

A "LONG" STORY - (OF MILL AND MINE OWNERS)

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Introduction

This article is the result of research into Cromhall Colliery and the Yate Coal workings. The name Long appears in connection with both these sites and with many of the woollen mills in the Wotton-under-Edge area, as well as with local chapels and schools. There is also a mining connection to the Forest of Dean.

The name of Samuel Long appears most frequently in the records but since there was both an elder and a younger, it is often difficult to be certain to which one the records refer. William Alexander Long's son was also called William Alexander and to confuse things further the name Walter Long appears several times. Therefore there were three different people with the same initial. Further confusion exists because the coalmines in Yate extended into the parish of Iron Acton. The manorial (and mineral) rights at that time were with the Long family from Rood Ashton near Trowbridge in Wiltshire, with the resulting Royalties being due to another Long Family. This family was also involved in the woollen trade and there is evidence to also suggest a link to mining in the Somerset Coalfield. No connection has yet been found between all these families.

This article is an initial appraisal of the Long family's commercial and public interests. Rather less research has been done on the family tree, and in consequence there is still much research to be undertaken. The starting point for the story is with Samuel Long the elder.

Samuel Long the Elder (circa 1784-1845)

Biographical The place of Samuel Long's birth is at present not known, but a record of a christening on 23rd December 1784 in Uley (Gloucestershire) may be of this Samuel. The parents were Nathaniel and Elizabeth, names which were given to Samuel Long's children. The same parents had earlier christened a child Samuel, in 1771. It is to be presumed that he had died before 1784, when the other Samuel was christened. It seems likely that Samuel Long was from the same family as W. A. Long, of Kingswood. The earliest reference found to date linking the two is that "Picking & Burling shops" were let to William and Samuel Long in 1812 for £35 p.a. Both appear in Pigot's 1830 Directory for Wotton-Under-Edge as "Woollen Cloth Manufactures – Chagfield Mill and Park Mill" (Charfield Mill in Charfield & Park Mill in Kingswood).

There is a record of a marriage on 23rd May 1812 between Samuel Long and Mary Stoner in Kingswood. In the same year the first of the three mills at Charfield was built, although some sources suggest that they were not built until 1815 (Figure 1).

Samuel Long's death is recorded on a very faded plaque propped against one wall of the Tabernacle churchyard in Wotton-under-Edge (Figure 2). This shows that Samuel Long the Elder died 12th August 1845 aged 61. (The plaque was inside the building until deconsecration in the late 1960s.) The plaque records that his wife Mary died on 29th February 1876 aged 87, and therefore she outlived him by some 31 years. Her tomb is also in the Tabernacle graveyard but her husband's tomb could not be found. Both her tomb and the

plaque describe Samuel Long as being "of Charfield Mills". His 30 years of involvement with the tabernacle is also recorded.

Chapels and Schools It is appropriate to give some details of the history of the Tabernacle. It was built in 1783 for Rowland Hill, the sixth son of Sir Rowland Hill, of Shropshire. Rowland Hill had first visited Wotton-under-Edge in 1771 when he preached in the Market. The first chapel there was a much humbler building than the Gothic style one built in 1850. The tablet to Samuel Long was presumably put on the wall at that time of the re-building.

The Rev. Hill was also involved in the founding of the independent chapel in Cromhall in 1813. Then by 1819 a chapel and cottage were built on land belonging to Samuel Long. The Rev. Theophilus Jones assisted the Rev. Hill at the opening ceremony of the chapel. The Rev. Jones was minister of the independent chapel at Kingswood, and thereby providing a link with that village and chapel, which also has connections with the Longs and woollen as discussed below. In his book, *A History of Kingswood Forest*, Braine describes an incident where Rowland Hill's brother Richard witnessed him preaching to "a vast multitude" of colliers in Kingswood (Bristol). The "faces of the rough pitmen channelled with tears of penitence and of joy" were sufficient to make him remain and assist his brother instead of doing as requested by his father and persuading his brother to return home. It would seem that the effect on Samuel Long must have been similar judging from his involvement in the chapels and other public affairs.

Samuel Long was also involved in support for schools. *In Wotton-under-Edge - men and affairs of a Cotswold Wool Town*, E S Lindley tells us that in November 1835 the chapels in Wotton decided to set up a school for boys and girls on "British and Foreign" lines. The committee included five of the ministers. Samuel Long was one of a number who gave "liberal support". Another was T S Child who, along with Samuel Long, was one of the witnesses to Christopher Keeling's will. Samuel Long's involvement in setting up schools and chapels is later mirrored in the works of Handel Cossham who went on to become the principal mine owner in the Bristol coalfield, mayor of Bath and M.P. for part of Bristol as well as being connected to founding many of the local chapels and schools. Cossham started his mining career as a clerk at Yate Colliery then run by Long Keeling & Co. He went on to become manager of the Yate works at which time he laid the foundation stone for the British School near to the works. Whether the Longs were also involved in founding this school is not known.

Mills Lindley tells us that the Rev. Hill also built Dudley Mill in Wotton-under-Edge "to provide an income for the poor" and that Samuel Long was the lessee of the mill. He also tells us that Samuel Long had coal interests in the Forest of Dean but unfortunately no details are given.

The Boulton & Watt archive indicates that in 1825 Samuel Long purchased a "Side Lever (Boat) Type Engine Used on Land", cylinder diameter x stroke: 26³/₄ in x 2 ft 6 in. 20 h.p. Then in 1827 William Long purchased a similar engine. These would appear to have been for the introduction of steam power to their mills. Samuel Long is quoted as saying regarding Charfield Mills that the waterpower in winter was 50 hp but even then irregular from floods. Pigot's Directory of 1830 for Wotton-under-Edge shows that Samuel and William Long were cloth manufacturers of Charfield and Park Mills.

In *Gloucestershire Woollen Mills*, Jennifer Tann indicates that Dudley Mill was leased first to Samuel and then to William Long. Their occupation had ceased by the time of the Tithe

Survey in 1842 when the mill appears to have been empty. Nothing now remains of the mill. A reference to picking and burling shops (site unknown) being let to William and Samuel Long in 1812 for £35 per annum confirms that there was a connection between the two Longs.

The largest of the three mills at Charfield has a date stone of 1829 on it. In fact this was the end of a significant period of mill expansion work in the early nineteenth century. In 1837 Samuel Long is said to have foreseen the decrease in demand for broad cloth and introduced doeskin cloth. This required highly skilled weaving techniques. Nearly 100 people were employed in this production. In 1839 the mill had sixteen handlooms employing sixteen men and seven children.

At the time of the tithe surveys in the 1840s Samuel Long owned Huntingford Mill. It was at that time occupied by Rowland Nathaniel Long and John Holbrow. The 1839 tithe schedule for Cromhall shows that he also had land there.

Collieries There is a lease dated 20th August 1827 for Cromhall Colliery. It is between Samuel Long; described as a clothier of Charfield, and Lord Ducie. The lease refers to "several pits and veins of coal" already being worked and specifically to "opening on Cromhall common one other pit for searching and procuring coal.....". It is believed this lease represents the commencement of the New Engine Pit at Cromhall but suggests Samuel Long was already involved. By the time of the 1838 tithe schedule the new works are in operation, the Old Engine Pit is also leased to Samuel Long and Christopher Keeling. The surviving lease for Cromhall only refers to Samuel Long, so exactly when Keeling became involved is unclear. There is a record that he was baptised at the Tabernacle in Wotton under-Edge on 10th June 1828 suggesting he moved to the area to manage the New Works about the time of the 1827 lease and became a convert at that time. The Cromhall mines continued to be worked into the 1850s. Christopher Keeling's name also occurs in connection with the Cromhall Chapel. A memorial plaque is in the chapel and his tomb is in the churchyard.

Samuel Long's involvement with coal mining in the Forest of Dean is confirmed in a document of dated 24th January 1856 document regarding Moseley Green New Engine Pit. This refers to earlier documents from 1842-1843 and indicates that when Samuel Long died he left his business interests to his three sons. His will has not however yet been located, although that of his son, Samuel, refers to it and indicates it was proved in Coventry.

In 1842 there is a reference to three pits being worked on Yate Common by Long and Co as well as two pits being worked by Stayley & Parkers. The Tithe Map for Yate (1842) shows a large area of land owned by Samuel Long. This now includes a housing estate known as Longs Drive. Also on this land was Longs Pit. Little is known of this pit other than that it predates much of Yate Colliery. The extent of the workings appear on a map dated 30th July 1861 on which it is labeled as Mr. Long's Engine Pit and Old Workings. This map shows that by that time the various coal workings in Yate had been consolidated into "Yate Colliery" being worked by Long, Keeling and Co. "Longs Pit" continued to be used for pumping to assist with dewatering the other mines long after extraction of coal from the mine itself had ceased.

Samuel Long (the Younger) - (circa 1816 -1885)

George Bousfield Long (circa 1841 -1893)

Samuel Long the Younger is recorded in the 1851 census for Wotton-under-Edge as a "Cloth Manufacturer", aged 35, and originally from Kingswood, married to Eliza with two children

living with them George Bousfield (10) and Eliza Mary (8). By the 1861 census George is described as “assistant to his father”. Samuel Long and his family lived at Ellfield House, Merlin Haven in Wotton-under-Edge (Figure 3). Confirmation of this comes in the 1863 *Gloucester Gazetteer*, and from a diary report by P C Biddeford on 10th December 1869, who watched his house that night due to the theft of a carpet earlier in the week.

When his father died he continued with his business interests. In 1854 he reported that 1000 were employed in Wotton-under-Edge in the manufacture of cloth. From 1860 to about 1870 he also owned New Mills (originally called Sury Mill) and also Ithall's Mill (now demolished). The steam engine is said to have been moved to Charfield when Ithall's Mill was demolished.

Perry tells us that when Samuel Long retired in 1878 he lent £10,000 at 5% interest to each of his two partners as working capital. He undertook never to call for it whilst they remained solvent, although he did reserve the right to inspect the books. When he died in 1885 his son George, with whom he was already in partnership, inherited Charfield Mill. At that time it had 40 Looms and 1500 Spindles and was worth £61,000, a considerable sum at the time. His son only out lived him by eight years and soon after cloth manufacture in the area ceased.

A Samuel Long was mayor of Wotton-under-Edge in both 1843-1844 and 1844-1845. Whether the elder or the younger is again unclear, although Perry suggests it was the younger one. On Saturday 6th July 1844 the Station at Charfield on the Bristol and Gloucester Railway was opened. The mayor, Samuel Long, called a meeting and a procession was organised from Wotton to Charfield, complete with a 21-gun salute, and a public holiday was declared. When the importance of coal to the steam mills is considered along with the fact that there was a coal wharf at Charfield station, Samuel Long's delight at the arrival of the railway is understandable. The Yate coal works were also close to the railway line and connections to the main line were made. Possibly a proportion of the coal travelled the short distance from Yate to Charfield. Incidentally the name Nowell is that of the engineer responsible for the construction of the railway tunnel at Wickwar, which happens to be between Yate and Charfield. The Yate pits are later in the ownership of Long, Keeling and Nowell. Whether Long and Keeling made use of his railway engineer expertise or whether he was connected to the mine before the railway tunnel work is not known.

Samuel Long (the younger) was an Alderman of Wotton-under-Edge and a Justice of the Peace, said to be the only one not drawn from the gentry. The Wotton-under-Edge Petty Sessional Division met every Friday. In 1881 there were five magistrates, Samuel Long was one of them. He was also a trustee of the Grammar School, one of ten who were appointed for life in 1884. He was also active in the campaign for water and drainage in Wotton-under-Edge. With the vicar Benjamin Perkins, he was actively involved in a petition by sixty-six ratepayers for an inquiry into the state of the town.

Paul Long (circa 1818-1864)

Samuel Clarke Long (circa 1840-1872)

Paul was the second son of Samuel Long the Elder. His memorial is also in the Tabernacle churchyard along with a tomb which shows that he died 9th April 1864, aged 46. The 1851 census of Charfield describes him as being in the "Woollen Trade" as a partner employing 350 adults in the trade, and as a partner employing 100 persons in the Coal Trade. His wife, like his mother, was called Mary and they also had a daughter of that name. Their son is called Samuel Clarke Long. Clarke may be Mary's maiden name. By 1861 he appears in the census for Wotton-Under-Edge in one of the houses on the “Chipping” and is described as

Wollen Cloth manufacturer. His son Samuel is described as “assistant to his Father”. Paul Long laid the foundation stone for the Independent Chapel in Charfield and appears as one of the original trustees

The family tomb in the Wotton Tabernacle shows that Samuel died 11th December 1872 “in his 32nd year” at San Louis, South America and that he is buried at the Dutch Settlement at Rosary. There are a number of places called San Louis and Rosary in South America. Probably the most likely is in Argentina, where there was a port – hence the “Dutch Settlement”. Perhaps coincidentally there are also a number of mines nearby. Whether he was involved in mining or trading cloth or even a missionary is not known.

Rowland Nathaniel Long (circa 1826-1863)

Rowland was the third son of Samuel Long the Elder. He was probably named after the Rev. Rowland Hill, and Nathaniel may have been his Grandfather's name. His tomb is also located in the Tabernacle churchyard and shows that he died on the 20th July 1863, aged 37. His wife, Sarah, died 9th July 1895, aged 68, at Clifton. The tomb in the Tabernacle graveyard indicates that four of their children died at a young age, with the oldest being just 20 months.

Two of the children were named Francis Holbrow Long. This may indicate that Sarah's maiden name was Holbrow, another Wotton-under-Edge family. John Holbrow was in joint occupation of Huntingford Mill with Rowland Long in the 1840s according to the tithe survey. In 1824 Huntingford Mill was a "cloathing mill", later it was converted to a Corn Mill. The 1872 lease indicates another link with the Holbrow family for Yate Colliery. This includes Sarah Long as well as John Holbrow, Francis Holbrow and Ann Holbrow as lessees. Francis Holbrow appeared as one of the directors in the Yate Collieries and Lime Works Company Prospectus of 1877. There he was described as "Colliery Proprietor, Yate".

Although Rowland Long does not seem to appear in the 1851 census for any of the surrounding towns and villages, the 1861 Census and the 1863 Gazetteer for Wotton-under-Edge lists him as living at Merlin Haven. The Census gives the names of three more of their children, the sons are Samuel C (7) and William (1). Rowland is described as “Coal Proprietor”

William Alexander Long (the Elder) (circa 1776-1862)

William Alexander Long (the Younger) (circa 1812-1876)

Rufus Long (circa 1820-1894)

William Long (the Elder) A large tomb in Kingswood Chapel graveyard tells us W. A. Long "clothier of this place" died 22nd January 1862, aged 86. He was married to Edith who died 18th September 1849, aged 68. The dates of the deaths of their two sons, William Alexander, and Rufus are also recorded on the tomb.

Much of our information on W. A. Long comes from Lindley. He describes him as a "Kingswood clothier wealthy enough to have bought Neathwood farm for £7250 in 1826". He also links the name to Samuel Long the Elder, and their ages suggest they may have been brothers.

Various other information survives on William Long, and shows that he and other members of the Long family were involved in various activities. In 1822 he signed the appeal for money to build the Chapel. In 1845 W. A. Long gave £60 towards the cost of building the Schoolroom, although whether it is the father or the son is unclear. On the same occasion Rufus Long gave £2 and Samuel Long (senior) gave £1.

At the time of the title surveys in the 1840s, Park Mill (Kingswood) was owned and occupied by W. A. Long. There appears to have been a joint venture with John Smith, and then in 1856 Welling joined them. By 1860 "Long and Welling" occupied Walk Mill and were succeeded by "Porter and Long".

William Alexander Long (the Younger) & Rufus Long The 1863 Gazetteer for Wotton-under-Edge lists William Long as living at Kingswood House. Since this is after the death of W. A. Long the elder it must be W. A. Long the younger.

Rufus Long appears in the 1861 census for Kingswood. It is likely that following the death of W. A. Long (the elder) in 1862, Rufus continued to live at Neathwood Farm. The tomb indicates that Rufus Long died in 1894. When Neathwood Farm was sold in 1935 a Rufus Long owned it, presumably his son. A lease of 1873 for Cherry Rock Farm in Kingswood has the parties as William Alexander Long, Rufus Long and John Wilcox, Yeoman.

In 1878 The Phoenix Permanent Building Society was established with the stated aim of "improving the social, moral and political condition of the working classes". Perry tells us that W. A. Long was an early Vice President. The date is however after the death of W. A. Long the younger. The family tomb indicates Rufus Long's "second son" was called Walter Strange Long - it is possible that the eldest son was another W. A. Long.

Perry tells us that a W A Long was in partnership with Samuel Long (the younger) and his son George. He also states that the firm of "Millman and Long" continued to operate Nind Mill "into the last decade of the nineteenth century". Which Long was involved here is not however indicated.

Walter Long - (Iron Acton Manor)

The Long family of Rood Ashton in Wiltshire also had land in Iron Acton (near Yate), Cheddar & Wells in Somerset and South Wraxall, Wiltshire. The family made their fortune through woollen mills in the Trowbridge area. Documents were lodged in the record office at Trowbridge in respect of Yate Colliery because the Manor of Iron Acton was owned by the Longs and the documents relate to royalties due to the landowner. Even after the manor was sold the mineral rights were retained. Reference to W. H. Long Esq. M. P. appears on many of the Yate colliery documents until its closure in 1888. As usual there is confusing evidence as documents dated 1872 give the lessor as R. P. Long Esq. There is also a reference on the map that accompanied the 1877 prospectus to land leased from the late Sir W. Long.

This Long family also evidently had income from other interest in coal. Down & Warrington's book on the Somerset Coalfield includes a reference to an agreement in 1855 between Walter Long and the Somerset Coal Canal for an incline from the Braysdown Colliery (near Radstock) to the Somerset Coal Canal tramroad. The Surveyors appointed to report on the mineral interests at Yate indicated they were going to report to him on Foxcote Colliery (also near Radstock).

Final Comments

It is clear that this family was heavily involved in the commercial world of the Wotton-under-Edge area throughout the whole of the nineteenth century. Nearly all the woollen mills in the area have a connection to the Long family. A number of histories of the woollen trade of Wotton-under-Edge suggest that the industry became uneconomic and died out early in the twentieth century. Certainly, the industry became rationalised with the survival of the larger steam powered premises such as those run by the Longs at Charfield, Park Mill and New

Mills. Large quantities of coal for these engines would have been required and it is not surprising that the owners also had interests in local mines. It is also perhaps not surprising that there is a coal wharf at Charfield and that the mines at Yate were also connected to the same railway line.

The wealth that came in the boom years of the French wars seems to have been wisely used. Perry (1986) states, "they did not aim to set up as country gentlemen, but bought and sold to take the profit". Thus there was always capital for their business. A relatively large business appears to have been created, although perhaps it is the involvement, in public affairs and the establishing of schools, chapels and public services which has left a legacy more telling than the remaining mill buildings, industrial remains and fading tombstones.

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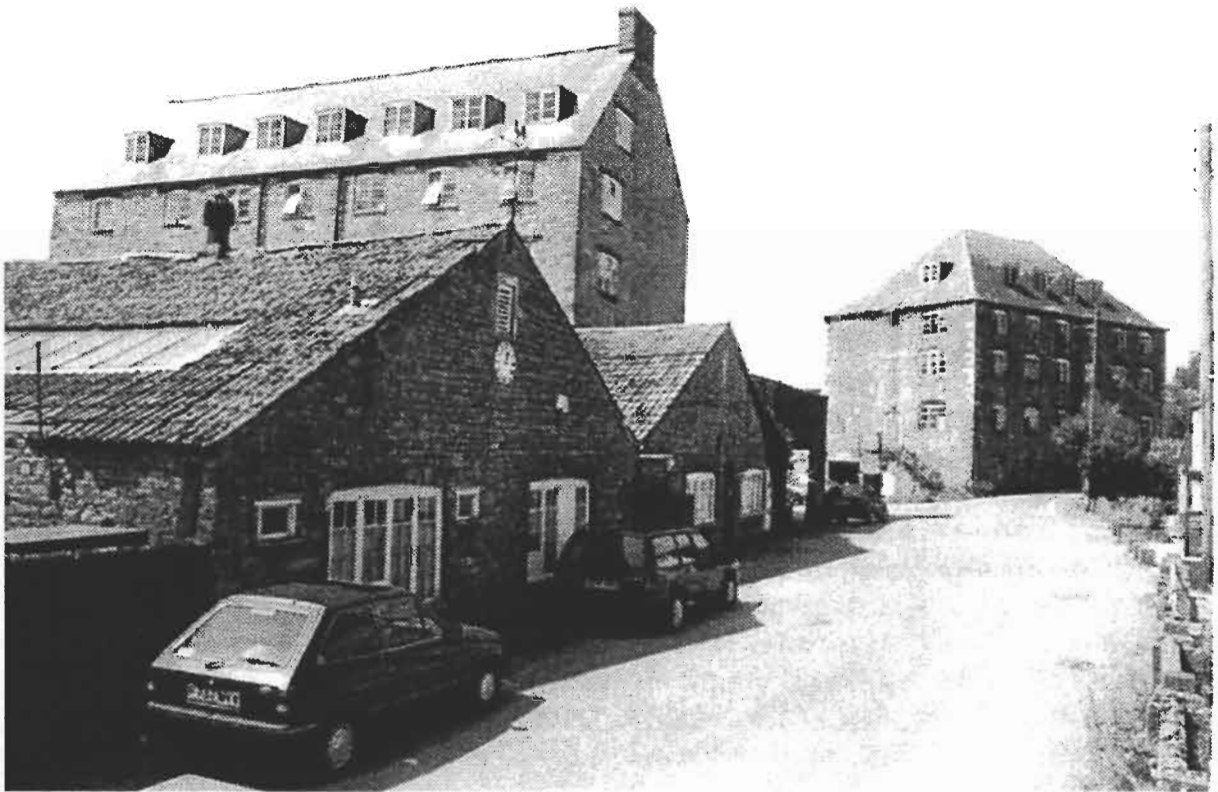


Figure 1. Charfield Mill, Large building was steam powered. The earlier building (furthest away) was water powered

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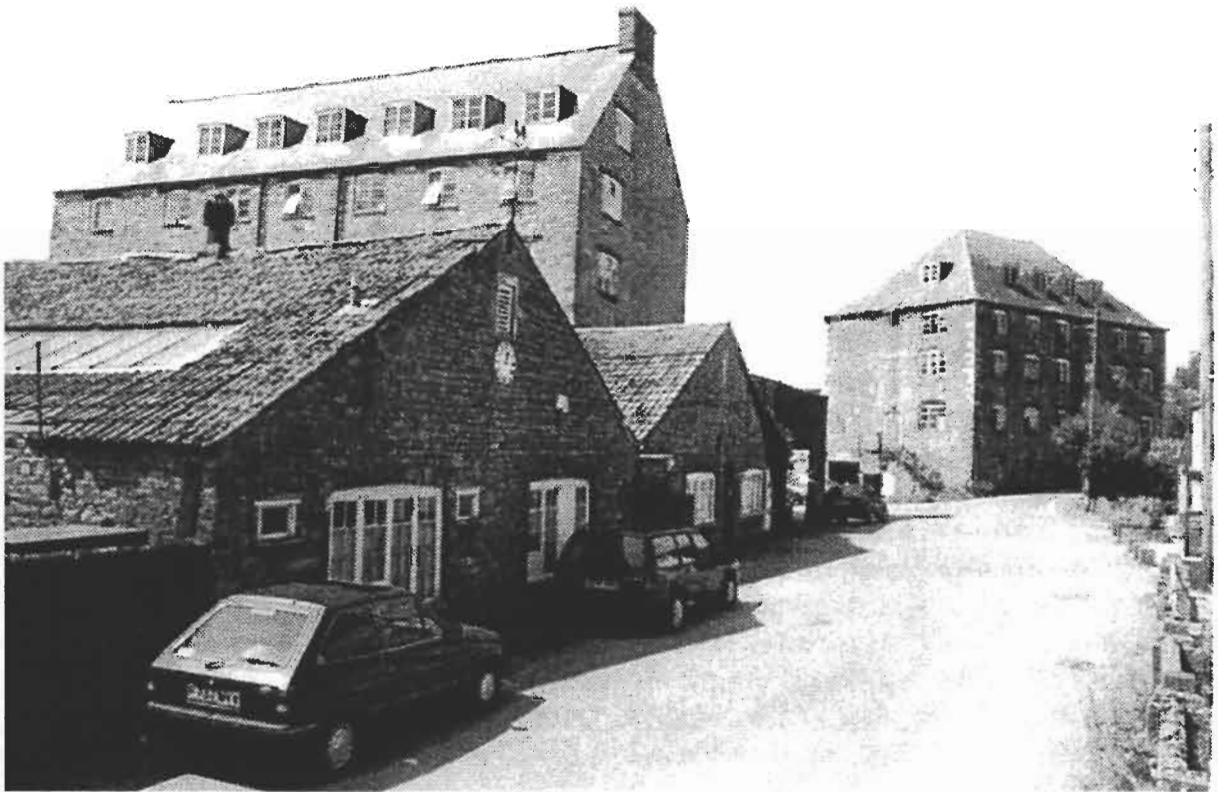


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