

# IMPROVED OATMEAL MACHINERY. NEW SHELLING AND GRINDING MACHINES, Also MACHINERY FOR FLAKE OATMEAL. ALEX. MATHER & SON, Millwrights and Engineers, EDINBURGH.

## In praise of Scotch Oatmeal

### Milling journals of the past at The Mills Archive

by Mildred Cookson, The Mills Archive, UK



“The virtues of Scotch oatmeal have been praised by both poet and historian, but most of all by the British public, making it part of their daily food as porridge for breakfast”

These words of praise featured in a 1902 issue of “Milling”, the predecessor of this magazine. At that time all the leading hotels in Scotland

served oatmeal porridge as a favourite food because “it is easily digested and supplies more strength-giving elements than any other cereal”. It also contained more silica than any other cereal food.

In 1902 there were several oat-growing districts in Scotland. Of these, Aberdeenshire grew one-fifth of the whole oat crop because of its soil and its climate. The soil in Aberdeenshire is practically all stony; Aberdeen was also known as the “Granite City” and sometimes the “Silver City by the Sea”.

It was the shipping port for the granite blocks which now ornament many of the finest buildings in the country. The climate is perfect for oat growing, with ample moisture during the foliage period, and plenty of sun for maturing and ripening the oats. The days in Aberdeenshire during summer and autumn are also longer than further south. Rolled oats were, as now, very popular and

the “Grampian” Scotch-rolled oats manufactured by the North of Scotland Milling company were apparently unsurpassed both in flavour and economy. Twice a week they could be delivered, like the granite, by steamers from Aberdeen to London.

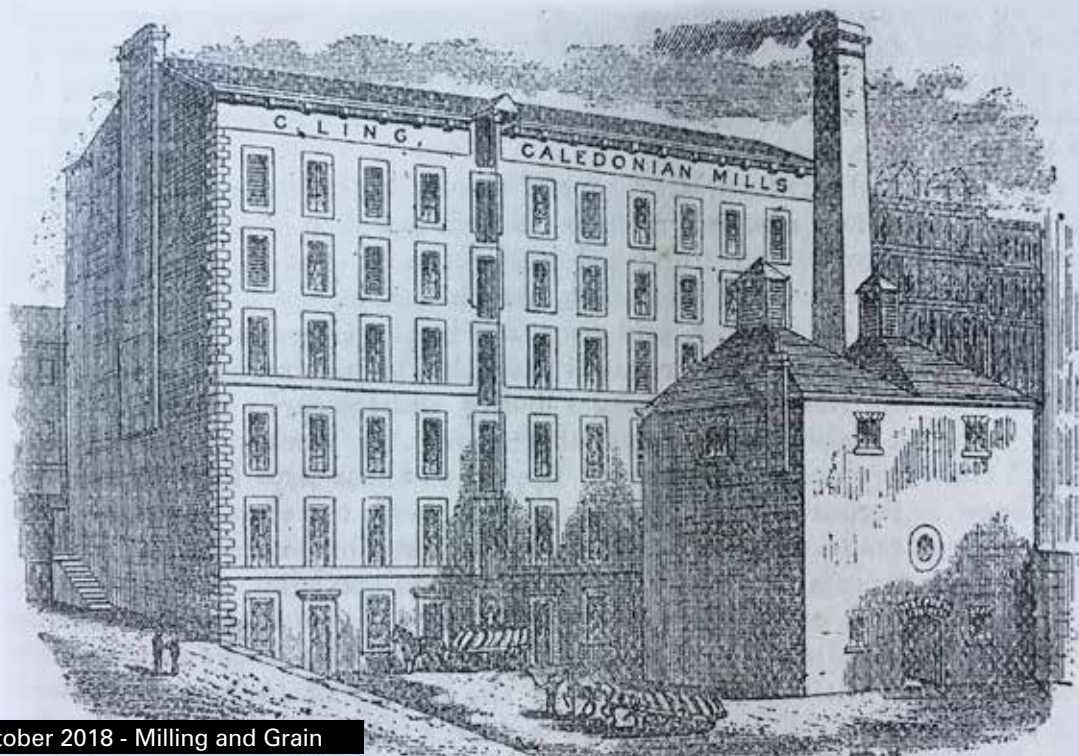
Helpfully, the process of oat milling south of the border, at the Caledonian Oatmeal Mill in Carlisle, was described in an article from “The Miller” December 6, 1886. The mills, owned by Mr Ling, comprised a block of buildings 90 ft long and seven storeys high, facing the street and with a large court behind. The kilns for the oatmeal preparation were in the court, as seen on the illustration. It was an imposing building with a tall handsome chimney about 140 ft high.

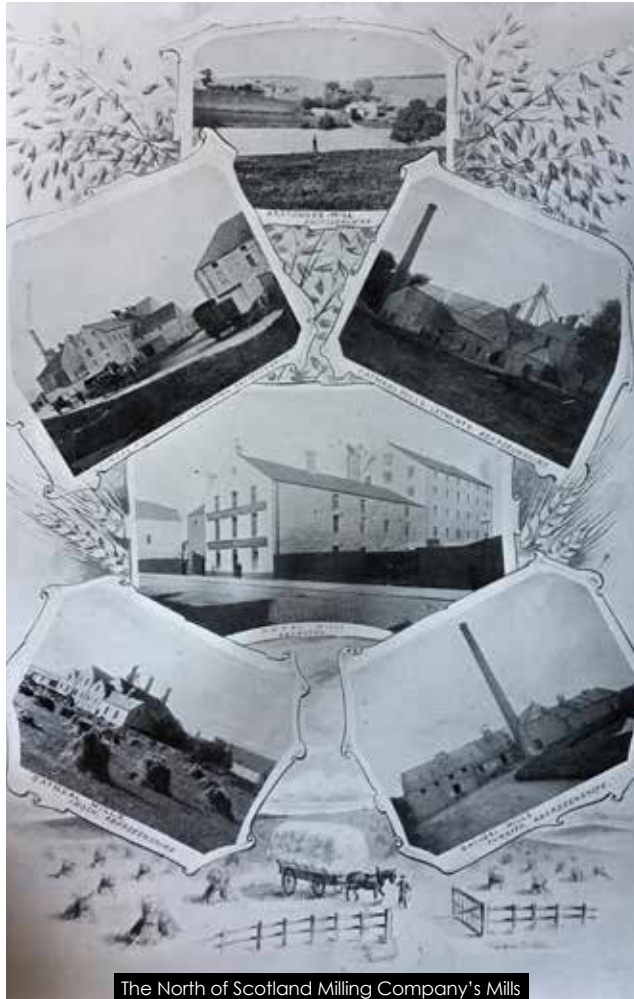
The machinery occupied one end of the building, the other was used for storage of grain. The mill could store around 3,000 quarters of oats, and, in addition to this, Mr Ling had a large adjoining warehouse to store another 4,000 quarters. There was little need for storage of the finished product as demand was such that it was sent out immediately and Mr Ling had a job to keep up demand.

The two kilns were very successful and occupied a position 12 feet from the mill, fulfilling insurance requirements.

They were connected to the mill by an iron gangway and partly covered with a glass roof. They were 19 ft square inside and the

Mr Ling's Caledonian Oatmeal Mills, Carlisle





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kiln floor was 20 ft high from the ground. The furnaces were arched in with ventilators around 5 ft square. In addition to these large kilns, there were two round iron kilns 6 ft in diameter. These had revolving arms and scrapers inside and were used in the preparation of a special type of oatmeal, for which there was a large demand. The kilns were capable of drying over a thousand quarters of oats per week. There were five pairs of millstones which, along with the other machines, were driven by belting with very little vibration.

The oats were first cleaned before being sent to the kilns. They passed over a riddle and through a large revolving sizing machine, then through two "Victoria" cockle machines, before being discharged into bins sufficient to fill the kilns. The small and light oats were sold for feeding purposes, only the finest and stoutest being used for making into meal. The oats were conveyed from the mill to the kiln, through iron spouts when dried, and then re-conveyed back to the mill to bins. From here the dried oats were



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The history of milling - no matter where it has taken place - is being archived by the Trust.

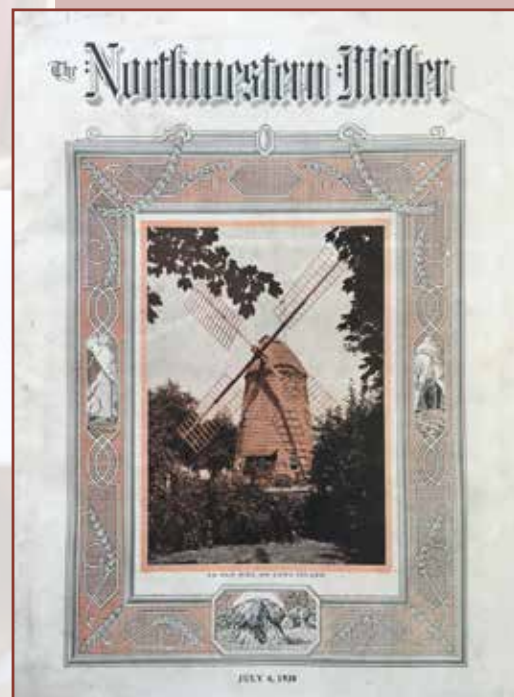
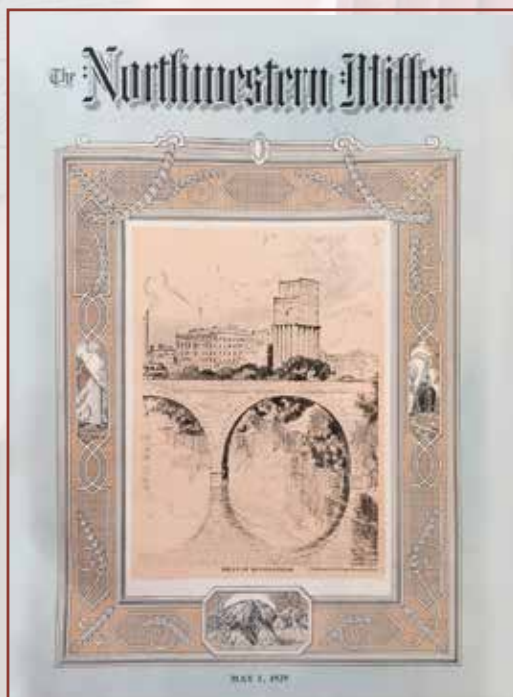
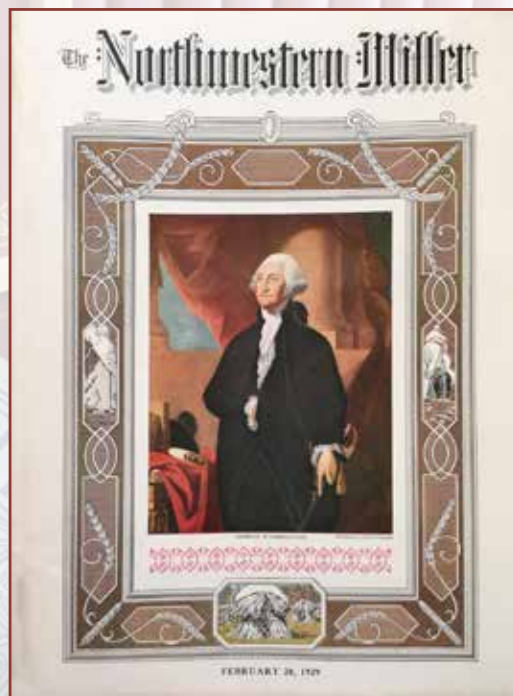
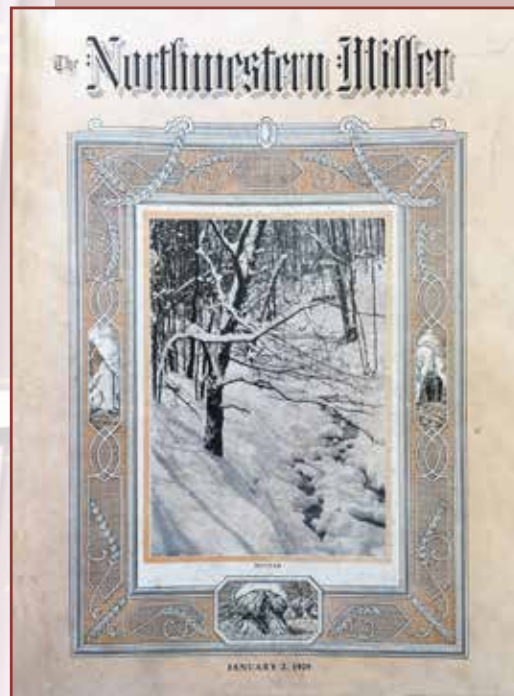
For well over 100 years milling technology has been global with many magazines serving or having served our industry from flour and food to feed and oilseed processing and now to fish feeds.

A most recent contribution to the Trust's collection is a complete century of past edition of the now out-of-print 'North-Western Miller' from the United States.

We are proud to present here, front cover illustrations from this valued and long-serving publication as a visual reminder of the importance contribution past magazines provided to our industry.



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subjected to another cleaning process by means of screens, three cockle machines and fans to remove all sand, seeds, and other impurities after which they were again transported by elevators to the millstone bins.

Two pairs of millstones were used in shelling the oats prior to grinding. The oats were then passed through a conical revolving duster and fanner and then to the second shelling stones. Again, the oats were elevated and cleaned and from there they passed to the grinding bins. There were two pairs of stones for grinding the oatmeal, each having sifters and fans connected to them. Each sifter had appliances by which pinhead oatmeal could be produced, thus giving the means of producing two separate kinds of oatmeal at the same time. The fifth pair of stones were used for making oatmeal flour and connected to dressing machines.

The mill could produce over 700 sacks of oatmeal a week, and due to demand was doing just that.

There was also means of producing groats on a special groat mill, on the same principle as barley milling. The mill was designed and



erected by Messrs Alexander Mather and Sons, Millwrights and Engineers of Edinburgh.

As a millstone miller, I am well aware that oatmeal milling done with millstones is a different process to flour milling. The millstones have to be set further apart than that for flour milling. The dressing on the stones is also different and very simple. The art is to get the oats to stand up on end between the stones so as the upper rotating stone clips off the beard. The stones themselves would most probably have been of indigenous rock from rural sites.

