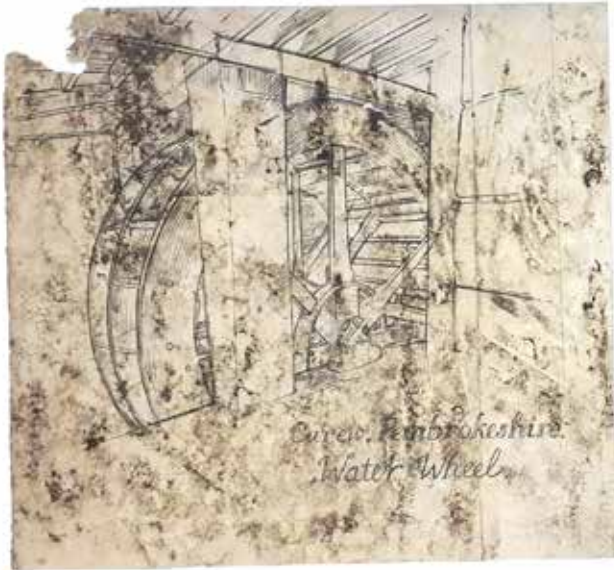


The Rex Wailes Collection



One of the drawings before and after conservation. This shows the corn mill in Carew, Wales, which was powered by the tides (and is still maintained as a visitor attraction).

Conservation of milling drawings

by Nathanael Hodge, The Mills Archive Trust

The Rex Wailes collection contains a large number of technical drawings which depict historic milling machinery. Unfortunately, after years of storage in sheds at the bottom of Rex's garden, mould and insects had done their worst, and many of the items were in a very bad condition when we received them at the Mills Archive.

Thanks to a grant from the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust we were able to fund cleaning and repair work by a professional library and archive conservator, Victoria Stevens. Her pictures show the process of repair and conservation.



An example of the type of damage sustained by some of the drawings due to their years of storage in a garden shed.



Conservator Victoria Stevens cleaning mould and dirt from the surface of two drawings.



Gaps in the paper are filled in with a very pure quality, thin and strong Japanese paper made from long fibred mulberry pulp.



Wheat starch paste is the adhesive – a product of the milling industry enabling us to preserve its history!



The amount of dust and mould on some of the drawings made a facemask necessary for handling – this was before Covid turned masks into everyday items!