

## MILLS AND MILLERS

### THE MILLS

In the Domesday Book of 1086, a number of mills were mentioned among the details concerning Hertfordshire manors, but the presence of a mill in Hormead is not indicated. The earliest reference to a miller, which I have found, occurred in 1577.

It was customary for the Lord of the Manor to own the mill and lease it to the miller. The mill stood on the highest ground owned by the Lord of the Manor, in our case, Hormead Redewells or Clarkes, i.e. Hormead Hall. The mill was built to the west of the manor house in a position where most of the residents of the Hormeads and Hare Street (where there is a house called Mill View) could see it from their own windows.

The earliest mills were the post mills, and ours was built and rebuilt a number of times over the centuries. The last post mill on the site was a round house with three floors and two pairs of stones. The remains were inspected in 1970 and it was estimated that it had been built in the early eighteenth century. The second mill was built shortly after 1846 on the tower principle, again with three floors and two pairs of stones. Both mills were constructed of timber, hence the need to refurbish them at frequent intervals.

A "windmill (for corn)" was shown standing at the corner of Little Hormead churchyard on an Ordnance Survey map published in 1876. This mill had completely vanished by the time the 1899 map was surveyed and no further reference to it has been found in any other document. However, a recent aerofilm survey of the area has disclosed the site which shows up quite clearly in the aerial photograph.

A windmill when working has a fascination all its own. The whole mill rumbles and shakes with the turning wheels of the machinery and the grinding stones. The village children must often have been attracted to the site, especially when they saw the sails turning with the wind. The miller would not have appreciated having an audience of small boys, since he well knew how dangerous the machinery and tackle could be. There is one record of a fatal accident caused by the mill, involving a small boy:

"Daniell the sonne of Mr. Thornton Cage and of Margaret his wife, was buried June the 19th 1684 kil'd with the mill."

Daniel had been baptized in 1677, the son of the owner of Hormeadbury, so he was only seven when he died.

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE MILLS**

### **The Post Mill**

The centre wooden post of the post mill was supported by quarter bars and cross trees on piers. Surrounding the central oak post was a polygonal weather-boarded roundhouse with a small weather-porch over the door. Four spring sails were covered with canvas, and the shutters of the sails were adjusted by hand-operated ratchets.

Inside the mill, the walls were finished with lath and plaster. The mill drove two pairs of French stones, one in the breast and one in the tail. The brake wheel and the windshaft were both of oak. The tail wheel was of cast iron and may have been a later refinement. This mill ceased to be operated 1924-25.

Lands at Felstead and Great Haddow were given by William the Conqueror to the abbey of Holy Trinity at Caen. Some of the best mill-stones were made at Caen and exported to England. Some of the millstones at Great Hormead would have been imported from Caen, others coming from British millstone districts.

### **The Smock Mill**

This small octagonal mill was built 20 yards away from the post mill on slightly lower ground. The structure was of tarred weather-boards standing upon brick footings. It was lined internally with lath and plaster, and housed two pairs of stones. About 1930 the cone-shaped cap, sails, fantail and wind shaft or brake wheel were blown away in a tremendous gale and, according to local residents, the resulting debris was "scattered over half the county." The mill roof was then replaced with zinc sheets and the mill continued to be used for grinding by Mr. Oyler, using a steam tractor standing outside with pulley connection belt drive. Alfred Scripps (1888-1968) drove this steam engine, a Charles Burrell machine, for Mr. Oyler until he left his employment c1932.

D. Smith published a book about windmills in 1932 in which he said, "Two only of the windmills (of Hertfordshire) at Little Hadham and at Hormead are still occasionally grinding for grist." All work at the mill ceased soon after this was written.

Both mills gradually fell into ruins until by November 1981 there was little left of them. An enthusiast, who was building a mill at Rickling, then removed nearly all the remaining debris. Part of

some of the millstones were saved and are now in the garden of Mill House nearby. On the site, a section of the kingpost is now all that remains.

## **Mill Owners**

The mill(s) stood on the land of the Lord of the Manor of Hormead Redewells and successive lords owned them. This was typical of the arrangement throughout the country from the earliest days of windmills being used to grind corn.

Nothing is known of the use of windmills in England before the end of the 12th Century, though watermills had been in use a thousand years before then. Great Hormeadbury had owned a watermill in 1295 when the Quin must have been a much larger and swifter river than it is now. The Quin was navigable up to Braughing until the 16th century, so the trickle of the brooklet we see today is of recent contraction of a much greater flow of water.

Windmills are more common in East Anglia than in any other part of the country. These eastern counties produced the greatest area of wheat because of the high grade of farm land and low rainfall, so this is where the greatest demand for milling existed. Because most of the rivers of East Anglia lacked sufficient gradient to drive watermills, millers resorted to windpower.

In Hormead, the Redewells manor, and thus the mill, belonged in the 16th century to the Delawood Family; in the 17th century to the Delawood and Bownest (of Stonebury) families and all the 18th century to the Houlton family. The Delawood and Houlton owners were wealthy London merchants and leased the manor house and land to tenant-farmers for most of the time in which they were lords of the manor.

William Delawood dictated his will in 1694 and two years later he was described as having 'died seised of the Manor of Hormead Readwells Hall with a Windmill and other appurtenances to the same Manor belonging.' He devised these to his two friends, the brothers Isaac and Abraham Houlton who were both directors of the Bank of England, established in 1694. The manor and the mill descended in the Houlton family until the mid-19th century.

A deed dated 7th July 1846 from Charles Eyre (then called Charles Archer Houlton) of Welford Park, Berkshire, to John Dellow, miller of Great Hormead, for the sum of £42, "All that piece or parcel of land containing thirty four poles or thereabouts being in the parish of Great Hormead, part of a certain field called Mill Field, together

with the mill and outbuildings erected and built and now standing and being thereon."

John Dellow had been the miller here from about 1830 (see under Millers) and he owned the mills from 1846 until 1873 when he sold them. An abstract of title reveals that he "built another Windmill on part of the land by the said indenture (dated 1846) conveyed to him". In February 1873, when he was 70 years old, John Dellow sold the land and property to Thomas Fitch of Cleobury Mortimer, Salop, a miller, for £350. Fitch did not keep the mills for long, but re-sold them by auction on the 10th June that same year. On this occasion William Chamberlain Mole was the highest bidder at £350. His signature appears across the stamp on the agreement to purchase the mill, which was written on the back of the sale sheet.

W.C. Mole then proceeded on 6th August (still 1873) to sell the property to Walter Westcott Wyman of Hormead Hall, for £360. Quite what was going on during all these sales and re-sales the documents do not reveal, but what is more interesting is that the tenant-farmer of the manor house, Hormead Hall, is now once again in control of the Hormead mills. The Houbion family still owned the manor and farm which Wyman farmed for them, but Wyman owned the mills separately, and he also appears to have purchased John Dellow's cottage (now Embers/Mill Cottage, which was then one house) at the same time.

Walter Westcott (or Waistcoat, as one clerk delighted in spelling it) Wyman died 24th December 1888 and left all his land to his wife Ann, who remained at the hall and farmed the land until 1903. When she died, at Braughing in 1908, she appointed her daughter Alice Emma Wyman as her sole executrix and trustee and instructed her to sell all her copyholds to form a trust for income for her three daughters. Alice put the mills on the marked on Friday 29th May 1908 as Lot 3 of a much larger sale of land and houses, etc. However, the mills remained unsold at the end of the day and so stayed in the hands of the Wymans.

In the Land Survey of 1910 (Finance Act 1909) the two mills of Great Hormead were noted as being owned by Miss Annie Mary Westcott Wyman of The Bury, Braughing and occupied by John Stewart. The gross rental was valued at £15, and the rateable value at £12.

In 1911 the manor was sold by G.B. Archer Houbion to John Read Russell and he in turn sold it in 1912 to G.B. Oyler. The mills were acquired separately by Mr. Oyler and they remained in his ownership until 1945. Mr. P.A. Smither owned them for the next 10

years, and then Mr. R. Luckock from 1955-1978 since which last date they have been owned by Mr. Frederick von Oldenburg. It would be more accurate now to say that Mr. Von Oldenburg owns the mill-site land.

On the 22nd February 1967 a preservation order was placed on both the smock mill and the post mill, but they had been disused for so long, it was too late to save them; and since they were of little or no practical use, too expensive to restore.

## **THE MILLERS**

Successive millers leased the mills from the Lord of the Manor, paying their rent at 6-monthly intervals, on Michaelmas and Lady Days. They had to give, and were due, six months' notice to quit. The miller was in the habit of taking between 1/16th and 1/18th of the corn ground for customers as a perquisite. As no-one but the miller and his assistant knew how much flour the grain had yielded, nor how much flour the miller had kept for himself, suspicions that the miller was defrauding them were held widely among the villagers. The miller thus tended to become an unpopular member of the community.

The miller was also very knowledgeable about the quality and quantity of corn which was brought to his mill. His opinion of the land the farmers' sowed with grain and the management of that land by the farmer, was often sought by the Lord of the Manor, prospective purchasers of land and land agents. The village farm workers suspected he knew too much to be trusted. In these circumstances, one can readily understand why millers frequently were outsiders who came to the village, stayed a few years, and then moved on. The single exception to this in the Hormeads, was the Dellow family who prospered here and ground the corn for the villagers for over 100 years, during which time three generations of Dells held the job of miller.

The following information on the Hormead millers has been collected from various sources and is both uneven and incomplete, due to gaps in the records preserved. The dates given against the names of the millers cover the time they are known to have been at work in Great Hormead.

### **William Bawnett 1576-77**

William is the first miller whose name we know, and only when he died was his trade mentioned: Burial register Gt. Hormead: 2nd April 1577 William Bawnett, miller, husband of Elene. Two of William and Elene's children appear in the parish registers: Henry,

baptised 1st May 1576, buried 2nd January 1579-80 and William buried 30th August 1576.

After the death of William the miller, his wife remarried and her second husband was another miller: 'Elena Bawnett, widow, married William Uphuppa of Anstie, miller, 11th July 1578. A son by this marriage was buried at Gt. Hormead: 'William, son of William Uphuppe and Elena, buried 12th March 1578-9.'

### **Thomas Wheeler 1587-c1601**

In the 1587 Muster Book for Little Hormead, Thomas Wheeler is listed as a 'trayned soldier and a myller' by trade. The only other reference occurs in the Little Hormead parish registers: Baptisms, 'Thomas son of Thomas Wheeler 7 December 1596' and 'Margaret, daughter of Thomas Wheeler 27 June 1601.'

### **John Clark c1602**

John's burial provides the means of us knowing about this miller: 'John Clark, of the parish of Layston, our miller, died 26th February at dawn, and was buried the 27th day of the same month 1601-2.' Since he was 'of Layston parish' it is more than likely that he lived in Hare Street which was then divided between three parishes, Layston, Little Hormead and Great Hormead.

### **William Day c1663-1696**

William Day was established as the miller here by 1663. In that year, Richard Brand, a carpenter of Great Hormead made his will and requested his son and heir, Thomas Brand, to pay "the sixe pounds with interest which I owe unto William Day of Great Hormead in the county of Hertford, Miller, upon bond which will bee due on our about Michaelmas next."

William Day's parents, Richard (who died 1679) and Mary (who died 1658) lived in Great Hormead, and four of his brothers were born here between 1649 and 1658, though William's baptism is not recorded. However, William left a will from which one can deduce that he died a relatively wealthy man in 1696. He left his sister-in-law, the late wife of Daniel Day brewer of London £20; and Elizabeth Warring, a widow of Royston, £10. To his nephew, John Day of Braughing he left all the remainder of his personal estate. The will was dictated on 30th October, William was buried at Great Hormead on the 20th November, and his will was proved on the 3rd December 1696. Solicitors in those days were a great deal less tardy than today.

### **James Rule c1744-1752**

The parish registers of Great Hormead tell us a little about James Rule.

Burials: Ann, wife of James Rule, miller 28th March 1745  
James, the Miller, an ancient man, 11th January 1752  
Martha, the daughter of James and Ann, 1st November 1744.

A very late-in-the-day baptism is recorded for James:

Baptism: James Rule, aged 69, 14th December 1751.

This would mean that James was born c1682 and when he died, aged 70, this was regarded as an achievement, and James labelled 'an ancient man'.

James Rule paid four shillings land tax on his cottage in Great Hormead in 1746. This was the tax for a modest house on a small plot of land.

### **John Jarman/Jarmyn c1757-1763**

John Jarman was mentioned as being a miller in the Great Hormead Militia Lists from 1758-1763. The Militia Lists were drawn up by the Parish Constable and contained the names of all the men in the parish between the ages of 18 and 45 who would become liable to make up Hertfordshire's quota of men to serve in the army or navy in time of crisis. These lists frequently give the man's trade, and the list for 1758 (the earliest one to be preserved for Hormead) named John Jerman, miller, among the 60 men of the parish of Great Hormead liable for service. The last time his name appeared was in 1763.

Three of his children were baptized at Great Hormead:

Joseph, son of John and Ann, 26th November 1757;  
Ann, 16th December 1759;  
Mary, 25th April 1762.

Since the first baptism occurs in 1757, and James Rule the former miller died in 1752, John Jarman might well have been here as miller following on straight after James Rule.

### **John Dellow c1762-1802**

John Dellow was miller here with John Jerman from 1762 to 1763. His name was included in the Militia Lists up to 1769 when he reached the age of 45. The lists of 1768/9 have the additional information that he had three children since men with families were not usually called upon to serve in the army before those with fewer commitments. His trade as 'miller' was recorded for each of these years, 1762-69.

The following children of John and Mary Dellow were baptised at Great Hormead:

Margaret in 1763, married James Wyman of Nuthamstead in 1785;  
Alice in 1765, married Henry Kemp 1787;  
Joanna 1767, married John Wood 1787;  
Eleanora 1768, buried 1794;  
Izabell 1769, married George Burgess 1790;  
Kezia 1775, buried 1791;  
James 1776, buried 1791;  
Benjamin 1779.

John's wife, Mary, was buried on 1st March 1792. He married again on 16th July 1793 and his second wife was Elizabeth Sparrow, a spinster much younger than himself. When John died in 1802, Benjamin his youngest son had shown no inclination to become a miller, but John's will reveals that another son, Thomas, born before the family moved to Great Hormead, was a true successor to his father. John's will tells us a few more interesting things about himself and his family. He commenced by devising 'to my wife Elizabeth all my household furniture now in my possession at the Vickarage house at Great Hormead and after my death of my wife I desire Elizabeth Kemp daughter of Henry Kemp to have my best bed if not worn out after my decease.' Poor John, he had hardly three months left after writing this in which to wear out his best bed at the vicarage which he leased from the absentee vicar. He dictated his will on the 14th February, was buried on the 13th May and his will was proved on the 21st May 1802. His grand-daughter Elizabeth Kemp probably got the bed when she married William Lawrence in 1819. The Kemp and Lawrence families lived in what we now know as Dellow's Cottage.

John Dellow apparently had some reservations about the choice of career of his youngest son Benjamin for in his will he said, "I bequeath to Benjamin Dellow now a soldier the yearly sum of £5 to be paid at the end of one year next after the decease of my wife, if he live to claim it.' And this income was also to come from his Nuthamstead farm.

John left his wife Elizabeth a copyhold messuage or tenement in Great Hormead 'in the Mannor of Hormead Hall now in the occupation of Henry Kemp labourer during the term of her natural life.' After his wife's death it was to go to his grandson James Wyman of Nuthamstead. This was Dellow's Cottage.

Lastly, John desisred all his 'farming stock and utencels with all my Mill utencels to be sold' and the proceeds were to be used to pay his debts and funeral expenses. Since his elder son Thomas was

already well established as the miller of Saffron Walden, he presumably did not need his father's mill tools.

The Vicar noted in the parish register that John had been his parish clerk:

Buriel: John Dellow, Clerk of the Parish, 13th May 1802.

From other sources, it is evident that John Dellow had been an active and useful member of the village community during the 40 years he lived here.

### **Thomas Dellow 1802-1833**

He was the elder son of John and Mary above, but not baptised here. When Thomas died in 1833 his age was given as 75, so he was born c1758 i.e. about 4 years before his father came to be miller in Great Hormead.

His father had been commuting between Nuthamstead and Great Hormead, his farm and his mill. Thomas meanwhile was miller at Saffron Walden but he came to Hormead when his father died, and took over the Hormead mill and care of the Nuthamstead farm. Thomas took his children to St. Nicholas to be baptised and they were duly recorded as being the sons and daughters of 'Thomas (Miller) and Elizabeth Dellow.'

Eleanor was baptised in 1806 and buried in 1813;

Heliaza was baptised in 1809;

George both baptised and buried 1813;

Benjamin baptised 1815 and buried 1820.

Among the Dellow burials are Thomas, aged 75, 2nd February 1833 and Elizabeth Dellow, aged 66, 26th January 1839. There is also a headstone in the churchyard bearing the inscription: Thomas Dellow died 1833 Aged 74.

On the Enclosure map of 1823 it is clear that the house which Thomas both owned and lived in was what we now call Embers/Mill Cottage, for which he paid 4/3d land tax yearly. In his will he devised to his son 'John Dellow the copyhold cottage, garden and tenement in Horse Shoe Lane in the parish of Hormead now in my own occupation also the copyhold tenement and garden situate in Horse Shoe Lane at present in the occupation of John Granvil and William Lawrence.....' The first house was his own Mill Cottage and the second was Baker's Cottage leased then to William Lawrence and his wife Elizabeth (who got the bed) and John Cranville (not Granvil). Both were owned by his son John Dellow for the next 30 years.

### **John Dellow c1833-1869**

John was the son of Thomas above, born at Saffron Walden in Essex about 1802 when his father was the miller there. He would be a small infant when his father took over as miller at Hormead in succession to his grandfather. It is likely that he was apprenticed to his father and worked in the mill from about 1814 onwards. In October 1828 he married Ann Newman and they had five girls and four boys, all baptised at St. Nicholas, Great Hormead:

Mary Ann in 1829;  
Emma 1832;  
George 1834 and buried 1840;  
William 1836;  
Ellen 1838 and bried 1840;  
Thomas 1840 and buried 1841;  
Henry 1842;  
Louisa 1844;  
Eliza 1846.

The burial registers record the early death of John's wife: Ann Dellow, aged 45, buried 1st December 1851. Died suddenly.' Fortunately, Mary Newman (Ann Dellow's sister) had lived with the family and helped Ann to bring up the children and she now stayed on to comfort and help the surviving six children.

The Census returns for 1841, 1851 and 1861 show the changing pattern of life in the Dellow family. They were entered under 'Horse Shoe Lane' (the name 'Horsehoe Hill' was not used for the lower part of the lane until the 20th century) and lived next to the Cannon family of the grocery shop when that was in Three Horseshoes Cottage. (**now re-named Bay House**).

One thing to note about the 1841 census returns is that the ages of the adults were allowed to be rounded up (or down) to the nearest five, but they were supposed to be accurately reported in later censuses.

### **Census 1841**

Name	Age	Occupation	Born Herts yes or no
John Dellow	35	Miller	No
Ann Dellow	35		No
Maryann "	11		yes
William "	5		yes
Thomas "	1		yes
Mary Newman	30	Independent	no

### **Census 1851**

John Dellow head married 48 miller born Walden, Ex

Ann "	wife "	44	"	London
Mary Ann "	dau unm	21	"	Gt Hormead
Henry "	son	9	scholar "	" "
Elizabeth "	dau	4	" "	" "
Mary Newman	sister in law unm	41	formerly dressmaker	born London

### Census 1861

John Dellow	head	widower	59	miller employing 2 men born Walden, Ex
Mary Ann "	dau	unm	30	" Gt Hormead
Henry "	son		19	miller " "
Louisa "	dau		17	" " "
Mary Newman	sister	unm	54	Housekeeper " London

The directories of Hertfordshire began to list the traders by village in 1850 and under Great Hormead from 1850 until 1868 John Dellow is entered as the miller. He also appeared in the electoral registers, as owner of copyhold cottages and gardens occupied by himself and others up to the end of the 1850s and in the 1860s the cottages were also noted as being in 'Horse-shoe Lane'.

After John had leased the mill in the usual manner for about 13 years, he negotiated with the then Lord of the Manor in order to buy the mill and a small piece of land, roughly triangular in shape, surrounding the mill. For these he paid £42 and then he proceeded to have built the tower/smock mill about 20 yards distant from the old post mill.

Business was flourishing and the increase in trade probably due to London's population explosion. The Hertfordshire farmers were supplying part of the need for more food in the capital by growing a larger quantity of wheat, and the millers were kept busy grinding it into flour. John Dellow had two men in his employment in 1861 according to the census, and his son Henry was also a miller. This would mean that two men were working each of the two mills.

By 1868-9 John Dellow was ready to retire, and he withdrew to Buntingford where he lived the rest of his life. What happened to his son Henry we do not know, but he did not carry on the family tradition into a fourth generation of Dellow millers in Great Hormead.

When John died, he was brought back to Hormead to be buried. There is a memorial stone in the Congregational Chapel graveyard (now the front garden of The Chapel, a private house in Horseshoe Hill) with the inscription:

In loving remembrance of John Dellow who died November  
2nd 1877 aged 77 years

Also of Mary Newman who died April 1875 aged 68 years.

John's employees had changed over the years, some being journeymen just out of their apprenticeship and working for a while with a master miller before taking on a mill of their own, and some may have been apprentices to John Dellow himself, e.g. his son Henry. Evidence of three such employees at the mill occur between the years 1833 and 1861 in the censuses and parish registers.

**Joseph Chopping c1833-37.** A bachelor of Great Hormead who married Sarah Butcher, daughter of the millwright who was here for a short time. They married on 23rd April 1833 and two of their children were subsequently baptised at Gt Hormead: Thomas on 7th December 1834, and Emily on 5th February 1837.

**John Skinner c1840-59.** One child of his was baptised at Gt. Hormead: William son of John (miller) and Esther Skinner, bapt. 29th May 1859. John had been living in the village, as a bachelor, at the time of the 1841 and 1851 censuses. He lodged then with two different households:

Census 1841 in the household of George Miller, a tailor and Mary wife – 'John Skinner, aged 20, miller.'

Census 1851: in the household of Elizabeth Barker, a widow and schoolmistress – 'John Skinner, lodger, unmarried, aged 30, journeyman miller, born Great Hormead.'

John had moved away by the time the next census was taken in 1861.

### **Thake Prior**

He was the son of Edward, the publican of the Three Tuns. By 1865 he was the miller of Woodham Walter in Essex, but came back to Great Hormead to be married that year. In the 1861 census he was a journeyman miller and may have been one of John Dellow's apprentices, as a boy.

### **William Baldwin c1869-1873**

He is noted in one Hertfordshire directory only, that of 1870 as 'Balding, William, miller' under Great Hormead. The next directory, of 1874, and those for many following years, do not name a miller.

William Baldwin came to the village and brought a large family with him about 1869. At that time, St. Nicholas had a much loved and respected vicar in the Reverend Charles Colson who knew all his villagers and did everything he could to help and encourage them. He called on the Baldwin family soon after their arrival, discovered that the large brood of children were unbaptised and persuaded the

parents to rectify the omission. The result is a rather surprisingly long entry in the baptismal register under the date 5th April 1871:

Annie, born in 1855;  
Elizabeth born in 1856;  
**Elizabeth born in 1856; (is this a repeat??)**  
Sarah born in 1858;  
Tabitah born in 1861;  
William born in 1862;  
Albert born in 1866;  
Arthur born in 1867;  
Amy bornb in 1869;  
Ada born in 1871.

Three more baptisms occur after this: Golder in 1871, buried in 1872; Lily baptised 1871 and died 1872 then another Lily baptised in 1873.

William rented Mill Cottage (including Embers which was just as well with that number of children to accommodate). He was there at the time of the 1871 census which showed how William had moved around from one job to another when out of his apprenticeship.

William Baldwin	head married	37	miller	born Tring
Sarah "	wife "	35	"	Brantford
Annie "	dau	15	scholar	Untorbridge
Elizabeth "	dau	14	"	"
Sarah "	dau	13	"	"
Tabitha "	dau	10	"	"
William "	son	9	"	"
Albert "	son	5	"	"
Arthur "	son	3	"	Wendover
Amy "	dau	3	"	Gt Hormead
Ada "	dau	9mo	"	"

The enumerator was not a literate man and it is possible that 'Untorbridge' in Hertfordshire was Hunton Bridge and that Brantford, more usually then Brantfield, was the old name for Bramfield.

### **John William Stewart c1873-1927**

When John first came to Hormead, he lived in the middle of the house we now call Great Hormead Dane, which was then divided into three tenements. The Wymans, his employers who also owned this house, left Hormead Hall prior to 1908 and John then moved to the cottage opposite the village hall (since demolished). He was the miller for some time before his retirement, had a short spell in

retirement and then returned to milling aided by his son Frank. He was deaf, and was alerted to the presence of a visitor to the mill by his little white dog which tugged at his trouser-leg when his master seemed not to notice the stranger. He was a keen member of the church choir in his younger days, having a gruff bass voice and he also played a concertina until his deafness interferred with these pleasures.

John Stewart was ill for some time before his death and after the death of his wife and his own second retirement c1925, he found life too difficult on his own at the cottage and went to live in Hare Street with his daughter Annie Bertha who was married to Albert Cane of Mead Villas.

A number of his and Jane's children were born at Great Hormead and baptised here:

Albert Henry in 1874;

Agneta Mary in 1880;

Annie Bertha in 1881 who married Albert Cane in 1924;

Charles Samuel in 1882, buried 1883;

Walter James in 1884;

Alfred Edward in 1886, and

Frank who assisted his father at the mill, born in 1890.

Two burials are of interest: Jane, aged 69, wife of John William Stewart, in 1921 and John William Stewart, aged 83 buried 4th February 1929, of Hare Street.

In the census of 1881 John Stewart's household included:

John W. Stewart	head	married	36	journeyman miller	born Rainford Ex
Jane	"	wife	"	30	" Sawbridgeworth
John W.	"	son	15	miller's boy	" "
Cornilius	"	"	11	ag. Lab.	" "
Elizabeth J.	"	Dau	7	"	Great Hormead
Albert H.	"	son	6	"	" "
Agneta M.	"	dau	1	"	" "

John Williams Stewart retired from milling in 1907 and this was when Joseph Scowan started leasing the mills from Miss A.M.W. Wyman of Braughing, but Scowan left in September 1908 and John Williams Stewart returned to keep the mills working. He was our last miller using wind power, and retired finally 1924-25.

### **Joseph Scowen 1907-8**

The Hertfordshire directory of 1908 says of him, "Scowen, Thomas, miller (wind)". This follows an earlier entry in 1902 of "Wyman, Ann Mrs. Farmer and miller (wind) Hormead Hall" which would seem

to indicate that she was leasing the mills then but the directory compiler did not know to whom. Even when the compiler found the miller, he gave him the wrong christian name of Thomas. The Electoral Register, compiled in 1908 for 1909, included Scowen, Joseph Two Mills, occupier elector.

A local resident remembers visiting Joseph Scowen and playing cards with him whilst he lived in one of the mills. Joseph took up residence at the top of the smock mill and was probably the only miller ever to do so.

In March 1908 Scowen wrote to Miss Wyman:

March 17th 1908

Madam,

I hereby give you notice that on or before the 29th day of September next, I shall quit and deliver up possession of the two Wind Grist Mills I now hold to you, situate at Gt Hormead in the parish of Gt Hormead in the County of Herts.

Dated the 17th day of March 1908

(Signed) J. Scowen

Written on the bottom of this letter were the words:

'Rec'd 20 March 1908'

and on the reverse a further note:

Miss Wyman, Madam,

Enclosed please find cheque for £6 for half years rent due March 25th also notice too quit Hormead Mills,

Yours truly,

J. Scowen (signed)

He had been asked to quit, one suspects, due to the imminent sale of the mills. Miss Annie Mary Westcott Wyman was the daughter of Mrs. Ann Wyman who had been noted in the directories as the owner of the mills, and she had recently died. Miss Wyman lived at The Bury, Braughton. She could not sell the mills, however, when they were put on the market, so let them once more to John William Stewart who came out of retirement and proceeded to lease the mills from her 'for one year from 29th September 1908 and so on from year to year until either party shall give to the other six months previous notice in writing to quit.... All those two wind grist mills situate in Great Hormead.....known as 'The Hormead Mills' together with all the fixed machinery therein yielding and paying the annual rent or sum of £12 payable half yearly in equal portions on the 25th day of March and 29th day of September in every year.'. Apparently the mills were already falling into disrepair, for the next clause in the agreement makes provision for some repair work to be done. Stewart agreed 'to preserve the Rope and Tackle belonging to the Landlady and which has been used by

her in repairing of the Two Mills and undertakes not to permit the same to be removed from the premises whatsoever. And the Landlady agrees to allow the Tenant out of the rent which will become due on the 25th day of March 1909 the sum of £2-10-0 and out of the rent due on the 25th day of March 1910 the sum of £2-10-0 provided the Tenant has expended such sums at least in repairs to the said Mills.' And so the arrangement continued, with John William Stewart as the miller until finally he gave his six months' notice to quit when he was almost 80 years old.

## **A MILLWRIGHT**

The only trace of a millwright living in these villages occurs when Thomas Butcher lived in Hare Street from about 1821 to 1839. Thomas would have been doing repair work on several mills in the district before moving onto another area several years later. While he lived in Hare Street, he probably refurbished the single mill at Great Hormead. His daughter, Sarah, married Joseph Chopping another miller at St. Nicholas' Church in 1833. Except for a brief appearance at Hertford for a court case in which he was a witness, in 1839, nothing further is known of Thomas Butcher.

Is it possible that Thomas Butcher built the mill in Little Hormead which appeared on the O.S. map of 1876?

## **MILL COTTAGE**

Millers owned and also occupied Mill Cottage from about 1790 to the end of William Baldwin's residence in Hormead in 1874. The Dellow family owned it from c1790 to 1870 whilst three generations of Dellsows lived there and were millers for most of that period.

During this time, the cottage we now call Mill Cottage was part and parcel of the cottage Embers, the two being one residence. Mill Cottage was an extension, built on in the late 18th century, almost certainly at the instigation of John Dellow, the first Dellow miller here. The use of the name Embers is of very recent origin. One can, however, imagine the villagers referring to the house as 'the miller's' for many years before they were split into two dwellings.

Both cottages were held copyhold of the Manor of Hormead Redewells. When John Dellow retired c1868 he mortgaged them to Messrs Foster, Bankers of Cambridge, for £830 @ 5% interest. In December 1870 he sold them to the then Lord of the Manor, Charles Eyre. Once the Lord owned them, the copyhold tenure was extinguished and the cottages were next sold as freehold.

In 1908 the cottage(s) were put up for sale by the executors of Mrs. Wyman's will, to be sold as one residence. One sale sheet has '£140' written on as though the cottage was sold at this price. However in 1910 there was a Land Survey which showed Miss Agneta Wyman of The Bury, Braughton as the owner of these cottages. Miss Wyman sold them soon after to Harry Ambrose Hammond of the Hormead village shop. With that sale, all connection with millers, mill-owners and Lords of the Manor of Hormead Redewells ceased.

## **Sources**

### **Documents:**

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Local History Studies.

Hormead Redewells als Clarke manor documents (HCRO:D/Ete T34; D/Ete B46 Manor Court Book 1837-1912, D/Ery B263).

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Land Tax: Gt Hormead 1746-1832 (HCRO with gaps)

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Wills: William Day 1696 and John Dellow 1802 (Essex CRO);

Thomas Dellow 1833 (PRO London)

## **Printed sources**

Directories of Hertfordshire: Gt Hormead, 1850-1937

Electoral Registers: Gt Hormead, 1832-1932

Hertfordshire Countryside: Letters and short articles on the windmills:

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## **Acknowledgements**

I am pleased to take this opportunity to thank those villagers who have been so helpful with their memories of the last days in which the mills were in working order. Mr. Bull and Mr. Ginn were most helpful and Mrs. Dedman kindly produced a photograph of John William Stewart, our last miller, and her grandfather.

I also wish to thank the staff of the Local Studies Department of the Hertfordshire County Library for their willing assistance at all times. The staff of the Hertfordshire County Record Office have also been most obliging whilst fetching and carrying the many documents relating to the mills preserved at County Hall.

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May 1984.