

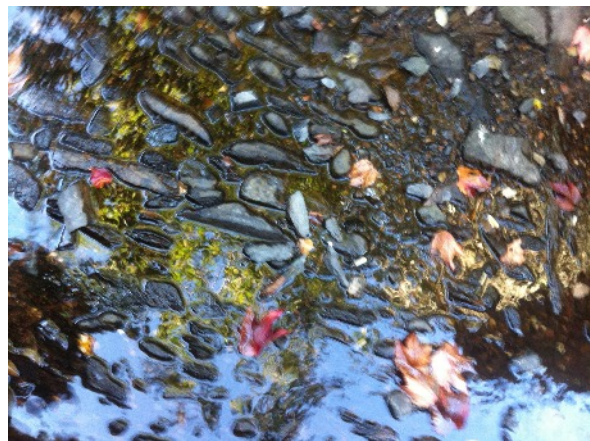
October 2015: Identification of the Original Leat Cobbled Floor



The *Dulverton Weir & Leat Conservation Group (DWLG)* continues to find interesting remnants of Dulverton's past.

Following the visit by *Dr Edgeworth* from Leicester University, in which original mill wheel casting patterns were discovered in the attic of Dulverton Laundry, last week the group hosted a visit by *Martin Watts*, a respected historic building researcher and mills specialist.

Whilst walking the Dulverton leat *Mr Watts* was able to identify the original leat cobbled floor behind Dulverton Town Mills.



The original leat cobbled floor

Mr Watts comments -

"it was common to have cobbled floors in leats to stop erosion and speed up flow.

In Dulverton we can see the cobbles just before the spillway leading to the Town Mills wheel pit. We can also see a pattern of raised stones that seem to be directing the water towards the waterwheel.

The interesting question is 'where else in the Dulverton Mill Quarter is the leat similarly cobbled?'"



Bryan Harrison

Long term local *Bryan Harrison* is able to shed light on this. He states -

"I remember these cobbles. When I was 7 I knew the family who owned Town Mills (the Warrens) very well and I was allowed to play there.

I used to play in the waterways under the mill and in the leat itself. The entire leat from the back of Town Mills to and under Leat Bridge and Holland House was cobbled.

I used to be able to run under leat bridge and Holland House and come out the other side by the laundry. I had to crouch a bit but there was much more headroom under the bridge. The leat is now silted up with about 2 feet of mud and the cobbles underneath".



The bridge where Bryan Harrison would emerge as a boy – now silted up

Martin Watts states -

"I was most interested to visit Dulverton Weir and Leat for the first time. The weir, although now damaged and somewhat badly served by some of the recent repairs, is a most impressive structure and worthy of the efforts being made to promote its proper restoration and long-term survival. It would also be good to see more made of the leat as a recreational facility.

I was also fascinated by the extent and complexity of the remains of the mills which the leat served. In particular the former textile mill, now the laundry, is a good example of an early industrial building".

Peter Romain the DLWCG member with responsibility for historic research states -

"the current very low level of the leat has exposed features which have not been visible for many years.

We are thrilled to host visits from experts who continue to show us aspects of Dulverton that have been overlooked in the past.

Weirs and wider watermill landscapes are increasingly being recognised for their historical significance, with local communities becoming aware of their amenity value, and the significant economic contribution they can make to the local tourist and sporting economy".