill Lane, now known as Mill Street, in 1903 there were two corn mills served by the Len, situated a little to the north and north-east of the "Old Palace" forecourt. One of these was the Church Mill which, according to the evidence of the Lease previously quoted, was in existence at the time Courtenay was Archbishop, and may well have been a good deal older.

It is a curious commentary on the shortness of living memory that, despite extensive inquiry, the writer has been quite unable to establish which of the two mills was in fact the Church Mill. Half a century is a short period for such knowledge to be lost, yet such would appear to be the case.

The sites of the two buildings are definitely established by reference to the 1/500th Ordnance Survey Map of 1867. They were adjacent to the Mill Pond, one situated at what is now the junction of Palace Avenue with Mill Street and the other over the "waterfall" in the Palace Gardens. A Tannery occupied the site of Messrs. Rootes building, while there was a third mill (worked by steam) behind what is now the National Provincial Bank.

The photograph of one of the two water mills taken just prior to its demolition in 1903 (Plate IX) would seem to indicate that this may have been the Church Mill. Brown & Son's "Map of Maidstone in 1821" shows the plan of the building to have been a long rectangle with a smaller block projecting to the west. This (then ruined) block was of masonry and appears to have been carried on a series of ancient semi-circular stone arches, the remainder of the building has the character of eighteenth-century work.

Although situated so near to the Palace, neither mill appears to have formed part of the estate which Edward VI granted to Sir Thomas Wyatt in 1550. When, thirty years later, this passed to the Astley family, the description of the property was¹ "ALL that the chiefe Mansion house . . . called the Pallace and the site of the sayd Pallace with the Yards Closes and Gardens and Orchards thereto adioyning the Long Stable Malthouse Coachhouse Little Stable with the Stable Yard together with the pond orcharde and the meadows thereto adioyning conteyninge in all by estimacon six acres two rods and six perches."

¹ From a deed in the writer's possession.

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Among the Kent Archives is a Lease¹ dated 30th March, 1752, for five years from "the Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary last past."

By this Indenture Richard Wattel of Harrietsham, gent. let to William Purtis of Maidstone, miller, "All that messuage in which William Purtis now dwelleth and all that Mill-house and Water Corn Mills adjoining And also all that Granary over the house and the hogstye in the Island And also all that messuage commonly called Rawlings Tenement and the Millhouse and Mills commonly called the Little Church Mills adjoining to the said last mentioned Tenement being near the aforesaid Mills and the Granary and Little Stable under it which . . . late were used by Daniel Howe and the ground where the said Daniel Howe's Hogg and Haystack usually stood at or near Mill Lane and the Water flash house Waggon Lodge All the Stables and Hay lofts over the same together with all manner of Houses Stables Outbuildings etc. . . . lying in Maidstone in or near a certain Street or Lane commonly called Mill Lane and near to a place there called the Cowyard now or late in the occupation of William Purtis and Daniel Howe."

The mention of "the hogstye in the Island" is interesting. This island may have been that formed by two branches of the river serving the two mills, but Mudge's Map shows what appears to be a small island in the Medway immediately above the bridge and nearly opposite the Len outfall.

Accompanying this Indenture is a paper headed "Inventory of Mill Tackling belonging to Mr. Purtis at the Church Mills" which contains the following particulars :

"In the Mill next the Church One Water Wheele which drives the Bolting Mills with Cogg Wheels Sharfts Brasses and Gudgeons Pillows Sleepers Also foar Bolting Mills and Spouts Gears Ropes Brasses and Screws thereunto belonging. Also one Wind Fann with all the Brasses Wheelles Spindles Bridge Tree and Binn under it and scry belonging to the same. Also one pair of French Mill Stones one Trough one Tunn one Ladder one Spout one Binn and Shoe belonging to the same. Also three large Binns or Hoppers belonging to the Bolting Mills and one pair of Trendle Heads which drive the Stones. Also five wheat Binns with the Linings of the same One Lifting Jack One Counter Wheele Ropes and Pullies belonging to the same and one Sack Cart.

In the other Mill

Two pair of French Mill Stones one pair of Peaks two Spindles two Maddocks and two Brass Steps belonging to the same. Also two Meal Troughs, three Ladders three Tunns three Hoppers three Shoes and three Calls belonging to the same. Also three Bolting Mills and Shafts

¹ U 415 T 30.

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Brasses and Gudgeons Bridge Trees and Spouts two Counter Wheels and other small Tackling or Gear thereunto belonging. Also one Wind Fann Binn and Scry Brasses and other Tackling belonging to the same. Three pair of Trundle Heads which drive the Stones. Also the Partitions and Linings of the Flour and Meal Pestries nine Wheat Binns two long Sries one short one three Iron Cranes and a Sack Cart."

In conclusion the writer would like to acknowledge the valuable help he has received during the preparation of this paper from Dr. F. Hull and his staff at the County Archives Office, from Mr. L. R. A. Grove of the Maidstone Museum and Dr. W. G. Urry at the Cathedral Library, Canterbury.

Mr. Thomas Balston and Dr. A. H. Shorter, University of Exeter, have been most helpful in elucidating problems which arose in connection with the Hollingbourne Paper Mills; also Major W. T. Pitt in relation to Turkey and Poll Mills, and Mr. S. F. Dixon, Borough Surveyor of Maidstone, in helping to locate the sites of the Mill Street Mills.

Thanks are also due to Messrs. L. J. Clark & Co. Ltd. of Lenham for allowing extracts from the firm's early records to be quoted and to all the owners or occupiers of the various mills and mill sites which were visited and in some cases photographed. For all this assistance the writer is most grateful.

Illustrations. Plate II is from a photograph in the possession of Edward Manning, Esq., of Dover; Plate IX is from the Maidstone Museum Collections, and the remainder from photographs by the author.

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