

## ***Saint Peter's Mill***

The mill is closely linked to the canal which flows past it.

It was in fact the construction of the Canal de l'Isle that led Mr Derrive, a businessman, to build a factory for processing madder. This plant, with its tinctorial properties (the red dye extracted from its roots) ensured the economic and agricultural prosperity of Vaucluse, which experienced a golden age based on the colour red.

It was in November 1859 that Mr Derrive received permission "to divert the waters of the canal to power the water-wheel of his factory".

However, this activity began to decline from 1868 onwards. In 1867, the mill had been sold by auction and then frequently changed hands.

In **1874**, two millers from Les Taillades purchased the mill, converted it into a flour mill and kept it until 1881.

After belonging to other owners, the mill passed to the Syndicat du Canal Mixte (the association operating the canal) in 1891. This association rented it to the Blanc family from 1894 to 1970, at which time flour milling ceased.

The premises were then rented to various users.

On **29 October 1981**, the municipality of Les Taillades finally bought the mill from the Syndicat and converted part of the buildings into the village hall, meeting rooms, sports facilities and workshops for the roads department, while one wing was let to a private firm.

For some years, cultural events (theatre, music, etc.) have been held in the courtyard during the summer and have attracted a large following.

### **The wheel and its functions**

This paddle wheel used the energy provided by the water flowing through the canal to operate the millstones.

The water arrived via the headrace fitted with a set of gate valves which controlled the water flow according to requirements. The head thus created could power the wheel at the chosen rate.

The water leaving the mill returned to the canal through the tailrace.

The movement of the wheel rotated a central shaft, which operated a sequence of gears increasing the speed to turn the millstones.

The wheel is nowadays running idle and is the symbol of the village's industrial past.

It is 8 m in diameter, 6 m in width and comprises 24 blades.

### **The avenue of plane trees**

The majestic avenue of plane trees contributes to the overall impression of the building, both as a decorative element and as an architectural feature providing the desired perspective.

## **The gear transmission room and the pitwheel**

The cogged wheel displayed at the centre of the roundabout at the entrance to the village was the pitwheel, which connected directly with the paddle wheel and was the first stage of the train of gears in the transmission room.

The gearing mechanism steps up the speed of rotation to work the grindstones: the stationary bedstone and the moving runner stone. The bedstone was fixed on a base. The runner stone was placed above it and rotated, driven by the central shaft. The grain was crushed between the two stones.

During the disastrous winter of 1956, the pitwheel dating from 1859 was damaged by frost. Fortunately, the original mould had been kept at the foundry in Saint-Dié in the Vosges, so that an identical copy could be made.

This cogged wheel is 3.30 m in diameter, 0.23 m thick and weighs four tons. It has thus become "the Memory of the Mill".