



History of Bonds Mill

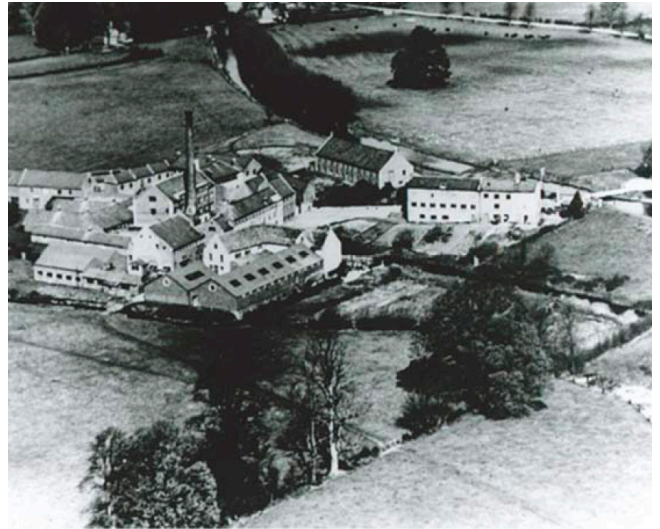
Stonehouse, Gloucestershire



BOND'S MILL

The earliest records date back to the 15th century with a cloth mill located nearby on the River Frome. The mill was not named Bond's Mill, however, until the early 18th century when a clothier from Stroud named John Bond rented the mill in 1714. The fact that his name remains linked with the mill suggests that he made it prosperous. The main mill buildings around the mill pond are noted on maps from 1730.

The central building now called The Wheelhouse along with the mill owner's home now known as Swan House appear on maps dated 1839. The remainder of old buildings forming a block towards the rear (south and west) of the estate are noted on maps from 1884 and it was at this time that its owner, Charles Hooper, completed major rebuilding on site.



Bond's Mill in the 1930s

Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries the woollen and textile mills known as "the string of pearls" dominated the industry of the Stroud Valleys - aided by the opening of the Stroudwater Canal in 1782 which borders the site. Bond's Mill was one of Gloucestershire's largest textile mills and operated as such until 1934 when the giant water wheels generating electricity from the River Frome to power the machinery finally stopped turning.



Bond's Mill in the 1990s



The site's Home Guard platoon during the Second World War



Queen Mary (the Queen Mother) visiting Bond's Mill in 1941

The site was then bought by the Ministry of Aviation and was let to Sperry Gyroscope - which made aircraft instruments and searchlights - as a back-up for its main factory in Brentford, West London. Hence during the Second World War Bond's Mill became a "shadow factory" providing essential back-up in case other factories were bombed.

Queen Mary (the Queen Mother) visited Bond's Mill in 1941 in recognition of its important role. Whilst Stonehouse was out of the range of German bombers when the war started, aerial photos taken by the Germans showed that they planned in 1943 to bomb both Bond's Mill and the adjacent Hoffmann's ball bearings factory. Both factories had their own Home Guard units combining with other local defence

volunteers in Stonehouse to provide around 200 men with a dozen officers. Thankfully the aerial attack pencilled in on Luftwaffe maps did not take place.

Reminders of Bond's Mill's role during the war exist to this day: The Gatehouse at the canal entrance and now a visitor information centre for the Cotswolds Canal Trust is Grade 2 listed because it was built as a pillbox but with the unusual addition of a first floor to accommodate a twin barrelled machine gun. In the fields around Bond's Mill can be seen three other normal height pillboxes and various bunkers are still on site providing valuable storage and in one instance, a lovely kitchen!

After the war, defence contracting continued to be the principal use for Bond's Mill's wide variety of buildings passing in 1970 from Sperry to Grundy & Partners.

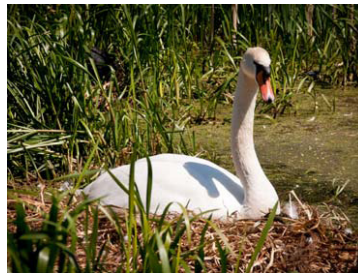


Present day on site

The site's transformation to a thriving mixed use business estate commenced in 1986 when Gavin Paul, a local businessman from Stroud, bought the site. He relocated his electronics company - Cristie - to Bond's Mill and set about refurbishing the buildings in order to attract a wide range of businesses as commercial tenants including many start-up companies who have been able to expand at Bond's Mill.

In 2000, the Robert Hitchins Group bought Bond's Mill and continued the ethos of refurbishing the buildings whilst keeping the characterful essence of the estate and encouraging all sizes of companies to make Bond's Mill their home.

The site comprises nearly 100,000sq.ft. of office, light industrial and storage space set in several acres of land including large car parks for the tenants and their visitors. Bond's Mill enjoys a particularly pleasant rural environment. The Stroudwater Canal borders one part of the estate whilst the River Frome flows around and through the estate passing underneath The Wheelhouse and exposed to dramatic effect by the mill "race" in the restored 18th century courtyard at the heart of that building. Bounded by fields and trees and visited by swans, otters, brown trout and the occasional lost sheep, the estate could be miles from anywhere. Yet it's not: it is just a mile away from junction 13 of the M5 - one of the most strategic motorway junctions in the country.





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The many benefits of being located at Bond's Mill have resulted in a thriving community of around 50 different businesses. Examples of the range of enterprises here are:

Solicitors; accountants; software designers; architects; surveyors; recruitment and education consultants; energy consultants and engineers; ecologists; a florist; a cafe; a photographer; giftware; eyewear; First World War model aircraft, hot metal typesetting for limited edition books; picture framers and several charities supporting a range of worthwhile causes.

A directory of all the businesses at Bond's Mill is available from the landlord to tenants to assist them to use each other's services if they wish.



From its beginnings over 500 years ago, this site has been home to industries adapting to changing needs as the centuries have rolled by. Each landlord has been proud to play their part to ensure that Bond's Mill Estate continues for centuries to come.



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Road

Stonehouse lies next to the A419, within 1.3 miles of the M5 (Junction 13), providing easy access to the M4, Bristol, Birmingham and South Wales.

Rail

Intercity trains run regularly from Stonehouse and Stroud reaching London in approximately 1 hour 40 minutes and Swindon in approximately 30 minutes.

Air

International airports at both Bristol and Birmingham provide frequent flights to many international destinations.

For Further information please contact:



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www.bondsmill.co.uk



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