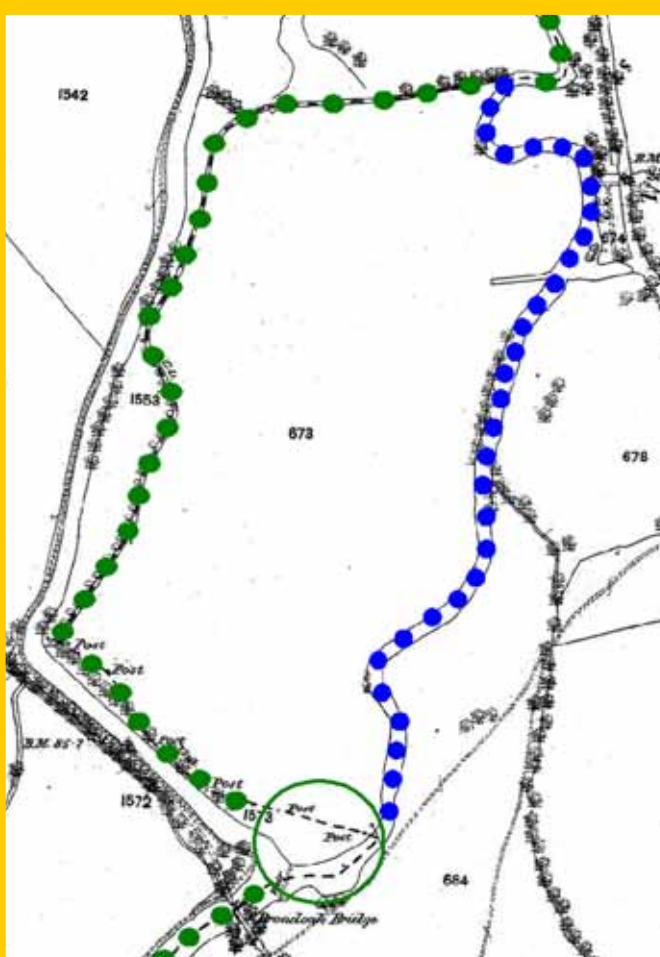
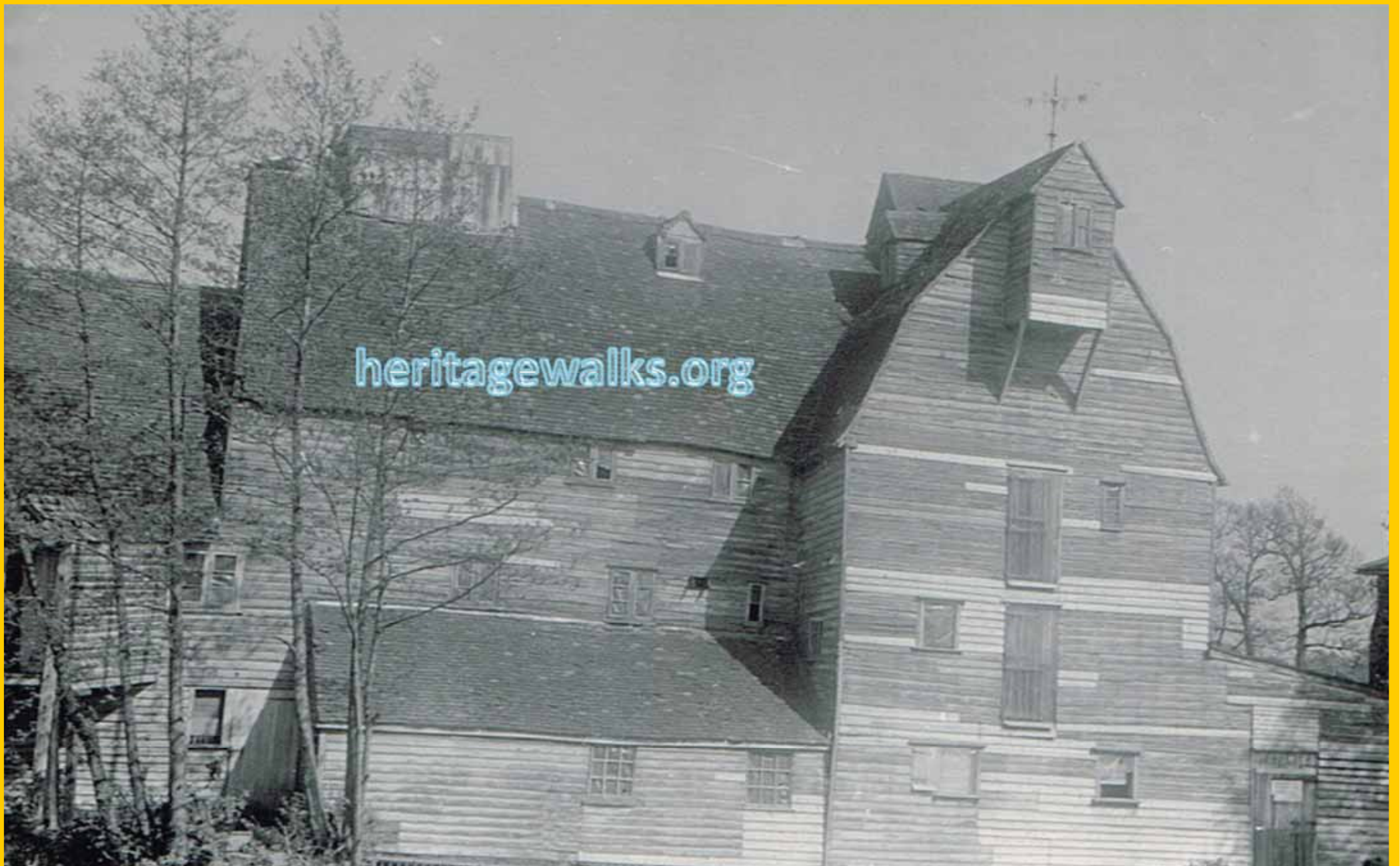


TROUBLE AT MILL - THE 3 'C's' - CORN, CLOTH & CARPENTRY

Iain Wakeford 2014



The boundary of Sutton and Send is marked in green over this 1870 25" Ordnance Survey Map, whilst the course of the main River Wey now follows the line of the blue dots. Is this actually the course of the Domesday Mill stream, in which case the mill could have been by what is now a weir near Broadoak Bridge?

Many think the mill at Newark was one of the mills recorded in Pyrford at the time of the Domesday Book, but Newark is in Send so Pyrford's mills must have been somewhere else.

CORN

As promised the other week, I will now turn my attention to some of Woking's other industries – this week concentrating on some of the water and windmills of the area.

Probably the oldest recorded industrial sites in many places are the corn mills, recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086.

Woking's was valued at eleven shillings and four pence, with mills at Byfleet, Sutton and two at Pyrford being valued at five shillings each. Where Sutton's mill was we do not know. There is some speculation that it may have been on or near a small meander of the parish boundary towards Potters Lane and the A3, but wherever it was it appears to have gone out of use fairly quickly.

The same may have applied to the two mills at Pyrford. Many have assumed that one at least must have been on the site of Newark Mill, but that was well and truly in Send and was undoubtedly the one recorded in that manor's entry in Domesday as being valued at twenty-



At Walsham the Wey Navigation leaves the old river (and the parish boundary) at the weir where a large fall of water could easily have powered a waterwheel (or two) in the past. Was this where Pyrford's Domesday mills were, rather than at Newark in Send?

The meander of the parish boundary (in green), probably shows the original course of the River Wey, whilst the modern course of the river (in blue), possibly follows the course of the Domesday mill stream.

one shillings! A possible site could be at Walsham where the weir shows that there was probably quite a fall of water at this site even before the Navigation was constructed, but the truth is that we may never know.

There were other mills in the Wey Valley at the time of Domesday such as Stoke (two mills worth twenty-five shillings), Burpham (one mill of fifteen shillings) and Wisley (five shillings), but whilst the two former sites survived for centuries, the latter has also disappeared. Having said that its site has probably been identified in a field on the tithe map of 1842 as 'Mill Land', where what is now the main part of the river cuts across a vast meander in the parish boundary with Pyrford and Byfleet (see next page, below).

Excavations in 1977 and 1978 in advance of the construction of the M25 found a possible medieval settlement site associated with the mill and the diversion of the river. After Domesday the mill was recorded again in 1206 and 1342, probably falling into decay soon after as the latest pottery from the excavation was similar to 14th century pottery found at Brooklands, also excavated in the 1970's.

All of the above mills would have originally been used to grind the flour produced on the local manor, but gradually over the centuries many were put to other uses (at least the ones that have survived).

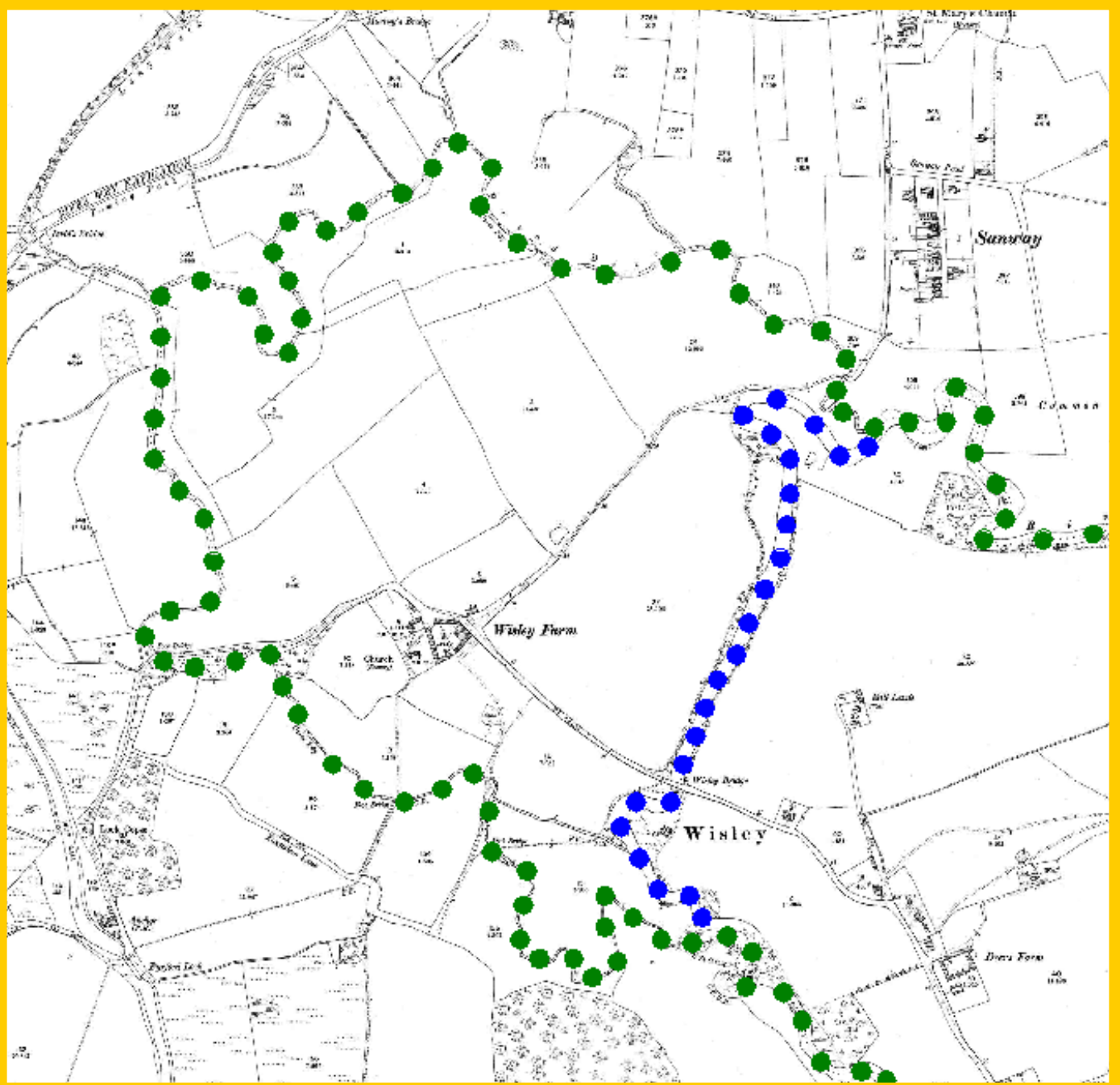
Byfleet for a time went over to metal working (as we shall investigate next week), although it returned to corn milling later in its life. Tragically an accident at Byfleet Mill in April 1890 resulted in the death of William, the eldest son of the owner, George Holroyd, when his foot got caught in a revolving belt and he was crushed to death. The accident may have persuaded George Holroyd to vacate the mill, for in the same year the firm of Hall & Davidson took control, and ran it in conjunction with their other concerns at Ewell before the waterwheels were removed for scrap in 1930 and milling ceased altogether.

At Woking in the 17th century part of the mill had been turned over to fulling cloth and by 1749 there was evidently a 'water-powered snuff mill' on the site, although the amount of fall of water at Woking allowed two corn mills to be in operation as well.

An auction in 1796 recorded a 'Capital Freehold Flour Mill' in the occupation of Mr Ryde, whilst there was by then also a 'Leather Mill' occupied by a Richard Baker. It was this mill that was later converted into a paper mill by Alderman Venables of Guildford in 1835 (more of which in a couple of weeks time).

By then the 'manorial mill' was well and truly out of date with mills such as Newark near Ripley importing its grain from elsewhere (and 'exporting' the resulting flour up to London). Indeed the village of Ripley despite having such a large mill on its doorstep appears from the records have got most of its flour from Ockham Mill, just a short walk downstream and across the fields.

At Woking the corn mill was also used as a fulling mill and for making snuff, before it was turned over to papermaking and finally printing



Most of the flour from the local corn mills would have ended up in ovens like this one at The Grange in Old Woking, where a fire of gorse faggots would have been raked out before the bread was afterwards baked.



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CLOTH

One of the earliest references to water powered fulling mills in country is from 1251 when a fulling mill was established in Guildford. The mill mechanized the process of pummeling woolen cloth in vats of water to produce a 'nap' on the surface; additions of fullers earth to the water would then de-grease the cloth in preparation of dyeing.

In the 14th century a fulling mill valued at eight shillings per annum was in operation at Woking where the corn mill at that time was worth just six shillings and eight pence, so it appears there was a profit to be made from turning at least part of your mill over to cloth production.

By the 1670's the fulling mill at Woking had been replaced by another corn mill but by 1717 the tan yard at Send had been established with the Ripley & Send Court Baron recording on the 26th April that year 'all that tan yard lately made', which may account for how in 1720 Henry Roake a Yeoman farmer from Horsell, could apprentice his son, Henry, to Henry Denyer of Woking as a Tanner.

The old tan yard building at Papercourt, marked on this map of 1811, survived until the 1970's when it was replaced by the office building now on the site.



CARPENTRY

Woking's only known windmill, at Horsell Birch, was unique in many ways, although it didn't last very long being erected in the mid 19th century and dismantled sometime before 1927 when the house 'Mill End' was built on the site.

The mill was built by members of the Steer family, who were carpenters in the village for many years. They may well have been brilliant

at their chosen trade, but when it came to mill construction they were obviously complete novices. It was a strange contraption, evidently being originally built as a post mill so that the building could turn to face the wind, but then they added two lean-to extensions for their workbench and saw with the result was that the mill could no longer turn on its central post!

If the wind was blowing in the wrong direction the sails would not be able to turn, and worse still, if the wind was blowing from across the common towards the mill (as it often did) the sails were in danger of being blown off.

So the ingenious carpenters added some hinges and cloth covered trellis, so the sails could be folded up when the conditions were unfavourable. No wonder it didn't last long!

