

In the 1996 GSIA Journal, the article on Coaley Ironworks mentioned the mill at Field Farm. John Bozworth who lived at Field Farm has provided this account of the mill, together with a plan and sketch of the building. Ed.

## **THE MILL AT FIELD FARM, COALEY**

A. J. Bozworth

A small stream ran through the fields of Field Farm known as The Delkin, and this flowed through a valley section at the bottom of the orchard close to the farmhouse and buildings. A small water powered mill had been constructed in this valley section below the orchard . I do not know when it was built, or who built it. The land was rented from the Berkeley Estate, and when we moved to the farm in 1935, the mill was in a derelict state. The main part of the mill was still standing, together with the dam, and the sluice gate, and the waterwheel. The dam gave a head of water of 7 feet or so, and the water wheel was about 6 feet in diameter and 2 feet wide. The rumour was that a previous tenant of the farm had built the mill, but was not given any compensation for it when he left, so he demolished a section of the building over the waterwheel so that it could not be used. There is probably no truth in this at all - but it explained to me why the wheel pit was full of huge stones, and the wheel would not go round.

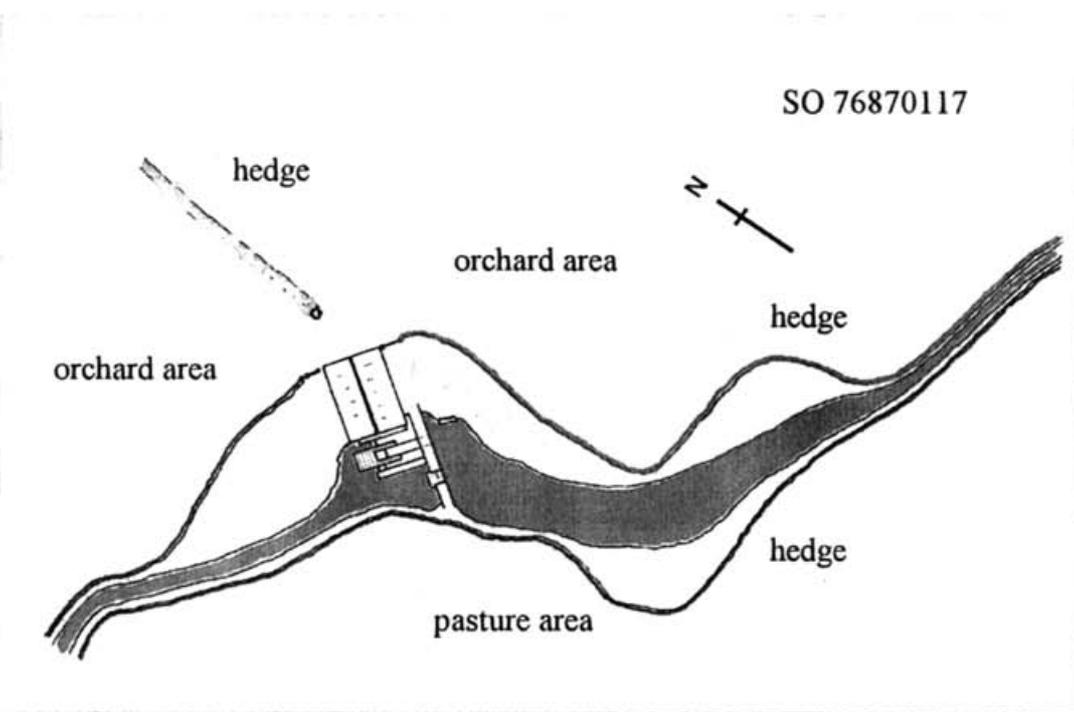
The corn grinding machinery had been taken out of the mill and installed in the farm barn. Unfortunately the wooden teeth of the gearing had been damaged and the mill could not be used. (Someone was a bit too enthusiastic with the tractor throttle I think!!) Over the years the tiles were taken off the roof for use elsewhere, and the building stripped of the timber cladding and anything else that was useful. The old mill provided hours of enjoyment for us kids, paddling in the water, and letting all the water out of the dam, and waiting for it to fill up again, and lots of other exciting things, as well as getting wet. There was also a copious supply of water cress growing in the pond, the main drain from the farmyard did in fact empty into this pond!!.

Eventually, some time in the 1940s the skeleton of the mill building became unsafe, and it would sway ominously in the wind. The structure was now only a roof frame resting on a stonewall at the top, and on two tall brick pillars built up from the stream level, with all the timber cross bracing and supports having been taken out for other uses. For better or worse, I personally pushed the structure down by levering the frame off the stone wall at the top with a length of timber, and it all crashed down into the bed of the stream.

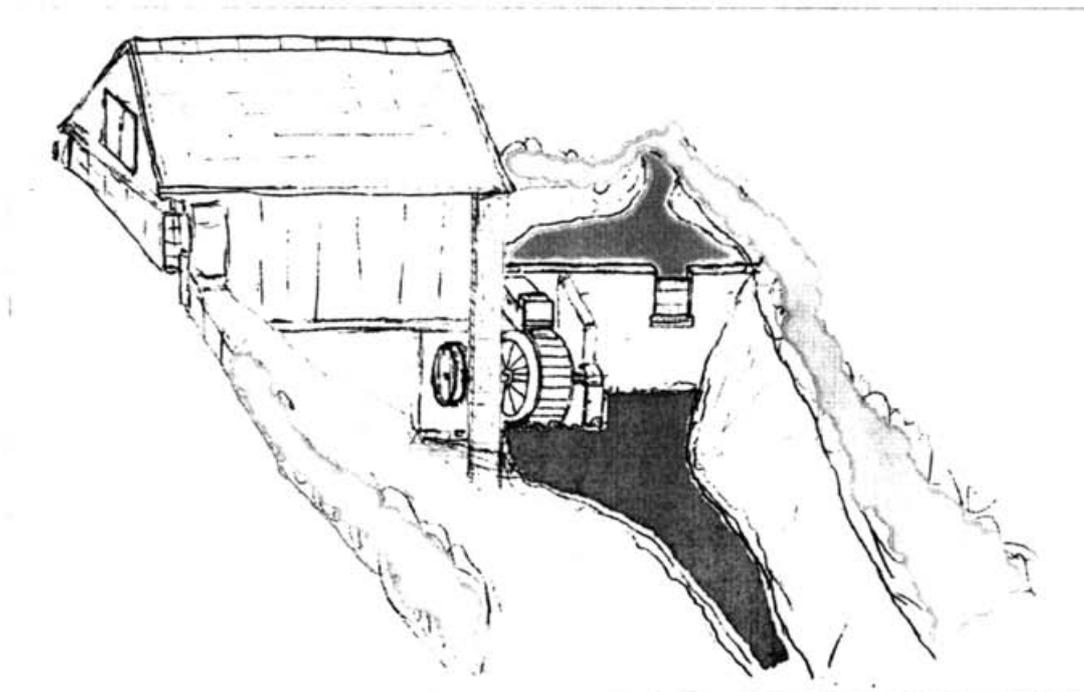
Pity really!! - my mother said she thought she heard some thunder. I kept quiet!



**FIELD FARM MILL COALEY DURSLEY GLOUCESTERSHIRE**



**Figure 1 Plan Showing the stream and dam layout**



**Figure 2 Sketch of the Mill from the Orchard looking Back Upstream**