

West Mill House



West Mill is located on the road from Watchfield to Highworth where it crosses the River Cole, anciently known as the Lenta.

West Mill House is located right next to the building that was once the Mill. There has been a Mill located there for several hundred years and it is quite likely that it was the site of the Mill mentioned in the Domesday Book listing for Watchfield.

Although they are separate now, West Mill House and the Mill were certain to have been associated in the past. The house was also the catalyst for the farm and is also known as West Mill Farmhouse.

Many names that appear in historical documents are also linked to West Mill and these same names are similarly linked to the Manor of Watchfield. Up until the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1539, the lands of Watchfield had always been administered by the Abbey at Abingdon. But afterwards the Manor of Watchfield became somewhat obscure. To read more and to see a list of Lords of the Manor, please go [HERE](#)

Two of the people that are included in the list who hold the Manorial Rights of Watchfield are William and Hester Stubbs. It was known that William Stubbs owned West Mill but it was unclear if he actually lived there. The answer was

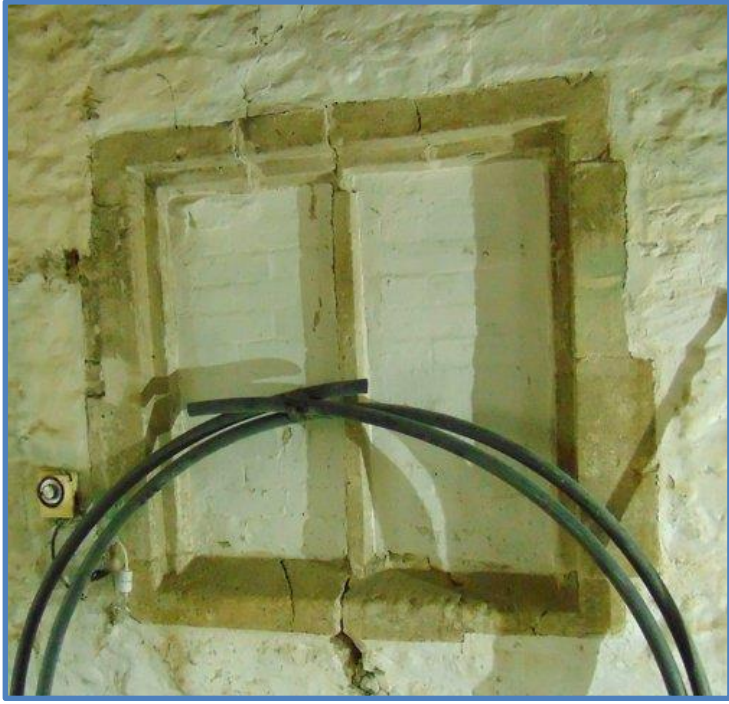
provided by the separate Wills of William in 1630 and Hester in 1639. Both of the Wills contained inventories that listed the contents of the house room by room.

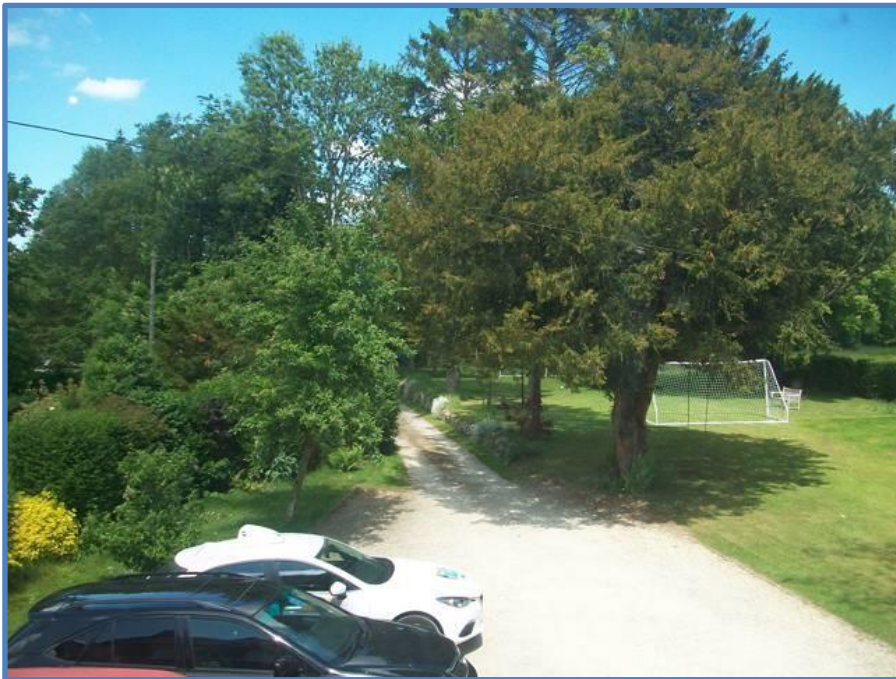
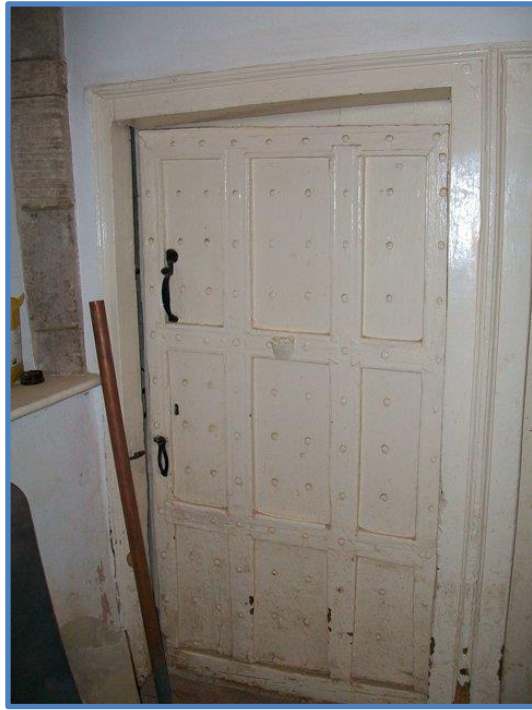
I made several visits to the house in 2015 and 2016 and the owners, David and Gill LeBon kindly assisted in trying to match up the inventories with what was there now. It was an ideal time to visit, as the property was under renovation with floorboards up exposing walls and joints. At first the house seemed to be far too large but when the west end of it was viewed as a sole entity it all fell in to place. It soon became clear that what was being described in the inventories was a country farmhouse.

With confirmation that the house was already built by 1630, it will be fascinating to establish a more precise date. A tantalising clue is in the basement, where wooden beams can clearly be seen on top of the stone course suggesting timber framing and the lower tiers of the bricks are distinctly mediaeval. More research may provide the answer.

Many thanks must go to owners who are sympathetically renovating the property and very happy to share the history of it with us. Thanks also to Chris Sidney of Bampton, Oxfordshire, for sharing his family research which includes the owners of the Manor of Watchfield.







To see more photos of the interior of the house please go [HERE](#). To read