

the level of the bedstone was checked using the original "gable" belonging to the mill and found satisfactory. A newly made "jackstaff" with its feather was used to check that the spindle was accurately "square" with the bedstone face. the runner stone was then replaced and its static balance checked as OK. Finally attention was given to the damsel. the iron bridge bar set across the eye of the runner stone was found to have a circular rather than the more usual square extension on to which the lower end of the damsel is fitted. the was not a damsel in the mill which fitted this, but a broken one was found. This was repaired with a fabricated bottom end which fitted the bridge bar satisfactorily.

All was now ready for testing. Was everything really in good working order? We would soon find out. A modest amount of wheat was put in the hopper, the shoe filled and a quantity

put into the eye of the runner stone to give things a start, and the stone nut engaged.

Time to hold one's breath as water was put on to the wheel. No need to get excited, the stones started to grind as though they had never had a day's, let alone a hundred years, rest. the only things needing adjustment were the pivot points on the tentering governor's steelyard to ensure that grinding quality remained constant when the mill changed speed. The first grindings were of course discarded, as they contained a noticeable amount of grit from the freshly-dressed stones, and, when they had been cleaned out, the stones went into production making organic wholemeal flour.

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HEAVY RAINFALL HELPS OUR RIVER DOUR

JOE HARMAN

THE RIVER CAME FROM SPRINGS that rose at Waters-end just north of Temple Ewell. The name Ewell meant a spring or a river source in Old English. The stream formed the Watersend Lake and ran through the village, where it powered a mill and on through a lake in the grounds of Kearsney Manor to drive another mill. From there it passed under the road to join water coming from the Alkham valley.

The spring above Chilton Farm which fed the Alkham stream was fairly constant and it is shown on an estate map of 1774. There was sufficient flow in it to build a paper mill at Bushy Ruff in about 1792. When this paper mill was put up for sale in 1847 the description mentioned a plentiful supply of water from springs. It appears that an extra storage lake was excavated on the north side of the Alkham Valley road to supplement the supply to the south of the Alkham Road. This new lake was fed from the spring below Chilton Farm which might still flow even if the higher spring dried up. The flow of water in the valley always increased if there had been plenty of rain in the winter part of the year.

The owners of the Temple Ewell Mill, when they found that their supply was not constant, put a stationary engine in the building now used by the D.O.D.S. to pump up sufficient water for their needs.

We have seen the lakes dry up each year now since 1990 and the local water company has been blamed for abstracting too much water, but this happened first at the turn of the century, when bore-holes were sunk at Lye Oak off the Swanton Lane. The local company was blamed when Watersend Lake dried up. In fact, the bore-holes did not produce much water and they were more or less abandoned. Could this have been due to lack of rain?

When the Alkham Valley Lakes dried up in this decade the wildlife moved on and Bushy Ruff and the Russell Gardens lost some of their attraction. Then in 1996 Folkestone and Dover Water Company decided to pump from the new bore-hole on the south side of the road and a generator was hired to run the pump. A pipe was pushed under the road and an outlet provided near the top spring north of the road in Bushy Ruff. This created a reasonable flow at the top end but the lake did not fill up and no water came through to Russell Gardens.

In November 1997 it was decided to do some clay puddling to seal the bottom of the lake. On November 26th a portion of the lake was excavated and and clay was delivered but the hole had water in it, suggesting that the water table was rising after some rainfall. The next day an unsuccessful attempt was made to pump the pit dry but the machine sunk in and had to be towed out.

All was not lost however for six lost sheep arrived and were put in a pen with straw on top of some clay. They were supposed to tread it in but all I saw them doing was eating the straw.

Then it rained but by the time the invited guests came, late morning, it was fine again. A few days later the water rose and everything disappeared beneath the ripples. The two main springs in the valley began to flow and Bushy Ruff pumping stopped. Then the lake on the south side began to fill up and eventually came over the small waterfall and fed into Bushy Ruff quite strongly.

By then the Chilton Farm and the spring was slowly feeding in and water flowing downstream, but this did not account for the amount coming over the waterfall and into the Bushy Ruff Lake. It seemed that the water from the bore-hole was feeding in as it did before pumping stopped.

It is obvious that the chalk aquifer has been considerably replenished by this winter's rainfall and the water table has risen allowing the springs to flow freely again. However, we still need more winter rain to make up for the deficit over the last few years. Then we could see the Drellingore running again from Alkham.



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