HISTORY IN BEDFORDSHIRE

THE JOURNAL OF THE BEDFORDSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION
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[Biggleswade water mill, photo Nigel Cox]

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BLHA Bedfordshire Local History Association

BEDFORDSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND AGM 2026

Hosted by the BLHA at
ST MARY'S PARISH CHURCH, LUTON, ON
SATURDAY, 6 JUNE 2026

(image @ www.stmarysluton.org)

Luton's Heritage: Made and Shaped

Join us for a journey through the heart of Luton's heritage. From the grand estate of Luton Hoo to bustling George Street, the town's story is one of rapid change and enduring community. This conference explores the diverse forces that contributed to modern Luton: the arrival of the railways, the industrial might of Vauxhall, and the powerful influence of church patronage on our social history. Discover the stories that have shaped the Luton we know today.

08.00–09.15: Conference opens for delegates with displays to set up

09.00–9.30: Conference registration with tea and coffee

09.30–10.00: Welcome followed by BLHA AGM

10.00–11.00: The History of George Street, Luton's Town Centre
Speaker: **Paul Hammond**

As Luton's high street, George Street has been the focus for much of its heritage for centuries. Prime Ministers have promenaded, hat factories located, riots started, regiments waved off and election results announced. The wealth of archive material available about just 400 yards of the public highway enables us to examine in detail aspects of the town's recreation, government and commerce.

11.00–11.30: Comfort Break with tea and coffee

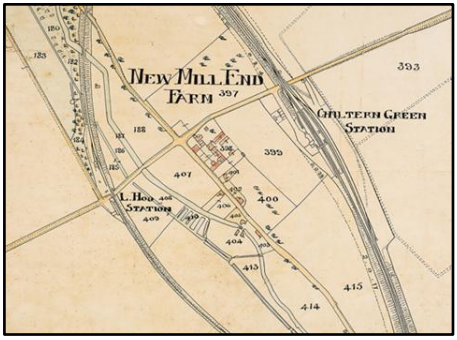
11.30–12.30: 'Luton Made: Vauxhall' is a heritage project funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, celebrating the history of Vauxhall, the car manufacturer, here in Luton
Speakers: **Toni Fielding & Aisha Hassan**

The project will culminate in an exhibition at Stockwood Discovery Centre in May and June 2026. Through a mix of oral histories, archival material, and personal objects, the exhibition will bring to life the everyday experiences of Vauxhall Motors' workers, from the factory floor to the design studio, from those who travelled here to be part of the journey to the families who watched generation after generation contribute to its legacy. Our aim is to celebrate Vauxhall's impact, not just on Luton, but on the wider community and beyond.

12.30–14.00: Buffet Lunch with tea and coffee, and browse archival displays

14.00–15.00: The Leigh Family at Luton Hoo and their involvement in the railways to Luton

Speaker: Felicity Brimblecombe



John Shaw Leigh, a wealthy Victorian entrepreneur, bought Luton Hoo in 1847. He was interested in railways and made money from railway transactions. Two new railway lines built through his estate in the 1850s and 1860s were important for Luton and were used by Luton Hoo to transport cattle raised on a new model farm. Later members of the Leigh family hosted the Prince of Wales who arrived by rail and visited Luton in 1878 and 1886.

15.00–15.15: Comfort Break

15.15–16.15: The Power of Church Patronage to Shape the Social History of a Town, 1763-1896

Speaker: Peter Adams

The sale of Luton Hoo to John Stuart, the 3rd Earl of Bute, on his resignation as Prime Minister in 1763, made him the patron of St Mary's Church. The vicars that he and his descendants appointed over the next century, and those that followed that period, had a significant impact on the social and religious life of Luton, and the fabric of the church.

16.15–16.30: Close & Summary

16.30–17.30: Optional Guided Tour of St Mary's Church

Following the close of the conference, there will be the opportunity to have a guided tour of St Mary's. This will be led by Peter Adams and should take around 40 minutes, with 15 minutes for questions. The tour is limited to a maximum of 40 people.

About one-third of the tour has restricted access due to two steps into the chancel and Wenlock Chapel. However, judicious placement of those unable to make it enables them to hear Peter's voice and see, albeit at a slight distance, the things referred to. There is no charge for this tour, but places are on a first come first served basis

Venue - St Mary's

The site of St Mary's has been the centre of worship for people in the area for over 1,000 years, and a church was built in about AD 930 by King Athelstan as an act of thanksgiving for victory over the Danes. The Church is one of the largest in Bedfordshire and is considered a fine example of medieval architecture. It is the only Grade 1 listed building in Luton.

Transport/Parking

The church is located just a five-minute walk from the Luton Mainline Station. For those travelling by bus, several stops are within a short walk of the church. Visitors by car are encouraged to use nearby parking facilities such as the Luton Point (The Mall) or the open-air Power Court car parks, or Vicarage Street, all just a 4-minute walk away.

Vicarage Street, Saturday £3.50, 08.00–18.00; *Power Court*, £3.50, 06.00–Midnight.

Booking

Conference tickets are £27.50 per person, which includes an excellent buffet lunch to be provided by the Gravenhurst caterer, *Disco-licious*. Bookings close at the end of day on 30 May, refunds for cancellations may only be made before this date.

Table displays are available for society displays, and floor space for free-standing displays.

For full booking details, visit:
www.bedfordshire-lha.org.uk

Launch of 2026 BLHA Local History Awards

Building on the success of the inaugural BLHA Local History Awards, a second round will be launched in June 2026, with more categories and a new competition for schools, run by local teachers.

The adult and society awards for 2026 will comprise **five categories**:

- Books.
- Journals/newsletters.
- Community projects and outreach.
- Websites.
- Partnerships with another society (either within Bedfordshire or a neighbouring county). The partner society needn't have a sole focus on local history – for example, it could be a civic, neighbourhood, family history or University of the Third Age group.

Entries may be made from June 2026 until 30 September 2026. The results will be announced at an awards ceremony in January/early February 2027. Winners will receive a framed certificate, and their win will be highlighted in the subsequent HIB.

More information and entry forms will be posted on BLHA's website before the BLHA AGM and Conference on Saturday, 6 June.

Bob Ricketts will be at the Association's conference stand to answer any questions you may have**. Please consider entering – it's a great way of publicising your work and achievements.**

A Date for your diary–Autumn Event!

Duck End Lane Farm: A Tour with Refreshments

At Duck End Lane, Wilhamstead
MK45 3HP on
Thursday, 3 September 2026, 10 am start

Your Committee of the Bedfordshire Local History Association tries to organise interesting and different events for our members! Well, this is certainly going to be different!

Have you thought of wandering around farm buildings? These farm buildings are different because they contain a lot of history: a collection of farm implements, lorries, cars, etc, referred to as dinosaurs by the owner!

In addition, the owner has collected over the years many historical documents, including maps of Bedford, etc., going back to 1890.

Cost and booking: £7.50 per person. This includes a selection of tea, coffee, biscuits and cakes.

The owner, Darren Maskell, supports the Milton Keynes-based charity *Medical Detection Dogs*, to which the most of the bookings will be donated. For more information about the charity, please see: www.medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk

Bookings to open soon.

www.bedfordshire-lha.org.uk

BEDFORDSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

HISTORY IN BEDFORDSHIRE

VOLUME 11, NO 1, Summer 2026

The Association's 34th Year

www.bedfordshire-lha.org.uk

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Eclectic Acquisitions for Bedfordshire Archives

Bedfordshire Archives receives a constant stream of material to add to its collections. The majority of this material is received either as a gift or on long-term loan. Recently these have included: the papers of a local politician from the 1990s; photographs of the widening of Bedford Bridge in 1938–40, and the records of Shillington Women's Institute from 1939–2025.

Just occasionally items come up for sale at auction that we believe are worth bidding for. Being able to bid relies on funds being available from donations or grants as we have no budget for document purchases. Fortunately, in 2025, we received a large donation from the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, which is disposing of assets prior to winding-up later in 2026. So, when we were told of two very different things coming up for sale, we felt we were in a good position to acquire them in order to fill gaps in our collections documenting the history of Bedfordshire and its people.

A member of the public emailed us to tell us that a set of the first 12 editions of the *Davis Gazette*, the Davis Gas Stove Company's magazine, were being offered for sale. Dating from 1920–1921, these magazines paint a picture of this thriving Luton business. As well as company news, they have plenty of details of the births, marriages, deaths and social lives of their employees. In addition to the activities of the company's various sports teams there is room to detail training opportunities. One such is a feature on the technical and scientific section of Luton Public Library, recently expanded due to contributions from local engineering firms, including the Davis Gas Stove Co Ltd. It suggests that, if there was interest from employees, visits could be arranged to have a tour with the librarian.

The magazines are surprisingly well illustrated with photographs and an interesting range of moustache styles is displayed in the regular feature on the company's founders and key personnel.

Another aspect of the magazine is the more generic articles that provide an insight into what was thought interesting or important to the readers. Allotment gardening has a monthly slot – the first provided by the fantastically named William H Cutbush, nurseryman by appointment to his Majesty the King, but after that by J B Riding, FRHS. Issue No 1 includes an article 'Should Husbands Help at Home?' and, from issue 2, there is a regular women's page called 'A Woman to Women'. No 6, from January 1921, has an article called 'Husbands by a wife' and in response No 7 has 'Wives and Women by a mere man'. There are poems, competitions, in-jokes, and items for children.

Until acquiring these magazines our holdings about the Davis Gas Stove Company were limited. We held a few illustrated catalogues of their products (reference Z764); some copies of their later company magazine, *The Davis Review*, from the 1950s (Z1236), and some company records (Z1471/1). This new accession, reference Z1886, of these 12 slim magazines fills a gap and offers the reader a very interesting view of urban industry in the south of the county in the early 20th century.

The other item we recently acquired came up for auction in January. We were notified about it by The National Archives. It is a court roll for the Manor of Ickwell Bury. Auction sale descriptions often don't tell you much and this was described as a 'View of Frankpledge and court baron for 1736'. I checked the manorial documents register, the official index to English and Welsh manorial records and their locations in public and private hands, to see what records were known for this manor. Only documents from the 16th, 17th and 19th centuries were listed, some held by

Bedfordshire Archives and some by The National Archives; nothing for the 18th century. Potentially then, this court roll could fill a significant gap. I registered for the auction. I hate bidding at auction and online auctions make me a nervous wreck – just the phone ringing or some other interruption can cause you to miss the crucial moment when the lot you want comes under the hammer. Everyone was given strict instructions not to disturb me and, when Lot 27 was duly announced, I was poised ready to respond. The hammer fell and the screen announced that our bid had won.

After the stress of the auction, it was a lovely surprise to find that the roll contained more than the auction house description had led me to believe. Beautifully handwritten over three membranes (6 sides) of parchment, each approximately 15 x 30 inches, the document contained not just the court held in 1736 but also the next court held in 1775. Clearly the manor felt that a court every 40 years was sufficient to conduct its business. This may have been due to the manor consisting of land held as freehold. All the business conducted at the two courts refers to land 'held by free deed fealty suit of court and yearly rent or service of finding one man in harvest yearly called a Bedreap', only one messuage and close of pasture has an additional yearly rent payable to the Lord of the Manor.

From the court we learn of certain owners and occupiers of land and cottages in Ickwell, Northill, Caldecott, Nether Caldecott and Thorncote, although, as usual, it is difficult to know where exactly the property was without a map or survey. Including the names of those who made up the homage, a total of 98 different names is mentioned.

Perhaps surprisingly for a manor that conducted little business, at the 1775 court, 12 orders were set down that sought to regulate the manor, in particular the numbers of sheep, horses and cows that could be kept and when and where they could be grazed. For example:

> No sheep [to] be kept upon Ickwell or Caldecott Green from Lady Day till St Andews yearley except on shearing days. Pain 4d per sheep. No man shall keep for a cottage more than three cows or one horse and one cow and six sheep. Pain 3s 4d for every offence.

Reading through the presentments at the two courts it was good to see that, in the time between courts, new owners of certain land had sorted out what they owed to the Lord of the Manor and had paid off all the arrears. For example, in 1739 Henry Fish Palmer agreed with the Lord of the Manor to pay the sum of 10s yearly and every year as composition [compensation] for and in lieu and satisfaction of the eight Bedreaps due

from his lands, it being at the rate of 1s 3d for each Bedreap and it is noted that Henry has 'ever since paid 10s to the Lord of the Manor'. Not everyone was so good, and five owners still failed to appear at the court and do their duty.

The Manor of Ickwell, also known as the Manor of Ickwell Bury, had been purchased by John Harvey in 1680 from the Barnardiston family, who had owned it since 1543. The only known survey of the manor was made for Robert Barnardiston in 1610 (reference HY741). By 1736 it was the grandson of the purchaser, John Harvey the 3rd, who was Lord of the Manor. John Harvey had inherited it from his father (John Harvey II) in 1732. John died in 1771 and his nephew, also called John, inherited the estate.

The timings of the inheritances and the timings of the two courts are presumably not coincidental. Careful study of the maps made in 1781 when the parish of Northill was undergoing enclosure and showing the estates belonging to John Harvey (Bedfordshire Archives, references MA2 and X1/87) may give clues as to the lands that owed fealty and were charged with supplying Bedreaps.

The next set of records date to the 1820s, by which time John Harvey had acquired a number of other pieces of land, notably the estate of Henry Fish Palmer, and other manors in the area, making it more difficult to understand which land had once been part of the Manor of Ickwell and the subject of the courts recorded in the court roll, our reference Z1887/1.

Pamela Birch
County Archivist, Bedfordshire Archives

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The Golden Hare

The 18-carat golden hare was the subject of a very famous treasure hunt in 1979. Artist Kit Williams crafted the hare and, after his puzzle book *Masquerade* was released, clues were given that it was buried somewhere in Britain, but the actual location was Ampthill Park. This created a global phenomenon, and Williams went to the US to appear on talk shows, and his book sold out two days after publication. The mystery was solved in 1982 when Dugald Thompson, using the pseudonym Ken Thomas, found it. The hare was auctioned by Sothebys in 1988 for £31,900, afterwards displayed at the V&A and Sydney Opera House. It sold again at Sothebys in 2025 for £82,550! **Editor**

Some Ivel Mills: Part I

The River Ivel has four equivalent headwaters, but its name is given to the lower part of the Flit in the south-west and all the separate south-east headwaters which rise to the north of Baldock in Hertfordshire. The rest of its course and catchment is in Bedfordshire. The Ivel flows through Stotfold, Arlesey, Henlow, Langford, Biggleswade, Sandy and Blunham. It joins the Great Ouse at Tempsford. Total length is about 16 miles (26km).

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There were mills along the River Ivel from earliest times, and both Langford mill, Holme mill and Biggleswade mill were owned for part of the latter half of the 19th century by the Powers family – we will cover these mills after the story of a local family of millers who turned success into disaster by suspect financial practices.

The Powers family[1]

The Powers family of Langford, Clifton and Biggleswade go back locally to the 16th century. Their connection with the Ivel water mills started with John Powers, a baker, who on 28 May 1799 married Mary Warboys at Biggleswade. He was still a baker living at Sandy, probably Girtford, by the time their first child was baptised on 21 July 1800. Their 6th and 8th sons were Edmund (baptised 21 September 1809) and Charles (baptised 12 February 1815) who both became millers in the Biggleswade area.

Edmund I had five children, of whom just Charles Tower, Edmund Frederick and George concern us. By 1850 Edmund I was a miller and farmer and running the Biggleswade, Holme (now Jordan's) and Stanford mills. He took his three elder sons into partnership in 1868, with George based at Holme mills.

Charles Powers, Edmund I's younger brother by 1847 was also a miller and a corn factor at Tempsford mill. By 1853 he also controlled South Mills, Blunham – an oil mill producing oil cake. He also had many children, but only Hugh Edward and George Walter are relevant.

On 31 October 1873, Charles Powers suddenly died, leaving a widow and five children under 21. He left the bulk of his assets with trustees who were: his elder brother, Edmund I; the family solicitor, Thomas James Hooper; and George Race, a cousin, who was a local farmer. They could either carry on Charles Powers and Company or could sell it. They decided to allow the company to continue to trade and appoint Edmund Frederick Powers,

Edmund I's second son, as manager until Charles Powers' two younger sons came of age.

The financial trouble which engulfed the whole family in the 1880s could have been avoided if they sold Blunham mill, but the business was thought to be worth at least £28,000 and probably much more. Two catastrophic fires, an inadequately supervised, untrustworthy and dishonest manager, and unwise speculations in foodstuffs during an agricultural depression led to the collapse of Charles Powers and Co and Charles' two sons were reduced to penury.

On 9 August 1876 at Blunham Oil Mill (also known as South Mills) a fire destroyed the building completely, leading to legal action against the insurer for recovery of costs incurred in protecting the salvage from the mill and for stock. The judgment on 9 January 1879 was in favour of Charles Powers' trustees.

In 1880, Hugh Edward Powers became a partner with Edmund Frederick Powers, but George Walter preferred not to be involved in the business but lent £10,000 to carry it on. Despite being a partner of Edmund Frederick Powers, Hugh Powers took no active part and was happy to receive £12 a week without asking too many questions. Finances were still healthy, but Edmund Frederick Powers had an overdraft of £1,100 with Charles Powers and Co.

When he grew old, Edmund Powers I became senile and left the running of the business to his three sons. By 1883 he had an estate in Campton, Biggleswade mill, Holme mill, Langford mill and freeholds in Biggleswade and Clifton. By his will, the mills were to go to Charles Tower, George and Edmund Frederick Powers. The will was not proved till 15 February 1885 despite Edmund dying in December 1883. It was, therefore, not valid at a crucial stage in later litigation. Edmund Powers and Co were also involved with George Powers, Edmund's third son, in two businesses:

(1) at Albion Mills leased by George Powers from the Great Northern Railway for 60 years, near King's Cross Station;
(2) Ham Farm Brickfield.

Edward George Tattersall was George Powers' partner in the brickfield, and he also had to buy land and erect buildings in Westminster.

By December 1878 Tattersall could not pay the rent and royalties on the brickfield plus other debts to debtors including George Powers. An arrangement was made to pay Tattersall's current debts in return for a lease to George Powers as a trustee to carry on the Ham Farm Brick Co.

An agreement was reached on 2 January 1880 to wind up the business. George Powers had to pay £1,873, but the two Powers brothers, Charles and Edmund Frederick, now had control of Powers and Sons, Albion Mill, virtual control of Charles Powers and Co and virtual ownership of the Ham Brick Field.

Keeping the conflicting interests of two milling companies apart would have been difficult, but Edmund Frederick Powers did not try. He used Charles Powers and Co as security for disastrous speculations in wheat and oil cake from abroad, principally America, in about 1881–82. In 1883, £50,000 was said to have passed between them but the transactions were nearly untraceable.

Charles Powers and Co's profitability was questionable, especially as Edmund Frederick Powers indulged in financial practices which were opposed by the family solicitor. He seems to have wanted to get as much money out of both firms as possible without bankrupting them, to cover the expenses of a high standard of living for himself and his wife.

Walter Shoolbred gave £1,800 and joined Edmund Frederick Powers in a joint speculation with George Race for oil cake. The money was completely lost, and Charles Powers and Co were to cover the loss. The refusal of Edmund Frederick Powers' two brothers to honour the agreement for £1,800, bearing the name of Powers and Sons resulted in Charles Powers and Co going bankrupt. This was not the only problem, because, on 3 December 1883, Tempsford mill burnt down – 4,500 quarters of wheat were destroyed, 500 quarters surplus to the amount needed to fulfil their orders: this surplus was used for Edmund Frederick Powers' speculation. Hugh Powers at last awoke to the danger and forced Edmund Frederick Powers to resign as a partner on 2 July 1884.

The bank of Wells, Hogge and Lindsell called in the overdraft of Powers and Sons, which had risen to £24,219 by 19 July 1884, from the three brothers' overdrawn accounts.

The bank successfully sued the company for £24,250 10s 4d. An order was given on 3 October 1884 which resulted in the forced sale of Albion Mills to the bankers for £29,000. On 22 January 1885, Charles Tower Powers conveyed all the company's freehold property, including Biggleswade, Holme and Langford mills, to the bank.

On 18 February 1885 Holme mill was leased to William Jordan of Hatfield, Hertfordshire, for £250 per annum rent. On 16 March 1885 the bank leased Biggleswade mill to Henry Franklin of Biggleswade, corn and coal merchant, for £300 per annum. On 28 March 1885 they leased

Langford mill to George Cobb, miller's clerk and Ernest Woodcraft, miller's traveller for £163 per annum.

Hugh and George Walter Powers, who had been swindled by their cousin, were left virtually penniless by the collapse of Charles Powers and Co.

The collapse of the Powers' companies led to the takeover of Holme (now Jordan's) mill by the Jordan family, see below. [1]

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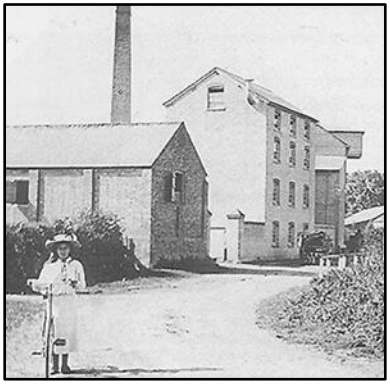
Stotfold Mill[2]



It is likely that a watermill stood on the site of Stotfold mill beside the River Ivel for more than 1000 years and the mill is one of the oldest recorded buildings in the town. The Domesday book of 1086 mentions four mills in Stotfold, one of which is Stotfold mill. The combined rents, payable to Hugh de Beauchamp, Baron of Bedford, were £4 and four hundred eels. There is not much history of the first 700 hundred years, but there are records from the Lords of Brayes Manor showing change of ownership of the mill.

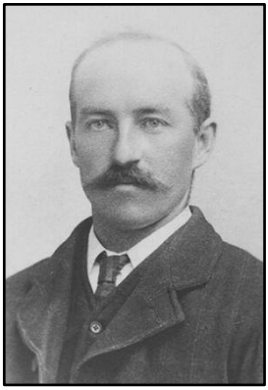
Owners and millers

Peter Thorp & Richard Page	1st named millers
Richard Lorymer	?–1516
James Sanders	?–1694
The Guilbert Family	1694–1757
Henry Dawson	1757–1767
The Smith Family	1767–1824
James Pestell	1824–1831
Hogg and Lindsell	1831–1841
The Waldock Family	1841–1863
The Vaughan Family	1863–1873
The Randall Family	1873–1966

The mill's history can be traced through early owners such as Richard Lorymer, James Sander and several families including the Guilberts, Smiths, Waldocks and, more recently, Vaughans and Randalls. Legal and other documents over the past 300 years tell more of the mill's history.

Three millers went bankrupt: James Pestell, David Waldock and Ebenezer Randall and two disputes went to court.

The Randall Family



In 1887, Stotfold-born John Randall *(right)* bought the mill after first renting it from Charles Vaughan. He developed the mill during his ownership, including installing a steam engine to increase the efficiency of milling. In 1902, Ebenezer Randall, John's son, built the roller mill, next door to the mill, to try to improve productivity. However, he was too late and could not compete with other larger mills being built locally. A diesel engine was fitted in 1954 to replace the steam engine, to try to keep the mill profitable – but, by then, it was only grinding grain for animal feed and the mill ceased working entirely in 1966.

Important machinery

In 1897 a new overshot wheel was installed, designed by John Lampit of Hemel Hempstead. The 14ft-wide wheel is the widest corn-mill waterwheel in the UK. In 1898 a cast-iron hursting frame was installed by Whitmore and Binyon of Wickham Market in Suffolk, the Rolls-Royce of mill equipment makers. Both were fine examples of Victorian engineering and can be seen in the mill today.

The Great Fire of 1992

There were many attempts to develop the mill after production of grain ended, but all this stopped after a catastrophic fire in 1992. Though the Grade II listed building was destroyed, the iron hursting frame and waterwheel survived. Local volunteers decided the mill could, and should, be restored.

Restoration

A charity, the Stotfold Mill Preservation Trust, was set up to restore the mill to working condition and transform the adjoining meadows into a nature reserve. In 2006, after years of dedicated work by volunteers and specialists, corn was once again ground in Stotfold mill. The Nature Reserve was officially opened in June 2011. Today the mill and Nature

Reserve have over 165 active volunteers who work in specialist teams, helping to keep the wheels of history turning.

Shefford Mills

Shefford windmill is a few yards inside the boundary of the parish with Southill, the site of the watermill being some yards west. Both buildings, seemingly known as Shefford Mills throughout their recorded history, were, for most of that time, shared between Clifton and Southill. The mill buildings were on the northern bulge of the River Ivel. On the north bank, everything was in Southill including the windmill. On the south bank everything was in Clifton. Records indicate that both the windmill and watermill were always in the same ownership and occupation, but this is not certain.

Early 19th century deeds refer to the mills as 'tythe mills' indicating that Chicksands Priory were the previous owners. So, their existence dates at least to 1539 at the dissolution of the priory. Beds Archives' earliest mention of a mill or mills at Shefford is from Campton parish registers in 1657 showing the burial of 'Warrin alias Wealler' of Shefford, miller.

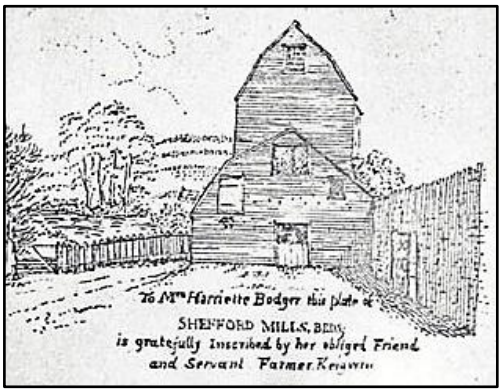
A deed for an annuity shows that an L Perrey granted the rents of two water mills called tithe mills in Clifton and Shefford to Felix Wilson and Robert Morgan in 1611. The deed witnesses the transfer of rents from John Perrey to Katherine Ashenhurst to get a £50 annuity in 1690.

A marriage settlement in 1724 next mentions the mill. It is for the strangely named Pattee Byng with Lady Charlotte Montagu. One of the properties conveyed to trustees was a messuage and mill house with five water grist mills (ie, pairs of millstones) under one covert called Shefford Mills in Southill with mill pools, dams, banks, water and going gear

belonging and formerly in the occupation of Joseph Franklyn, miller, now Martin Haycock, miller.

Joseph Franklyn is also recorded as a miller in Chicksands in the Campton parish registers from 1702 to 1719. Another Joseph Francklyn (or the same man married to a second wife) is recorded from 1719 to 1727.

The parish registers of Campton show Martin Haycock had given way to William Newman by 1735 as his son William was baptised in that year and William the father is shown as of Shefford, miller.



In 1765 George, 3rd Viscount Torrington gave a mortgage for £8,000 to William Daniel which included Shefford Mills as part of the security. The description of the mills is the same as 1724 but adds that Thomas Quire was the miller before Joseph Francklyn.

J S Elliott in an article on Bedfordshire windmills in Volume 14 of the Bedfordshire Historical Records Society (1931), notes that, on Thomas Jeffreys' map of 1765, a windmill is shown on the north side of the road leading to Clophill (Ampthill Road) about a quarter of a mile from the church. This is the only such reference to a mill.

George Byng, 4th Viscount Torrington exchanged land including Shefford Mills with John Dilly, gentleman in 1775, which ended the Byng family's ownership of the mill going back to at least 1724. The Campton parish registers again give the next reference to a miller when, in 1787, James, son of James Dobson of Shefford, miller, was baptised.

The Bodger family began their ownership of Shefford Mills in 1806 when John Dilly's brother Charles sold the mill, with other lands, to Richard Bodger of Southill, gentleman. The mill is described as 'a farmhouse with water mills, heretofore called Tythe Mills and now called Shefford Mills in Southill and Clifton parishes near Shefford, part possessions of the late Priory of Chicksands and in occupation of John Waller alias Warren'. Waller alias Warren is obviously not the miller, but John Warrin alias Wealler was buried in 1657, which shows how far some property descriptions in deeds go back!

George Edwards wrote a memorandum in 1809 to William Bodger, son of Richard, stating that he had 'drawn a kiln' of 4,000 bricks and had six quarters of lime reserved for him and did he still want them? It seems Bodger junior had a large building project at the mills, which could have been the later windmill, which is not mentioned in any previous record. J S Elliott in his 1931 article thought that this mill had been built by Henry Haynes in 1835 but gave no source or reference.

In his will made in 1811 (proved in 1812), Richard Bodger left the mill to William Bodger who, was probably then the miller.

The previously quoted article by J S Elliott on Shefford windmill states:

> The skeleton of a cone-shaped brick tower, standing in the field adjoining the water-mill, half a mile distant NE of the Church and equidistant between the river Ivel and the road leading to Stanford marks the site of the mill . . . erected by Henry Haynes of Shefford about this year [1835]. It ceased working about 1880, and two of the four decrepit sails were still in position as late as 1927. The brickwork of the tower is still at its original elevation, and is 40 feet in height; it measures 24 feet over the base, with 22-inch walling. There appear to have been four floors above the ground, and it worked three pairs of stones. The dome was of sheet copper, which was stripped off and sold during the Great War. The overall [length] of sails was about 50 feet. This mill was built to augment the water-mill, but its low and sheltered position was far from satisfactory, and its handicapped ability was answerable for a brief career . . .

William Bodger of Shefford Mills, mealman, owned a great deal of land in Clifton, Meppershall and Southill, and an abstract of his title includes a mortgage of Shefford Mills. But this may be a reference to wind and watermills or simply to the fact that there were five mills, or pairs of millstones, at the watermill. The mortgage in 1811 shows the long defunct John Waller alias Warren still noted as tenant. But a deed of 1815 gives the occupier as John Northwood, although who can say, looking at the accuracy of tenure of the preceding deed, when, in the past 150 years, he was in occupation? An 1830 deed describes the mill as formerly in occupation of John Northwood, now William Bodger.

In the next 50 years there were many mortgages and assignments of mortgage which are documented in the Gudgin archive of Shefford Mill records. These show William Bodger had moved to Essex by 1844 and was describing himself as a 'farmer'.

George Kempster of Shefford Mills made a claim for registration, which was a claim for outdoor relief under the Poor Law of 1834, in 1846, shown

in the Meppershall parish archive. He may have been the former miller, fallen on hard times, or have lived at one of the six cottages built around the mill. In 1856 Richard John Bodger was the miller. He is noted as miller in a conveyance by William Bodger and directories since 1850 term him as the miller.

In 1865 Richard John sold the mill to William James Bodger then in 1869 the mill was sold by auction. The sale particulars describe the mills (Lot 1) in part as follows:

> The spacious partly brick and timber-built and slated STEAM & WATER FLOUR MILLS, 4 STORIES HIGH and STAGE with extensive STOWAGE FOR CORN, with Brick, Timber, and Tiled 6-Bayed BOILER HOUSE, STORE HOUSE, and CART SHED, with large BRICK SHAFT, WASTE WATER GATE, BRICK-BUILT COUNTING-HOUSE communicating with Mill and House.
>
> Boiler House, Engine House, and ground Floor of Mill; a nearly-new Cornish Boiler, 6 feet diameter, 18 feet long, with two 27 feet tubes and fittings, and connections to a 25 (nominal) Horse-Power Condensing Engine (by HORNE, of Westminster) fitted with High and Low Pressure Cylinders, and connected with Spur and Counter Gear for driving 8 Pairs of French Burr Stones, 4 pairs fitted with Silent Feed Apparatus, and 4 pairs with Damsel ditto; an 18 inch Iron Breast Water Wheel, 8 feet 6 inches wide, with Rack Down Gate and 9 foot Fall; an Iron Pit Wheel, Wallower, Iron Upright Shaft, and Spur Wheel, 5 Stone Nuts and Spindles, with fixings. The whole in good working condition.
>
> STONE FLOOR. 13 Pairs of French Burr Stones, a Jumper, a Bran-Room, and a large Loading Chamber.
>
> MACHINE FLOOR. Iron Crown Wheel, 2 Nuts and Shafts with 6 Pullies for driving [the] Dressing and Smutting Machinery and Sack Tackle, upright Spindle and Driving Pullies as fitted to Smutter, one 18 inch cylinder Dressing Machine and large Pastry, and 2 Bolting Machines.
>
> BIN FLOOR. Six large Wheat Bins, one ditto for Smut-Machine, one ditto for Bolting-Machine, and one very large ditto for Dressing-Machine.
>
> LARGE STAGE. Two sets of Sack tackle fitted for Mill and set of Elevators to Smut Machine with counter shaft and pullies for driving the same, and Stage over Dressing-Machine.
>
> Connected with the Mill Head is a Reservoir of nearly 3 Acres.
>
> A COMFORTABLE PARTLY BRICK-BUILT DWELLING HOUSE, Containing capital Entrance Hall, Breakfast Parlour, Dining-room with bow Window and folding glass door overlooking Lawn and River, Drawing-Room with front door to Lawn, 7 Bed-Rooms, 2 Staircases, Kitchen, Larder, Side Entrance, and good Cellar; Court Yard with Brew-House and Wood Shed, Range of Brick, Timber and Pantiled and Asphalte Buildings used as

Cart Horse Stable, enclosed Store House and Shed, 31 yards by 21 yards, Cart Shed.

Partly Walled-in FLOWER and KITCHEN GARDEN overlooking the River Ivel.

A SUBSTANTIAL BRICK TOWER WINDMILL with 3 Pairs of French Burr Stones with overhead Driving Gear, iron upright Shaft and Wallower, iron-bound Shaft and Woof Break with part of 4 pair of patent Sails.

Also being sold were 21 acres of garden, meadow and pastureland, four (formerly six) cottages and 23 lots of building land.

Mary, Richard John Bodger's widow, made the sale and it was bought by Edward Bodger of Southill, gentleman, who straight away mortgaged it to Henry Campion. In 1888 an abstract of Edward Bodger's title to the mill was produced, as it was to be sold. A reconveyance by mortgagees in 1894 suggests that there was a sale in 1888 or 1889 to Joseph Gudgin of Hill Farm, Broom.

Shefford mill>

The mill was valued under the Rating Valuation Act 1925 in 1926 or 1927, when every piece of land and building in the country was assessed to determine the rates to be paid. The valuer at Shefford mill noted that the owner and occupier was Charles Frederick Gudgin and that the building was built of brick, wood and slate. It was a corn and grist mill (there was 'no flour trade') and there was an average production of about five quarters per week from just two pairs of stones.

<Shefford Mills about 1900

One mill, that is, a pair of stones, was used for rolling the grist. There were four floors ('One Floor has been taken off Top') and 'Only water power' was available which 'gets short in Summer', so it seems that steam power mentioned in the 1869 deed out of use.

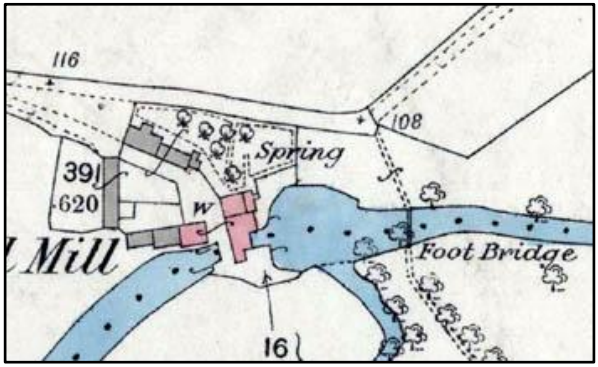
One-third of the mill had been pulled down since 1913.

The watermill was destroyed by flood in 1959. The windmill is still there, but derelict. *Bedfordshire Mills* by Hugh Howes, a booklet published by Bedfordshire County Council in 1983, noted that it was then used for fruit storage.

A TENTATIVE LIST OF MILLERS

Date	*Miller*
1657	John Warrin alias Wealler
before 1724	Thomas Quire
before 1724	Joseph Francklyn
1724	Martin Haycock
1735	William Newman
1787	James Dobson
before 1806?	John Northwood
1806 to 1812	Richard and/or William Bodger
1846	George Kempster?
1850-1869	Richard John Bodger
1869-1888	Edward Bodger
1894-1910	John Samuel King
1914-1928	Charles Frederick Gudgin
1931-1940	Gudgin & Son

Stanford Mill



Site of Stanford Mill, 1881

Domesday

The 1086 Domesday Book shows quite a few holdings in Stanford as well as some mills:

Owner	*No of mills*	*Tenant*	*Valuation*
Eudo, son of Hubert	2	—	29 shillings and 50 eels
Hugh de Beauchamp (later Baron of Bedford)	Half a mill (possibly the other half is below)	Roger	5 shillings
William Speke	Half a mill	Hugh	5 shillings
Azelina Tallboys	1	Roger (perhaps the same Roger as above)	–
*Total No of mills**	4	—	—

*This might not mean four mill buildings as later a mill could be just a pair of grinding stones: Shefford Mill was recorded as five mills as it had five pairs of stones.

Medieval murder

In R F Hunnisett, *Bedfordshire Coroner's Rolls,* volume XLI (Bedfordshire Historical Records Society, 1961), translated from rolls at the National Archive, entry 48, tells of a murder near the mill:

> About vespers [in the evening] on 15th November 1269 Ralph del Louwe of Stamford went towards Stanford mill in 'Hageyorfurlong' on the fee of the abbot of Old Warden, and met felons and thieves, who took and bound him and struck him with a knife under the right side and on the hattrel of the brain, of which he immediately died. His wife Millicent was troubled because he did not return that night, and at dawn the next day searched for him and found him dead in the said place . . . Inquest before G Rodlond, coroner, by Southill, Stanford, Langford and Henlow, who said that on the day of the felony the felons came from the house of Hugh le Champiman, a receiver of felons. It was ordered that he be arrested.

By the time of the Eyre (once a year circuit judges) at Bedford the felons were still unknown.

18th and 19th centuries

Bedfordshire Archives has no further mention of a mill at Stanford in any document it holds until a family settlement of 1792 by Robert Henley, 2nd Baron Ongley, who owned property, 18 acres of land and a watermill in Stanford. It is possible that he owned the mill because he also owned the two manors in Stanford, called Stanford Manor and Stanfordbury Manor, which were probably later versions of the land of the Domesday owners. In 1800, Ongley exchanged land with Samuel Whitbread, conveying to him a watermill named as Stanford mill, a yard, pasture and over one acre occupied by William Squire.

By 1847 Stanford mill was leased from the Whitbread Estate by Edmund Powers, see above. The family continued to lease the mill until 1916 when they sold all the stock. Edmund Powers is shown as miller until 1862, directories from 1869 noting the millers as Edmund Powers & Sons who ran the operation through a series of agents acting as millers.

20th century

The mill was no longer in use by 1916 and in that year J R Eve & Son were instructed to sell off the stock. According to a draft catalogue, the mill stock and the lease of Mill Farm were for sale. The description is as follows:

> Agricultural Buildings including a valuable Onion and Seed Loft with stable and cart shed under 50 feet by 30 feet. Covered yard 35 feet by 31½ feet; 6 bay return shed, etc. The substantially built mill – milling plant and machinery comprising elevators, four pairs of stones, dressing reels and mixers, Eureka separating and scouring machine, 30 driving reels, steel shafting and pulleys, centrifugal dressing machine, 10 foot purifier, set of double rolls, sack tackle etc, etc. 30hp compound tender type engine by Robey.

Site of Stanford Mill Pond, March 2008

When Stanford was valued in 1927 under the Rating Valuation Act 1925, the valuer visiting Stanford Mill Farm noted that it was owned by the Whitbread Estate and tenanted by Hugh B Larby, who paid £140 per annum rent. The mill included 59 acres of land and the valuer commented: 'Small buildings wood and tile in poor state. Part of land is liable to flood. Rent looks very high 36/6 per acre, 2¾ miles from station'. The house contained two living rooms, a kitchen and two bathrooms with a small barn outside. There is no mention of the mill itself which had, presumably, been demolished.

The water mill at the end of Mill Road was fed by a mill race from the Ivel Navigation.

These are the known tenants of Stanford mill, mostly from directories

1800*	William Squire
1847–1862	Edmund Powers
1869–1871	John Nutting
1877–1885	Charles Williamson
1890–1903	William Dilley

*The dates are those when they are known to have been there rather than their entire tenure.

Langford Mill[2]

There was a mill in Langford from earliest times. Aethelgifu, a saxon lady, made a still existing will where she gave Aelfnoth her land at Langford with flocks of sheep, the herd of swine, oxen and slaves – among them Wine the miller.

Later, unlike other mills in the vicinity, Langford mill produced paper in its early years, between 1746 and 1798, and is the only site in Bedfordshire recorded as definitely doing so. Only the Dane and Finch families were recorded as involved but Chamberlain (2013), tells us that the Langford Parish Register reveals three other families.

A Sun Fire Insurance policy of 1746 lists Henry Dane as proprietor and describes the mill as having a dwelling-house, workhouse, pantry and paper mill and a corn mill under one roof worth £800.

Henry Dane died in 1759 because of an accident. He seems to have been successful as a fee of 10s was paid for burial – only required if the deceased man's property was worth more than £40.

Dane married Martha Baymant (or Bayment), in 1757. When he died in 1759 Martha was pregnant, and she had a stillborn daughter almost seven months after Henry's burial. Sadly, Martha followed the baby to rest a few days later.

There were 29 burials at Langford in 1759, a number that would not be exceeded for 20 years, so there might have been an epidemic. There were two other papermakers at the mill at that time: William Flemming (or Flemman or Flemmans or Flemans) was there between 1755 and 1796; the other, John Davies, was there only for a short time: probably 1755 to 1760 when he was buried.

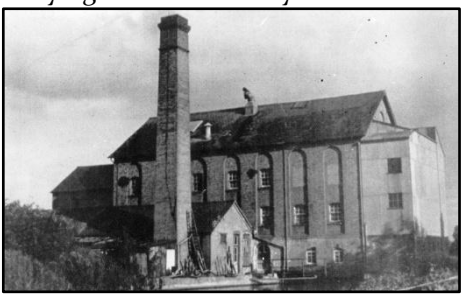
Flemming was the longest-serving papermaker at the mill but did not take it over on Henry Dane's death – Henry Finch, a well-connected man, and his family ran it while it remained a paper mill.

Henry Dane's insurance over the 14 years between two insurance policies, 1746–1759, showed a significant downgrading of the worth of the property. But when Henry Finch reinsured it in 1783 the total value of the property more than doubled – to £1,400, suggesting that rebuilding had occurred.

Land Tax assessment in the 1780s shows the proprietors as Henry Finch and Sarah Marshall, with Henry Finch as occupier. Another papermaker there at about this time was James Withall, who died in late 1787. Henry died in 1790 and his two sons assumed responsibility for the mill, along with one Elizabeth Finch – probably Henry's widow – but they became bankrupt in 1797, when their equipment was ordered to be sold to cover unpaid Excise Duty, but the sale did not take place for reasons which are not known.

Their equipment included 'The Engine', for macerating rags, and 'Tribbles' (ropes covered with horse-or cow-hair to prevent marking the wet sheets of paper when hung in the drying loft – standard items for papermaking). But the vat (used to hold the suspension of fibres in water), and the mould and deckle (the sieve and frame upon which the fibres form a sheet of paper) are missing from the list. This lack of vital equipment is a mystery.

No further information on papermaking at the mill can be found, but at least two of the Finch family stayed locally well after the bankruptcy: William and Elizabeth went to Biggleswade where he was described as a 'Miller' and Joshua and Fanny started a family in Langford in 1801, after marrying there in 1800. By 1806 the site was offered for sale, freehold.



Langford mill, c1980

Sometime after the papermaking equipment was removed, the mill was refurbished and enlarged and worked as a water-powered corn mill well into the 20th century. Two millers were recorded in the 1851 census. For part of this time the mill was owned by the Powers family as mentioned above.

The mill was later owned by the Franklins for many years and then by Dalgetys. It was stripped of machinery and used to produce seed grain, ceasing work in the 1980s.

The mill building still exists and has been converted into town houses.

Holme (Jordan's) Mill[3]

As other mills on the River Ivel, Holme mill was probably in existence from earliest times. The le Scrope family used the house at Holme mill as a residence for about 80 years in the 14th century and in 1446 the old bridge over the Ivel at Holme mill, which was in a decayed state, was repaired. There is a reference to a miller in 1746 and, in the late 19th century, the mill was owned by the Powers family. Fortuitously, they also owned the Albion Mill at King's Cross where the third William Jordan served his apprenticeship.

But, before that, in 1855, the second William Jordan bought Eaton Ford Mill which was the start of milling for the Jordan family. In 1861 he also purchased both the Golden Ball Inn and Tythe Farm (over 300 Acres) in St Neots.

In 1865 the first William Jordan died in a carting accident on Wilden Hill in Bedford and in 1871 the third William began his apprenticeship at the previously mentioned Albion Mill, Kings Cross, owned by the Powers family who also owned Holme mill.

The third William leased Holme mill and moved there with his young family in 1883 and purchased it in 1893 with his brother, Alfred. But the following year the mill caught fire and, when it was rebuilt, some of the traditional millstones were replaced with a roller system.

In 1899 there was a second fire. The waterwheel was replaced by a state-of-the-art turbine, and a new Carter Roller System was designed and installed by Turners of Ipswich.

In 1909 the fourth William bought Sandy mill, which he changed into a feed mill, making rations for pigs, poultry and horses as well as selling hay, straw and chaff.

During the First World War women ran Holme mill and were known as the 'Flour Girls' – they also had to be able to lift 240lb bags of flour!

The fifth William bought the assets of the business from his grandfather's estate in 1949. In 1959 this William changed the roofline at Holme mill to a flat roof to allow the installation of machinery to transport grain to the top floor.

The present generation moved the family firm away from milling flour to create their own range of breakfast cereals and cereal bars at the start of the 'Wholefood Revolution' in 1973.

In 2005 the mill was closed for production and, in 2009, Bill and David Jordan set up the Jordan Trust, a charitable trust founded to renovate the mill, to preserve the old mill and its surroundings as one of the last working

roller mills in the country. It is now a fine example of Victorian technology preserved for future generations.

In April 2013, the Jordan Trust, opened Jordan's mill, and a new visitor centre and café on the banks of the River lvel, alongside the original mill building. The mill can be seen working again through special guided tours. Later in that year, the mill garden was opened to the public to demonstrate Biggleswade's rich heritage of market gardening as well as seed and cereal production.

Biggleswade mills[4]

Water mill

In 1086 there were two mills in Biggleswade (two mills means two water wheels under one roof) valued £2 7s per annum, and they were probably on the site of the present mill – the first place above a ford with sufficient fall of water.

About 1300, Biggleswade was prosperous, there was a mill and weaving, tanning and dyeing industries (Patricia Bell, former County Archivist).

Franklin's mill in Mill Lane closed in 1945 following a fire. *[Photo Nigel Cox]*

The mill building was restored and used as a warehouse before being converted into flats in 1982.

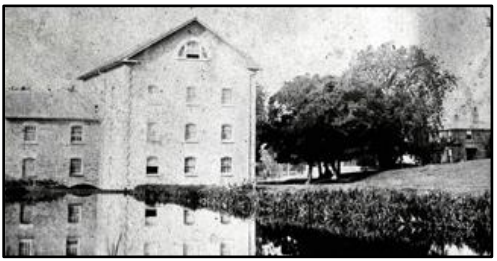
Windmill

Biggleswade had a windmill but that was nowhere near Mill Lane. Its site is now occupied by 67 Osprey Road where there is a Heritage Plaque (2003) fixed to No 51:

> Near to this spot stood the tallest and finest windmill in Bedfordshire from c1858 to 1967, demolished in one day. It was 70 feet high and had five floors, with a gallery around the cap. The three millstones could grind three tons of grain per hour.

Sandy Watermill

Sandy mill about 1900>



The Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record for Sandy mill states that the mill was built in 1857 and demolished in 1977. The 1857 date is supported by a valuation carried out in 1927 (see below) but, if this is correct, the mill replaced an earlier structure.

The Domesday Book of 1086 records two mills at Sandy. As mentioned, this may mean one mill with two pairs of stones (as in later documents), or two separate buildings, one perhaps in Sandy itself and another in the lost settlement of Kinwick. It is not unreasonable to suggest that a mill in Sandy was on or near the site of the later Sandy mill.

This mill is recorded sparsely in the Middle Ages. The calendar of fines for Bedfordshire for 1219, in The National Archives (translated and published by Bedfordshire Historical Record Society (BHRS) in 1919) has a record of an assize of *mort d'ancestor* where Henry, son of Guy conveyed two virgates of land and a mill in Sandy to Henry, son of Hugh.

In the same volume. Sandy mill is recorded in 1240 and, in 1271, a man fishing at Sandy mill was recorded in BHRS, Volume 41, in 1961, covering 13th and 14th century Bedfordshire coroners' rolls from the National Archives, edited and translated by R F Hunnisett.

In more recent times, the mill is mentioned in 1735 when Humphrey Monoux conveyed a house near the water mill to Sir Humphrey Monoux, who also owned the mill.

In 1850 the Sandy Place estate was for sale by auction and part of Lot 1 was described as :

> A SUPERIOR WATER MILL With great Water Power, WORKING FOUR PAIR OF STONES, Corn Chamber, Bran Loft &c.
>
> A NEAT & COMFORTABLE STONE-BUILT RESIDENCE, ERECTED A FEW YEARS SINCE, Containing Six Bed Rooms, two Parlours, Kitchen, Wash-house and Cellar; enclosed FLOWER GARDEN and KITCHEN GARDEN.
>
> A COTTAGE, with Three Bed Rooms and Kitchen.
>
> Granary, Cow House for Four Cows, Piggery, small Farm Yard, Chaise House, Stabling for Eight Wagon Horses and for Three Nag Horses, Wagon Hovel with TWO MEADOWS, ISLAND &c.

In the Whole 6 acres, 3 roods, 27 poles.

Let to and in the occupation of Mrs SARAH POPE, yearly tenant, at an annual Rent of £130.

Part of the Sandy Place Estate was later again put up for sale by auction. The mill was Lot 2, described as a water corn mill, residence and out-buildings. The mill had four working pairs of stones with a corn chamber and bran loft. The outbuildings comprised: a miller's cottage; a wagon lodge; a cart; nag stables; a chaise house and piggeries. The residence (later Park House) was described as

> very substantially Stone Built, and Slated, and contains on the Ground Floor Entrance Porch and Hall, Dining Room, Drawing Room, Kitchen, Washhouse, Dairy, Larder and Knife House; a Yard and Garden in the Rear, and on the First Floor and Six Capital Bed Rooms.

The mill was occupied by 'Messrs Pope' as yearly tenants.

Sandy mill about 1920>

Under Rating and Valuation Act 1925 the valuer visiting the mill found it owned and occupied by M H Walker and Sons.

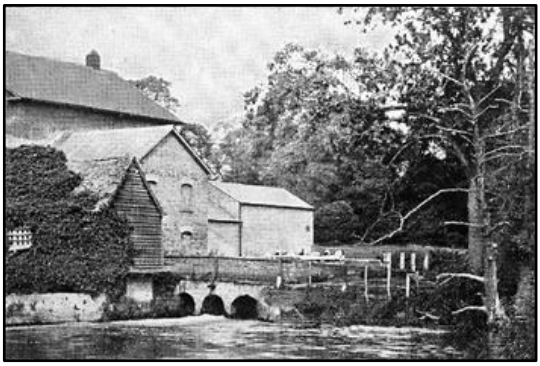
The grist mill stood in a quarter of an acre. The valuer noted: 'Power – breast water wheel, good head of water all the year'. There were four pairs of stones, each 4 ft in diameter, but power for only two pairs.

The brick and slate premises were dated 1857 and in good condition. The ground floor measured 39 ft 9 in by 30 ft, the first floor 40 ft 6 in by 31 ft and the second floor 41 ft 6 in by 31 ft, the latter with a projection for a crane. The top floor was storage, the first floor contained the four pairs of stones, a store, a dressing machine and an oat crusher, whilst the ground floor contained a cock pit.

Outside were two garages, a three-stall stable ('not used'), a harness room used as a store, the water-wheel house measuring 23 ft 6 in by 22 ft by 15 ft, a brick and slate office measuring 13 ft by 12 ft. The valuer commented: 'old but solid mill liable to be flooded, no land with it' and 'Works most of the year, every day in winter'. Daily output was 2½ sacks from each the two pairs of working stones.

This list of millers is taken from Bedfordshire Directories:

Date	*Miller*
1847	Charles Pope
1854	Mrs. Elizabeth Pope
1862, 1864, 1869, 1877	Charles Pope
1885, 1890, 1894, 1898, 1903	Fred Newbery
1906, 1910	William and Ezra Garner
1924, 1928, 1931	M H Walker & Son
1936, 1940	Charles Sidney Banks



Sandy mill about 1900

[To be continued]

Acknowledgements

This article could not have been written without access to online resources primarily from Beds Archives for Shefford, Stanford and Sandy mills in this part and Blunham Mills, South Mills, and Tempsford mill which will feature in the next part. I also used the websites of Stotfold mill and Biggleswade History Society. I am most grateful to all sources for their help.

Notes

1. This part is from my article in M Rutt, *At the Long Ford* (Langford History Society, 2021). There is much more detail available about the Powers family by following the link

http://bedsarchivescat.bedford.gov.uk/docs/HF41%20powers%20family.pdf

2. Henlow did not have a watermill but did have smock windmill, first noted in 1819 and demolished in 1935. For Langford mill see also, Chamberlain, Daven, 'Langford Mill', *History in Bedfordshire*, No 6.4, Summer 2013. Can be accessed online at www.bedfordshire-lha.org.uk.

3. *At Home with the Jordans* (Jordans Mill, 2015).

4. Biggleswade History Society, 2009, *Biggleswade Heritage Project Report* (Bibliographic reference), SBD11650.

Ted Martin

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Book Review

A Town Transformed: Bedford 1939 to 1999. By Bob Ricketts, CBE. Bedford Architectural, Archaeological and Local History Society, 2026. ISBN 978–1–7399201–1–1, A4 paperback, 250pp, including index. Obtainable from BAALHS, 68 Mendip Crescent, Bedford MK41 9EP, £10.

This is a mighty book both in its discursive coverage and its weight – it cost the publisher £5 to send it to me, which is half of the cost of the book itself! However, the author's effort has been extraordinary. In 18 chapters he charts the progress of Bedford during the Second World War and in the post-war period up to the end of the 20th century. Chapter 19 is the Bibliography (which should not need a chapter number and usually stands alone). There are no less than 82 illustrations and eight tables in the text.

After an Introduction setting the scene for the period, chapter 1 treats of the emergence of the town from the war and chapter 2 continues with an examination of the burgeoning population of Bedford. This chapter has lost the word 'Chapter' from its heading so the reader could think that it is just a text heading. There is no typographical differentiation for chapter headings throughout which makes the text appear dense and the sans-serif typeface doesn't help.

Subsequent chapters deal with creating a diverse community; post war recovery and growth; the town's economy; changing industries and commerce; shopping and hotels; housing; education; transport; public services; local media; politics and protest; sport and leisure; entertainment; culture; faith and events, celebrations, visits and wild weather. Altogether a very wide canvas which is sustained by reference notes in the text. These are not differentiated from the text and they run together, rather than on separate lines, might make them difficult to use. Some chapters have subheadings, some do not.

But none of this detracts from the Herculean effort of preparing this publication, on which Bob Ricketts must be congratulated. By its scope it must be a reference tool for Bedford historians to use for years to come. The 32-page index will also be very useful for anyone wanting to find

information on an aspect of Bedford's history over the 60-year period covered.

Some of my comments above reflect the fact that I feel this book is too important to be produced as an A4 paperback. Hardback in a traditional book format on lighter paper (with a separate illustrations section on art paper cross-referenced to the text), and a professional typographical design and layout, would have suited it much better.

It is an important work of reference and is ideal for dipping into for research or serendipity, but it is hard going for continuous reading. I realise my suggestions above would increase the cost and detract from the bargain price of £10, but I think the subject and the author deserve it. **Ted Martin**

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A History of Some Faith Groups in Bedford. A Special Issue of Bedford Local History Magazine, Edited by Bob Ricketts, CBE. Bedford Architectural, Archaeological and Local History Society. A4, 92pp, price £5 to non-BAALHS members, available from the Eagle Bookshop, 16–20 St Peter's Street, Bedford MK40 2NN.

At the Long Ford: A History of Langford, by Michael Rutt; Ed, Ted Martin. Paperback, 172pp incl indexes. Price £7 (£10 by post). Langford & District History Society, 2021. Contact John Shipman, j.m.shipman@ntlworld.com. Tel 01462 700650.

Beats, Boots and Thieves – A History of Policing in North Bedfordshire, By Des Hoar and Richard Handscomb. Sharnbrook Local History Group. 2013. Paperback, 146pp, £10 from 24 Loring Road, Sharnbrook, Bedford MK44 1JZ.

Bedford History Timeline, by Alan Crawley and Bob Ricketts. Bedford Architectural, Archaeological and Local History Society. 2019, Paperback, 94pp, 119 illustrations. Price £8, from the Eagle Bookshop, 16–20 St Peter's Street, Bedford MK40 2NN or £10 incl postage from Bob Ricketts, 68 Mendip Crescent, Bedford, MK41 9EP.

Bedford Town Centre Statues, by Stuart Antrobus, £5, on sale only at the John Bunyan Museum shop, Mill Street, Bedford, MK40 3EU**.** Tel 01234 270303. Tuesday to Saturday 11am to 4pm.

*Clophill in the Great War: Those who Died and those who Survived***,** by Colin Watt. Hardback, A5 landscape, 169pp, £12.50 + £2.50 p& p. For purchase details see: website bit.ly/307uLMM or phone 01525 860922.

Colmworth and Neighbours History: Volume 5, March 2023. Published by Colmworth and Neighbours History Society: www.colmworthhistory.org.uk. 44pp including cover, price £6, plus £1.60 p & p from secretary@colmworthhistory.org.uk or Dave Jarrett, 3 Collingwood Road, Eaton Socon, PE19 8JQ.

Colmworth and Neighbouring Villages: Then and Now, by Colmworth and Neighbours History Society. 2018. Paperback, 46pp, 100+ illustrations, £5 + £2 postage from Dave Jarrett, 3 Collingwood Road, Eaton Socon, PE19 8JQ.

Henry Clutton: Victorian Architect of Gothic Revival Churches and Country Houses, by Gordon Vowles: Clutton's life and work in Bedfordshire and elsewhere. 2022. Willington Local History Group. £10 + p&p, contact WHLG website: www.localhistory.me.uk or by email wlhg2022@gmail.com

Henry John Sylvester Stannard with notes on his daughter Theresa Sylvester Stannard, by Richard Morgan. Bedfordshire Local History Association, 2018. 48pp incl index., £5 + p&p. Available via the BLHA website: http: //www.bedfordshire-lha.org.uk

Langford Then and Now 2006. Langford & District History Society, 2006. Paperback, 40pp, 80+ photos, £4, Contact John Shipman:
j.m.shipman@ntlworld.com. Tel 01462 700650.

Langford through the Lens Volume 1. Langford & District History Society, reprinted with amendments 2021 to include *Langford: A Village Walk*. Paperback, 138pp, 70 photos, £7. Contact John Shipman, j.m.shipman@ntlworld.com. Tel 01462 700650.

Langford through the Lens, Volume 2. Langford & District History Society. 1992. Paperback, 80 pp, 80+ photos, £3, Contact John Shipman:
j.m.shipman@ntlworld.com. Tel 01462 700650.

Life in Bedford during the Second World War, by Stuart Antrobus. Published by Bedford Architectural, Archaeological and Local History Society, 2021. A4 paperback, 102pp, incl Appendices 18 pp, Indexes, 13 pp, 85 illustrations. Price £11, from the Eagle Bookshop, 16–20 St Peter's Street, Bedford MK40 2NN or £13, incl postage, from BAALHS (cheque payable to BAALHS), Bob Ricketts, 68 Mendip Crescent, Bedford, MK41 9EP.

The Life and Times of Sir John Gostwick: Tudor Entrepreneur and Bureaucrat, by Gordon Vowles. The life and times of Willington's most famous son, a man who served Wolsey, Cromwell and Henry VIII. 2018. Willington Local History Group. 60pp, £6 + p&p, contact WHLG website: www.localhistory.me.uk or by email wlhg2022@gmail.com

The Parish of St Lawrence, Willington, its Church and Vicars, by Gordon Vowles, traces the history of the church and parish, setting this in the context of wider social and ecclesiastical developments. 2016. Willington Local History Group. 66pp, £5 + p&p, contact WHLG website:
www.localhistory.me.uk or by email wlhg2022@gmail.com

The Reverend Augustus Orlebar, by Gordon Vowles, covers the life of the long-serving vicar Augustus Orlebar, vicar of Willington for 54 years. 2010. Willington Local History Group. 62pp, £4 + p&p, contact WHLG website:
www.localhistory.me.uk or by email wlhg2022@gmail.com

Willington and the Danes, Myth and Reality, by Gordon Vowles, explores the period when Willington and Bedford stood on the borders between Saxon and Viking territories, covering what has been said and written about the physical traces of the Danish presence in the area. 2013. Willington Local History Group. 36pp, £4 + p&p, contact WHLG website:
www.localhistory.me.uk or by email wlhg2022@gmail.com

Willington and the Russells, by Robert Bollington, covers the period from 1774 to 1902, when Willington formed part of the estates of the Duke of Bedford. 2012. Willington Local History Group. 44pp, £4 + p&p, contact WHLG website: www.localhistory.me.uk or by email wlhg2022@gmail.com

Willington in the Eighteenth Century, by Robert Bollington, covers the period, when Willington formed part of the estates of the Duke of Marlborough. The book provides an insight into village life at the time, when the village was a small farming community. 2014. Willington Local History Group. 42pp, £4 + p&p, contact WHLG website: www.localhistory.me.uk or by email wlhg2022@gmail.com

Willington in the First World War, by Robert Bollington, sets out to paint a picture of what the war meant for local people, both those in the forces and those supporting the war effort at home. 2018. 96pp, 27 illustrations, £6 + p&p, contact WHLG website: www.localhistory.me.uk or by email wlhg2022@gmail.com

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