

HISTORIC BRADMORE PROPERTIES

Mill, Mill Lane

Post mills were introduced to England in the C12th and the design stood the test of time, still being commonly used in the C19th. The body of the mill pivoted on a post with four strong struts to take the weight of the structure, and was turned by a long tailpole so that the sails faced into the wind. Thus although the mill itself may have been a square shape the mound on which it stood was circular to allow for the sweep of the tailpole as it turned.

The Bunny parish register for 1723-1802 states that a Bradmore Mill was built by the late Sir Thomas Parkyns about 1683, but the site of the mill is not recorded. The first miller was almost certainly George Goodwin who died in 1697 and described himself as miller in his will. The inventory taken at about the time of his death shows he was also a cottager with a couple of cows and a pig and land to grow wheat, barley and hay; his net worth was £23/8/10. This was quite low by comparison with his contemporary John Hooton the blacksmith, whose inventory was valued at £139 in 1695.

John Chapman's map of Nottinghamshire in 1774 shows two mills, the Ruddington mill on Spinney Hill and one between Bradmore and Flawforth in the area where Mill Lane now runs. The 1792 Bunny estate survey reinforces this with a row of fields called Mill Close along the main road across Spinney Hill, and a Mill Close at the top of Moor Lane. However, at the time of Sanderson's map surveyed 1830-1835 the only mill shown in Bradmore was in the fields on the outer edge of Far St., opposite Town End. There is a tradition that one of the village mills was moved from its original site, as was common with post mills, and it was thought that the Mill Lane mill was moved to Spinney Hill but the map evidence leads us to question this.

The Mill Lane mill is firmly identified with the Dalby family, and the sequence of millers can be identified with some certainty from the time of William the elder who died in 1777 aged 68. His daughter Ann was baptised at Bunny in 1734 so he was probably in Bradmore by this date. William married twice, the sons of his first marriage, William and John, taking over his land and the mill, while Thomas the son of his second marriage became a shoemaker. In 1792 both William and John seem to have lived in Far St., in separate houses. The extent of William the elder's land holding may be indicated by the combination of William's and John's lands running along the northern boundary of the parish, east of the main road, plus pasturage in the common field Rowends and grazing for 3 beasts each in Cottage Moor. William junior also had Mill Close on Mill Lane, and paid 25/- pa rent specifically for the mill. This is the only mill recorded in the 1792 survey for Bradmore, the Spinney Hill mill being across the boundary in Ruddington. William junior married three times, and when he died in 1794 the son of his second marriage seems to have followed him at the mill. John himself is not recorded as miller, but his sons Samuel and William became involved with the mill later.

Between 1795 and 1801 William son of William and Mary, married to Jane, is recorded as miller at the baptisms of his children. He may be one of the two William Dalbys who died in 1814, but had given up the mill before then to his cousin Samuel. William's heir Henry was born in 1801 so was not old enough to succeed his father.

By 1811 Samuel, son of John, is recorded in the Constable's accounts receiving payment for flour issued to the poor of the parish. These entries in the accounts stop in 1813, but Samuel is recorded as miller in 1825 when he married. He also seems to have handed the mill on before his death.

In 1826 Henry, the son of William and Jane, married and is described in the register as miller, and kept the title in the baptism records of his children in 1828 and 1831. In the 1832 Whites directory Henry is described as shopkeeper, not miller, but a William Dalby is listed as miller. Henry's own son William was only 6 years old at this time, and the most likely William is Samuel's brother although he was then 60 years old. Henry himself died in 1834 aged only 33, and the Dalbys' mill seems to have ceased operating soon afterwards. By the 1841 census the 70-year old William is recorded as a framework knitter and there is no later reference to milling in the Dalby family records.

The sole exception is the drawing of a post mill reproduced in the booklet 'Bradmore the Village and Methodism 1830-1980' by Oliver Randall and again on the title page of this section. This drawing is initialled WD and dated 1899. It is most likely that it was drawn by William Goodacre Dalby, a great-grandson of William Dalby the elder and grandfather of Oliver Randall. William was born at Bradmore in 1820, and was certainly living in the village in 1851 and afterwards so would have seen the later Far St. post mill even if he did not remember seeing the Dalby mill on Mill Lane.