

Clifton Mill: part 2

'A record of the existing Mill building and mill machinery and an assessment of existing information including an historical report. Plans with locations marked of items photographed and plans of proposed changes.' Prepared by Architectural Historian Dr Alison Maguire for Mr Aubrey and Dr N Allison in November 1998, to whom the Society is most grateful for permission to reproduce it.

The Christ Church archives contain the regular accounts and surveys carried out for the college, and therefore charts the interventions due to maintenance or for updating the mill.

However, although there are copies of the leases from 1655, there is only one mention of the mill in the archives between 1540 and 1 August 1714. This is a 17th century copy of a letter from the tenant of the mill complaining that the addressee does not grind his corn 'att ye Colledge Mill' as required by law.

Provisional programme 2000-01

We are still working on the full programme for this season, and details will be published in the next issue of 224, but our *provisional* programme for the rest of 2000 is:

13 September: Robin Leleux—
The canals of North Oxfordshire

11 October: Mike Breakell—The
landscape of north Oxfordshire,
past, present and future

8 November: to be confirmed

13 December: Christmas social
and quiz

11.8.1716 Account by Thomas Wynt
of estates at Deddington and
Clifton:

'Clifton Mill, with the close, is
worth £35 per annum, and could be
made worth £40 per annum'.

Thomas Wynt's idea to upgrade
could be the installation of a second
water wheel. Because of the industrial
revolution, technical improvements
could be expected.

1.4.1775 Particulars given by William
Chapman. Lessee Bartholomew
Churchill:

'Land belonging to messuage
called Clifton Mill.

Mill Close, meadow, orchard
garden three & a half acres.

In Millinham, 4 yards and 1 hook.

In Valisham, 2 acres and 6 hides

Cottage and garden
Corn Mill

The Mill and lands were let to the last
tenant for £30... The present tenant of
the Mill, Nathaniel Merry, has laid out
£300 on it'.

This is a considerable sum of
money. Merry must have hoped to
reap a good return on his investment.
Possibly he installed the second
waterwheel, rebuilt the mill race and
replaced the mill machinery

3.11.1817 Remarks by Richard
Crabtree concerning Clifton Mill:

'Has not seen a better mill of its
size for many years'.

10.4.1832 Valuation by George Davenport
of Clifton Mill Estate, lessee

From the Chair

It seems to be true, what they say
about time going faster as you get
older. This issue of 224 marks the
start of the History Society's third
year: it hardly seems five minutes
since we opened our doors for the
first time, wondering if anyone
would turn up. You did, of course,
in gratifying force. But it is likely to
get harder now, not easier, as we try
to maintain interest once the novelty
has worn off. We aim to do that
primarily by continuing to provide
interesting and lively speakers. We
shall also develop our non-lecturing
activities, which already include the
successful Christmas and summer
'social' evenings and the exchange
visits with neighbouring societies,
with occasional trips to places of
interest. We hope to establish one or
two small research groups, studying
particular aspects of the history of
our locality such as schools and
inns and pubs.

If all, or indeed any, of this is to
happen, we shall need to call on the
talents and energies of our members,
since the present committee members
are already hard pressed. Once
again, then, I appeal to members to

offer their services if they think that
they might be able to help. We need
assistance with publicity in particular.
If we are to arrange any trips to
historic sites or houses, we shall require
someone to undertake the organising.

We shall hold our AGM before the
meeting on 11 October. If anyone
has an issue that they would like to
see on the agenda, please contact the
Hon. Secretary, Moira Byast, at
5 The Lane, Hempton. At the AGM
we are going to suggest raising the
subscription from its very low level
of £7 (£12 for couples) to a scarcely
exorbitant £8 (£14 for couples), to
cover increased costs. In an amazing
special offer, anyone paying before
then can have their subscription
at the old rate.

We look forward to seeing existing
members back at our monthly meetings,
and to welcoming newcomers. If you
have enjoyed the meetings that you
have attended so far, why not try to
interest a friend or neighbour? We
need them even more than we think
they need us.

Chris Day—Chairman



William Merry:

Stone and thatched cottage ... The Mill is a capital stone and slated building with 2 water wheels working 4 pairs of stones and has very commodious garnerers.

Good stable ...

Another stable and woodhouse.
2 cattle and carriage sheds.

Capital buildings are in good repair except the cottage.

Land measures 8a. 0r. 37p.

There is a small ozier bed where the back water leaves the mill stream ... an error in the enclosure map ... the plot of land and cottage described above belong to Magdalen College and another plot without a cottage to belong to Christ Church.

Annual value £170'.

From 20 July 1832 until December 1832, there is correspondence over the fine for the Mill.

1.12.1832 A letter from William Merry to Dr John Bull protesting at the amount of the fine:

'... in the last 10 years, the property has fallen in value owing to several mills in the neighbourhood having been much improved ... The Mill has no steam engine

and can work only one water wheel and two stones in times of floods ... This kind of property is less valuable by 1/3 than it was 15 years ago'.

5.12.1832 '... agree to reduce the fine from £241.11s.10d. to £196.11s.10d'.

19.12.1840 'R. & B Field to Dr. John Bull:

'... apply for permission to cut timber to repair Clifton Mill'.

Slates were put on at this time and repairs to the timber were undertaken.

9.6.1846 Valuation by Benjamin Badcock of Clifton Mill Estate. Field the lessee:

'Ancient house of stone and thatch.

Mill joins and is substantial, roof recently repaired with slates.

There are 5 pairs of stones but only 3 work at a time.

Good supply of water but wheels are old fashioned and wasteful.

Stable, stall, stable, woodhouse, dairy, open hovel & pigsties.

Opposite the Mill a wagon hovel and old cottage.

Gross annual value £170

Net annual value £120 6s. 8d'.

9.11.1846 Robert Field to Dr. John Bull:

'... intend to refit Clifton Mill with iron wheels ... ask for financial assistance'.

9.12.1846 Estimate by Charles Lampitt, millwright:

'the amount of oak for wheels and frames: 350 feet = £52 10s. ... advise iron wheels and shafts owing to the damp'.

9.12.1846 Estimate by the same of machinery costing £150.

14.12.1846 Letter from Robert Field, Banbury:

'... ask for rough timber allowance where I substitute iron for wood'.

26.1.1847 Badcock to the Dean and canons:

'... advise a deduction of £25'.

31.4.1853 Letter from Robert Field, Banbury:

'...doubtful whether to renew lease of Clifton Mill. ... heavy repairs are more than the cost of fuel for a steam mill ... ask for abatement of £50'.

(Dean and canons reduce fine to £200)'.

'The bridge over the Cherwell at Clifton—only half lies in Oxfordshire—was repaired by the County in 1854 and



Mill machinery at Clifton: left-hand page showing machinery on the first floor and right-hand page showing the attic floor sack hoist and a winnowing machine.

1862'. It is apparent that the level of the road was raised alongside the Mill.

27.4.1857 Specification by Charles Lampitt:

'... timber needed for repairs to Clifton Mill: £38. 0s. 6d'.

17.6.1857 Robert Field from Banbury:

'desirability of fitting iron instead of wood at the Mill ... cost estimated £150 ... have put a new roof on this year'.

17.8.1857 Letter from Robert Field:

'...desire help of Dean and canons to erect iron instead of wooden wheels at Clifton Mill'.

This work must have been undertaken.

Wilfred Foreman's gazetteer of watermills lists the Clifton Mill on the Cherwell as: 'A larger mill which had two metal breast shot wheels. One set fairly complete metal/wood gear remains, and 14' by 4' 6" wheel (3' 6" gone) Might be workable. Grain elevator and storage for over 600 bushels. Fail safe on sack hoist. S'.

Based on the evidence of specifications by Charles Lampitt and his connection with Clifton Mill, it is assumed that the new iron wheels and mill machinery were supplied by Lampitts of Banbury. Foreman notes in his book on *Oxfordshire Mills* that there is only one wheel marked with 'Lampitts' and that is the wheel at Salford Mill.

23.4.1864 Valuation by Francis Field of estate at Clifton. Lessee Robert Field:

'Corn water mill with 4 pairs of stones.

Out buildings, garden, orchard, yard, meadow, dwelling house.

Area 8a. 0r. 37p.

Gross annual value £100

Net annual value £67. 16s. 1d'.

1860 proposal to assist in erection of steam engine was not carried out. The value of the Mill has dropped due to the drainage of land, short water summers, other mills having steam.

14.3.1871 Robert Field

'... understand the College wishes to sell Clifton Mill ... the terms?'

College grants him a 21 year lease as usual.

To be continued

Bibliography

Christ Church Archives = Calendar of Estate Papers, Oxfordshire 7, Caversham to Overy, Ms Estates 69, 70, 71 containing the history of the Mill from 1536 to 1885, when it was exchanged for other property with W C Cartwright.

Boucher = Boucher, Cyril T G, 1968 *James Brindley, Engineer 1716-1772*, Goose & Son Ltd.

Foreman = *Oxfordshire Mills*, Wilfred Foreman. Philimore, 1983.

Freese = *Windmills and Millwrighting*, Stanley Freese. David & Charles, 1957.

VCH = *Victoria History of the Counties of England*, Volume XI, Oxfordshire: Wootton Hundred.



The picture, which by the clothing I would date at around 1900-1910, is of what was then 'Ticky' Wells drapery shop—the store for all your requirements' selling 'fashion goods, costumes, clothing, outfitting, boots and shoes, furniture, carpets'. Ticky was so called, I understand, because he gave people 'tick' or credit.

It was latterly the Deddington Sale room and only recently demolished. Maybe some of our senior members can tell us more? I do not know the origin nor of any copyright licence holder and have made due attempts to trace it to no avail. However if anyone knows of, or claims copyright, we would be pleased to acknowledge it.

Colin Robinson

MY OWN MEMORIES FROM 1930-39: COOKERY CLASS

From the nineteen thirties until the Windmill Secondary Modern School opened in September 1950 girls from Bodicote and Adderbury attended cookery classes at Deddington, which were held in the Foresters Hall*. As I remember the class was held once a fortnight. It is possible that other villages attended classes on other days. As I remember it was a good sized room with a wooden-topped table and a cooker for each pair of students. We were brought by bus probably Stanley Hall's who at one time had a bus company in Deddington.

On arrival we would be given the menu for the day, we would then have to work out the amount of ingredients needed for the class.

Someone would then be sent to Tuckers stores and the butchers to do the shopping. One of the first things we were taught was to assemble all the utensils that would be needed tidily on the our table, also a clean tea towel and a damp dish-cloth to wipe our hands. We did not have any water or proper sink in the class room, a portable aluminium one with a bucket to catch the dirty water was erected in the middle of the room. Each time it would be the task of one pair of girls to keep emptying this bucket before it overflowed. Should this happen one of them would have to get down on hands and knees and scrub the floor underneath the sink. Much to the amusement of the rest of the class, sometimes they would deliberately put extra water in just to make it happen. I do not remember anyone getting into trouble for doing that, only the girls that were supposed to keep it emptied.

There was a small side room as it was called that housed the toilet and a tap: there may have been a sink. I believe there was a drain somewhere for the dirty water.

When the allotted pair came back with the shopping the goods had to be divided into the number of groups—I think there must have been about five or six. Usually we cooked a meat and veg meal and perhaps a pudding which, when we had worked out the cost, we could buy and have for our midday meal. In the afternoon we would make cakes, I seem to remember the first ones we made were rock cakes. Then it was time for everything, tables, sinks, floor and side room, to be thoroughly scrubbed with soap and Vim. Different jobs were allotted each week. We were allowed to buy our cakes to take home. I suppose our dinners perhaps cost 3d and 2d for the cakes.

These classes were held for the last two years of school: girls left school at 14, but by the time the Secondary Modern Schools had opened the school leaving age was 15.

By and large I think we gained a good sound basic knowledge of a plain economical method of basic cookery: in fact some of it I still do the same way.

Rhoda Woodward, Adderbury

*Foresters Hall stood in the Tchure

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