

Millers at Ickleton Water Mill, Church Street

The mill was built in 1818 and closed as a working mill in 1926 after the last miller was killed in the water-wheel. It was owned by the Hanchett family until 1867. It remains as a private house though the mill building has been much reduced in height.

Some details below are from a database at The Mills Archive. Some have been excluded as incorrect. There were 2 other mills in Ickleton, the windmill in Duxford Road and the steam mill in Abbey Street, so someone described simply as 'miller' may not have been at the water mill.

	Dates at mill	Birth & death	Notes
William Mumford	c.1841 -1847	1809-1854	1841 census also shows him as a miller.



Late 19th century drawing probably by Cyril Percy Mundy, cousin of Sir Robert Herbert of Caldrees Manor and father of Major Mundy who inherited Caldrees Manor.

This may well have been the funeral of George Smith Mumford, son of William Mumford, miller of Ickleton. George died on 29 March 1848, aged 9-12 months. Sadly his mother, Sarah Ann, had died on 4 September 1847. Mother and son are buried together in the Churchyard.

William Barker	c.1851-c1881	1811-1882	1851 census shows him as a miller. 1861 census shows him as a miller employing 2 men and living in Church Street. Barnard, Philpot and John Hill (below) may have been employees. 1871 census shows him as a miller. 1881 shows him as a miller employing 3 men including his grandson Albert Claydon who lived with him and his wife.
Thomas Barnard (not clear what the link to Ickleton is)	1847-58	1788-1865	1851 census shows him as a miller, living in Market Place, Saffron Walden. Perhaps he was an employee at the mill.
Fletcher Philpot	1858-c.1869	1819-1890	The baptism entry for his daughter in 1860, shows him as a miller. 1861 census shows him as a miller. He and his family were living with his mother at the Duke of Wellington where she was the inn keeper. It seems likely he was an employee at the mill.
Edward Clark	1883	?1834-1897	Kelly's Trade Directory of 1883 shows him as a miller at the water mill together with Joseph Wisbey.

Joseph Wisbey	1891	1824-1903	Kelly's Trade Directory of 1883 shows him as a miller at the water mill together with Edward Clark. The 1891 census shows that he was the miller at the water mill. His son Henry was employed as his assistant.
John Lawrence	1896-1897		Shown as miller at the water mill in the Post Office Directory 1896 and living at the water mill in the Electoral Roll 1897.
John Clarke	1901-1907	1849-1907	The 1901 census shows him as a miller at the water mill.
Mrs Eliza Clarke	1908-1911	1851-?	Widow of John Clarke. The 1910 Land Valuation survey shows that the mill was owned by Fred Godfrey but occupied by Mrs Clarke. In 1912 the family emigrated to Florida.



John Clarke, Eliza Clarke and Lionel Fordham at the mill house c.1900s

Lionel Fordham	1911	1885	Son-in-law of John and Eliza Clarke. The 1911 census shows him as an assistant to Eliza Clarke. Emigrated to Florida in 1912.
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Probably Lionel and Florrie Fordham at the mill c.1911



Harry Rumble	1916-1926	1872-1926	Kelly's Trade Directory shows him as the miller living at the water mill in 1916. Likewise in the Electoral Rolls for 1920 and 1925. He was killed on 26 April 1926 when oiling the shaft while the water-wheel was in motion, his ladder broke and his clothes caught in the mechanism.
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Saffron Walden Weekly News 7 May 1926

Rachel Radford
2023

CAUGHT BY WHIRLING SHAFT
Ickleton Miller's Body Found
Entangled in Mill Machinery.
DAUGHTER'S AWFUL DISCOVERY.

The body of Mr. Harry Rumble, a miller, farmer and carrier, of Ickleton, was found entangled in the machinery of his watermill about 4 o'clock on Thursday of last week. A broken ladder suggested that the unfortunate man had gripped the shaft which he was oiling when the ladder gave way, and his clothes catching in the mechanism, he had been whirled around by the rapidly revolving shaft. The terrible discovery was made by the deceased's daughter. Mr. Rumble, who was aged about 53, lost his wife about 12 months ago. An inquest was conducted by the Deputy-County Coroner (Mr. Jasper, J.P.), assisted by a jury, in the school on Friday evening. The proceedings were watched by Inspector Evans (Linton), on behalf of the County Police, and Mr. H. W. Atkinson (Inspector of Factories). The foreman of the jury (Mr. F. W. Godfrey, a former owner of the mill) said that he had warned Mr. Rumble against oiling the shaft while it was revolving. He was called to the scene of the tragedy and saw that deceased was wearing a woollen cardigan jacket which had caught in the teeth of a wheel. It was very much stretched and wound round and round the shaft like a puttee.

Dr. James York-Moore, of Ickleton, stated that there was an injury on the right side of the head just below the ear, the ribs were crushed, and the right thigh was fractured. Death in his opinion was due to suffocation. The injuries were consistent with deceased having been caught in the shaft.

Ivy Helen Rumble, living at the mill, identified the body as that of her father. On Thursday during the dinner hour the deceased had said something about going to see about potatoes and went out. At about 2.30 p.m. wife went for her father, but failed to find him. At 3 o'clock Mr. William Godfrey, a parish constable, called on business. Witness told Mr. Godfrey that she could not see her father anywhere. Afterwards she searched around the premises, but could not find him. She was not sure there was anything wrong, because her father was often in the mill for a long time. While searching she passed the turbine gates. These were open, which was unusual. She looked in the place and saw her father with his hands around the turbine shaft. Then she went to her brother.

The Coroner: Was your father a healthy man?—Yes.

He did not suffer from giddiness?—No.

In answer to another question, witness said that her father had occasionally to go to the shaft and attend to it.

"CLINGING TO THE SHAFT."

Gilbert Henry Rumble, a son of the deceased, a carpenter, living at the mill, said that about four o'clock on Thursday afternoon he was in bed as usual. His sister Ivy came into the room and said: "Gilbert, I believe daddy's dead." He got up, dressed and went into the mill to the turbine shaft. He saw his father clinging to the shaft with his hands around it. He then went and called a man named Gusterson and sent for Dr. Moore. Help was obtained from Mr. William Godfrey, and they got deceased's body away from the shaft.

William Godfrey, an Ickleton parish constable, spoke to being fetched about 4.30 to take the body of deceased from the turbine shaft. His clothing was caught on the shaft and wound round it. The body was so close to the shaft that only his head and neck could fall back. He cut the clothing away from the shaft to release the body, and Dr. Moore pronounced life to be extinct.

Mr. Atkinson: Was there a ladder there?—A part of a ladder, which was broken.

What was the ladder doing there?—In my opinion deceased had been up to the top of the ladder to oil the shaft. The ladder had broken and deceased had put his hands round the shaft to save himself from falling.

Inspector Evans: Where was the broken part of the ladder when you arrived?—It must have gone down the stream. It was not visible.

Was the ladder near the spindle?—No, about four or five feet away.

The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death" from suffocation, adding a rider that the shaft should be properly protected in future.

Mr. Atkinson pointed out that as there were no employees concerned, he was not in a position to demand that such protection should be afforded.

The Coroner condemned the practice of oiling such shafts when they were in motion.