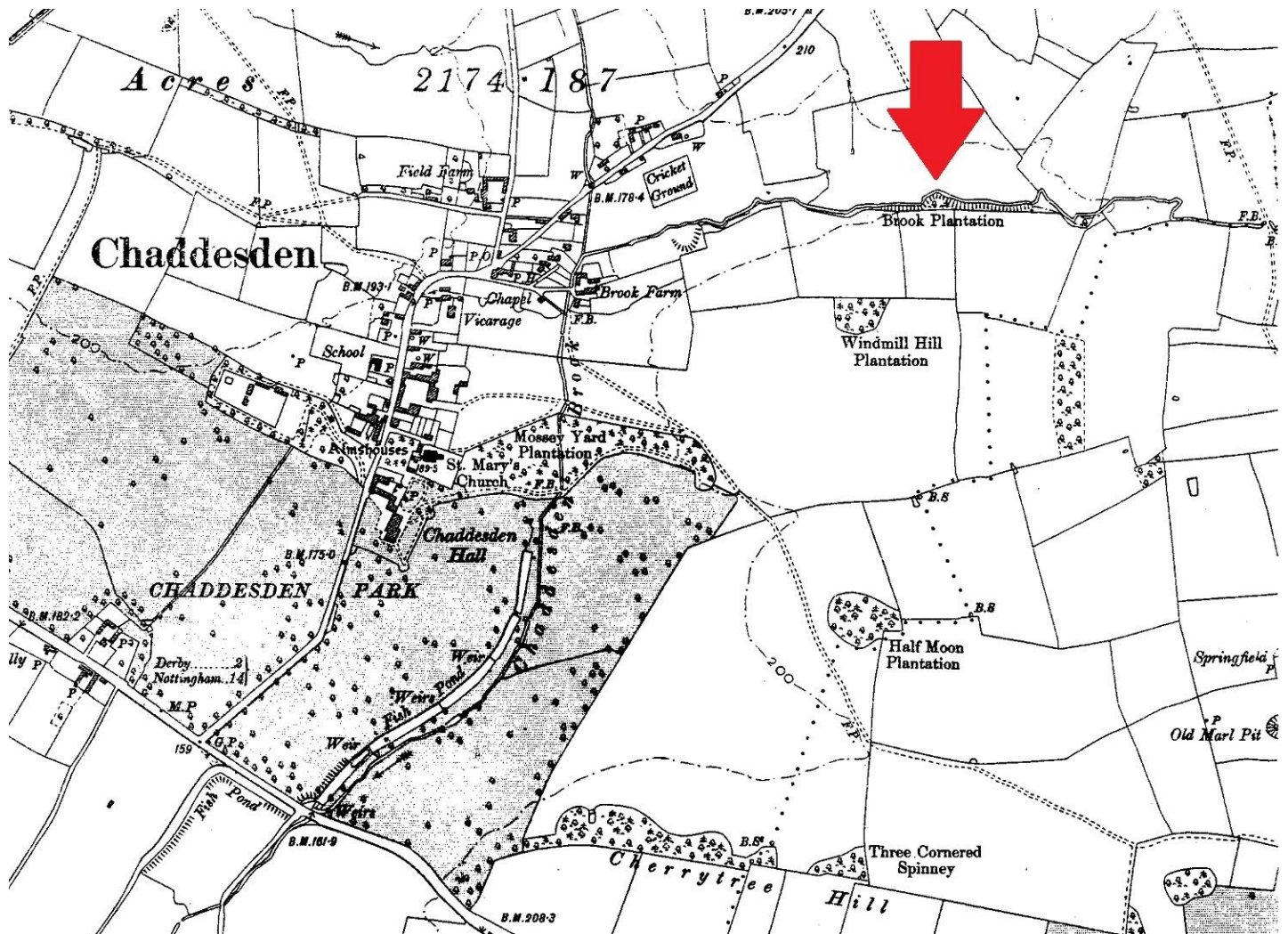


## BRADCAR WATERMILL, CHADDESSEN

The following article is an account of a hitherto unknown watermill at Chaddesden which I have called Bradcar Mill, and includes brief details about some of the individuals who were associated with it. This corn mill, which once stood on Lees Brook, seemingly fell into disuse in the early eighteenth century and its very existence has been forgotten until now. Fig. 1 shows the approximate location of Bradcar Mill in relation to the rest of the village, but as its exact site has not yet been determined it must be stressed that this is only a general indication to the whereabouts of the mill.

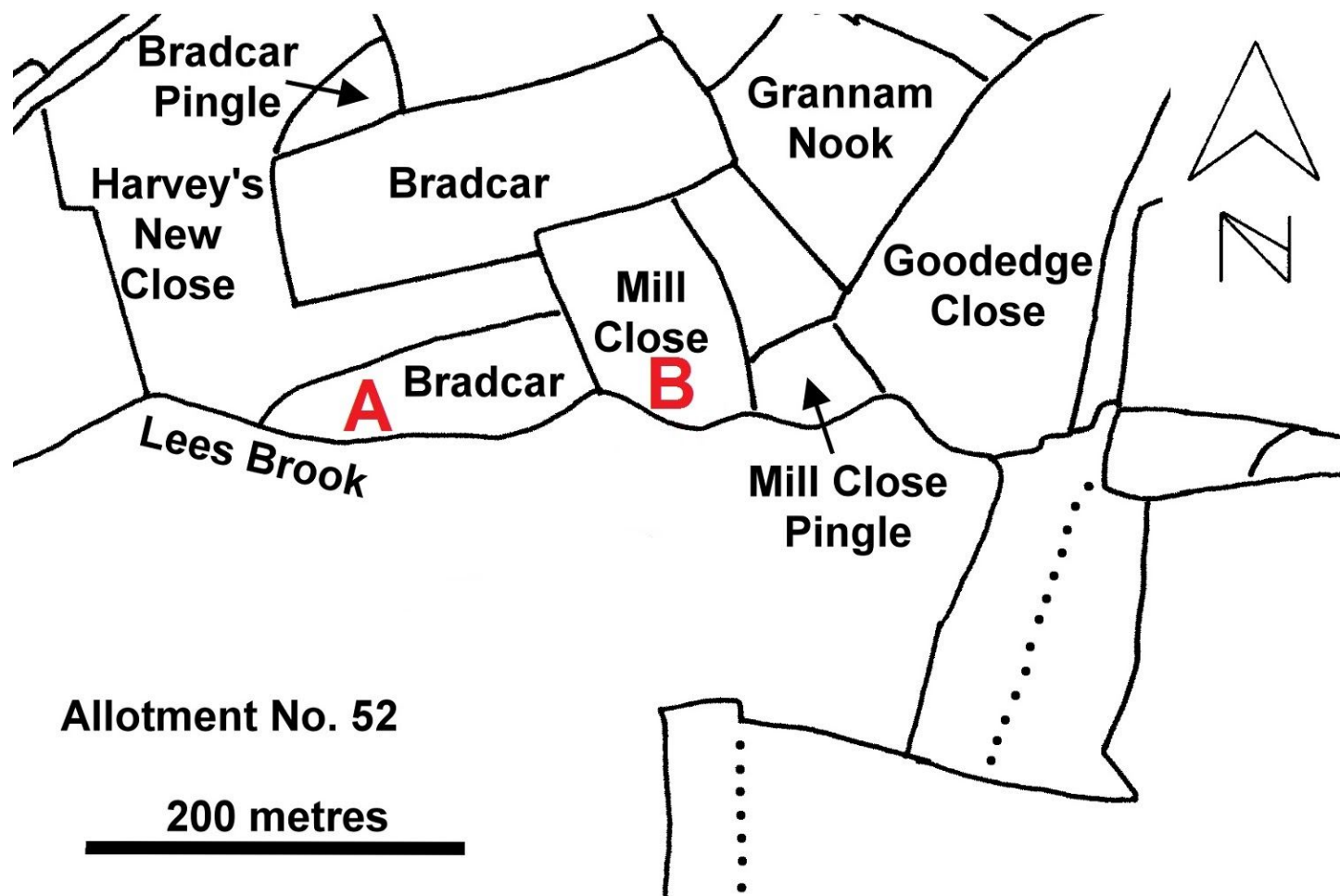


**Fig.1: Approximate location of Bradcar Watermill on Lees Brook, Chaddesden (arrowed). From the six-inch Ordnance Survey map of 1901.**

In 1791 the three commissioners responsible for overseeing the parliamentary enclosure of Chaddesden appointed Robert Smedley, a Chaddesden man and a cartographer of some skill, to act as their surveyor. His task, which took the best part of a year to complete, was to survey the whole of the village and then draw the resultant enclosure map. Carefully plotted at a scale of 1:4752 (i.e. one inch to six chains), the map shows the individual houses of Chaddesden, its four open fields – Breadsall Field, Derby Field, Ryley Field and Spondon Field – as well as the common, meadow and previously-enclosed land.

At around 159 acres in size, Spondon Field was the third largest of the open fields and in modern terms extended from Albert Road across Nottingham Road, over Chaddesden Park and beyond Tennessee Road and the adjacent prominence of Windmill Hill before dropping down to Lees Brook, which formed its northern boundary. Lees Brook runs from east to west at the base of Windmill Hill and from at least the early seventeenth century onwards, an area of land abutting its right-hand (north) bank was known as Bradcar, its name apparently meaning a broad, overgrown marsh.

By the time Robert Smedley drew the Chaddesden enclosure map in 1792, Bradcar already lay subdivided into three separate closes called (from N–S) Bradcar Pingle, Bradcar and another Bradcar, whilst adjoining these to the east were two further smallish parcels of land, Mill Close and Mill Close Pingle (Fig. 2). Today all this land lies within the grounds of Lees Brook School on Morley Road, Chaddesden, but prior to the construction of the school in the 1950s formed part of Brook Farm on Chapel Lane.

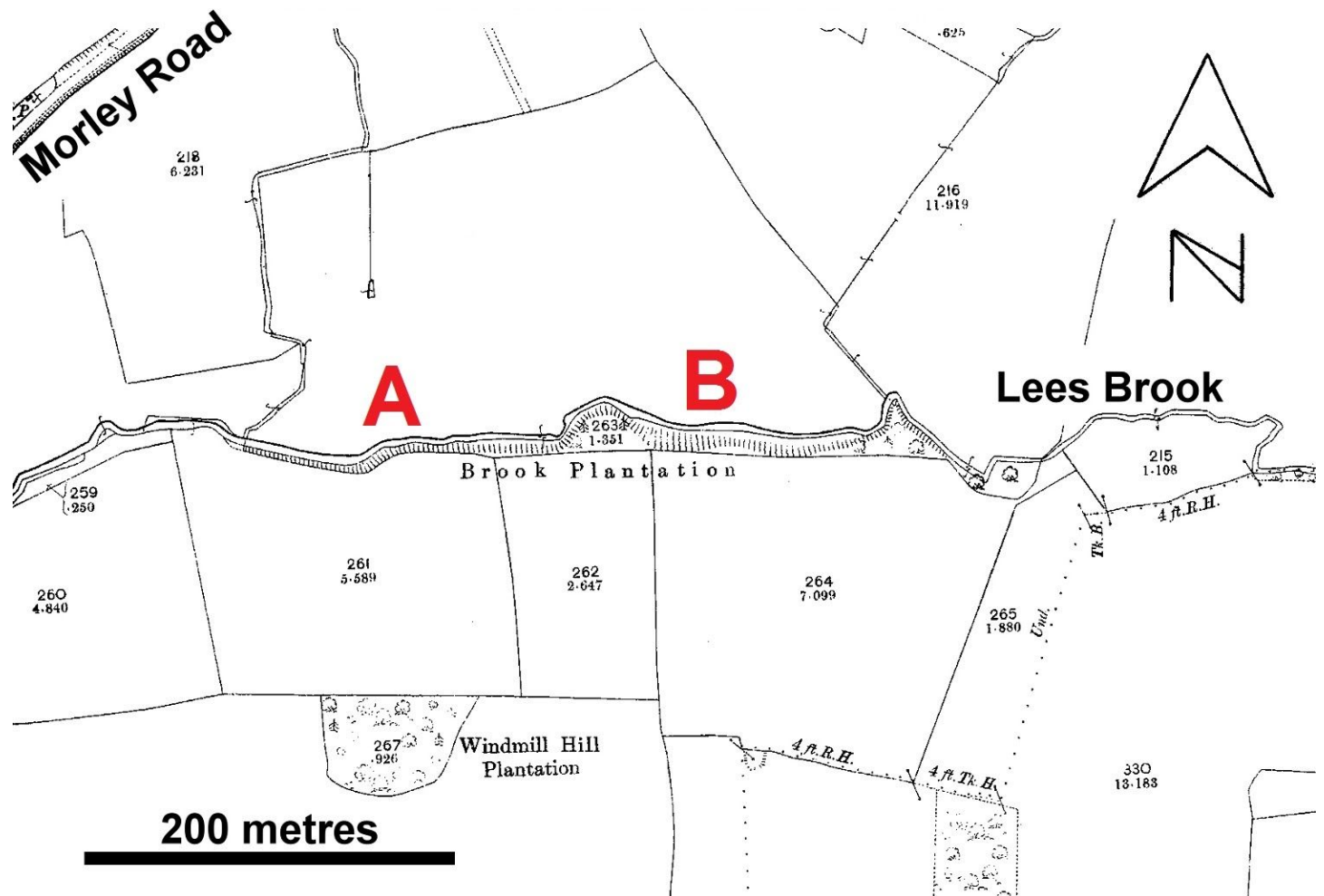


**Fig. 2: Chaddesden enclosure map of 1792 (simplified version) showing the Bradcar area. The watermill was situated on Lees Brook, probably somewhere between points A and B.**

When I first saw a copy of the Chaddesden enclosure map some forty years ago, I assumed that Mill Close and Mill Close Pingle were so-named because of their proximity to Windmill Hill only 250 yards away. Windmill Hill (Fig. 3) is a prominent local landmark and (so I reasoned) it would have been quite logical for someone enclosing a couple of pieces of land in the vicinity of Bradcar to name their new fields after the village windmill which had once dominated the summit of the hill looming above them to the south. However, with the passage of time I began to have doubts about this initial assumption – could Mill Close and Mill Close Pingle actually indicate the site of an otherwise unknown and undocumented watermill which had utilised the water of Lees Brook? Chaddesden certainly had a watermill in Victorian times, but this was in the south of the parish near the Derby Canal and Chaddesden Sidings, in-between what is now Highfield Lane and Meadow Lane (SK 376 360). A hint that Chaddesden might once have had another watermill appears in William Woolley's History of Derbyshire, written c.1713. Commenting on the subject of Upper Locko, Woolley says:

*There is now standing an old house with an estate of about £100 p.a. It was lately Mr. Walker's of Derby, whose daughter married John Harpur of Little Over Esq., whose it is now. There is on the backside of the house a curious well of springing water called St. Ann's well which is walled and paved with stone; it feeds the fishponds, runs down by Nether Locko, through the gardens and turns a mill in Chaddesden liberty, about a mile below the fountain (Glover & Riden 1981, 83).*

Now Woolley was writing in the early eighteenth century, in an era when there were no detailed maps to use, but even so the true distance between the ‘fountain’ or St. Ann’s Well at Locko (SK 412 390) and Chaddesden Mill down by the Derby Canal was nearer to three miles – could his estimate have been so far out, I wondered? However, if the mill Woolley was really describing lay close to Bradcar, then it would have been just under two miles away from its source at Locko and thus more in accordance with his estimate.



**Fig. 3: The Bradcar area of Chaddesden in 1900, taken from the Ordnance Survey map. The watermill on Lees Brook was seemingly situated somewhere between points A and B.**

Back in c.2000 I walked the north bank of the brook in the grounds of Lees Brook School looking for any traces of a former watermill, but overgrown vegetation thwarted a detailed examination. Certainly there were places along the brook-course where the banks (particularly on the south side) were very steep, almost vertical, and it seemed feasible that the brook might once have been dammed to provide a water-supply for a mill. A few years later the School authorities stopped access to the field immediately to the north of Lees Brook by installing a two metre high metal fence, making further investigation impossible from their side of the brook.

Eventually, in 2011, I discovered evidence proving that back in the early eighteenth century, Bradcar was indeed the site of a previously unknown watermill, for a document of 1719 in Nottinghamshire Archives (DD/BK/1/334) refers to a small piece of land called Bradcar or Bradcar Pingle at Chaddesden ‘whereon a Water Corne Mill lately stood’. The document may be summarised as follows:

20 May 1719. A deed to lead the uses of a fine made between (1) Thomas Wood of Ripley, Derbyshire, butcher, and Anne his wife; Samuel Wood of Ripley, Derbyshire, yeoman, and Hannah his wife; Hugh Bourne of Derby, gentleman, and Mary his wife; and William Turner of Derby,

gentleman, and (2) Charles Stanhope of the Inner Temple, London, esq., Seth Wood of Swanwick, Derbyshire, gentleman, and Thomas Farmsworth of Ripley, Derbyshire, millwright, of the other part. The first party were to levy a fine to Charles Stanhope, Seth Wood and their heirs before the end of next Trinity term of various properties in Ripley and Derby [all specified], and also ...

*all that Close or peice or parcell of inclosed Land or Meadow ground lyeing and being in Bradkarr als Broadkarr in Chaddesden in the said County of Derby comonly called or known by the name of Bradkarr als Broadkarr Pingle late in the tenure or occupacon of Mr Thomas Carter his Assignee or Assignes Tenant or Undertenants but now in the holding of Widow Cockayne and a Barne Stable or Building now thereupon standing and the ground there whereon a Water Corne Mill lately stood And of all that other peice or parcell of Meadow ground containeing by estimacon one Rood be the same more or lesse lyeing dispersed in Bradkarr als Broadkarr aforesaid and neare or adjoyning to Bradkarr als Broadkarr Pingle aforesaid and late in the tenure of George Goodwin but now in the tenure of John Taft which said Lands and premises in Chaddesden were purchased from William Barnes of the Borough of Derby Esqr by the said William Turner by feoffment beareing date the Thirtieth day of August Anno Domini One Thousand Seven hundred and Seventeen ... And it is ... Agreed by and between all the said partyes to these presents ... That the said Fine to be levied as aforesaid shall be and enure and shall be construed deemed and taken to be and enure to the severall respective uses intents and purposes ... That is to say ... as for and concerning All and singuler other the herein before menconed Lands Tenements ... and hereditaments respectively lyeing and being in Chaddesden and Derby aforesaid whereof no use is herein before limited To the use and behoof of the said William Turner his Heirs and Assigns for ever ...*

This deed covered a variety of different modest and apparently unrelated properties which appear to have been aggregated together for the express purpose of levying a joint fine, no doubt reducing legal fees in the process. A fine, by the way, was a somewhat convoluted means of conveying and recording a title to land. After first agreeing terms, the purchaser of the property (plaintiff or querent) would begin a fictitious legal suit alleging that the vendor (defendant or deforciant) had agreed to convey the property to him but had not done so. With the permission of the Court, matters would be settled by means of a final agreement (Latin: *Finalis concordia*, shortened to 'Fine') and a copy lodged in the Court's archives thereby providing definitive proof of title. A deed to lead the uses of a fine such as the one described above was drawn up prior to the fine itself to define precisely the interests of all parties involved. The actual Bradcar fine (Notts. Archives DD/BK/1/335) is dated Trinity Term 1719 and provides no further information about the watermill.

The fact that William Barnes had already conveyed the Chaddesden properties to Turner in August 1717 by means of a feoffment suggests that the fine was actually intended to further safeguard the latter's title, probably by barring all entailed estates in the Bradcar property. It should be noted that whatever apparent changes to the freehold ownership at Bradcar were being proposed in this transaction, the concluding part of the deed to lead the uses of the fine clearly establishes that the ultimate use (i.e. control) was to remain with William Turner and his heirs. Throughout the remainder of this article the mill situated on Lees Brook will be referred to as Bradcar Watermill in order to distinguish it from Chaddesden's better-known watermill which, as mentioned above, once stood between Highfield Lane and Meadow Lane.

The deed to lead the uses of a fine dated 20 May 1719 also reveals a connection between William Woolley, the writer of the 1713 account of the watermill 'in Chaddesden liberty', which he stated ultimately derived its supply from St. Ann's Well at Locko, and William Turner its subsequent owner, for some of the Derby property described in the deed had been purchased by Turner from 'William Woolley late of the Borough of Derby Esqr deceased' the previous year. Woolley had only recently died, and was buried at St. Alkmund's Church, Derby, on 4 May 1719.

The names of the parties mentioned in the deed to lead the uses of a fine are worth a little more attention. Thomas Carter, the erstwhile occupant of Bradcar or Bradcar Pingle and its mill site appears to have been the individual of that name who was Mayor of Derby in 1698 and 1701 (Simpson 1826, 747). In passing it should be emphasised that Carter's piece of ground and hence the site of the mill was not in the same place as the Bradcar Pingle marked on the enclosure map in 1792 – field names often change down the years much to the confusion of later historians! Widow Cockayne was Mary Carter of Breaston (maybe a relative of Thomas Carter), who first married Thomas Palfreyman of Chaddesden in 1680 and then, after his death in 1684, married Benjamin Cokayne, also of Chaddesden, in 1688. After Benjamin's death in 1700, Humphrey Carter, a maltster of Derby, acted as an administrator of his estate while John Carter was one of those appraising his goods. George Goodwin, sometime occupier of a rood of land in Bradcar, was either the man of that name who died in 1691, or his son who died unmarried in 1708. It is not clear which individual named John Taft succeeded him at Bradcar.

Unfortunately, it has not proved possible to locate any further documentary evidence confirming the feoffment of 1717, which might have provided more details about the mill. The former owner of these plots of land at Bradcar, 'William Barnes of the Borough of Derby, Esquire', can, however, be identified with a degree of certainty as the grandson of Edward Darcy and Elizabeth Stanhope, daughter of Philip, 1st Earl of Chesterfield. The Darcy family had distinguished Derbyshire ancestors, being descended, via the Reddishes of Lancashire, from the Dethicks of Newhall and the Longfords of Longford. William Barnes, of Stanton-by-Newhall and Derby, married Elizabeth Greaves at St. Werburgh's Church, Derby on 8 January 1701/02, and is interesting to note that their marriage settlement, dated the previous day, mentions his lead mines in Wirksworth Wapentake (Stoke on Trent City Archives, D4842/12/1/4–5), so a watermill at Chaddesden was probably merely a small part in a larger portfolio of industrial premises. Anne Barnes, William's daughter-in-law, would later go on to achieve some local notoriety as 'Blowzabella', the patroness of the Derby Assembly between 1741–1750.

As to the identification of 'William Turner of Derby, Gentleman', who acquired these Bradcar properties by feoffment in 1717, William Woolley helpfully gives a piece of additional information in his article on Chaddesden (Glover & Riden 1981, 85): 'There is also several other good freeholders, as Parker, Cokayn, Charleton, Turner, etc.' William Turner senior served as Mayor of Derby in 1704 (Simpson 1826, 747). Another slightly earlier deed to lead the uses of a fine in Nottinghamshire Archives (DD/BK/1/332 of January 1713/14), which also mentions 'widdow Cockayne' together with its associated fine of the same year (DD/BK/1/333) further attest to the Chaddesden property interests of William Turner senior (died 1716) and his son William Turner junior (died 1751). It therefore seems that the man who purchased the site of Bradcar Mill in 1717 was William Turner junior, a prominent Derby attorney.

Indeed, Turner apparently had a specific interest in mills, for on 8 June 1713 Thomas Carter, William Turner senior and Samuel Heathcote senior assigned to William Turner junior and Samuel Heathcote junior the 21 year lease of St. Michael's Mills in St. Michael's Lane, Derby, which they held from the Mayor and Burgesses (Jeayes 1904, 58). The presence here of Thomas Carter in conjunction with both a mill and William Turner junior has parallels with the deed to lead the uses of a fine made in respect of Bradcar Mill at Chaddesden some six years later, and helps in confirming Carter's identity as the former Mayor of Derby of that name.

It is not known for how long William Turner retained his Bradcar property at Chaddesden, or whether he ever attempted to re-establish the watermill here. Derbyshire Record Office has a deed to declare the uses of a fine dated 1727 (D5955/343), again involving property belonging to William Turner at Chaddesden. Since this land was then in the holding of Francis Cockayne (very probably the son of the 'widdow Cockayne' mentioned above) there is the possibility that it included the Bradcar property.

A couple of years later, the will of John Smith, a Chaddesden blacksmith, dated 1 January 1729/30, features several references to land in the village which also belonged to Turner. Significantly, Smith owned a small piece of land which is described thus: 'Two Roods lying and being in another Field belonging to Chaddesden aforesaid called Spoonon Field on a place there called Windmill Hill butting North on Land of Mr. Turner and South on Land of Mr. Rowland' (Cholerton 1983). So whether or not Turner still owned the site of Bradcar Watermill in 1730, he certainly held land at Windmill Hill close by. As will be seen later, Turner or his descendants must have eventually sold the properties at Bradcar to the Wilmot family prior to the commencement of parliamentary enclosure at Chaddesden in 1791.

Turner died in late 1751 and was buried at All Saints' Church, Derby, on 13 December. The *Derby Mercury* of 6–13 December 1751 described his death thus: 'On Monday last died suddenly Mr. William Turner, an eminent Attorney at Law in this Town.' By his will dated 26 October 1750 and proved at London on 17 June 1752 (National Archives, PROB 11/795/359) Turner gave to his son Exuperius, 'all my Lands Tenements and Hereditaments whatsoever' subject to his paying all the testator's debts and legacies. Perhaps Exuperius Turner sold his father's Chaddesden properties to the Wilmot family in order to raise the necessary funds. William Turner had been churchwarden at All Saint's between 1720 and 1721 (Cox & St. John Hope, 1881, 37) and was evidently continuing a family association with the church, for in its chancel a memorial tablet to his parents (William and Mary Turner) could once be seen inscribed as follows:

*Near this Pillar / Lie ye Bodies of Willm Turner / Gent: and Mary his Wife, one / of the Daughters of Roger / Allestry Esqr. She dyed the / 30th of April 1712: He the / 28th of October 1716. / And Also ye Body of Exuperius / Turner Gent: younger Brother / of the said William: He dyed / the 27th of Jan 1728. He had only / Issue one Son Exuperius, who / dyed before his Father without / Issue. / The said William Turner / and Mary his wife had Issue, / Mary, Willm., Sarah, Seth, and Bethia.*

Surmounting the memorial tablet was a shield displaying the arms of Turner and Allestry thus: 'Ermines, on a cross voided argent, 4 mill-rinds sable, Turner; impaling Argent, a chief gules, over all on a bend azure, 3 inescutcheons argent, a chief gules, Allestry; ensigned with an esquire's helm (crest gone) and red mantling, lined argent' (Cox & St. John Hope 1881, 149). In view of William Turner's connection with at least two Derbyshire watermills, it is worth noting that his family's coat-of-arms included four mill-rinds, these being the cross-shaped fittings with enlarged ends that supported the uppermost mill-stone in a pair. Presumably they were used as an heraldic device because they were a canting pun on the family name, i.e. mill-rinds support the turning stones, hence Turner.

Bradcar Mill at Chaddesden was very probably situated on the north bank of Lees Brook in the vicinity of grid reference SK 388 373 and close to the approximate location marked on Figs. 2 and 3, however, an examination of detailed aerial photographs taken between 1948 and 1951 has failed to pinpoint its exact site. This is perhaps unsurprising for the watermill was most likely a fairly basic wooden structure with a simple undershot wheel, and once abandoned (sometime prior to 1719) its timbers would simply be removed for re-use elsewhere. A working mill, of course, would need road access and we may speculate that carts and waggons once reached Bradcar Mill by means of a ford, since Sparrowford, first recorded back in the early seventeenth century, is known to have been close to Bradcar and therefore must have crossed Lees Brook, most likely downstream from the mill

By the time of parliamentary enclosure at Chaddesden and thus forty years after William Turner's death, the three closes of land abutting the north bank of Lees Brook at the base of Windmill Hill were called respectively (from west to east) Bradcar, Mill Close, and Mill Close Pingle (Fig. 2), all three of which had belonged to Sir Robert Mead Wilmot of Chaddesden Hall in 1791 immediately prior to enclosure and were still in his ownership in 1793 after the process had concluded.

These three closes feature only once in the associated enclosure award (on page 74), where the boundaries of the adjacent 113 acre Allotment Number 52, which was awarded to Sir Robert Mead Wilmot on the south side of Lees Brook, are described thus: 'One other piece plot or parcel of Land marked Number 52 in the said plan ... bounded ... Northwardly ... by ancient Inclosures belonging to the said Sir Robert Mead Wilmot called respectively Soggs, Townend Close, New Close, Bradcar, Mill Close and Mill Close Pingle ...' Neither the enclosure map nor the award mention a watermill here.

Walking to the top of Tennessee Road in late November 2011, I noticed that just inside the gap in the fence leading into Brook Farm fields was a notice stating that the property was now owned by the Radleigh Group Ltd and advising members of the public that the land might be used for recreational purposes, so I took the opportunity to investigate the general area of Lees Brook from the opposite bank to Lees Brook School. The brook course was still obscured by many trees, but there were enough gaps to see that it runs for much of its course hereabouts in what amounts to a small ravine. In some places the stream is perhaps almost twenty feet below the level of the fields on the left-hand (south) bank and maybe ten to fifteen feet below the fields on the right-hand (north) bank, and a dam of timber and stone (or clay) might have been constructed relatively easily to turn part of the brook into a linear mill-pond. This would certainly have been an essential prerequisite of any watermill here, for the flow of water in Lees Brook could never have supported a watermill without the provision of just such a mill-pond. For example, on subsequent visits to the site the depth of water in the brook (which is perhaps on average some seven feet wide) has always been in the region of six inches or less (Fig. 4).



**Fig. 4: Lees Brook, Chaddesden, in the general vicinity of the probable mill site, photographed 3 Feb. 2013. Note the relatively shallow depth of water, the high bank on the south (left) side, and, to the right, the metal fencing around Lees Brook School.**

It remains to be seen whether additional information can be found relating to Bradcar Mill, for example, were there any ancillary buildings such as a miller's house or a drying kiln, and how long had a watermill been operating on this site? Some 300 years after the mill processed its last sack of corn, we can only speculate what the circumstances were which brought about its closure. Maybe proximity to a larger and more efficient competitor played a significant part, but I suspect that ultimately the main problem lay with the inadequacy of the water supply. It is certainly ironic that the existence of a second watermill at Chaddesden has come to light at the very point in time at which it is likely that any surviving traces of it will soon be obliterated. To the north, Lees Brook School expands ever closer, whilst immediately to the south of the brook a large, new housing development on the remaining fields of Brook Farm is being contemplated.

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#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to thank Nottinghamshire Archives for permission to quote from the text of their deed DD/BK/1/334.

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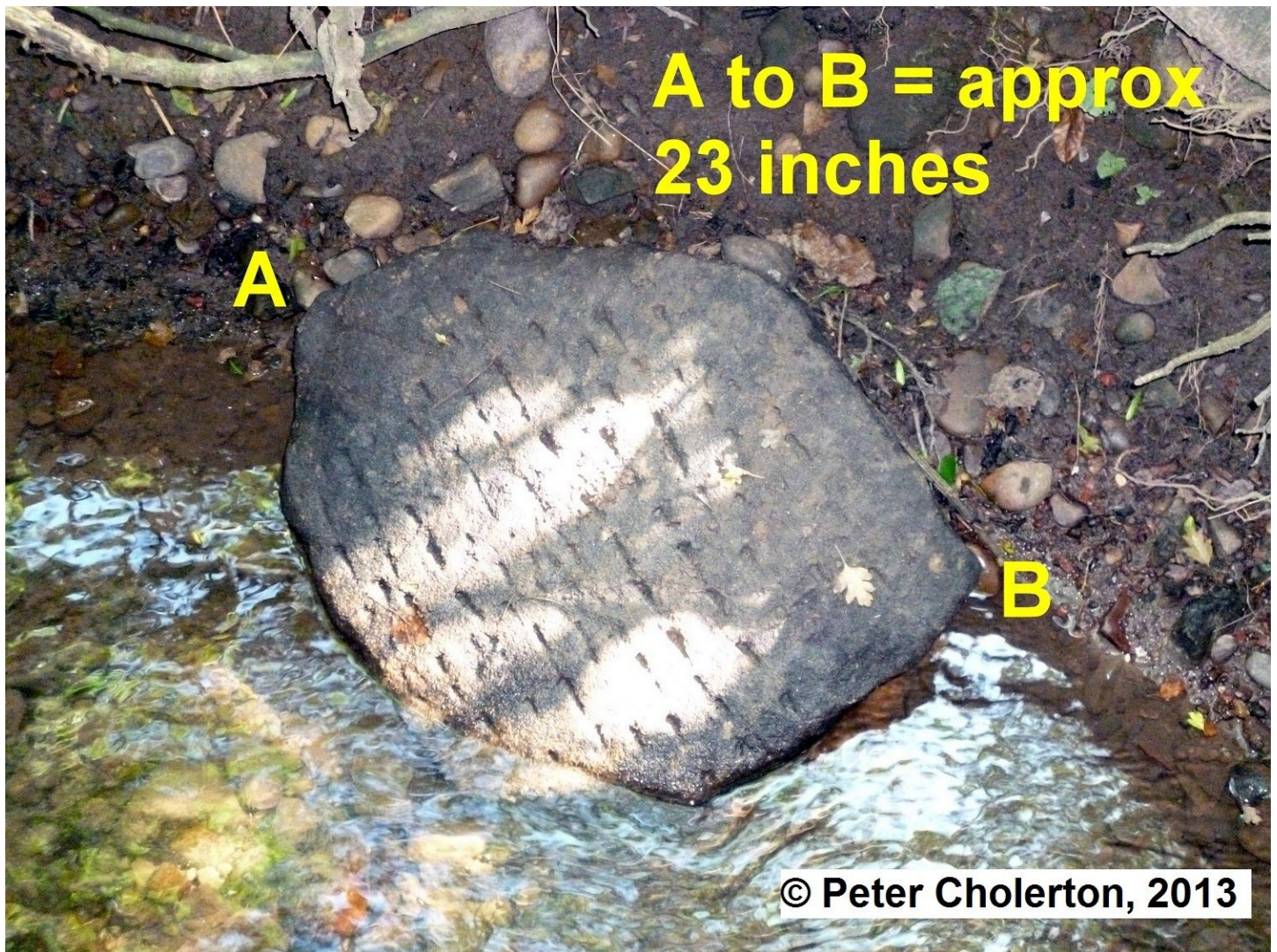
**PLEASE SEE BELOW FOR A POSTSCRIPT TO THIS ARTICLE**

## A POSTSCRIPT TO THE ORIGINAL ARTICLE

I have taken this opportunity to update the account of Bradcar Watermill with a few minor amendments and some additional information which I hope will be of interest.

Shortly after my original article went online, four of us – Paul Dove, Andrew Bailey, Rita Bailey and I – scrambled down into the brook on 9 August 2013 and walked along its course for a couple of hundred yards or so in the general area of where I believe Bradcar Watermill was located.

Splashing around for half an hour or so, we noticed several smallish stones in the water that might have been fragments of millstones and then eventually came upon one larger stone (approximate grid ref: SK 391 373) which attracted our attention because its surface had clear regular toolmarks as can be seen in Fig. 5.



**Fig. 5: Large fragment of worked stone found in Lees Brook, Chaddesden, on 9 August 2013 not far from the presumed site of Bradcar Watermill.**

The general shape of this particular fragment put me in mind of one of the component sections of a French Burr millstone. Such millstones were built up of shaped stone segments somewhat like this which were then set in Plaster of Paris or cement and bound with metal bands. However, as the peck marks on the Chaddesden stone did not appear to resemble anything seen on a typical millstone, I sent a copy of the photograph to local mill expert Alan Gifford, who confirmed he could not associate the pattern with any normal milling process [Note 1]. Clearly whether this stone fragment was connected in any way with milling must remain a moot point.

Further downstream a very conspicuous feature was a substantial area of dressed stone walling, which began just above the water level (Fig. 6). As may be seen in the photograph, Lees Brook at this point cuts deeply through the surrounding land but what was the walling for? I could only think of two reasons why anyone would need to construct something like this in such an out of the way spot, either to make a watermill dam or a sheepwash [Note 2], but it would require further specialist investigation to determine which.



**Fig. 6: Partly obscured by tree roots and vegetation, this section of dressed stone walling on the south side of Lees Brook some 20 feet below the surrounding ground level might once have been associated with Bradcar Watermill. Photographed on 9 August 2013.**

In 2014, the year after my article first appeared, there was further interest in the subject of Chaddesden watermills. A local Facebook page featured a short video clip of the walling shown in Fig. 6 and this can still (June 2020) be viewed at the following link:

[Dressed stone walling in Lees Brook, Chaddesden](#)

Also in 2014 Mrs. Rita Bailey was able to announce that she had managed to get an intriguing late-thirteenth century Latin document translated by Dr. Matt Tomkins, which suggested that a very early watermill was once sited on the River Derwent, at Beaumontacre in the extreme south of the parish.

Thus from the situation which prevailed only a few years previously when only one watermill was known (i.e. the one between Highfield Lane and Meadow Lane), we have now gone to three mills, spanning many centuries of Chaddesden's history.

The building work at Lees Brook School to which I alluded in 2013 duly took place, and the new school (opened November 2014) was built some 150 yards south of its original position and much nearer the presumed site of Bradcar Mill [Fig. 7].



**Fig. 7: Pictured here in August 2014, building work at Lees Brook School was well under way close to the actual brook itself (marked by the trees running from left–right) and the site of Bradcar Watermill. In the foreground, land to the north of Windmill Hill is likely to be developed for housing fairly soon.**

On the south side of Lees Brook, the new housing development on the former fields of Brook Farm is still pending, though what effect the current Covid-19 pandemic will have on future housing demand is far from clear at present.

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NOTES:

1. *Pers. Comm.* from Alan Gifford, 15 September 2013.
2. For an account of a sheepwash elsewhere in the village, see my article *The Chaddesden Sheepwash* on this website.