

Hope in the 1850s

18. Edale Rd –around Hope Mill

Opposite the end of what is now Eccles Close there was a footpath running towards the river Noe. Hawthorn House had not been built then and the footpath gave access to a house which was the home of Hannah and Mary Bennett, the sisters who ran a private school in the cottage next to the Old Hall. It continued past a barn and down to the river where a set of stepping stones gave pedestrian access to Hope Mill.

Behind the Bennett sister's house were two cottages, later converted by Mr Freckingham into Higher Hall. At this time they were owned by William Wills Gould. Ann Gould, a farmer of 22 acres lived in one with her daughters and granddaughter. The other was the home of Godfrey Hallam, an agricultural labourer.

We know from documentary evidence that Hope has had a mill for several centuries. It was part of the estate attached to Nether Hall and was sold in 1602 to Adam Slack of Tideswell. A mill for grinding local farmer's corn would have been an essential part of any village. The water for working the mill was stored behind a dam on the river Noe roughly opposite Upper Weir Cottage and the mill leat ran along a channel above the river bank to a shuttle which adjusted the flow of water to the mill. The water then went underground through a brick arched tunnel to appear in the goyt at the other side of the road beyond Kilnhill Bridge. The remains of the arch can still be seen. Changes by the Derwent Valley Water Board to the flow on the river Noe meant that by 1961 Hope Mill was unable to operate. It was sold by its then owner, William Eyre, in 1968.

In 1851 the mill was owned by John and Jonathan Longden and the miller was George Woodhouse. He lived in one of the two houses below Kilnhill Bridge with his wife and grandson and a young fifteen year old miller's apprentice, Samuel Bolsover. Next door was John Cottrill and his wife Hannah and their five children. He was an agricultural labourer and his eldest daughter and son were at school, but the next two daughters were "at Home". Maybe a farm worker's wages would not run to schooling for all the family.

Over the bridge and on the opposite side of what is now Bowden Lane was a smallholding owned and run by Charles Hobson. He farmed 12 acres and also described himself as a tea hawker, perhaps another way of supplementing his income.

Ann Price

Sources: Castleton/Hope Research 2012 – "Medieval Lives in Castleton and Hope". "Goin' Down T' Th' Mill" by William Eyre. 1847 Tythe Map. 1851 Census Returns