

## SHERBORNE STEAM AND WATERWHEEL CENTRE



### Open Days 2026

Sunday 15th March  
Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> April  
Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May  
Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> June  
Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> July (\*Gala\*)  
Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August  
Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September  
Sunday 11th October

### Trustees

Paul Belliss (Chairman)  
Nigel Bartram ( Secretary)  
John Thompson (Treasurer)  
Geoff Ward  
Craig Henderson

Find us on our website or on Facebook

<https://www.sswc.co.uk>



Charity No 1099153

March 2026

### The Hindley Engine

The engine originally came from Gillingham Brickworks and was rescued by the late Tom Stewart. For many years it remained in his yard at the Sherborne Gas Works awaiting restoration. Subsequently Tom agreed to sell the engine to Richard Vincent of Vincent Engineering who had previously rebuilt the waterwheel at Castleton. Richard undertook to restore the engine at his cost and loan it to SSWC for a nominal rental. After many years, Richard Vincent is now considering selling the engine. It is critical that the engine, which was made in Bourton in North Dorset, is unique and a part of the heritage of Dorset, remains at Castleton. SSWC is considering ways of raising funds to buy the engine. There is still much to sort out but SSWC is 'confident' of a successful outcome. We will provide regular updates on our website, Facebook and via other means. We may need to call on your support !



### Winter work

Work on the site does not stop for the winter and two very important jobs have been concluded:

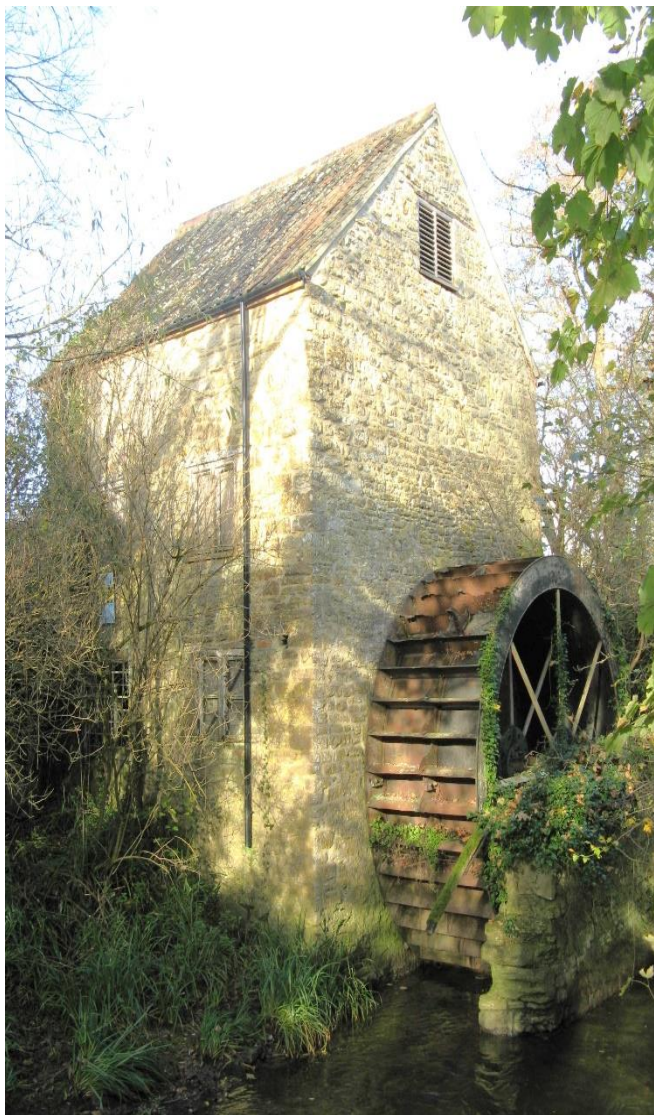
Mike Briggs has installed a new section of drain to prevent rainwater from the paved area overflowing into the waterwheel pumphouse. The rainwater ingress has been a problem for some time and had been making the pumphouse damp.

Mitchell Langfelt has re-positioned the guttering on West side of the waterwheel pumphouse so that it does not overflow in the NW corner of the building. This should also help in reducing the damp in the pumphouse.

### **The Mills of Sherborne**

There were many mills in and around Sherborne and not all were corn or grist mills.

**West Mill** A grain mill still at work in 1952. Owned by Wessex Water it is still in existence. There is no separate leat, the waterwheel channel is built out into the river. A mill was operating here in the late sixteenth century and there are recorded many owners and millers up until 1960 when the mill was recorded as derelict.



In the 1970s a team from Sherborne School set about restoring it. The adjoining millers house to the north was removed in the process. The mill was at this time subject to a very unfortunate accident. Some children

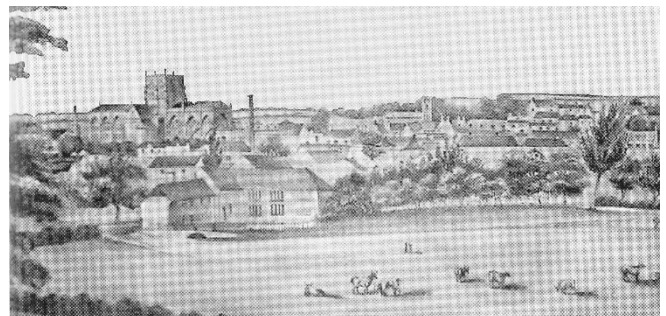
were playing on it when it was unsupervised and the wheel turned and crushed and killed one child. The restoration by the school ceased at this time and never really got restarted.

**Westbury Mill** This was known as Hart's Mill in the early eighteenth century. It was a grist mill powered by a leat from the river. By 1753 the premises were leased to a silk thrower and so began a long association through several owners with the silk trade. In 1840 business had increased and a new factory was constructed across the road. Its power was provided by a waterwheel with the drive shaft running under Westbury to the new building, In 1937 the mill was switched to weaving parachute silk. Subsequently the mill made woven glass fibre and is now run by Valmiera Glass UK . Little remains of the original mill buildings except some outside walling.

**Forrester's Mill** This is one of a number of mills belonging to the Sherborne Castle estate in the eighteenth century. It was also known as Reeve's Mill and was south of the town between South Street and Westbury. It was powered by the Coombe stream which also powered the Abbey Mill. There are no visible remains.

**Abbey Mill** This is an old mill site. There was a mill here in 1432. In 1775 it was operating as a silk throwing mill and was powered by the Coombe stream. Silk continued to be manufactured here until 1872. In 1873 the premises became part of Sherborne school and are now workshops and class rooms.

**Middle Mill** Two watermills belonging to the abbey's monks were demolished in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. This mill then called St Andrew's Mill was built in their stead.



From the eighteenth century it belonged to the Sherborne Castle estate. It was a grist mill until 1814 when it was acquired for use as a silk mill. Despite this, part of it remained as a grain mill. In 1887 it is recorded as a silk mill. Sainsburys now stands on the site and nothing remains.

**East Mill** or Castle Mill The site was at the end of East Mill Lane. In 1793 it was a grist mill but in 1809 it was converted to a silk mill. In 1858 it served as a counting house, workshop and sleeping quarters for the navvies building the railway. It was then demolished to make way for the railway.

**Castleton Mill** was situated by the junction of Osborne Road and Castleton. The three-story building had four pairs of stones grinding flour and meal. The Salisbury and Yeovil Railway bought the mill in 1859, and it was demolished as it was blocking the new alignment of Castleton Road which now had to cross over the railway.

**Sherborne waterwheel** used for pumping water. Not strictly a mill but originally water powered.

**Castle Farm Snuff Mill.** There is some debate about this mill. It was thought to be a little to the east of our present site. It is unclear if it was water powered.

Acknowledgement: Mills on the Yeo by Martin Borman gives really extensive coverage of all the mills on the river and the people who worked in them.

### **Papplewick Pumping station**

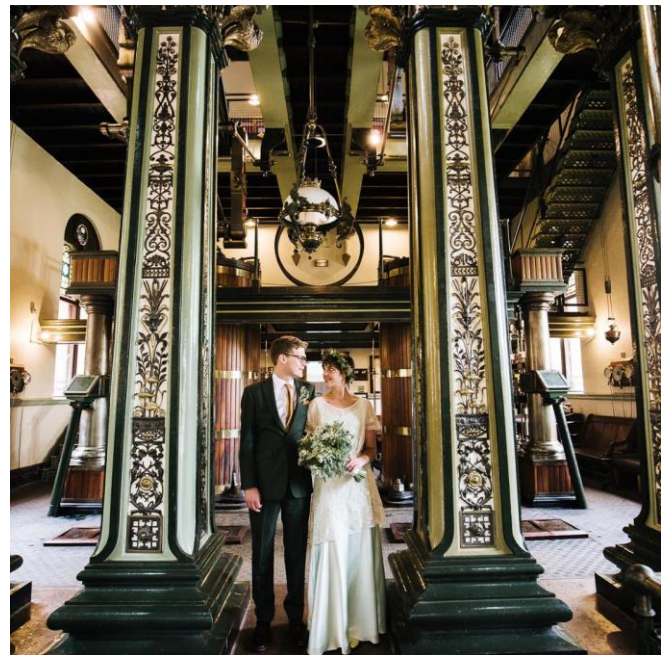
Likes to call itself the most spectacular preserved water Pumping Station in the British Isles.

It built by the Nottingham Corporation Water Department between 1881 and 1884 to pump water from the Bunter sandstone to provide drinking water to the City of [Nottingham](#). Two beam engines, supplied with steam by six Lancashire boilers, were housed in Gothic Revival buildings.

Apart from changes to the boiler grates, the equipment remained in its original form until the station was decommissioned in 1969, when it was replaced by four submersible electric pumps

A Trust was formed in 1974 to conserve the site as a static museum, but the plans soon developed to include the refurbishment and regular steaming of the engines. One of the beam engines was operated in 1975, using the only boiler that was certified to be safe at the time. Since then, the second engine has been reconditioned, and both are steamed several times a year. New visitor facilities were built in 1991, and a major restoration of the structures was completed in 2005. As well as the beam engines, the site houses several other engines.

You can even get married there.



### **Weston Zoyland Pumping Station Museum**

This is on the Somerset Levels not far from Bridgewater. It is the home of Somerset's earliest steam-powered pumping station (built 1831), once a hard-working guardian of the flatlands, now a museum displaying the largest collection of stationary steam engines and pumps in the South of England.



A large number of restored engines can be seen in action on Steaming Days.

Best to visit their website for details of opening times and steaming days.

### Why be a member of SSWC?

People sometimes ask what is in it for me? What is in it is the knowledge that you have helped to ensure the long-term success of SSWC. Open day donations just about cover the running costs but membership subscriptions have the potential to provide an additional source of income to enable us to improve the visitor experience. You will have the satisfaction of knowing that you are helping to ensure the long-term viability of the project. So please don't just ask what is in it for me but join as a member. £12.00 per year is not a major investment so please just email Nigel and he will do the rest.

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Pride of place goes to the station's pumping engine, the Easton and Amos. It is still in the main engine house, built in 1861 to replace an earlier engine that had been carrying out the pumping work since 1831. Other exhibits include a Wills engine, Lancashire boiler, the original forge and a Lister diesel generating plant, to name just a few.

### Steam Events

Below is a small sample of the events in our area. Always best to check the relevant website for latest information

27-29 March	Swanage Railway Spring Steam Gala
28-29 March	West Somerset Railway 50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary weekend
19 April	Yeovil Railway Centre Steam Train Day
1-4 May	Abbey Hill Yeovil Steam Rally
16-17 May	Shillingstone Steam & Vintage Rally
20-21 June	Crofton Beam Engines in Steam

