

## The Water Mills

The origin of the water mills dates back to the wars of religion: "The mills, set at the foot of the hillside of Alex, before the wars of religion, were comprised of a flour mill and an oil press, both driven by the canal of the mill".

The presence of the mills was, until the 20th century, intimately linked to the "Chateau d'Alex", with the families of Eurre being the first lords. By 1868, Mr. and Mrs. Bontoux were the owners and by 1920 it was the School of Missionaries. The town of Eurre furnished the water to operate the mills.

The canal of the mill crossed the Isle estate, passed by the Pontillard, fed the mill of Alex, continued by the vegetable patch (today Espace Saint Joseph), and the School of Missionaries at the end of the park. It then went across the Ramières and quite further on, connected to the Drôme river at the Moulinage de Brézeme.

From the beginnings of the 15th century to this present day, historical chronicles of the time report over a hundred arbitrations and feuds regarding the partake and use of the canal as well as numerous illicit pumping of water across its route.

Around 1873, an engineer, a Mr. Bontoux, installed a turbine which pumped the water diverted by the canal. It provided electricity to the Château d'Alex and to a number of houses in the village, including the Factory facing it. The turbine supplied the School of Missionaries with electricity until 1967, upon which time the school was linked to the town electric power grid.

The townsfolk would reminisce that, as children during World War II, they would "pilfer" nut cakes from the mill, which calmed their hungry stomachs. They also remember fishing for river crayfish during the cleaning of the canal.

Louis Revol was the last miller on-site when mill operations ceased by the end of the 1960s.