

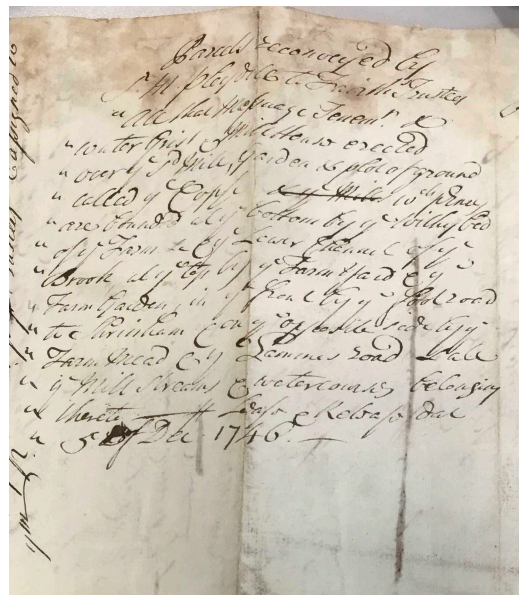
The Layout of Little Mill (Tuckmill) in Watchfield village

By Neil B. Maw

The drawing below is from the documents contained within the bundle Ref No: D/Epb - T46 in the Berkshire County Archives at Reading. It dates from 1746 at the time when the Fairthorne Estate passed into the hands of Sir Mark Stuart Pleydell at Coleshill (to become known as the Radnor Estate). Although the drawing may look crude, it is in fact remarkably accurate and is a true representation of what was there up to 1972/3.



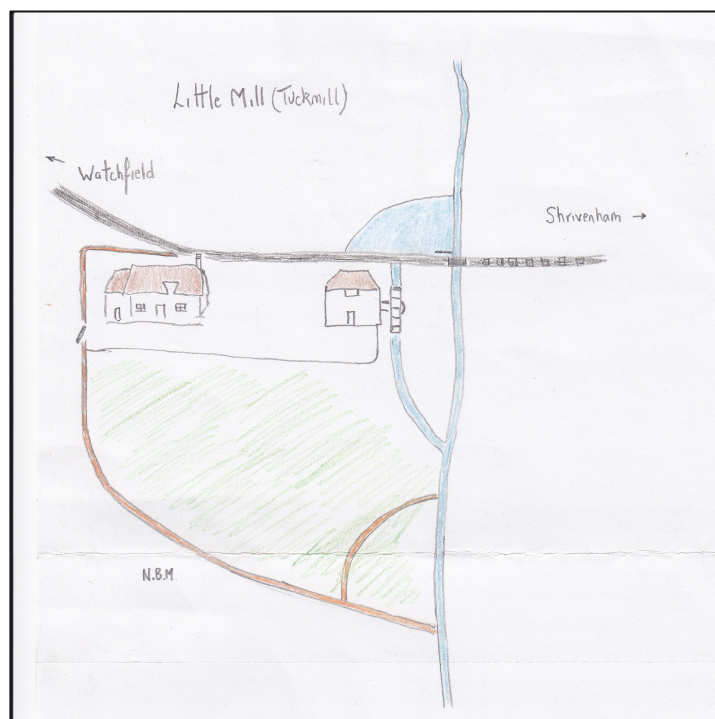
Attached to the drawing is a note that describes where the mill is located within the layout of the Fairthorne Farm.



This is a transcription of the note above. *'Parcels conveyed by Sir Mark Pleydell to the Trustees, all that messuage, tenement and Water Grist Mill House erected over the said Mill, Garden and plot of ground called the Coppice and the Mill which premises are bounded at the bottom by the Withy Bed of the Farm and the lower channel of the Brook at the top by the Farm Yard and the Farm Garden in the front by the Foot Road to Shrinham on the opposite side by the Farm Mead and the Lammas Road and all the Mill Stream and watercourses belonging thereto.*

Lease
5th December, 1746.'

The following drawing is a more detailed representation of the layout of the Mill and matches the cruder layout above in every detail.



The water management was simple in that the bridge going over the main water course was also a dam. When the panels were put in place to halt the flow of water from the main course, the rising water level behind the dam formed a pool. The water was then ducted in by a tunnel under the footway to Shrivenham and onto the Mill Wheel. After it had turned the wheel it joined the main flow of the Brook further down.



The history of Little Mill and Farm has been broken down and explained under separate headings in order to maintain accuracy.

The use of the Mill

How the Farm went in to the Radnor Estate

The Court proceedings that followed the death of Thomas Fairthorne