

Slipper Snippets

by Jane and Tony Yoward

Slype, from which the name Slipper is derived, is the old English word for mud which seems rather appropriate for Emsworth.

The Slipper is part of the Hermitage area of Emsworth which is south of the A259 on the Hampshire / Sussex border. The map on the right shows Slipper Mill and its mill pond, the site of New Slipper Mill (next to Floodgates) with its mill pond which is now the marina, the Rope Walk (now Slipper Road) and just below that (unmarked) was the site of the Round House with its outside toilet and well.

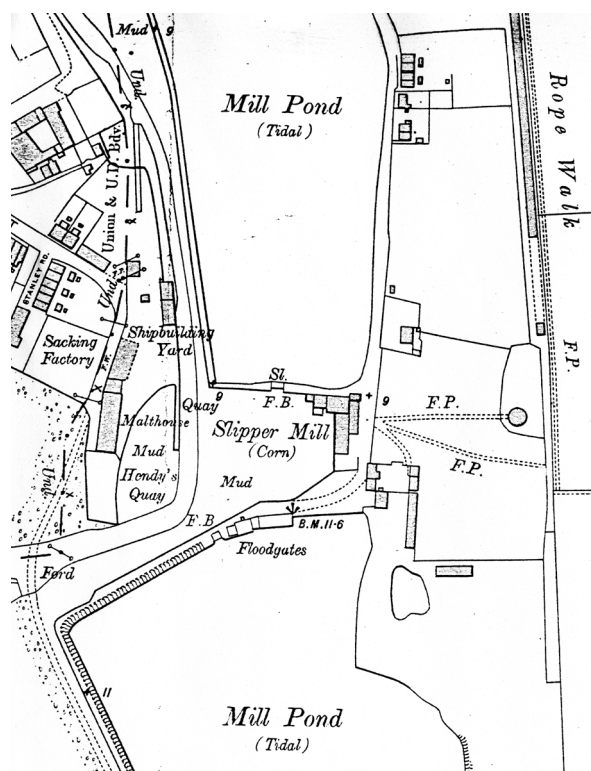
In 1770 Thomas Hendy constructed a quay on the Hampshire side of the Dolphin Creek, into which the River Ems flows, and built a tide mill on the Sussex side by enclosing the lower part of Norton Common with a 'wall' or bank to form the tidal pond using clay from the brickyard nearby as the central pug in the bank.

By 1786 the northern two acres of the six-acre Slipper Common, a common grazing field, had been turned into a brickfield. The southern half was then known as Slipper Bushes and later became Round House Meadow.

A horse was used to drive the pugmill for the brickfield and soon trod such a firm base for the Round House that further foundations were unnecessary when it was built there later.



The Old Round House, Hermitage, Emsworth.



In the 1800s the Slipper area was owned by Reverend Lewis Way of Stanstead and when he died Slipper was put up for sale. In 1845 Thomas Byerley was milling both here and also at Westbourne Mill. Slipper Mill was for sale again in 1853 and was let to a Mr Cozens who then sublet it to Thomas Byerley and he continued milling at Slipper until 1909.

Boney Hatch

'Boney' Hatch purchased Slipper Wharf and Slipper Field together with the brick enclosure, known as the coal yard, with a range of spacious sheds on it. It had a good position as a general wharf for both export and import. He built New Slipper Mill in 1867 and its tidal mill pond. However, it was never a successful venture because when Slipper Mill was working, it took the power out of the New Slipper race. He purchased a boiler and built a chimney to replace water power, but they were never used and in 1886 the mill burnt down.

The notice for the sale by the executors of Reverend Lewis Way included the following:

Lot 1.	Slipper Mill	£1,080	Thomas Byerley	rent
Lot 2.	Slipper wharf & field	£500	B Hatch	wharf & coal yard
Lot 3.	Round house	£120	Thomas Byerley	2 tenements, a well with excellent water
Lot 4.	Round house meadow	£180	B Hatch	the brickyard
Lot 5.	Cottage (5 rooms)	£55	B Hatch	
Lot 6.	Slipper meadow	£205	B Hatch	(now the caravan site)
Lot 7.	Double tenement	£135	Mr Marshall	5 rooms each
Lot 8.	Tenement (4 rooms)	£55	Thomas Byerley	
Lot 9.	Rope walk & meadow	£380	B Hatch	

A report from a newspaper of the time described the fire:

“Early on Sunday morning (28th February 1886) the town was awakened by the cry of ‘fire’, and very soon it became known that the flour mill belonging to Mr Hatch was burning. It appears that P.C. Webbing first discovered the fire, and he speedily aroused the men of the fire brigade. Mr George Tong of Queen Street, who the policeman also aroused, was the first on the scene of the conflagration, and he, together with Webbing, finding that all efforts to quench the fire would be in vain, the building being in a mass of flame, searched the premises to see if any life was in danger, fortunately discovering that there was no one on the premises.

Half an hour after the alarm had been given the first of the brigade made their appearance without their engine, though after they had inspected the burning buildings they speedily brought it to the spot and vainly tried to stifle the fire.

The fire continued to rage until the roof fell

in, bringing to the ground all the machinery which had but recently been erected. The fallen roof somewhat quenched the flames, though the wood continued burning.

To estimate the amount of damage would be very difficult, but certainly several hundred pounds will be needed to restore the mill to working order, the machinery and plant being destroyed, and nothing but the bare brick walls and a chimney left standing. Mr Hatch is saved from a great loss by insurance.

It is not known how the fire originated, but when, about half past twelve in the morning, the policeman perceived the fire, the flames had got a good hold on the buildings, so it must have been burning for some hours. On Sunday the place was visited by several hundred people who came from far and near.”

Boney Hatch also owned the nearest windmill at Gosden Green, less than a mile away. It was demolished in 1980.

Continued overleaf

Slipper Snippets continued

The occupants of the Round House can be seen below:

1851	Census	Two occupants of the Round House and garden			
		No.1 - Benjamin Johnson	50	pensioner	his wife and four children
		No.2 - James Dawson	30	rope maker	his wife and child
1861	Census	James Dawson	40	rope maker	5 children
1871	Census	Robert Merritt	32	engine fitter	his wife and daughter
1886		At the age of 18, Frank Burgess started work as a miller at Slipper Mill, having been born in the Round House in 1868			
1912		Frank Burgess		foreman miller	his wife and three sons

They temporarily moved into the Round House after a great storm damaged the mill house, which was attached to Slipper Mill



Right: Children playing by the Slipper Mill about 1910

Photo: Hampshire Library and Information Service – Hampshire County Council

OLD SLIPPER MILL, EMSWORTH.
SLIPPER MILL, EMSWORTH

Below: A pugmill



A horse and team. A pug mill crushing clods into fine particles. C., 1880.