

ROOKERY MILLS

Pippbrook TQ 132481 & TQ 132479 - Adjacent to Rookery Drive south west of Westcott.

The Rookery estate was purchased in 1759 by David Malthus, father of famous economist Thomas Malthus. Malthus built a large mansion here, alas now gone, and landscaped the surrounding grounds which then included two large lakes.



There were two watermills on the estate before 1759 as both are marked on John Senex's map of 1729 as 'Westgate Mills'. One was on the embankment between the lakes, while the other was below the lower lake; both were primarily flour mills.

In 1851 the Water Resources Survey states that the owner of the estate, including the two mills, was Mr R. Fuller and they were both statute mills, working alternately, both containing two pairs of stones that produced a combined average total of forty sacks of flour per week.

George Bird was the tenant of the Lower Mill in 1805 and by 1856 Joseph Rose was the recorded occupier. The Upper Mill was shown as a saw mill on the 1st Edition of the 1/2500 Ordnance Survey map of 1869, while earlier, in 1866, all trade references to the Upper Mill cease. The Lower Mill building was still extant in 1924, for it is included in the sale particulars of the Rookery estate.

All traces of Upper Mill have gone but the Lower Mill was converted to a private dwelling in 1945, although the former mill building was virtually rebuilt.

The mill sites are near to a private road in an area still known today as The Rookery, although the mansion has been replaced by a terrace of houses.