

Perry Wood or Shottenden Mill

The mill is near the village of Selling, near Faversham. It would have served the locality with grain being brought to the mill by horse and cart. The mill is referred to a Shottenden mill in many documents.

The mill is recorded on several maps including the Symonson map of 1596. This makes it one of the oldest mill recorded in the county. Coles Finch who visited the mill before it was demolished considered it to be one of the earliest he had seen. The mill can be seen on a series of maps [1736, 1769, 1819-43, 1903-10] until its demolition in 1921. Lord Sondes is known to have been the owner of the mill during its last hundred years of operation.

Coles Finch recorded it as one of the early type of post mill and that it was situated in what was a 'favourite spot for picnics and a *rendezvous* for school outings, char-a-banc excursions, and the like.' He records that the mill was last worked in 1910. Coles Finch researched documentary sources but he also visited all the mills that featured in his book and talked to local people. He records that, 'a year or two later two of the sweeps were removed and the structure gradually decayed until it became a danger to visitors and was pulled down in 1920.'

The names of the millers have been traced back to 1860.

1878 George Atkins

1860 John Sutton

1873 George Harris

1881 Frederick Neame and a Mr. Pearson

Working mechanism

There were two pairs of stones worked by the mill, one pair 3 ft. 8 in. were French wheat stones and one pair -1 ft. 2 in. barley stones.

In 1881 T. R. Holman fitted a new iron windshaft to replace the wooden one, at a cost of £58 10s.

Much of this information has come from the book by Willaim Coles Finch, published by Cassell in 1933 entitled *Watermills and Windmills*. The book covers watermills and windmills in the county of Kent.

The visit to Shottenden Mill by William Coles Finch

On another occasion I went in search of Shottenden Mill, sometimes known as Perry Wood Mill, in the Selling parish, near Faversham. This mill had family associations. My son-in-law, as a Canterbury boy, often made journeys with a school fellow to this isolated spot on the top of a wooded knoll difficult of access, and would hide such treasures as boys possess, in the ground beneath the gaunt timber tripod which carried the centre post of the mill. Here marbles and tops were safe until the season came round again for them. Being a navigator by profession, he gave me the bearings which took me to the knoll, but he had been many years at sea and did not know the old mill had disappeared.

I first found the "Rose and Crown," which I learned stood in four parishes, then climbed the steep circuitous path up which the boyish treasure trove once travelled, though certainly not the way the farmer took his corn to the mill. Gaining the summit, I came on to a flat grass-covered clearing surrounded by trees. Not a vestige of the mill remained. Yet, as clearly as if the four radiating blocks of masonry which carried the feet of the timber tripod had only recently been removed, I found the four excavations in the ground, like four unfilled graves. I should have taken a picture had there not been a little picnic party occupying the ground. They would certainly have wondered what possessed me to 'take' four holes on the top of a high hill.

I had always considered it an important mill, one of the earliest ; contemporary, no doubt, with Quarry Mill, Frindsbury, and Rolvenden, which, with Perry Wood Mill, are noted on the 1596 map.

From enquiries of several elderly people living near, I learned that about 1913 the mill was only carrying two sweeps, and that it last worked about 1910 and was then allowed gradually to fall into decay. The spot was once a favourite one for picnics, Sunday school 'treats' and other 'outings.' It was thought that the mill might at some time cause disaster to visitors, especially to the younger folk who played in and around it. The old structure was, therefore, pulled down about 1920. Some of the old timbers were purchased by Mr. George Reeves, of Whitstable, where the main post and brake-wheel can still be seen in the grounds of 'Granary House,' Canterbury Road.

William Coles Finch
Watermills and Windmills
Published by Cassell 1933

Shottenden Mill Poem by Benjamin Gough 1867

From *Kentish Lyrics*, by Benjamin Gough. Houlston & Wright, London, 1867.

On the top of a hill
Stands Shottenden Mill;
And whenever the breeze is blowing
The sails swing round,
And the corn is ground,
And the mill is always going.
Round and round, with hearty good-will,
Sweep the sails of Shottenden Mill.

All the year round
Corn must be ground,
For God sends bread for the eater ;
So there's no standing still
At Shottenden Mill.
Round and round, fleeter and fleeter,
Merrily swing the sails of the mill
On the top of Shottenden Hill.

Sunshine or mist,
There's always a grist
To grind, or for man or for beast ;
Light winds or strong,
Short days or long,
Never from labour released.
Round and round, with a whirr of good-will,
Swing the sails of Shottenden Mill.

This hard-working mill
On the top of the hill
Is oak-braced with many a rivet;
And it braves the wild storm's
Most terrible forms,
And long may it stand to outlive it.
Hurricanes fierce have swept over the hill,
But firm as a rock stands Shottenden Mill.

And sailors see
This mill out at sea,
And a welcome beacon it stands
Their passage to guide
Until they outride
The tempest and Goodwin Sands.
Brave hearts, steering with courage and skill
By this beacon sign on Shottenden Hill.

In the olden day,
The book-learned say,
On this hill was Caesar's camp ;
But now they grind corn
Where the blast of the horn
Was heard, and the Roman's tramp.
And the country smiles in peace and good-will,
And plenty of wheat at Shottenden Mill.

Round and round,
With a humming sound,
Go the sails by night and by day ;
And the grists are sent
Till the stock is spent,
And the flour is carried away.
And round and round go the sails of the mill
Which stands on the top of Shottenden Hill.

Chillenden Windmill: similar to Perry Wood

Chillenden windmill is very similar to the one that once stood in Perry Wood. The story of Chillenden illustrates the difficulties of maintaining a post mill. By researching Chillenden mill the children will be able to find what the Perry Wood mill looked like and how it worked.

Chilleneden Post Mill



The mill in 1955

not afford a full repair. The mill remained in private hands until 1958, when KCC acquired it. Unfortunately the adjoining barn was demolished and the milling furniture removed. The mill stands in an exposed position amongst fields and lanes and forms an important and distinctive local landmark, the original reason for its purchase.

Listed grade II*. Chillenden post mill was built in 1868 and retains its open trestle. As normal in Kent, it was never fitted with a fantail and would have been turned manually with its long tail pole. This is one of only four remaining Kentish post mills and was the last to be built. It replaced a former post mill on a site where it is believed there had been mills for 500 years. The mill remained in use until 1949 when one sweep broke in a gale. In 1955 local residents raised enough money to make the mill weatherproof but could



Work in progress

The mill had suffered over many years from superficial repairs, sometimes carried out by local builders rather than a millwright. As a result repairs were done without dealing with the basic problems. The most important alteration and one of which compromised the mill's structural continuity, was to wedge the post to the cross trees below and secure the

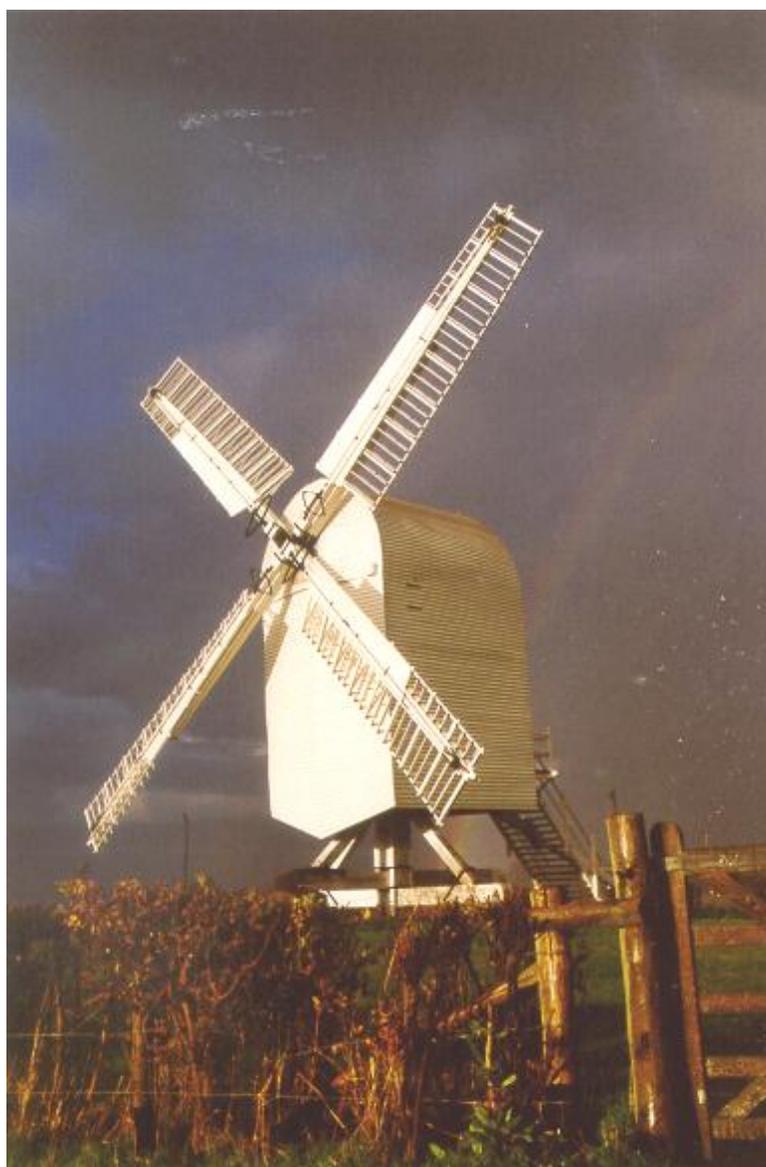


Major frame repairs

tail pole to the ground with a steel post. This prevented the body moving independently on its trestle. As a result, the mill body suffered further and with beetle and water damage the mill frame was becoming dangerous.

The repairs have now been completed. This includes re boarding and extensive repairs to the frame, trestle repairs, replacing a stock, rebuilding sweeps and replacing shutter frames and shutter furniture. As part of an

ongoing experiment comparing alternative coatings and materials, the mill body has been painted with a white lead paint, whilst the stocks and sweeps have been painted using a natural pigment made up of titanium dioxide, zinc oxide and chalk, suspended in raw linseed oil.



The completed mill

Windmills: Further Reading

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