

Barford Mills

The first part consists of entries concerning Barford Mills in Headley, Hampshire which I have found and are in approximate chronological order, and the second part what others have written.

Barford mills are located on the border of Churt in Surrey and Headley in Hampshire, but are on the Headley side of Barford Stream which is the border. There is some conflicting information on the history of these mills and the following attempts to reconcile this. My interest is that both my [grandfather](#) and my [father](#) were born there.

A corn mill rotates a grinding stone which requires a vertical axel. Paper mills perform two functions. The first is break the fibre into small lengths which is done by hammering. This can be done by hand or a water wheel can be used to lift a heavy weight which is allowed to fall onto the fibre and requires a horizontal axel. The skill is in obtaining fibres of the correct length. A similar process is used to produce flock and shoddy from recycled wool, locally this would have been rags. The second process is the making of the paper. It is very difficult to convert a paper mill into a corn mill or v.v., but paper mills can be converted to flock or shoddy mills – the latter just do not need the paper making process.

In [Churt: A Medieval Landscape](#) published in 2000, P D Brooks writes on p48 “Above Barford there are the remains of three mills, all now converted into houses. The lower one next to the Headley road bridge [the site of the Bar Ford], and the upper one below the large mill pond are relatively modern. These mills were constructed for industrial purposes such as paper and flock milling. The middle mill, always a corn mill, has occupied the present site since 1343; prior to that date it had been on the Churt side of the river. In that year the Churt mill was transferred to the Headley side of the stream; no reason was given for this move. One can only guess that the old mill was in disrepair and the opportunity was taken to move to a better site”.

The evidence for this is in the entries in the Winchester Pipe Rolls, the financial accounts of the manors or estates belonging to the Bishopric of Winchester. These are for Churt but the land is that which was occupied by the middle mill taken from [Churt: A Medieval Landscape](#) p 62 – a slightly different translation is in [Extracts from Winchester Pipe Rolls 1210–1670](#) relating to Headley, by Philip Brooks.

1252 Richard of Bereford for 1½ acres purpresture [land taken out of the Lord's waste].

More land was taken in from the waste in 1257, 1262, 1296 and 1299 by the Smiths of Barford but the exact location is unknown. The last entry is for William the smith of Bereford for messuage [land occupied by a house] and 24 acres purpresture surrendered by William son of Richard. At the same time from 1247 land was being cleared further up Whitmore Vale and presumable enough to warrant the building of a water mill which was a large investment – a horse or ox driven gin is much simpler because a vertical axle is turned - a water wheel turns a horizontal axle and this must be used to drive a vertical one for grinding corn. However there are two entries showing a mill was built.

These entries refer to a family of smiths or iron workers. There may have been a hammer mill in the valley since the road on the Headley side from above Barford to Grayshott is called Hammer Lane. There is not much difference between an iron forge hammer (used to make wrought iron) and a paper mill – both use falling weights (hammers) which are lifted by pegs on a horizontal rotating axle. Iron forge hammers were in use in Austria as early as 1135.

The two entries are:

1313 Adam of Bereford, smith, for messuage and 15 acres purpresture and a mill from William his father.

1343 An increase of rent Adam smythe because his land/mill straddles the stream

And in the same year in the accounts of Sutton (Headley being in the Manor of Sutton at this time)

1343 Adam for the mill built on the borders of Surrey and Hampshire with rights to water and fishery.

The next entries are under Headley, now part of Winchester Manor and are taken from [Extracts from Winchester Pipe Rolls 1210–1670](#) relating to Headley, by Philip Brooks

1409 John Plunker for a mill (and land) in Barford by surrender of William Bereford [the reference to William Bereford refers back to the 1299 entry].

1636 John Norris for 17 acres called Deanlands lately part of a messuage and mill (Barford Mill) by surrender of George Blande (John Newman had Barford Mill)

1670 Roger Bardin and Elizabeth King for a water mill garden, curtilage [land that enclosed a house] and 7 acres, Barford Mill.

The following is extracted from a notebook titled Customs of the Bishoprick of the Headley Estate written in 1552 but based on a [transcription](#) written in 1766.

Watermills — Part of Roger Bardin's Estate now Richard Pim's & Dene land — John Newman did then hold a Mess, a Water mill with a garden and orchard and certain customary lands containing by estimation xxv akers in Barford, whereof the messuage, mill, orchard and iii closes with a little meadow at the south end of the same containing between them vii akers, lie together.

I assume the above refers to 1552 and the following to 1766.

Late Roger Bardin's, now Richard Pim's
The Upper mill at Barford — 30 acres
Middle mill — 20 acres
Lower mill — 50 acres with about 12 acres of land thereto belonging

The following entry taken from [Hampshire Mills](#) confirms this

29 March 1757 Richard Pim Headley Barford Mills -Upr & Lwr paper & corn mill under same roof and indicate that the upper and lower mills were not only constructed by 1757 but also had dual purposes. I assume that the middle mill is not one of these.

The following entries are from [Population of part of Headley c.1761](#) by Sir Thomas Gatehouse.

The Upper Mill, Richard Pim is in Headley parish, and part of late Roger Bardin's Estate, but the Dwelling house is in the Parish of Frensham

The Middle Mill Richard Pim

The Lower Mill Richard Pim

There are three entries in [Headley Parish Records](#) for the baptism of three children between 1622 and 1627 whose father was Thomas Steele of Barford Mill, the 1627 entry adding he was a miller. Very few of the early entries give locations or occupations.

The following entry is taken from [Rent-roll for Headley, 1774](#) written by Thomas Gatehouse of Headley Park.

John Rooke or Mr Sherlock 1 toft & 17a called Dene-Lands, part of 1 mess and 1 mill at Barford

[The Headley Compendium](#) p192 has a map dated 1776 which shows “Barford Paper Mill” but no other on Barford Stream. However the scale is too small to show the exact location. The map also shows another paper mill on the River Wey south of Standford Court. These are the only two paper mills – all the others Bramshot, Headley and Frensham are just Mills and hence I assume corn mills.

[Hampshire Mills](#) also contains the following entries for Headley Barford paper mill although they could refer to either the upper or lower mill.

5 Jul 1777 Allen Mills commission of bankruptcy

18 Mar 1777 Allen Mills of Barford to surrender to Comm of Bankruptcy at G'hall+

29 Mar 1777 Allen Mills to surrender at Guildhall for Comm of Bankruptcy

10 November 1781 Abraham Harding on goods in house adj mill brick/stone/tile £50

1785 Henry Pim insure stock & utensils

25 January 1785 Henry Pim and Abraham Harding on house stone/tile £100 & paper mill sep £250; Upper mill £50; seo sizing house £50;malthouse £100; watermill adj £150

3 January 1787 Abraham Harding on house £50 on paper mill adj £450

10 January 1787 Abraham Harding sen and jun partenship diss by mutual consent ; snr continues

The following entries are taken from the [Headley Parish Records](#):

1814-1821 John and Frances Goodeve - Miller of Barford [I assume the middle mill]

1816 William and Charlotte Eads - Papermaker of Barford

1822 Thomas and Ann Thistle - Paper maker of Barford

The following entries are from the [1822 Headley Valuation](#):

Land at Barford Richard Knight snr, occupier Barford Mill and Malthouse, Dwelling House, etc, garden, meadow, Malthouse piece, mill ground and homestead

Cottage on the Farm Barford Mill Homestead: J Goodeve occupier [I assume the John Goodeve mentioned above].

The following entries are from the [Headley Parish Records](#). I have omitted those who are not living in Barford, or are just labourers or other occupations than millers.

1814 to 1825 – Thomas and Mary Anne Bryant - Paper Manufacturer of Barford Mills in the first three entries (1814 to 1822) but the last entry (1825) has Upper Barford Mill Frensham.

1825-1838 John and Sarah Knight – in 1825 Miller of Barford, 1838 Miller of Barford Mill (but in 1840 he was at Park Mill)

1827 Henry and Martha Hobday -Papermaker of Lower Mill Barford

1831-1833 Edward and Sysanna Rose Slade – Farmer of Barford in 1831 but a Labourer of Barford Mill in 1833 [seems a big fall in status as a farmer implies the owner or tenant of the farm]

1838-1846 Thomas and Ann Puttick – Papermaker of Barford Mill in 19838 and of Barford in 1846

1829-1833 Richard and Hannah Knight – a farmer of Churt Surrey in 1829, of Barford Mill in 1831 and of Barford in 1833

1840 Richard and Jane Tilbury, 1842 Thomas and Mary Tilbury and 1849 William and Maria Tilbury, all Paper Makers of Barford.

In the 1841 census where only the head of the household had an occupation the only paper makers of Barford were Thomas and Jane Tilbury who had a lodger? Richard Elstone who may have worked at the mill, Thomas and Mary Tilbury, William and Mary Tilbury and Thomas and Ann Puttick. All the labourers were agricultural labourers. There is no mention of (corn) milling. It should be noted that the census concerned people, where they lived and their type of employment, and did not include industrial buildings such as mills.

The mills were all in Headley, but the row of houses immediately below the Upper Pond's dam called The Barracks were in both Surrey and Hampshire – according to [A Headley Compendium](#) p202 section 68 the border goes “through the centre of the pond”, section 69 “through the cottage under the chimney, two bedrooms of the cottage being in Headley Parish and by the front of the other cottages to again meet the stream” since the pond outflow is in one corner and not in the lowest point in the valley, and section 70 “by the stream to the lowest pond”. However in the census all are in Headley.

In the 1851 census George Wheeler and his son Charles (aged 15) were Journeyman Millers I assume of Barford from the following entries. Thomas Tilbury a Journeyman Papermaker and his wife Jane who was a Paper [illegible], then an entry for Barford Mill House with John Warren a Journeyman paper maker born in Devon (Topsham?) and his son John a journeyman Mill Wright born in Bramshot, followed by Barford Paper Mill with Steven Tilbury and William Chennell both Journeyman Papermakers, and lastly Thomas Cade and Thomas Puttick both Journeyman Papermakers, and Thomas Cade's daughter Sarah who was a rag sorter. In all cases the word Journeyman has been added later. There is no mention of (corn) milling.

I cannot find any baptisms for families living in the mills between the 1851 and 1861 census. My father states that there were family squabbles and the stealing of title deeds. I assume John Warren was a son of William Warren, and this is the family my father refers to.

In the 1861 census the only papermakers of Barford were Thomas and Jane Tilbury. There are two entries for Barford Mill (or is it Hill?) Thomas and Mary Ann Glaysher – a grocer and labourer and George an agricultural labourer and Lucy Glaysher. There is no mention of (corn) milling. My father states that his father James Croucher was born at the Lower Mill and the family are in the entry immediately before that for Thomas Tilbury. His father was a dealer in poultry and his mother a school mistress. He was christened in Frensham where it states he was living in Chert.

The following entries are from the [Headley Parish Records](#):

1863 to 1876 Charles and Rebecca Glaysher – a labourer of Barford Mill (but the 1871 census states an agricultural labourer)

1863 to 1884 George and Jemima Glaysher - a labourer of Barford Mill (but the 1871 census states an agricultural labourer).

1866 to 1876 Henry and Elizabeth Copper – in 1866 a labourer at Barford, from 1866 to 1871 a mechanic at Barford, in 1873 a machinist at Barford Mill and in 1876 a labourer at Barford Mill. From later entries this was the Lower Mill.

In the 1871 census Henry Cooper is an Engine Driver Flock Machine of Barford (so I assume this was the mill with a steam engine). There is a Flock Maker Edwin Hall of Barford, and an Edwin Rippon who is a Flock Manufacturer and Land Owner. There is no mention of paper making or (corn) milling. The Upper Mill is believed to have been demolished.

On the 1871 and 1874 OS Surrey Maps the Lower mill is a papermill with three buildings, but two are long and the middle mill is a corn mill with two buildings. There is no upper mill. The house where my father was born is shown on the west of the lane leading up to the Barracks. This house is definitely in Surrey.

In the 1881 census there are entries in Barford for William Chalcraft a Miller in one entry, Edward Rippon a Flockmaker and his son Edward an Assistant Flock Maker in another, [James Smith](#) a Stoker in a Shody Factory in another, and Henry Cooper an Engineer and Flock Maker.

In the 1891 census there are only two relevant entries - Francis Reeves a Flock Manufacturer (Wool) and Employer, and Henry Copper a Machinist in Flock Mills and son Alfred an Assistant in Flock Mills (it is not clear whether it is Mill or Mills) so it appears the Middle Mill was not in use, and perhaps only one of the other two.

The only relevant entry in the 1901 census is Henry Copper Machine Minder Flock Mills. My father names him as Harry Copper manager of the Lower Mill. I cannot find an entry for the Middle Mill or a miller, but father states that the miller was Sam Larby in about 1906. The only Sam Larby I can find is a Samuel Larby, a carpenter's labourer living in Parish House Bottom, Arford, and he was still there in the 1911 census so I doubt it was him.

An article in [British History](#) dated 1908 states "At the present day there are the following six water-mills in the parish: [...] Barford Upper Mill, used for corn, and Barford Lower Mill, now disused, formerly used for flock, and previous to that for paper." The Upper Mill must refer to the Middle Mill.

In the 1911 census John William Verstage, a Grocer and Provision Merchant and employer was living in eight rooms at Barford Mill, Churt – from my father's records this was the Lower Mill. Edward Stubbington, a Carman and Carter was living in two rooms at Barford Water Mill, Churt as was Walter King, a Bootmaker and Repairer working on his own account at home, in three rooms. All entries come under Grayshott, Hampshire, Churt being the postal address. Thus neither mill was being used as a mill.

My father states that a Chapel was constructed by converting a cart shed at the Lower Mill in 1911. It was located between the rag sheds and where the stream emerges just above Barford Bridge. He attended Sunday school and Sunday evening service there. It fell out of use after the war, but is marked on the O.S. maps as a Wesleyan Chapel.

The 1915 OS map has a benchmark below Kitts farm of 335ft, the lower mill pond at 315 or 318 ft (not sure of last digit) and a bench mark near the bridge of 295 ft but the stream would be a few feet below this so an 18 ft diameter wheel at the Lower Mill is possible (see below). Several buildings are marked just above the bridge including a Wesleyan Mission Room and still there on the 1962 map! It is still marked as a flock mill in 1920 but not in 1938 although the Middle Mill is still a corn mill.

The following are extracts from other researchers.

The first is from my father's copy of Headley 1066-1966. On page 72 of the original, page 78 in [A Headley Compendium](#) against the comment on Barford Lower Mill in the second paragraph which states ""the mill worked until 1890 or 1900, employing 50 people" he has written "UNTRUE". The article was written by Mr F W Simmond's of Rowledge. "The corn mill was the middle of the three Barford mills, the upper one was the paper mill. [...] The large upper pond at Barford must have powered a sizable mill at one time and this was the paper mill. I remember the desolate ruins there nearly 50 years ago, but no trace remains today except the dam and some modern cottages [these must date back to 1841 at least from the census entries]. Barford Middle Mill ground corn and was working until after World War I., probably until about 1930, when one of the Barford dams broke. [...] Barford Lower Mill was formerly a flock mill, preparing rags for paper making (probably for the upper mill) and was a derelict, completely gutted ruin for many years. It was converted into a residence about a decade ago by the late Major J H Virgo. [...] This mill is on record as having had the largest water wheel in Surrey, but the buildings are in Hampshire and the wheel was in the stream which forms the boundary. [There are two interpretations of largest – either width or diameter, but other references state it was 20 ft in diameter so it would have been fed by a channel from the pond and would not have been in the stream which would still exist as an overflow from the pond], It also had auxiliary steam power at one time. The house was built in 1738 and the mill worked until about 1890 or 1900, employing 50 people [this cannot be correct if it implies all at the same time]. It – like Barford Middle Mill and probably others – is reputed to have been used by smugglers to hide contraband spirit brought from the coast, in a secret chamber reached through the water wheel. Middle Mill had a hidden staircase."

My father has written the following on a piece of writing paper enclosed in the book. "The references to Barford Mills are rather misleading. There has certainly been a mill by the large upper pond and as a lad I played among the few remaining stones. The others had been used for building pig sties and retaining walls. In 1900 I was born in one of the semidetached cottages which were demolished in the late 1940s. The three terrace cottages which remain were anything but modern in those days - very damp as the back wall was built against the earth of the dam to the height of 6 ft. The [illegible] has been removed. The names of the occupants were Ayling, Woods and Glaysher. I understand the name Barracks given to the cottages was because the mill made braid for military uniforms. The Middle Mill was worked by Sam Larby [not in the 1901 census] until about 1910 when Sam left after which the Mill House was occupied by a Mr Pride [not in the 1911 census]. I doubt if he did any milling but certainly food rationing would have ended it during the war years. He emigrated to Canada in 1919 and the Mill House was occupied by Jessie Glaysher until well into the 1930s. The Lower Mill was used as a flock mill but was in disuse for long periods at a time. My father was born in the mill house in 1860 [in the 1861 census]. Even at that time it was reputed to be haunted. My grandfather was certainly still in the Contraband business making periodic visits to the coast with his pony. In the 1870s a Mr Copper [in the 1866 baptisms to 1901 census] took over the mill and new machinery was installed but a fire did much damage. I knew him as a very tall elderly man. The sheds which held masses of rags had become dilapidated and the rags were rotten, a spongy morass. I with others was more than once chased from the buildings by Old Coppers whip. The last occupants of the mill house before it became derelict were a couple named Verstage [in the 1911 census]."

I suspect this caused my father to write about his early life in [Churt](#) in 1967. The following is an extract. "My father was born at the Lower Mill at Barford, the mill then being out of use as it was so many times in its history. Family squabbles and the stealing of title deeds was the cause of this. The house was then not only reputed to be haunted, but my grandmother heard strange noises so often during my grandfather's absence. This may have been the reputation taking effect. In the late 70s or early 80s the mill was equipped with new machinery and Harry Copper was Manager. A fire took place soon afterwards and he was said to have run to Farnham, East Street to call the fire brigade in 35 minutes. He was a very tall man but elderly when I was a boy. His wife was small. I do not remember the mill in use. The sheds between the mill and the bridge were full of rags, mostly in sacks. As boys we went into them despite warnings. Years later the roofs caved in. By then the rags had sunk into a solid mass. That was during the time that Mr. and Mrs Verstage [he was widowed and she was his daughter from the 1911 census] lived there. An elderly couple, pleasant, but reputed to be misers. In 1911 an evangelist who had arrived in the village converted a cart shed which stood between the rag sheds and the place where the stream emerges into a chapel. The shed had 8 big uprights on which the roof rested and was open on all sides. A disused cart which had stood there for years, and on which I or we played for many hours was removed. The shed was weather boarded and lined with match boarding, the match boarding also being placed under the rafters, a floor was put down and the whole place was cosy inside, warmed by oil heaters. For several years I and my sisters and brothers attended Sunday School there, and my mother [this was [Ellen Fullick](#)] with one or other of the children attended Sunday evening service which was conducted by local preachers. It fell into disuse after the war when two large families which had supported it emigrated to Canada and others moved away. The mill, often called the Middle Mill, as earlier there had been three, was in use when my memory begins. Sam Larby was the miller and my father bought pigs food there, mostly barley meal for fattening. I accompanied him on such occasions and of course that was our only way of reaching the village and school. Later the Mill House was occupied by Mr. and Mrs Pride, Dorset shire people who emigrated to Canada. Mrs Pride was one of the local women who contracted to do soldiers washing during the war. It was poorly paid and more poorly washed. A soldiers bundle consisted of one of each shirt, pants, towel, pair of socks and a household would take a G.S. wagonful each week. As none of the cottages had a hot water supply beyond what could be heated in a pot over the fire, one can understand the result. All the water had to be carried from the stream in pails."

The [Headley Compendium](#) page 114 has an article Extracts from The Watermills of Headley Parish by Joyce Stevens written in 2000 which states that “By the eighteenth century there were seven watermills in Headley Parish [...] three equally close to each other on the Barford Stream in the west.” On page 115 “Of the three mills, which were on the Headley bank only their ponds and two houses remain. The middle mill has always been a cornmill and is recorded as early as the thirteenth century, but the other two have a more varied history, both for a time being paper mills. Some years ago I searched the Headley Church registers for mention of people employed in this industry and found the names of forty-four families from 1738 onwards through the nineteenth century – however it does not state which part of Headley.”

An entry in [Historic England](#) for Barford Mill and Mill House which from the map is clearly the middle mill states it is a “former flock mill with its adjoining house. C18. Stone and tile. The mill building is at right angles to the stream, and on its west side is built into the steep valley side: immediately to the east is the narrow water-channel, and beyond is the eastern embankment, supporting the mill dam; north of the mill on its west side is a wing (1st house?) and attached to it is an extension (late C18) of the dwelling, ending in a single-storeyed C20 service block: the whole being L-shaped. The mill is a 2 storeyed timber-frame resting on a basement (accessible on the north side); ½-hipped roof, exposed frame, with rubble stone infill (formerly boarded), the basement walls being of stone with brick dressings. Irregular pattern of C20 leaded oak frames, and plain board doors.”

An entry in [Slough History Online](#) states “There were once three mills operating on the Barford stream, the upper and lower ones involved in paper-making, while the middle one ground corn. The county and parish boundaries run down the centre of the stream - so while the Lower Mill was said in 1884 to have the largest water wheel in Surrey, the mill itself was actually in Hampshire. Barford middle mill [...] stopped working commercially at some time prior to the 1930s and has now been converted into a private house. The upper and lower mills stopped working in the 1880s and have since been demolished, though the mill house of the lower mill still stands - an impressive three-storey building near Barford bridge. Tilbury and Warren families were shown as being involved in papermaking at Barford in the 1841 and 1851 censuses of Headley parish, but by 1891 only a flock mill is mentioned. The middle mill was the oldest-established of the three, being mentioned in a pipe roll of the manor of Farnham in 1264 - the others dated only from the 1730s.”

The following is from [Paper Mills in Headley & Bramshott](#) Published April 2001 in The Quarterly 38, Journal of the British Association of Paper Historians — written by Alan Crocker. “At Barford there was a series of three mills on a small stream which [...] rises near Hindhead and flows 5 km north-north-west along Whitmore Vale to feed Frensham Pond and hence the southern headwater of the River Wey. This stream forms the parish boundary between Headley in Hampshire and Frensham in Surrey but the mill buildings lay on the Hampshire side. Traditionally they were known as Barford Upper, Middle and Lower Mills. The central mill was a corn mill and worked until the First World War but Barford Upper and Lower were both paper mills. The following story, relating to the coaching days at Hindhead, is told about the establishment of these mills [Ref: 'Anne Gilchrist, her life and writings']. "Now and again at night a portmanteau would be stolen; one containing a quantity of gold was so cut off a post-chaise by a man called Pimm, who invested his ill-gotten coin in purchasing land; he built two paper-mills at Barford, a beautiful steep valley; but the mills never prospered, one reason being their inaccessibility." The mill house at Barford Lower Mill is said to have been built in 1738 and this date could correspond to the events described in this tale. Indeed one year later a daughter of William Eade papermaker was buried at Headley [Sarah 24 June 1740].

In 1757 Richard Pim papermaker of Bramshott insured his corn mill and paper mill under one roof in the parish of Headley. Three years later now described as a papermaker of Headley he again insured this property. It is not known to which of the Barford mills these references relate, but on Rocque's map of Surrey dated 1768 the Lower Mill and a second mill which appears to be the Upper Mill are labelled "Barford Paper Mill" and "Paper Mill" respectively. In 1771 Allen Mills papermaker of Barford insured the utensils and stock in his paper mill and in 1774 he and Henry Pimm were using barges on the Wey Navigation to obtain bags of white rags and linen rags from London and to send back reams of paper.

The Navigation had been opened from Weybridge to Guildford in 1653 and extended to Godalming, about 16km by road from Barford, in 1763. However in 1777 Mills was bankrupt and a year later one of the Barford paper mills "well adapted for making printing papers" was to be let or sold and enquiries were to be made of Robert Myears of Alton Mill. It appears that Abraham Harding became the tenant as by 1780 he and J Bowman, both of "Barkfield" Mill, were making use of the Navigation, to transport paper, rags and alum, and in 1781 Harding insured his goods at the mill. However the Pim family still owned Barford mills and in 1785 Henry Pim insured the Paper Mill and the Upper Mill, in the tenure of Abraham Harding papermaker, and a corn mill. Then in 1787 Abraham Harding of Barford, papermaker, insured his dwelling house, and the utensils and stock in his paper mill adjoining. A watermark with the initials "AH" and Britannia is known from this period [...] and is likely to refer to Harding. There were in fact two Abraham Hardings, senior and junior, but the partnership was dissolved in 1790 and Harding senior continued alone as the papermaker.

The Pims were associated with Barford mills until 1809 when Henry Pim junior died and left his property to his five sisters including Sarah Knight. Her husband Richard is then recorded as the owner and occupier of the mills and land at Barford until 1832. However for over 30 years at the beginning of the 19th century Francis and Timothy Bryant were the papermakers. Thus in 1801 one of the mills, said to be "brick, stone, timber, tiled, adjoining but not communicating with the dwelling house" and occupied by Francis Bryant, was insured by Joseph Burrough, a draper of Marlow who also held Alton paper mill. Two years later Bryant and John Abbot Dusautoy were the papermakers at the two mills, the latter's son Edward having been baptised at Headley in 1800. Then in 1814 the Headley parish registers record Timothy Bryant at the Upper Mill and Samuel Hale papermaker of Barford Mills. The latter was bankrupt in 1816 and creditors were asked to call on Lister & Phipps paper merchants of London and James Simmons papermaker of Haslemere. In the same year Francis and Timothy Bryant were allocated excise numbers 121 and 123 at Barford Upper and Lower Mills respectively. Thus it appears that Hale had been at the Lower Mill and on his departure Timothy moved there from the Upper Mill leaving Francis behind. However there are no further records of Francis and in 1822 and 1825 Timothy was again recorded at the Upper Mill.

The excise records add to the confusion as in 1826 number 121, now used for the Lower rather than the Upper Mill, was said to have a new occupant Timothy Bryant, and also to be 'not in use'. Iping Mill in Sussex which had originally been allocated 122 later became 123 and in 1829 James Harman became papermaker at Barford Upper which was said to be 122. In 1830 the Lower Mill with "drying rooms, and offices and a substantial dwelling house and good garden" was offered for sale. The mill had "the great advantages of an overshot wheel and a constant supply of river and spring water, the latter adapted for the manufacture of the finest paper. The presses and other fixtures will be sold as part of the property, of the whole of which immediate possession may be had". However, two years later 121 was no longer in use and Timothy Bryant was back at 122, Barford Lower, and probably stayed there until 1837. Also, a letter dated 2 December 1839 from W Vandervall of Blue Anchor Road, Bermondsey, where Bryan Donkin manufactured papermaking machines, to William Howard of Barford Paper Mills, discusses a patent for sizing paper but ends with: "I hope you are progressing with the sale of your mill.... I suppose in another week or 10 days you will be thinking of starting for Russia".

William Warren, who came from a family of papermakers in Devon, completed his papermaking apprenticeship in 1810, when the Original Society of Papermakers issued him the 'ticket' or 'Card of Freedom' [...]

Warren appears to have taken over Barford Lower Mill, excise number 122, in 1837. [Note the census entry is for John Warren who was probably a son of William, and the dispute over deeds was probably between him and his father]. There are several records of him at this mill or what came to be known as Barford Paper Mill up to 1860. However from 1851, when one beating engine was working and none idle, he was in partnership with his two sons George Roe and Andrew and by 1860 it had become a half-stuff mill.

When their father died the Warren Brothers circulated the letter [...] announcing the new title of the firm and the end of paper excise duty. At first they operated all three paper mills, Bramshott, Barford and Standford. However in 1862 they offered Standford for sale. Also, Barford, which had become a half-stuff mill [paper pulp from rags partly processed (as by washing, bleaching, and draining) and ready for the beater], no longer appears in the Paper Mills Directory after 1865.

After it closed in 1865 Barford Mill became a flock mill employing about 50 people [I do not believe this to be correct – there is no evidence for it and where did these people live?]. The Warren family sold the copyhold of the property in 1891 and the sale particulars describe the buildings as a 3-storey brick and stone sorting house with slate roof, a stone built mill with an iron overshot waterwheel 18 ft in diameter and 6 ft wide, a residence with several outbuildings and two cottages in four tenements. Flockmaking had finished by 1908 and Hillier described the mill as one of the most savagely ruined in "Surrey". Little survives of the mill but the mill house has been restored and is now known as "The Old Mill". The Upper Mill cottages survive as a house known as "Barracks" and all three Barford mill sites retain their very attractive ponds. The Lower and Middle mills are reputed to have been used by smugglers to hide contraband spirit, brought from the coast, in secret chambers reached through the waterwheels!"

In conclusion the Middle Mill dates back to around 1343, but there was an earlier mill on the Surrey side of the stream, both presumably corn mills. The Upper and Lower Mills were built in the 1730s to convert rag into paper. The rag could have been transported from London via the Thames and the Wey Navigation, but only as far as Guildford prior to 1763. It is a long journey from Guildford or Godalming post 1763 by road to the remote Whitmore Valley. The paper mill or mills were out of action from 1777 to 1780, and the Upper Mill demolished in the 1860s. The Lower Mill had a steam engine installed about 1870, but was used for making flock until around 1904. Only a few local people were involved, never the fifty quoted above. There is no evidence that the inhabitants of Churt were involved, except those living on the Surrey side of The Barracks at the Upper Mill. The Middle Mill fell into disuse sometime around the First World War.