

WIND AND WATERMILLS

For many centuries the only power available to man was either his own or from animals.

The first form of mechanical power was the watermill; this was followed many centuries later by windmills and again centuries later by the steam engine.

The watermill was introduced into Britain by the Romans and became very well established. By 1088 when the Domesday book was compiled it showed that there were 5,600 in use.

The windmill did not appear in England until the end of the eleven hundreds.

In the Midlands most villages came into existence in the Saxon period and each one was more or less self-supporting.

One of their chief requirements to survive was being able to produce enough flour for bread and grist (from corn or beans) for their livestock.

The preferred choice of mills would be a watermill as it was a more reliable form of power. This was only possible if there was a brook or stream in the close neighbourhood to power it, these usually only exist in areas that are low lying.

Where a village stands on high ground waterpower is seldom available so windmills were built.