

Part 2 - Stock's Historic Buildings, continued.

Stock's tower mill was erected around the middle of the 19th century by Mr. William Moss of Thaxted. It was in use until the middle 1930's, although the motive power then was not wind but steam. The sails are still intact, and the cap is boat-shaped and large for the size of the mill.

The basic difference between a post mill and a tower mill is that the post mill is a wooden, box-like structure, pivoted on a post so that it can be turned to face the wind, whereas in a tower mill the body is of stone or brick and the cap alone turns, carrying the sails and windshaft. The cap is turned by an elaborate chain mechanism. On the windshaft, which carries the sails, is a toothed wheel known as the "brakewheel", since it can be used to stop the mill. The drive is taken from the brakewheel to the stones by a large upright shaft passing down through the mill floors, having a gear wheel known as a "wallower" at the top, and the great spur wheel driving the stone nuts at the bottom. The spur wheel drives two small spur pinions known as "stone nuts". The stones, which grind the grain, are worked by a system of levers, which allow the upper stone to be lowered or raised. The lower, or "bed stone" is fixed, and thus this allows exactly the right amount of grain to flow between the two stones. therefore exactly the right quantity of ground corn can be maintained, even if the wind speed changes, There were three pairs of stones at Stock Mill, being sixty inches in diameter, each weighing nearly a ton!

The corn is fed to the stones direct from sacks to the hoppers, these feed the shoes, which vibrate constantly. This vibration keeps the flow of corn into the "eye" of the runner stone constant. The grain is then ground by the stones, and the meal finds its way out through the meal spout into sacks or bins on the floor below. It is a pity that modern conditions make it no longer economical to work Stock Mill, for it must have presented a very attractive sight when it was in operation.

Returning towards the village, we notice just off Mill Road, the Roman Catholic Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, a lofty structure of red brick. This has the unusual distinction of having been converted from a School into a Church. It was originally erected as St. Joseph's Roman Catholic School in 1892, by the Gillow family who lived at Lillystone Hall. It is reputed to have cost £5,000; and had accommodation for some two hundred scholars. When the School became redundant, because of a lack of pupils, it was converted for use as a Church, the old Roman Catholic Church at Lillystone Hall, also erected by the Gillow family, being closed.

Proceeding towards the centre of the village, we pass the site of the old Weir Pond, and also of Stock's "Cage". The purpose of this was not to detain wild animals, but to punish petty offenders. Apparently, this was a wooden building about 10ft square, with no windows, but with iron bars in front, bearing a resemblance to the cages used in a Zoo. In case the prisoner should try to escape, the door was constructed of iron, with a padlock.

These cages could be used for the detention of important prisoners until the arrival of a magistrate, but their usual function was to provide somewhere to detain petty offenders. The most usual offence was drunkenness. At one time Stock had no less than ten Inns and beershops, and often on Saturday night a drunken brawl would occur. The Village Constable would then arrest the offenders, and they would be locked up in the cage for the night. Usually they were released on Sunday morning but in the case of more serious offences they were often detained longer. It was the favourite occupation of the village youths to annoy the prisoners before they were released.

With the establishment of a regular police force there was no longer any need for a Cage, and they gradually disappeared. The Cage at Stock fell into disrepair and was eventually removed about 1860. The remains were apparently used at Whites Tyrrels.