

Upper Mill, Carshalton.

This mill was situated on the River Wandle on the east side of Mill Lane, Carshalton, about 60 yards from its junction with North Street. Its site is within the present grounds of The Grove, where a water wheel remains.

It is generally agreed that the first mill here was probably the Carshalton mill noted in the Domesday survey of 1086. It was apparently held on lease by the Abbey of Chertsey by 1200 when abbot Martin paid four marks to John Comyn [1]. In 1279 abbot Bartholomew paid to Sir William Ambesas and his wife Joan a fee for grinding corn at the mill, which continued to be paid until 1321 [2]. In 1359 the abbot of Chertsey was fined by the Carshalton Manorial Court for allowing the road at "Tounsmill" to be "overturned." [2]

The Upper Mill later became part of the property of Stone Court Manor. The earliest reference found to an owner of Stone Court and its appurtenances was to Bartholomew de Burghersh, who died possessed of the properties in 1355 and bequeathed them to his son Sir Bartholomew de Burghersh. They had passed to his grand-daughter Lady Margaret Burghersh by 1372 and remained in the possession of her descendants until about 1454.

By 1460 the manor had been acquired by Nicholas Gaynesford. Later, having been charged with treason, his estate was confiscated by the Crown. He was pardoned in 1485, and before his death in 1498 he had regained his properties [3]. He bequeathed these to his wife Margaret and after her death to his grandson Robert [4]. Robert Gaynesford duly inherited the properties, and they later passed to his son Henry Gaynesford. They passed in turn to his son Robert, but before his death in 1545 Henry had leased the manor of Stone Court for 99 years to his son-in-law Walter Lambert. Lambert also died in 1545 and bequeathed the lease to his wife Margaret [5]. The lease passed to her son Thomas Lambert who sold it to his brother-in-law Christopher Muschamp. He died in 1579 and bequeathed it to his wife Dorothy [6].

Robert Gaynesford died in 1558 and was succeeded by his son John Gaynesford. On 12 February 1590/91 John Gaynesford sold the estate to Humphrey Rogers of Beddington for £1000. The indenture of sale contains the first specific reference to a mill on the estate, described as "two wheate mills and one malt mill." The manor house and its appurtenances including apparently the mill, were at that time in the occupation of Edmund Marrant [7]. Humphrey Rogers died in 1593, and by his will he bequeathed his properties in Carshalton to his son Francis [8]. On 1 June 1626 Francis Rogers sold these properties to Edward Burnish, citizen and merchant of London, for £1800. The mill was then said to be in the occupation of William Killick [9]. Edward Burnish died in 1635 and by his will bequeathed the properties in Carshalton "which I bought of Francis Rogers, Gentleman", to his son George [10].

George Burnish died in 1664 and by his will devised his properties to his wife Dorothy, and after her death to his eldest son Edward [11]. This bequest varied slightly the terms of a deed which he and his wife had executed on 2 July 1660, whereby the properties were conveyed to Edward and his wife, subject to the life interest of Dorothy Burnish. This deed mentioned that the mill was "late in the occupation of William Killick and now of Christopher Pope [12]. This was, no doubt, the Christopher Pope, miller, whose marriage to Elizabeth Matthews in April 1654 was recorded in the Carshalton parish register.

Dorothy Burnish died in 1685, and Edward Burnish then entered fully into his inheritance. Soon afterwards, on 17 and 18 November 1686 he sold the Stone Court estate to Henry Byne [13]. The mill was then said to be in the occupation of "widow Pope", who was probably the Elizabeth Pope (nee Matthews) referred to previously.

However, there must have been a later transaction of which no record has been found, whereby Edward Burnish regained possession of the properties. For on 10 March 1688/89 he and his wife Ann granted a 500 year lease of them to Henry Herringman, who was Henry Byne's father-in-law [14]. On 9 and 10 February 1693 the Burnishes sold the Stone Court estate to John Cator for £4,100, of which £1875 was paid to Henry Herringman [15]. Widow Pope was recorded as being still in occupation of the mill, but when a voluntary parish rate was called for on 16 June 1707, one of the donors was "William Pope for Mr. Buredges(sic) Mill House" [16]. No doubt William Pope was Elizabeth Pope's son.

Despite the above reference to Burrish's mill in 1707, it was then still in the ownership of John Cator. He rebuilt the manor house, and in 1717 he mortgaged the estate to the Dowager Viscountess Lanesborough, and in 1719 he arranged a farther mortgage with Sir William Scawen. Following Cator's death soon afterwards, the estate was bought from his executors by Thomas Scawen, nephew of Sir William who had died in 1722.

The indenture of sale was dated 1 and 2 December 1729, and in it widow Pope was named as the occupier of the mill [17]. This lady was another Elizabeth Pope, the widow of the previously mentioned William Pope. She died in 1741, but her son Christopher had taken over the management of the business by 28 August 1738, when he insured the "Corn Mill with Granarys over", at the valuation of £400, with the Hand in Hand insurance company [18]. He renewed this policy on 8 August 1745, again on 7 August 1752, and for the last time on 17 August 1759 [19]. He died in 1764, and by his will proved on 16 July 1764 he bequeathed the lease of the mill with its fittings, and his dwelling house, to his nephew George Pope [20]. George Pope duly took over the business, and renewed the insurance policy on 15 August 1766 [21].

Thomas Scawen died on 11 February 1774, and his estates were inherited by his son James Scawen, who was obliged to sell most of the properties in order to discharge the debts incurred by his father. On 9 and 10 July 1778 he released the Stone Court estate to his trustees who were to arrange for its sale. It was purchased on 20 April 1779 by the Right Honourable Richard Rigby. On 19 and 20 October Rigby sold the mill premises only to John Hilbert of Wandsworth for £3,625 [22]. Thus the centuries-long association of the Upper Mill with Stone Court came to an end.

The mill was described in the indenture of sale as "three water corn mills under one roof", and the premises included a dwelling house, stable, carthouse, and outbuildings, and sundry pieces of land, and also the Lower Town Pond out of which the river flowed. John Hilbert was said to be then in occupation of the mill, and in fact he had held the head lease, with George Pope as his under-tenant, since at least 31 July 1779, when he insured the mill and the dwelling house with the Sun insurance company [23].

The following year Hilbert had engaged the engineer John Smeaton to design new water wheels for the mill, and Smeaton produced alternative proposals, one for two low-breast wheels, 18 feet in diameter and 6 feet wide, and the other for two overshot wheels, 7 feet 4

inches in diameter and 7 feet 6 inches wide. The latter scheme, which incorporated wrought iron float boards, was apparently adopted [24].

On 18 November 1782 John Hilbert renewed the policy on the mill and dwelling house [25]. The valuation of the mill, following Smeaton's improvements, was then £2000, as against £1000 in 1779. The premises were then still occupied by George Pope, but apparently he had quit by 26 January 1787, when Hilbert renewed the policy with no mention of Pope in the register record [26]. Presumably Hilbert had sublet to another miller whose name has not been recorded. Hilbert renewed the policy again on 15 January 1797 [27].

By 18 January 1802 the mill was being worked by William Charrington and James Gray, when they insured the mill building only [28]. They were listed as millers at Carshalton in Holden's directory for 1802-4. The policy was renewed jointly by Charrington and Gray and John Hilbert on 16 November 1807 [29].

John Hilbert died on 18 January 1819 at the age of 86, and by his will proved on 3 February 1819 he bequeathed certain of his properties, including the Upper Mill, to William Tate, referred to as his nephew, but who was actually the son of his late cousin William Tate senior [30]. In April 1819 an advertisement was published announcing that, "by order of the executors of the late John Hilbert, Esq." the mill and some adjoining property would be offered for sale at an auction to be held on 18 May following. The mill was described therein thus:

"a very capital and most substantially erected Water Corn-mill, with an uninterrupted supply of water ... driving 5 pairs of stones to one 18 feet breast shot and one 6 feet overshot wheels, with bins for upwards of 1500 quarters of corn, ranges of stabling, sheds, kiln and loft, and other appurtenances, together with a comfortable and convenient dwelling house, large garden &c. in the occupation of Messrs. Charrington and Gray, on lease, which will expire at Midsummer 1822." [31]

However, the offer was withdrawn on the day before that set for the auction [32], and William Tate retained the ownership of the property until 1834.

William Charrington died on 26 October 1821, and by his will proved on 28 February 1822 he bequeathed to his elder son William the lease of the mill and "the goodwill of my business as a miller upon trust to carry on the same for the joint benefit of himself and his brother and sisters." The said brother, Robert Linton Charrington (then aged about 14) was to join William in the business when he came of age [33].

Apparently James Gray had retired by this date. He died on 21, December 1827 and by his will proved on 1 February 1828 he made no mention of the business, but he did appoint William Charrington as one of his executors, who were to administer his other properties in Carshalton and in Croydon to provide an income for his daughter [34].

In March 1822 William Tate granted a new lease for 31 years and 3 months at the rent of £400 per annum to William Charrington [35]. Later Tate got into financial difficulties, and on 3 May 1837 he mortgaged the mill to his sister Mary Dewsbury as security for the sum of £6,800 he had borrowed from her. If the loan was not repaid within six months Mrs. Dewsbury had the right to sell the mill [35].

William Tate did manage to raise the money and repay the loan, probably by borrowing from others. He died on 28 May 1834, and by his will, proved on 6 October 1834, he bequeathed the mill and other properties to Mary Dewsbury and his brother Francis Tate in equal shares, with the proviso that the properties be sold to pay off his debts and to provide for various legacies should his personal estate be insufficient to meet these commitments [36].

Evidently some disagreement arose between James Howell and William Mackie, who were the executors of Tate's will, and Francis Tate and Mary Dewsbury, which resulted in a case heard in the Court of Chancery. The details have not been ascertained, but it would seem that the legatees were unwilling to sell their late brother's properties in order to pay his debts, as provided for in his will. The court found in favour of the executors, and some of the properties including the Upper Mill premises, were offered to be sold at an auction to be held on 1 March 1838 [37]. The auction was later deferred until 29 March [38], and was eventually held on 26 April 1838(39).

According to the notices advertising this sale:

"The mill has been in great part rebuilt by the present lessee in the most substantial manner, and fitted with four pairs of French stones, dressing machines, and all the driving gear and apparatus, nearly new, constructed of the best material, on the most approved principle ... the building and machinery possess facilities for an extensive trade at the best possible cost."

The premises were said to be "let on lease to Mr. Charrington, for an unexpired term of 16 years, subject to a clear net rental of £400 per annum." The lessee was then Robert Linton Charrington who had joined his brother William when he came of age in about 1828. William Charrington had died a few years later, on 21 February 1832 at the age of 36. He had directed in his will, proved on 7 May 1832, that his executors should retain his capital and stock in the milling business to enable his brother to carry on. The profits of his share of the business were to be paid to his wife Clarissa for the maintenance of their children [40]. Robert Linton Charrington did carry on, and continued to work the mill for the next 48 years.

At the auction held on 26 April 1838 the mill premises were bought for £8,000 by William Newton, a miller of Wandsworth, who had been appointed by William C'harrington as an executor of his will [41]. On 1 March 1853 Newton renewed the lease to Robert Linton Charrington for 21 years at the annual rent of £350 [42].

In the same year Frederick Braithwaite noted that at "Mr. Charrington's, the water turns a flour mill of 24 H.P., the waste sluice being alongside the wheel, in the mill; the head waste-weir, or overfall, is situated at the east side of the mill. The privy and drains from the house, empty themselves into the mill tail." [43] In the Carshalton census returns for 1861 it was recorded that Charrington was employing 12 men and 3 boys.

William Newton died on 29 January 1873 at the age of 76, and his executors, namely his widow Sarah, Richard Dawes and William Newton Dunn,



*The Upper Mill in
c.1867. [114kb]*

renewed the lease to Robert Linton Charrington for a further seven years on 24 June 1874 [42]. He did not live to complete the term, dying on 19 August 1880 at the age of 71, and by his will proved on 11 October 1880 he bequeathed his estate to his nephew William Hart and five nieces in equal shares.

They evidently decided to discontinue the milling business, and arranged for the utensils, rolling stock, and other effects at the mill to be offered for sale at an auction to be held on 11 January 1881 [44]. They also surrendered the lease of the mill when it expired in June 1881, and on 22 June 1881 the executors of William Newton's will granted a 21-year lease, at the annual rent of £330, to another miller, James Bristow [45], who had previously worked at the mill with Robert Linton Charrington.

James Bristow apparently had difficulty in working the mill profitably, for five years later, on 22 February 1886, he entered into an agreement with his landlords whereby he occupied the mill for a further two months only for the rent of £27.10s. [46] He subsequently moved to the Merton corn mill at Wimbledon which he worked until he retired in 1896.

The Upper Mill was never to be worked again. With the end of James Bristow's tenure in sight, the executors of William Newton's will decided to sell the mill, and in February 1886 it was announced that the freehold would be offered for sale with vacant possession at an auction to be held on 16 March following. The advertisement gave the final description of the mill and its machinery:

"...comprising three-storey mill-houses fitted with ten pairs of French stones, half driven by a 16 ft. breast-shot wheel 9 ft. 10 in. wide, and the remainder by a 12-horse power high and low pressure beam engine by Wentworth, with a 4 ft. 4 in. wrought iron vertical multitubular steam boiler 13 ft. high, and a wrought iron egg-end boiler: there are also a bolting mill, silk dressing machine 24 ft. 3 in. long, jumper, fire-proof smutting machine, elevators and other gear, stabling for eight cart horses, nag stabling, lofts, good yard, miller's house, with office, foreman's house, long garden, glasshouses &c. the whole having a frontage of about 353 feet and an area of about 2a. 36p." [47]

The steam engine had been installed by Robert Linton Charrington in about 1854.

Evidently no acceptable bids were made at this auction, and later, during September and October 1886, it was advertised that the mill was available to be let or purchased by private contract [48]. The Upper Mill was eventually sold, in the following year. On 11 August 1887, the owner of the nearby Stone Court and The Grove, Aurelia Cator, the widow of the Rev. William Cator, bought the mill premises from Richard Dawes and William Newton Dunn for £4,000 [49], in order to incorporate the land into her estate.

Mrs. Cator had the mill buildings demolished soon afterwards, but the water wheel was retained. By 1895 a building had been erected to house two electricity generators powered by the wheel. The generators charged batteries, which supplied current to lighting installations in Stone Court and The Grove [50]. This was a relatively early use of the technology; the first hydro-electric plant in England is said to have been installed in December 1880. Mrs. Cator may have been persuaded by the advantages of an electric lighting installation at the paper mill a short distance downstream, which was provided in 1887.

In 1903 the properties were purchased by Sir Samuel Barrow, who had held the lease of The Grove. In about 1909 part of the water wheel was cut away to accommodate a more efficient water-driven turbine. This probably continued in use until about 1924, after Stone Court and The Grove were purchased by Carshalton Council, and mains electricity was installed. The building housing the generators was badly damaged by fire in 1984, but has now been restored.

References

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- 3.** Victoria History of the County of Surrey, Vol-49 pp.183-4.
- 4.** PROB 11/11 q27.
- 5.** PROB 11/30 q34.
- 6.** PROB 11//61 q41.
- 7.** London Metropolitan Archives, Deposit 19, Box 1, Bundle 1 (per Andrew Skelton).
- 8.** PROB 11/80 q90.
- 9.** London Metropolitan Archives, Deposit 19, Box 1, Bundle 12.
- 10.** PROB 11/169 q106.
- 11.** PROB 11/313 q2.
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- 16.** Surrey Archaeological Collections, Vol.26, p.111.
- 17.** House of Lords Record Office, Scawen Estate Act 1734; Private Act, 7 Geo.II cap. (No 38).
- 18.** Guildhall Library, MS 8674/56 p.29.
- 19.** Ibid. MS 8674/67.p.331; 8674/79 p.316:a 8674/g2 p.303 respectively.
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- 21.** Guildhall Library, MS 8674/104 p.270.
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- 27.** Ibid. MS 11:37/17, No.663690.
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- 29.** Ibid. MS 11937/76, No.810798.
- 30.** PROB 11/1613.q67.
- 31.** The Times, 17 April 1819.
- 32.** Ibid. 17 May 1819.
- 33.** PROB 11/1652 q10.
- 34.** PROB 11/1736 q74.

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39. Ibid. 26 March 1838; and Croydon Local Studies Library, Harold Williams Sale Particulars, No.265.
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