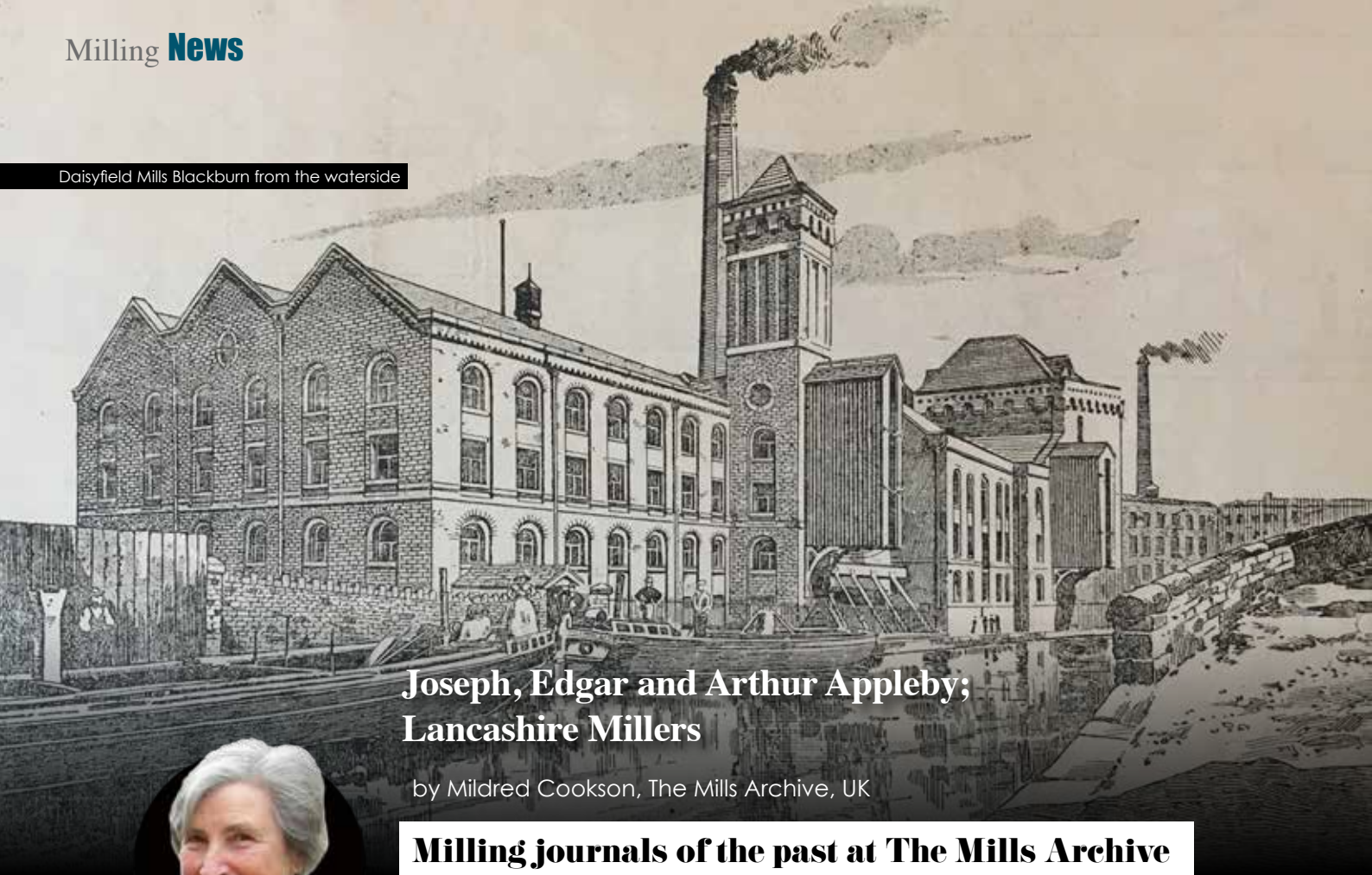


Daisyfield Mills Blackburn from the waterside



Joseph, Edgar and Arthur Appleby; Lancashire Millers

by Mildred Cookson, The Mills Archive, UK

Milling journals of the past at The Mills Archive



The weekly millers' journal Milling is the parent of today's Milling and Grain. Founded in 1891, it contains well-illustrated articles about mills, the milling trade and particularly the men who were leading the roller mill revolution.

Now largely exiled from Lancashire, as well as a retired miller, my attention was drawn to a couple of articles from early issues of Milling that highlighted a family of fellow Lancastrians who had a lasting impact. The items from September 23rd 1892 and May 20th 1893 were followed up by another dated June 5th 1893. I found the latter in The Miller, the other veteran magazine for British millers, which lasted for 100 years but did not have a white knight to rescue it and make it fit for the 21st century.

The impressive Appleby family of Lancashire millers goes back to 1841 when Joseph Appleby settled at Enfield Mills. A 2009 Heritage Assessment for British Waterways describe the mill in Clayton-le-Moors, two miles north of Accrington, as steam powered, built in 1827-1828, extended in the 1872 and demolished in 1968. Milling ceased in 1920 and it became part of the Enfield Soap Works in 1922 prior to its demolition.

The Enfield Mills were at the half-way point of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal and the Appleby Family made good use of the canal by having their own fleet of barges to transport their products. Joseph conducted most of his business at the Leeds and Wakefield markets every week until 1865, when the growing importance and advantages of a sea port led him to switch to the Liverpool Corn Exchange. His son, Edgar Appleby, born at Enfield Mills, began his career as a miller in 1858, and in 1862 took charge of his father's mill at Accrington, afterwards the mill at Burnley in 1868, and in 1873 the management of the Blackburn Mills, known

as the Daisyfield Mills, built by Joseph in 1871 as a millstone mill.

In 1878 on the death of Joseph, the business of the firm continued and was extended by his two sons, Edgar and Arthur, under the old style of Joseph Appleby and Sons. Arthur (1843 - 1902) was also on the board of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, an Alderman of Lancashire County Council and Chairman of the County Bench, sitting at Church. He was a consummate cricketer, playing for Lancashire and England.

Edgar Appleby was invited in 1889 by the National Association of British and Irish Millers (nabim) to accept the nomination for



1883 advertisement for the Jonathan Mills Reduction Machine



President, but he refused this at the time, but was later to take up the Presidency in 1893.

In 1886 the brothers purchased the Carolina Mills in Bootle, which had just been built on the banks of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal close to Liverpool, and contained a small plant installed by Henry Simon. Three years later the mills in Bridgewater Street, Liverpool, were added to the already very large output of the firm. The Carolina Mills at Bootle were remodelled to increase capacity. In addition to the original machinery 'Victoria' purifiers were added and the mill arranged on more modern lines.

The success of this venture was such that in 1889 after the



purchase of the Bridgewater Street mills was completed all the existing machinery (with the exception of some Gray rolls) were removed and a complete remodelling of the wheat department was given to TW Throop and Henry Simon.

In the mill itself, Mr Simon fitted all his modern improvements in machinery and product handling, including the latest type of rolls and "Reform" purifiers, making it one of the most complete mills in the UK. The capacity was 18-to-20 sacks-per-hour. The mill was fitted with electric lighting by the firm of Thomas Barton of Blackburn and a complete Grinnell Sprinkler system.

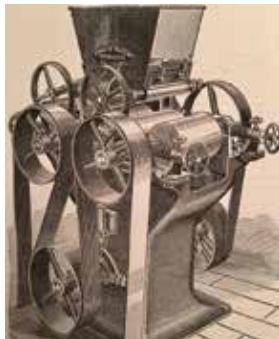
During the latter part of 1892 the Blackburn, Daisyfield Mill was

also renovated. It was originally fitted out as a roller mill by Child and Son of London, with the then famous “Jonathan Mills” discs, found 20 years later to be very much behind the times. The order was given to Whitmore and Binyon of Wickham Market, Suffolk to install their latest type of rolls and two of their purifiers, the “Victoria” and the “Best”, raising the output of the mill to 28 sacks-per-hour. Mr George Binyon oversaw the installation himself.

The Daisyfield Mills were advantageously situated, having on one side the Leeds and Liverpool Canal and on the other a siding by which means goods could be received and dispatched to any point in the United Kingdom, via the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway. Local customers were delivered their flour by horse and cart.

The mill had five storeys, including the basement, and was built of brick on a stone base. Two railway tracks connected the mill to the east Lancashire line. Cast iron pillars and brick vaulted ceilings were all incorporated into the design to add protection against fire. The grain silo could hold 20,000 sacks of wheat. On the canal side were two hoist towers, ornately decorated with pyramidal roofs. The north gable had a keystone inscribed “J.A.S AD 1872”.

Originally, wheat was hoisted up from the canal towpath, to the upper floors. The milling used ten pair of stones powered by a Musgrave engine. A major fire in 1875 led to the rebuilding and extension of the mill. In 1883, the mill was converted to roller milling and the millstones discarded. In 1928, the mill was taken



Gray's Noiseless Roller Mill



'Appleby' the workhorse from 1906 to 1968

over by Joseph Rank and eventually closed in 1968, marking the end of large scale milling in Blackburn.

“Appleby”, the black and red-liveried saddle tank locomotive was special; by 1962 it had become the only one of its type still working. Built in 1895 at the Atlas Works of Peckett and Sons in Bristol, Appleby was numbered 568, had 2ft-6in wheels with a 0-4-0 arrangement and worked at a pressure of 80lbs per square inch.

Despite its compact size, the engine, acquired by the Blackburn millers about 1906, was capable of hauling as much as 100 tonnes as it travelled the 400-yard track from the Daisyfield sidings taking wagons filled with grain to the mill's loading bays. It came to the end of the line in 1968, the same year that steam powered expired on Britain's railways, when the flour mill ceased production, with the loss of 90 jobs.



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