



Statue in River Wylde

The story is that the bridge over the River Wylde used to be a humpback bridge. This was the original main road before the A303 bypass.

In the time of stagecoaches, there was quite a jolt going over the humpback bridge.

One day the guard who was sitting up next to the mail coach driver, had been drinking. He fell off whilst going over this bridge and drowned.

His wife wanted a memorial to him so found this statue and had it dragged to the middle of the river where he had fallen.

She felt it represented him as one part of his job was to sound a horn to warn of the mail coach's approach so the Inn could make sure they were ready with the change of horses.

The statue used to fall over in the time of flood and had to be put back up.

To overcome this, a large island was built in the river and the statue placed at the end of the island so it was much protected from strong flood currents.

After floods, the statue man often had acquired extra garments, made of river weed.

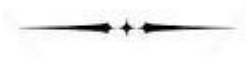
I have seen him clothed in river weed but this was carried out by the two daughters of the mill owner. They thought he looked better so clothed.

(Photo & information kindly supplied by Alan Clarke)



Postcard of "Memorial Statue" in the River Wylde

In the old coaching days a stage coach in fording the river was overturned and the driver was drowned.



The Mill House, Wylye – For Sale Brochure by Knight Frank

The Mill House has an interesting history. There has certainly been a dwelling on this site from Saxon and Norman times at least, as the Mill is recorded in the Domesday Book as rendering 10 shillings. The London to Exeter road forded the river beside the Mill until the first bridge was built in the late 18th Century. In the middle of the river stands a statue of a sea sprite blowing a shell-like trumpet. This statue, known as “The Wylye Boy” and mentioned in Pevsner, was collected by the Earl of Pembroke on the Grand Tour in the early 18th Century. It was later given by him to stand in the river in perpetuity as a memorial to a young postilion rider who drowned after saving a relation of the Earl from a coach which had overturned in a flood.



British Listed Buildings / Monuments

The Wylye Hornblower North of Mill House, High Street, Wylye

Grade II Listed 11 February, 1997

Statue. Probably C18. Lead sculpture, about life-size, depicting a young male, almost nude, figure blowing a horn and draped and festooned around the waist; representing the Horn of Plenty. It stands on a rock on a small island in the River Wylye. The left knee is supported on a later metal bar and the statue is said to have been re-set on the rock base in living memory. Reputedly it was installed in the late C18 by the Earl of Pembroke to commemorate the post horn man, who was drowned saving one of the Earl's relatives from drowning when a coach overturned at the old ford over the River Wylye when it was in flood. Also, it is said to be of Roman origin and collected by the Earl of Pembroke on his Grand Tour of Europe, but it would seem to be of C18, possibly Italian, origin. SOURCE: Buildings of England, page 601.