

Nutshell House

Nutshell Bridge, originally known as “*Mr Hill’s Bridge*”, was built around 1778 by the Company of Proprietors of the Stroudwater Navigation (“*the Company*”). They owned the Bridge and the land to either side of it on the south side of the Stroudwater Canal (opened July 1779). Nobody knows when or why it became “*Nutshell*”.



View of House and Canal 1910

Edward Hill owned Lower Mills, a short distance to the south of the Bridge. Before April 1803 he built Nutshell Cottage on the Company’s land to the west of the Bridge - without their permission.



View of House and Canal 2000

In 1804, with permission, Hill built a warehouse on the east side of the bridge, and bought the land on which both buildings stand. There was a hoist on the canal side of the warehouse and warehouse-like openings were revealed when plaster was removed.

Edward Hill died in 1816. The warehouse, still owned with Lower Mills, was altered into a dwelling, with a chimney date-marked 1827.

It is ***now known as Nutshell House***. This may have been a boarding house, with rooms let out to passengers. The eastern end of the building is hexagonal-shaped and the roof is hipped. Its distinctive appearance has made it a Stonehouse landmark.



Cottage, Bridge & House viewed from St Cyr’s Church

An arched tunnel once ran from below the kitchen of Nutshell House into the Cottage on the other side of the Bridge. This is now divided in two by a wall beneath the steep approach to the Bridge from the south.

This may have been an internal dock or boat-house for unloading goods, or even passengers.

The Committee of the Company may have “turned a blind eye” to the tunnel since Edward Hill was a member.



View of House from garden

This information is from the work of Joan Tucker, for some thirty years the Company’s Archives Director, and Michael Handford. Joan died on January 15, 2013.