

ROCK MILLS

THE HISTORY

The site on which Rock Mills is located was created by the formation of a canal on the River Avon just north of the Emscote Bridge to form an island. Historical records suggest that Rock Mills was built on the site of the original Milverton Mill recorded in the Domesday Book at a value of 50 shillings. There are more references to the Mill in 1279 which John de Astley held of Sir Andrew Astley.

By 1560 a water-mill and fulling-mill* were recorded in the estate of Alvred Trussell, and by 1570 his son was managing fishing rights and a water-mill on the River Avon. By 1583 the house was owned by John Colbourne, conveyed by a deed granted by Queen Elizabeth I, and sold to William Hudson (Bailiff of Warwick), to include the house, estate and water mills as a gift for his daughter Ursula on her marriage to Sir Thomas Beufoy of Elmscote Manor. The estate of Emscote Manor in 1621 had two mills and Rock Mills could have been the site of a water-mill referred to as Averyes Mill. Both Milverton and Emscote manors jointly had a fulling-mill and a water corn-mill.

Rock Mill was built around 1792 when a cotton spinning mill was constructed on the site by Benjamin Smart which provided work for many locals over the following century. During the early 1800s a part of the Mill was turned over to corn grinding, and by the 1830s it became solely a corn grinding mill powered by steam engine to aid waterpower.

The Mill was five storeys high and built in brick in the traditional cotton mill style of the era, and substantially extended during the 19th century with a range of outbuildings. The mill no longer exists and today the building has been converted to provide luxury housing.

ROCK MILL HOUSE

Rock Mill House stands to the right-hand side of the Mill and was built in the late 1700s probably around the same time as Rock Mill and it too had been extended in the mid 1800s. It is large imposing house consisting of a three storeys built in red brick with a Welsh slate roof and is now Grade II listed building. It appears from official records that the millers from the Mill next door were usually the occupiers.

THE SQUIRES CONNECTION

White's Directory of 1850 shows James SQUIRES as a Corn Miller living at Rock Mill and a year later the 1851 Census records James SQUIRES of Rock Mill House together with his wife and family. He is recorded as a Miller (Master of 2 men) and his household included a servant which indicates the standing of the family at the time. By the 1861 Census James is still recorded as living at Rock Mill House as a Farmer and Miller of 145 acres employing 6 men and 2 boys, and again in the 1871 Census (Farmer of 122 acres, employs 4 men and 1 boy) so the family clearly lived there for many years.

*Fulling of cloth goes back to the Roman times, with fulling-mills appearing in medieval times for fulling cloth using water-mills. The cloth would be beaten with machine operated wooden hammers to help whiten, strengthen and thicken the cloth.

Referenced from:

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