

Dummer Windmills

There were once two windmills in Dummer. One is described in the 1743 enclosure documents as being on 'the road leading from the east end of the Butts Lane to the Wind Mill across Priest Down to Nutley Gate'. It is drawn on Robert Scullard's 1744 enclosure map (Figure 1).¹ The 1838 tithe assessment describes it as being a post mill with four common sails. This was the highest point in the parish at what is now known as Dummer Clump. The reference to the name Priest Down is a name that no longer appears on modern Dummer maps but has been retained as a street name in the Basingstoke Beggarwood housing estate which borders the parish in the north.



Figure 1. Scullard's Enclosure map, 1743.

There is much more documentation for the second mill which was part of Little Manor Farm. This was a smock mill built in 1811 by Mr Day of Westerham, Kent. Greenwood's map of 1826 (Figure 2)² shows it located in the north of the parish between Down Street and the turnpike road, now the A30. It had a short life however, burning down in 1833.³

¹ HRO, 120M97/1. NGR SU 603459.

² HRO, 3M39/1. NGR SU 588463.

³ *The Times*, 5 Jun. 1833.



Figure 2. Greenwood's map, 1826.

Little Manor Farm was in the tenure of the Smith family for several generations.⁴ The first mention of the windmill is in August 1811 when James junior assigned the lease to John Banister, yeoman 'with the addition of a windmill erected thereon'.⁵ As well as the Smith family, mortgage records from 1810-1827 for the farm variously show shared interest from John Kidgell of East Oakley, John Banister of Eversley, John Webb of Quidhampton and Nathaniel Loader of Basingstoke. The mortgage in 1810 for the farm was £500 but by 1827 had increased to £2,300.⁶ This could indicate that the farm and mill were successful with shareholders prepared to invest in the business.

A diary of John Thorp, a farmer in Preston Candover dated October 1818, refers to a payment to Mr Smith for grinding two sacks of wheat and in December for grinding two sacks of barley at a cost of four shillings.⁷ This shows that grain was brought in from the surrounding farms and parishes for making into flour as well as from farms in Dummer and Little Manor's own harvest.

The 50 acre farm and mill were put up for sale in August 1828. The equipment was described as two pairs of stones completely fitted out with a flour machine, grist machine and bolting mill. The newspaper advertisement mentioned that the village had the advantage of a mealman and the next nearest mill was six miles away but the Basingstoke canal was within easy distance for conveyance of goods to London in 24 hours.⁸ No purchaser was found until November.⁹ Records for the following

⁴ HRO, 55M67/T38-44.

⁵ HRO, 55M67/T41.

⁶ HRO, 55M67/T39-45.

⁷ HRO 66M82/3.

⁸ *Hants. Chronicle* 11 Aug. 1828.

⁹ *Hants. Chronicle* 10 Nov. 1828.

year show that Revd Arthur Atherley Hammond of Southampton leased the property to William Drinkwater, yeoman of Dummer at a rent of £120 per annum. A detailed inventory was drawn up for this transaction:¹⁰

	£	s	d
Mill stones – one pair of 4ft French Stones to the wheat mill	20	0	0
Spindle [ink] hoop horse hopper and feed to ditto	4	15	0
One peak runner to the barley mill nearly worn out, one bed stone worn out	1	10	0
One spindle and jack to the mill	4	15	0
One flour machine complete for dressing housels, in good repair	15	0	0
One grist machine complete in good repair	9	10	0
	55	0	0

Disaster struck the mill during the night of 31 May 1833. A traveller on the turnpike road spotted that it was on fire. He rushed to the village to raise the alarm but in spite of 'extraordinary exertions' the whole building was entirely consumed in a few hours. Flour dust mixed with air is very flammable and mill fires were common, but as the Dummer mill had not been worked for the previous three weeks it was assumed that it had been deliberately set on fire. Further evidence for this was that a farm in the village belonging to Mr Kersley had been burnt down just two months previously. The miscreant for both fires was never convicted. The early 1830s was a time of unrest amongst agricultural workers suffering from poor pay and loss of jobs through mechanisation. Hampshire suffered particularly with the so-called Swing Riots and incendiary attacks; perhaps these fires were part of that disturbance.

It was reported that the next nearest mills were in Basingstoke and Sherborne St John some four or five miles away and a considerable inconvenience to Dummer villagers.¹¹ The mill was not rebuilt. There is little evidence of Little Manor Farm mill or Clump Mill in the landscape today.

¹⁰ HRO, 55M67/T52.

¹¹ *The Times* 5 Jun. 1833; *Hants. Advertiser* 1 Jun. 1833; *Hants. Chronicle* 3 Jun. 1833.