

THE MILL AT 'THE BARRACKS', KING'S STANLEY

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This mill lay on the boundary stream between King's and Leonard Stanley about a quarter of a mile SSW of St. George's Church, King's Stanley. It was recorded as 'unnamed' by Jennifer Tann in *Gloucestershire Woollen Mills* (1). The title of 'Stanley Mill' had been appropriated by its much grander neighbour half a mile to the NE, and the Beard family's other mill in Leonard Stanley already bore their name. However, the dwellings which formed part of the complex were called 'The Barracks' by the time of the 1851 census so I have chosen to refer to it as the Barracks Mill (SO 809038).

Layout and surviving remains

A parish map of 1817 (2) provides the first known plan of the Barracks Mill complex showing the main building orientated east to west (Fig. 1). This was probably the stone-built three-storey mill, 75ft by 45ft, (23 by 14m) advertised for sale in 1848 (3). Two lesser buildings were separate from the main block, the larger of which lay to the east near the access lane leading to the main road 100m away. On the 1817 map this was shaded grey for industrial use rather than pink for residential. By 1848, however, it seems to have been converted into housing since not all of the cottages in that year's sale can be accounted for by the Beard property near the mansion in Church Street. The stream issued from within the smaller of the detached buildings as it resumed its course north of the mill towards the river Frome. This was confirmed by subsequent maps and plans of 1834 (4) (Leonard Stanley Enclosure - Fig. 2), 1839 (5) (King's Stanley Tithe Award), and 1879 (6) (Ordnance Survey Notebook - Fig. 3). The building spanning the stream was extended southwards to attach it at a right angle to the main block. This was suggested by the 1834 plan, but only a part of the mill was shown here because only the Leonard Stanley portion of the site is featured. The 1839 map reverted to showing a separate building, perhaps because it was essentially an unrevised copy of the 1817 map as far as this site was concerned, but the 1879 notebook and subsequent 1881 O.S. Map showed the buildings joined in an L shape. To the south of the main block was a long and fairly narrow mill-pond fed by the stream. None of the plans made clear the exact course taken through the mill by the stream, nor did they show the location of a wheel.

There are now very few visible remains of the mill. A raised ground level indicates the site of the main block and several pieces of Cotswold stone can be seen as debris in the stream. The former mill-pond is now a large hollow running across the back-gardens of several bungalows in Beeches Close. At the

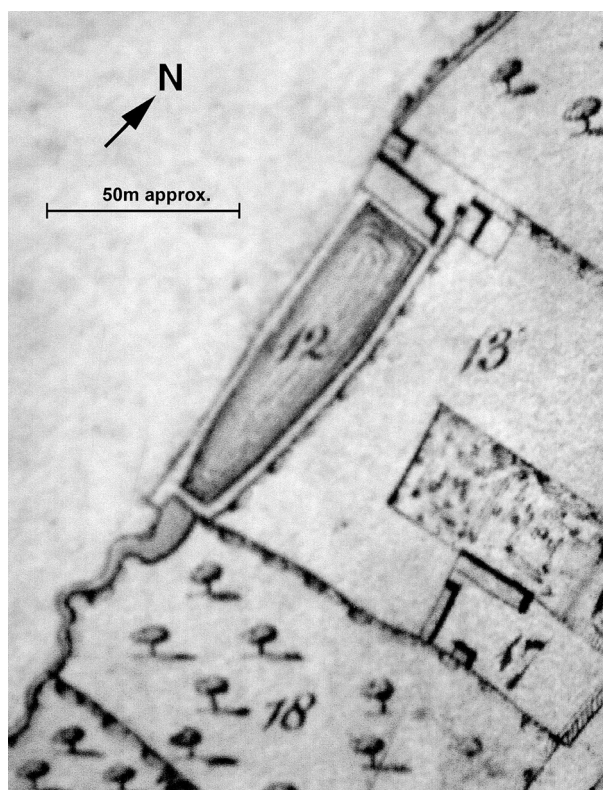


Fig. 1 The mill as shown on the 1817 Parish Map (Courtesy of Gloucestershire Archives D1159)

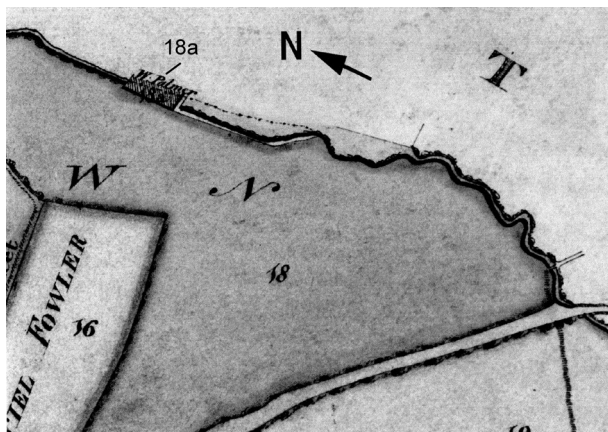


Fig. 2 Part of the mill site (Plot 18a) as shown on the 1834 Enclosure Map (Courtesy of Gloucestershire Archives Q/RI 89)

Thomas would inherit the Leonard Stanley mill. By 1797 Paul Beard was described as a clothier of King's Stanley on being bound regarding the illegitimate child of Hester Cratchley of Stonehouse (7). In 1800 he married into a prominent Stonehouse family when he wed Mary, the daughter of Thomas Skipp of Haywardsend House. His young wife died within a few months of the marriage, but the connection was maintained when he married Katherine Skipp, possibly Mary's sister, in London in 1801 (8). In the early years of the nineteenth century Paul Beard played a part in the affairs of King's Stanley as a vestryman, and in 1819 he served as churchwarden (9).

Evidence from Land Tax (10) and parochial rating records (11) concerning Paul Beard in King's Stanley at this period does not conclusively link him with the mill at The Barracks but it is highly probable that this was his place of business at least from 1815. He did not figure on the King's Stanley list of Land Tax payers until 1800 when his assessment was only 1s.5d (7p). In 1802 he became the tenant of the Revd. Anthony Keck at the house later known as Beech House (Figure 4) but in the earlier nineteenth century sometimes called King's Stanley Mansion, the nearest substantial residence to the Barracks Mill. The previous owner had been Keck's father, also Anthony, an architect of regional importance who had died in 1797 (12). By

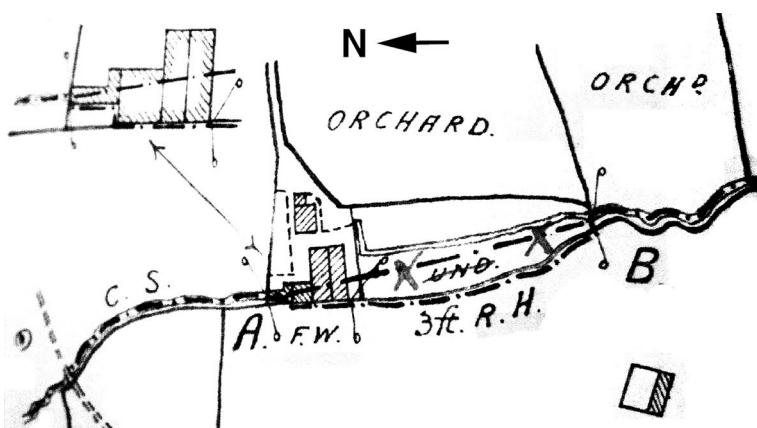


Fig. 3 The mill site as shown in 1879 Ordnance Survey Notebook (National Archives OS 26/4180)

north-western corner of the complex is approximately 5m length of substantial masonry lining the stream to a depth of 1.8m below present ground level, the remnant of the small building through which the stream left the mill. The level of the stream drops by 0.8m as it enters this section.

Paul Beard and his family

Paul Beard was the first known owner of the mill. He was a member of the Leonard Stanley clothier family which, in the later eighteenth century had renamed what had been known as Merret's Mill as Beard's Mill after themselves. Baptised in 1771, Paul was the second surviving son of John and Anne Beard, growing up in the knowledge that his elder brother

1804 Beard had evidently bought the mansion since Keck's name disappeared from the Land Tax list and Beard was now registered as the proprietor, paying £1.15s.9d (£1-79) a year until 1826 when his assessment rose to £2.5s.11½d (£2-30). Parochial rating surveys from the 1820s show that Beard had property in the village apart from the mill at The Barracks. The first of these, in 1820, refers to a "Mill, Dye-house, Stove, Workshops &c" but also a dwelling house (the mansion) with offices and a counting house and a further five properties



Fig. 4 Beech House in 2009

occupied by tenants. Beard's dwelling house was separated from the mill by a field, no doubt the Rack Close referred to in the advertisement for the sale of his estate in November 1826 (13).

Prosperity

The records of the East India Company show that Paul Beard was making significant amounts of cloth for them in 1815 when his transactions with the Company were worth in excess of £700 (14). By the time of the 1822 parochial rating Beard had acquired more house property in distant parts of the parish. This period was probably the height of his prosperity but this can be put in perspective by comparing the "annual value" of the mill in 1820

with that of "Messrs Harris & Co." at Stanley Mill in the same year. The Barracks Mill was valued at £91.5s (£91-50) and Stanley Mill at £860.12s (£860-60). A third rating survey, undated but probably from the later 1820s, was the first document to link Beard unequivocally with the Barracks Mill and the mansion by using property numbers later used in the tithe map. However, the format of the earlier Land Tax and rating documents strongly suggests that he had occupied both for many years and this was confirmed in the advertisement for the letting of the mill in 1830. In 1820 the Gell & Bradshaw *Directory of Gloucestershire* had included Paul Beard in his own right as a clothier under 'Kingstanley and Ryeford' but also the clothing firm of 'Davis, Beard and Davis.' However, the compilers were careless of parish boundaries, for instance including Henry Hicks of Eastington under the same heading, so the attribution of the partnership to Stonehouse Lower Mill (15) is more likely and the Beard in question may have been one of Paul's brothers. Paul Beard's firm does not feature in any other directory.

Bankruptcy

Beard was evidently a victim of the trade depression of late 1825 and 1826. Two advertisements in the *Gloucester Journal* in early September 1826 gave notice of sales of his property but with different emphases and with the second apparently superseding the first. On the 2nd September Halliday & Humphrys, a local firm of auctioneers, publicised a sale of clothing machinery and household items to take place on September 25th with all the detail devoted to the household furniture and goods. In this advertisement Paul Beard was described as a bankrupt. A week later another advertisement for the sale of Beard's cloth-making equipment and household items was inserted by a London firm, naming the date of the sale as 11th September and referring more delicately to "distrain for rent," though it is not clear what was being rented. This second advertisement included details about machinery absent from the first "...two 14 horse power steam engines, scribbling, carding and other valuable machinery, and the usual implements and utensils in the trade of a clothier". Evidently the September sale was only partially successful because a further sale was arranged by the local auctioneers for 20th and 21st November

offering the mill and mansion as well as their contents and once again referring to Beard as a bankrupt (Ref. 13 and Figure 5).

There was now only one 14 hp steam engine but the mill was described as powerful and worked by both water and steam "equal to a Trade of between 20 and 30 Ends of Cloth per week." The machinery was itemised in considerable detail with dimensions and makers' names provided; scribbling and carding engines and an upright brushing machine, all by Price, cloth cutters by Miles and by Lewis, shearing frames "on Harmer's principle" and billies and jennies of up to 80 spindle capacity. The results of this sale may well have been unsatisfactory, or there may have been a family rescue bid, since yet another advertisement in April 1830 (16) offered the mansion and mill to let, complete with a significant amount of surviving machinery and even some possible re-equipment. There was still a steam engine, stocks, gig mills, 15 scribbling and carding machines, 16 or 18 shearing machines or cutters, a steam-heated Cloth stove, and various other items. The capacity of the mill was now given as "about Twenty Pieces of Broad Cloth per week." Clearly the Beard family had not been dislodged since prospective tenants were invited to apply, among others, to John Beard at Leonard Stanley Mill, or to Paul's daughter Elizabeth "upon the Premises."

Continued family ownership

After 1826 there is no evidence of activity on the part of Paul Beard. The word "void" against his name in the Land Tax records for 1829 and 1830 may refer either to mill or house, perhaps both. Likewise, in the undated rating survey, the assessment is for only part of the mill and at a lower rate than before. When Beard died in 1832 he left no will.

TO CLOTHIERS
ESTATE and EFFECTS of Mr. PAUL BEARD, a Bankrupt
KINGSTANLEY, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.
TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,
By HALLIDAY and HUMPHRYS,
On Monday, the 20th day of November, and the following days,
under the authority of the Commission;
THE ESTATE and EFFECTS of Mr. PAUL BEARD,
a Bankrupt.
The ESTATE consists of a superior Dwelling-House and other Buildings, with Courts, Lawn and Garden, forming a desirable Residence for a Gentleman, either in or out of Business. A valuable and powerful Mill, worked by both Water and Steam; a perfect Engine of 14 horse power, with stocks, gigs, stoves, racks, and other fixed Machinery, spacious and numerous Workshops, Lofts and Buildings; a Rack Close and other Lands, with several COTTAGES, forming a most convenient and perfect Clothing Factory, with every possible requisite, equal to a Trade of between 20 and 30 Ends of Cloth per week, every part of which is in the best state of repair.
The EFFECTS comprise a large Stock of superior and valuable Machinery, clothing utensils, teasles, and other articles of trade, horses, carts, &c.; and also the neat HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, wines, plate, linen, china, glass, books, and other effects which lately belonged to Mr. Beard.
Full Particulars and Catalogues will be published in due time, and further information (if requisite) may be obtained of the Auctioneers, Stroud; of Messrs. Gatty, Haddon, Gatty and Haddon, Solicitors, Angel Court, Throgmorton-Street, London; or of Mr. Croome, Solicitor, near Stroud.

KINGSTANLEY, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.
TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,
By HALLIDAY and HUMPHRYS,
Under the authority of the Commission, on Tuesday, the 21st day of November, 1826, and following days, (Sunday excepted);—
THE very superior and valuable STOCK of CLOTHING MACHINERY, Utensils, Teasles, Rape, Gallipoli, and Lucca Oil; a fourteen-horse-power STEAM-ENGINE, capital Gig or Carriage Mare, Nag Horse, neat HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, fine-toned Cabinet Piano-Forte, Wines, Plate, Linen, China, Glass, Books, Casks, Brewing Utensils, and other effects of Mr. PAUL BEARD, a Bankrupt.
The CLOTHING STOCK, &c. &c. (with which the sale will commence,) include 2 forty-inch scribbling engines, with six top workers, 2 thirty-six inch ditto, 1 twenty-eight inch ditto, 2 twenty-eight inch carding ditto, and 3 twenty-four inch ditto, (the whole by Price,) with iron arches and frames, well clothed, and in excellent working condition, capital upright brushing machine, with steam apparatus, &c. (by Price,) cloth brusher, 9 patent cloth cutters, (by Miles,) and 1 ditto, (by Lewis,) 6 shearing frames, on Harmer's principle, 47 pair of cloth shears, sixty, seventy, and eighty-spindle billies and jennies, capital cloth press, with wrought-iron screw, brass nut, and iron sides, (by Price,) 1 ditto, with wood screw, fourteen-horse power steam-engine, snap and other reels, press papers and fences, planks, blocks, and shooters, 2 wool-tuckers, (by Price,) wire hurdles or whims, beams, scales and weights, several casks and jars of rape, Gallipoli, and Lucca oil, 169 mills full of gig-mill work, about 140 packs of excellent teasles, several reams of brown and white paper, wool and other baskets, beams, scales and weights, driving straps, wood shafts, 2 narrow-wheel carts, capital brown gig or carriage mare, useful nag horse, saddles, bridles, thiller's harness, iron and wood wheelbarrows, &c. &c.

The HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE and other Effects comprise four-post and other bedsteads, with moreen, chintz, and cotton furnishings, excellent feather and flock beds, mahogany and painted wardrobes, chests of drawers, dressing and night tables, pier and swing glasses, mahogany sideboard, with plate and other drawers, Brussels and Kidderminster floor, bed-room, and stair carpets, mahogany and walnut-tree bureaux, and bookcases, with glazed folding doors, mahogany and painted parlour, drawing-room.

Fig. 5 Sale notice in Gloucester Journal
11 November 1826 (Ref. 13)

His wife Katherine died the following year and his son, Nathaniel Skipp Beard, was probably dead by 1837 since he is not mentioned in the will of his grandfather, Thomas Skipp (17). Beard's daughter Elizabeth was thus the sole survivor of the immediate family, maintaining the clothing tradition by marrying Charles Hooper of Eastington in 1834. Nevertheless, the Barracks Mill seems to have remained in family hands until 1848. According to the Leonard Stanley Enclosure Schedule of 1834 the slice of property which lay in that parish to the west of the stream belonged to Walter Palmer, and so, presumably, did the major portion of the site in King's Stanley parish. Paul Beard's mother Anne had been a Palmer of Weston-under-Penyard and Pencoyd in Herefordshire and a Walter Palmer was prominent in that family during the 1830s.

In 1839 the owner of the mill was Charles Beard, possibly Paul's brother (born c.1786). The tithe survey shows him resident at the mansion and leasing the Barracks mill to Donald Maclean of Stanley Mill. Charles does not figure in the 1841 census but a "Henry Beard" of independent means had replaced him (18). In 1848 the mansion, mill and other nearby dwellings were sold by G.H.A. Beard to William Fowler, a contractor, originally from Lincolnshire, who had worked on the Cheltenham & Great Western Union Railway in the Sapperton area. At that time the mill was described as "formerly used as a Cloth Mill, but now as a Warehouse" and this may have been the situation for several years. Fowler and his brother, Joseph Belton Fowler, had settled with their families in Stonehouse and both still lived there in 1851. William is mentioned among the King's Stanley gentry in *Slater's Directory* for 1852/3 so he may have occupied the mansion for a few years but by 1863 (19) it had been let to a Mrs Wigmore who was still there in 1871. In fact the Fowler brothers had set up a coal exporting business in Cardiff by 1855 and acquired a colliery in Pontypridd by 1859. At some point before 1866 (20) William Fowler moved to Cardiff where he died in 1876.

Possible uses of the mill in the later 19th century

Meanwhile there is no firm evidence of what was happening to the Barracks mill. The presence of two bakers and three millers in nearby houses owned by Fowler in the 1851 census suggests that it may have been converted to a corn mill. In the 1871 census it was described as an "old mill in ruins", but when William Fowler's King's Stanley property was advertised for sale on the instructions of the Court of Chancery in 1882 (21) as the result of a challenge to his will, the mill was promoted as a spacious building, now of two floors, with good water power. It seems that the connection between the Barracks Mill and King's Stanley Mansion was severed at this point. The mill was "in hand" so presumably untenanted, and the former pond, still in evidence in the 1830s and said to be a fish-pond in 1848, was now a withy bed. The stream channel is shown in 1879 running roughly through the middle of the former pond nearly as far as the mill and then turning eastward at a right angle away from the main block for a few metres before terminating abruptly. At some point since then the stream has been made to turn sharply west instead of east. Mr. William Tocknell (1877-1973) lived at the Barracks when a young child, as shown by the 1881 census. According to his recollections nearly eighty years later (22) the adjacent mill was at that time producing pins. The occupation of William's father was given as "Engine Driver at Flour Mill" but this may refer to a different mill.

Housing at "The Barracks"

The Victorian censuses show occupation of a number of dwellings at The Barracks. In 1851 there were five, one of which was uninhabited. Twenty years later three dwellings were recorded, one of them occupied by the village poet Jephtha Young (23), a weaver, who was still in residence in 1881. This has given rise to the impression that Young was the tenant of the mill but there is nothing definite to support this. In 1901 there were still three dwellings, though one had only two rooms. The residents throughout the period were mostly clothworkers. It is not

clear whether the dwellings were ever part of the main block of the mill or were only in the detached block slightly to the east shown in all the maps and plans. No evidence has been found of anyone working the mill in the twentieth century, but the Inland Revenue assessment papers for King's Stanley (24) between 1910 and 1914 describe three cottages at the Barracks owned with the adjoining withy bed by James G. King of Stonehouse (25). King's property was measured at 1.238 acres, roughly the same as the area advertised in the lot comprising the mill and cottages in the sale of 1882. The I.R. documents do not, however, mention a mill. Two of the cottages were occupied by residential tenants and described as of brick and slate construction, the other 'cottage' was empty, derelict and unusable but built of stone and slate. It may therefore not have been part of the separate eastern building but a surviving part of the mill. The O.S. map of 1936 and 1938 showed the brick cottages, known to have been still inhabited (26), and the small part of the northern range on the part of the present stream which still has stone lining, but the main block had disappeared. By 1950 all buildings on the site had been demolished and only low brick and stone footings were visible.

Around 1960 a private house was built at the eastern edge of the site, near to where the previous accommodation had been. This house currently stands empty following the death of its owner, and may be demolished to make way for larger-scale residential development when planning permission can be obtained.

References

- (1) Tann, Jennifer, Gloucestershire Woollen Mills David & Charles, 1967 p.152.
- (2) Gloucestershire Archives (GA) D1159
- (3) Gloucester Journal 16 September 1848.
- (4) GA Q/RI 89
- (5) GA GDR/T1/169
- (6) National Archives OS 26/4180
- (7) GA P316 OV 7/2/2/11
- (8) At St. Leonard's, Shoreditch on 3 March 1801.
- (9) GA P190 CW 2/1
- (10) GA Whitstone Hundred Q/REL 1
- (11) GA D873 R11
- (12) Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600-1840, Howard Colvin, Yale U.P. 3rd Edition. 1995.
- (13) Gloucester Journal 11 November 1826.
- (14) ex inf. Ian Mackintosh.
- (15) See Tann op. cit. p.147.
- (16) Gloucester Journal 10, 17 and 24 April 1830.
- (17) GA Gloucestershire Wills 1837/145
- (18) Apparently George Henry Augustus Beard, who died in 1891.
- (19) Post Office Directory of Gloucestershire, 1863.
- (20) Harrod's Post Office Directory of Glamorgan, 1866.
- (21) GA RX 177.1
- (22) In conversation with the author.
- (23) Jephtha Young may have been resident at The Barracks in 1861 but the eccentric organisation of that census enumeration makes this difficult to establish.
- (24) National Archives IR 58/21270
- (25) James Godsell King, a butcher and shopkeeper of Upper High Street, Stonehouse.
- (26) ex inf. Mrs I.R. Griffin.