

Days Mill, Nailsworth

by Stephen Mills

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Members will recall that Tony Burton recently took us on a walk around Nailsworth looking at former mills and various other sites. One of the mills was Days Mill, and coincidentally, the plate shown below recently appeared on ebay.



Although having changed over the years, Days Mill stands in Old Market, and is thought to have been built or rebuilt ca 1800 by Daniel and Jeremiah Day. Like so many other mills, it had a succession of owners and uses, starting out as a cloth mill, followed by periods as a flock and shoddy mill, becoming a corn mill in the 1890s. At some point before the Second World War, it saw yet another change of use, being converted for silk throwing. When the business closed, the mill stood empty until 1958 after which various new tenants included an engineering firm and furniture company.

Water shortages were a well-documented problem for some mills in the area, and to help overcome this, Days Mill was originally built with twin mill ponds (one for each wheel) created by damming the valley bottom. The ponds amounted to over 3.5 acres and were supplied by the Nailsworth Stream. Under average conditions, water flowed into the ponds at a rate of 750 gallons a minute, which equated to 180 tons of water each hour. This was capable of providing sufficient power up to the 1840s, when a dozen or so power looms were installed in the newly built loom shed, the first in the area.



Days Mill in 1884, showing its two extensive mill ponds (courtesy Ordnance Survey)

Water power continued to be used well into the 20th century with the mill (now operating for silk throwing) partly dependent on a water wheel. This single surviving wheel provided sufficient power for the processing machinery up to the time of the mill's eventual closure. A steam engine that previously provided part of the site's power had been sold off ca 1900 for £45-7s.

Although the area has changed greatly and the mill ponds now lie beneath the bus station and roads, the mill still retains much of its character and is worth a visit if you are in the area.