

## Miles and Farthing families

28 August 2018 21:55

My mother was the daughter of Charles Leopold Miles and was born at French Mill, Melbury Abbas in April 1900. My mother's family went on to mill at the first mill on the Stour, Gasper Mill near Stourton until that was wrecked in the great storm of June 28th 1917. It has been said, in the family, that Charles Leopold Miles also milled at the last mill on the Stour at Throop Mill, Christchurch; but I can find no record to prove that!! In the 1940s and very early 50s I visited the mills at Melbury Abbas most of which were still run by the Miles family.

John Farthing

30 August 2018 13:06

Thank you for the information about Gaspar Mill.

I have just found a newspaper report of the devastation caused by the 1917 flood on the British Newspapers Database via Find My Past. It was unbelievable and I wonder if the owner of Stourhead paid compensation? It was the dam in the river to create the Lower Lake at Stourhead, that resulted in the deluge of water when it broke its banks. Apart from Gasper Mill being destroyed, some of the greatest destruction was at the nearby Maggs & Hindley Bourton Foundry where buildings and machinery were broken, as well as 2-3 tons of coal swept away. The foundry is of interest to us as it began as a water-powered flax mill and foundry that had several large wheels installed to process the raw material and drive the spinning machinery. Later they used the wheels for pumping water to power the foundry machinery making all manner of wheels and steam engines. They also made munitions during WWI and ironically, they made one of the last wheels that was installed at Stourhead in 1921.

I've looked up Throop Mill through the census returns but there are other millers in the village up to 1911. There are at least two millers recorded at Throop in the censuses from 1851-1911 so it was a big mill. May I ask what Charles birth and death dates are? However, he could have been at Throop Mill for a few years between censuses. He might be listed in trade directories for Christchurch. There is also a record of the baptism of his daughter Norah at Tarrant Keyneston, for example. The last miller at Throop was Cecil Biles up to the 1970's.

Kind regards

Elizabeth Trout

01 September 2018 22:48

Thank you for the links regarding Throop Mill, My Grandfather Charles Leopold Miles was born in 1855 and died in 1933, the daughter you mentioned was my aunt Norah Ruth, born 1889 (Known as Ruth in the family) Charles may have been working (milling) at Keystone Mill at the time, but I have no reference of that; he certainly moved around a great deal, there has been a suggestion that he may not have been too in tune with his mother who seemed to be running most of the mills at Melbury Abbas with her younger sons.

With regard to Gasper Mill, yes that was quite an event for the family, my mother told of throwing important belongings from the bedroom windows to her brother's safe outside while the whole building shook! I'm fairly certain that Charles at this time was a tenant miller, and the owners of Stourhead (the Hoare family) owned the mill (so it was a bit of an own goal) however they found somewhere for the family while the mill house was repaired, although not as a mill, and Charles worked the property as a farm until 1930. My mother's wedding reception was held there in 1927; it is still known as Gasper Mill and is now lived in as a country house. The Stourhead Western Estate has its offices there.

You also mentioned Bourton Foundry another 'family affair' on my father's side, my father, three of his brothers, my grandfather and great grandfather all worked there as millwrights and engineers and four of my aunts were employed on the munitions there during WW1. I believe their largest water wheel was the biggest in Britain, sadly the site was demolished last year and is now a housing development!!!

John Farthing

04 September 2018 13:00

I'm amazed that your mother remained in a building that could have been washed away at any moment! We are also interested in the lives of millwrights so do you have any recollections from your father, aunts and uncles about the foundry?

It's a shame that the foundry was demolished and is now housing, though much needed, but has some evidence of its industrial past been retained? There is a housing estate in Buckinghamshire built on the site of a cement works but one of the Listed kilns is still there in the middle of it.

Kind regards

Elizabeth Trout

06 September 2018 19:04

I fear I will not be able to help much with regard to recollections of Millwrights, my father was forced to leave the foundry at Bourton having contracted TB (he still lived to 97) , he became a Farm Bailiff and our part of the family left the area and the life of milling and millwrights. His father and brothers remained involved although the only one who was pictured in connection with his work was my eldest uncle Arthur who travelled the country installing machinery for Hindley's.

He is also pictured in our four generation photo (attached) Only the three eldest of those in the photo were 'Millwrights' at Bourton although various census returns gave their occupations various obscure titles at different times, such as Machine Makers, Wheelwrights, Engineers, Pattern Makers, they all seemed to be multi-tasking.



With the two large families in close proximity it is surprising that there were only two Farthing/Miles marriages.

John Farthing

## John Farthing's (and siblings) Engineering/Milling/Farming heritage

MILES		FARTHING	(Occupations taken from census returns)
Samual Miles, Miller & Maltster 1796 -- 1880 1	GG, GF	Jesse Farthing, Carpenter, Machine Maker, Turner 1791 -- 1853 1	
Richard Thomas Miles, Miller 1832 -- 1872 1	G, GF	Isaiah Farthing, Carpenter, Machine Maker, Iron Founder, Engineer, Wheelwright, Millwright 1833 -- 1916 1	His brother Matthias, Carpenter, Millwright
Charles Leopold Miles, Miller, Farmer 1855 -- 1933 1	GF	Matthias Farthing, Wheelwright, Engine & Pattern Maker, Steam Engine Pattern Maker, 1855 -- 1938 1	
Helen Miles, Dairymaid (Mother)---- Married----- 1900 -- 1991	(Father)	Isaiah Farthing, Pattern Maker, then Farm Bailiff 1902 -- 1997	
Her brothers, Hugh, Miller then Farmer Phillip, Miller then Farmer Louis, Soldier, then Farmer			His brothers, Arthur, Steam Engine Fitter Matthias, Pattern Maker Ambrose, Engine Fitter, later Policeman Bernard, Pattern Maker
Leopold George, -----Married-----			His sisters, Evelyn, Munitions Worker. WW1 Honora, “ Esther, “ Elizabeth, “ Kathleen “ Theresa
Her sisters, Nora Ruth Margaret			
Helen and Isaiah's Children,			
Elizabeth (1929-97) Policewoman, later Director Wexen Industries, Yeovil, (her daughter, partner in a chemical engineering company, USA)			
John (1937--) Engineering Apprentice with Saunders-Roe Ltd, later with Plessy Radar Ltd, both Isle of Wight			
Andrew (1942 --) Engineering Apprentice with British Thomson Houston Ltd, Rugby later with Cummings Diesels, Daventry			