



The plansifter floor

Daren Mills Dartford, Kent

Milling journals of the past at The Mills Archive

by Mildred Cookson, The Mills Archive, UK



According to *The Miller* (November 3, 1913) the Daren Mills in Dartford were purchased a number of years previously by Mr SK Keyes, and fitted up with the most modern milling machinery of the day.

The mills were close to Dartford Railway Station and on the navigable River Darent some two miles above where it joins the River Thames.

Described as “that great water highway to the metropolis and so occupying a most advantageous position, being able to obtain their supplies of foreign and Colonial wheat by barges direct from the London docks”.

In 1909, the business had been registered as a private company when Mr Hubert Keyes, brother of the head of the firm, became a director. His eldest son, Captain Reginald Keyes who in his spare time, out of business hours, was a captain of the Queen’s Own Royal West Kent Regiment, assisted Mr SK Keyes, who was then a Governing Director, in active management.

Mr SK Keyes had felt that his mills were not quite as up to date as they could be and considered the best way to improve and enlarge them, so a few years previously in about 1906, he had made an extended trip to Canada and the USA to visit a number of the newest mills there. He said he saw nothing on the other side of the Atlantic to approach European mills, either with regard to process or machinery, so he visited the Continent and inspected flour mills there, with the result that he placed the order when he got back to remodel his mill with Messrs Amme, Giesecke and Konegen of Brunswick and 59 Mark Lane London, to their widely advertised plansifter system. He placed the order



Advert using the roller floor



Keyes' Daren Mills

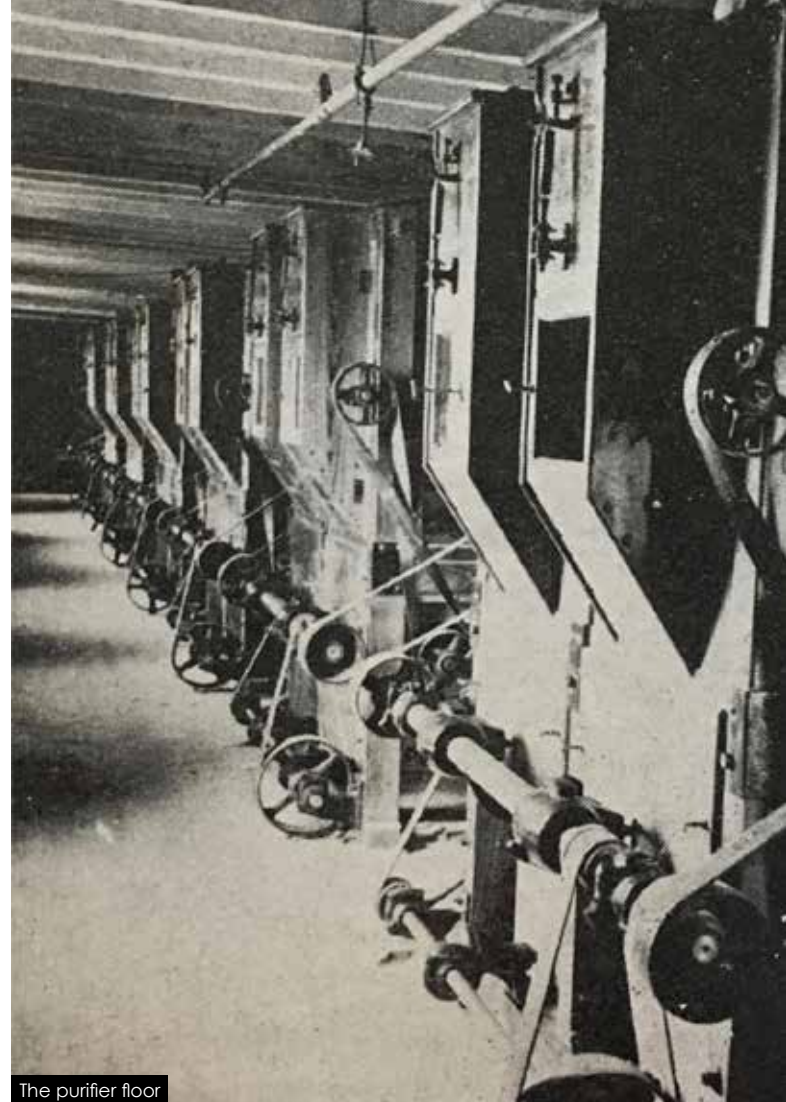
with their London manager Mr JE Speight. Mr Keyes took the advice of the engineers and added another storey to his mill, making it seven storeys. The top room was a fine handsome lofty apartment in contrast to the lower rooms which all had less height than usual.

Nine of the latest pattern 'Ageka' self-balancing plansifters were installed on the top floor. This plant performed all the scalping, grading and dressing. As seen in the illustration, seven of the plansifters were in a line on the side of the room next to the elevators, and two were on the opposite side, where space was left to install more of these machines when it became necessary to increase the capacity of the mills.

The Miller reported it was a pleasure to admire the smooth, even gyrations of these novel self-balancing plansifters, and be able to study the products coming from them. One of their leading features enabled coarse material to be removed before actual flour dressing was attempted. For example, the first break stock went on to the one section of a plansifter and the broken wheat was first tailed over to the second break. The next material to be removed was the small broken wheat, which went to the fine second break.

After the semolina had been taken out, followed by the middlings, only the dust and flour were left to be treated on the flour sieves. The same procedure was then followed in dealing with the second, third and fourth breaks, so that all the stocks delivered from the plansifter were quite prepared for the next process. The scalping process extended beyond the breaks, the principle applied to all reductions stocks, the top sieves of each sifter section tailing off coarse material first, leaving only flour and dust to be treated over the flour silks.

The plansifters themselves were made up of two chests of 12



The purifier floor

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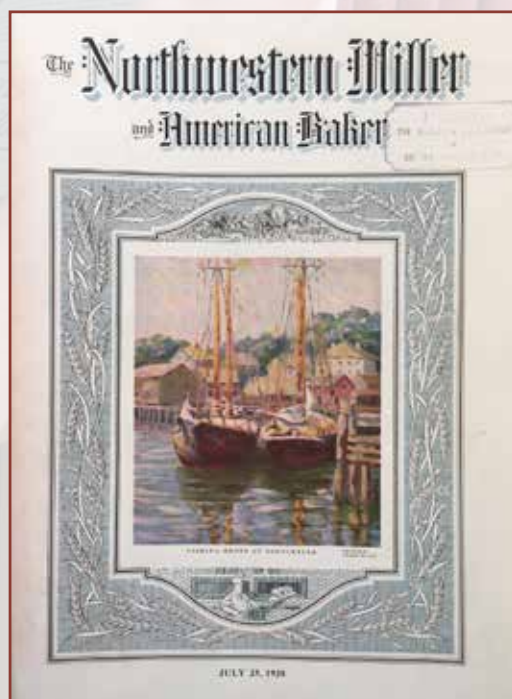
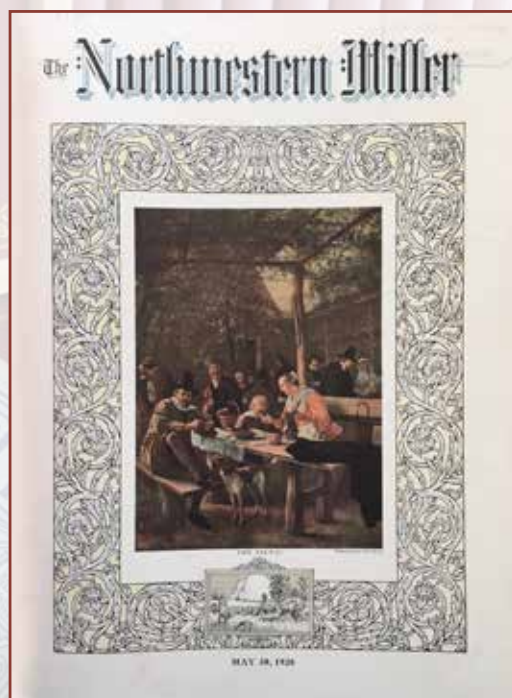
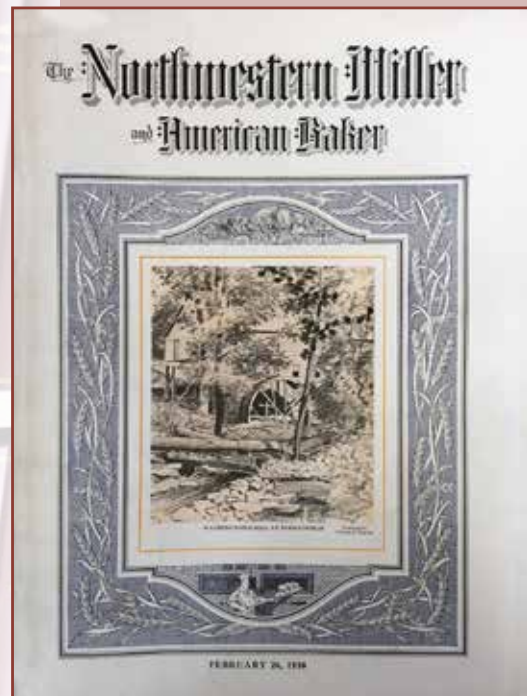
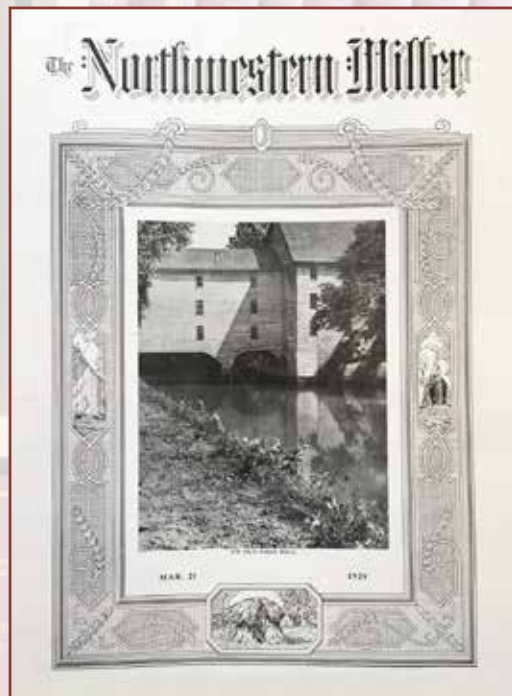
For well over 100 years milling technology has been global with many magazines serving or having served our industry from flour and food to feed and oilseed processing and now to fish feeds.

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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Art in the Archive

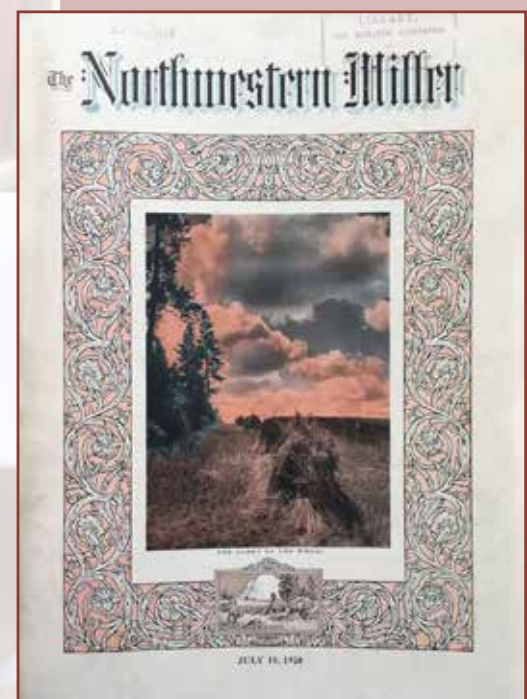
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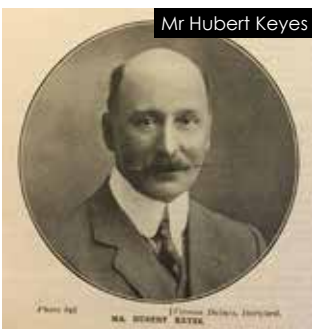
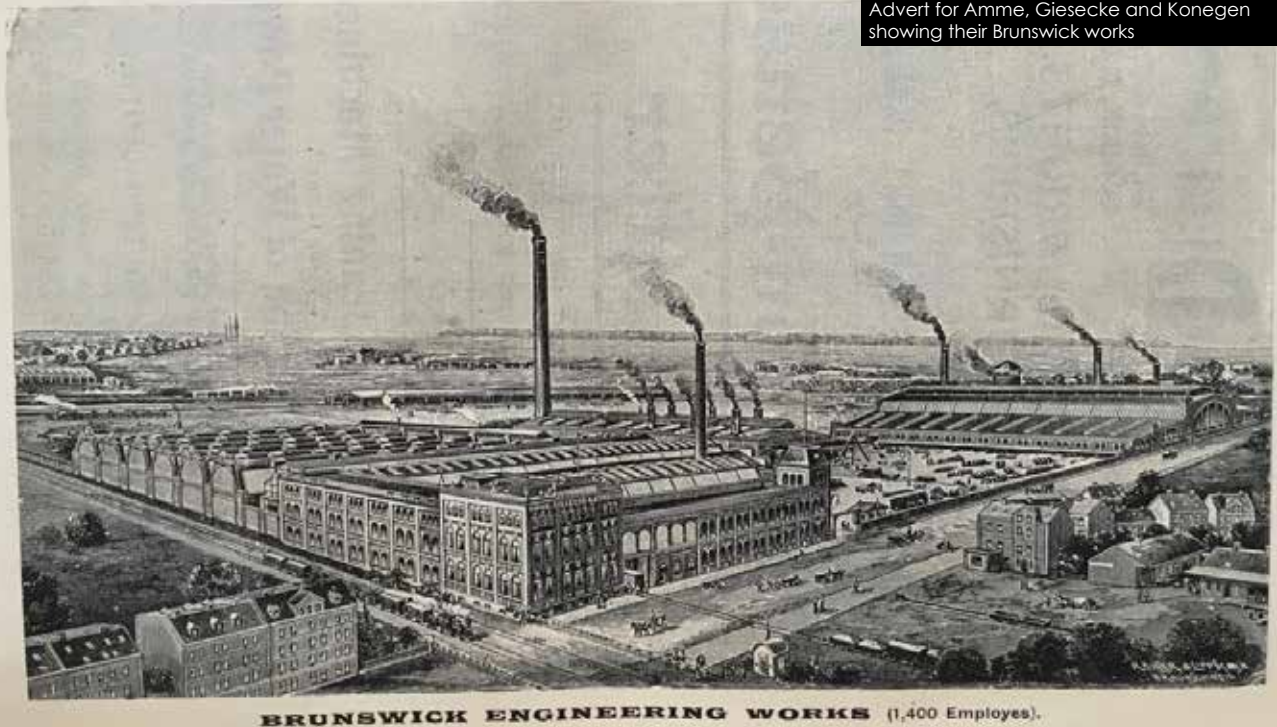


Mills Archive



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Mr Hubert Keyes



Mr SK Keyes

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sieves in a main frame of angle irons to ensure rigidity, each suspended by canes from a small frame fixed to the timbers above which also carried the pedestal from which the driving spindle was suspended. The mill still used the old type plansifter but only for offal grading. The two systems were seen working side by side, the newer taking less power to run, and running much more smoothly.

The setup of the mill was such that each alternate floor had the machinery installed on them, the ground or first floor containing the shafting from which the rolls were driven along with the elevator bottoms and the Ageka detachers. The third floor was the roller floor; the fifth held the purifiers and the seventh or top was the plansifter floor. The three intermediate floors were vacant except for the spouting and trunking passing through them.

The purifier floor had seven double Ageka sieve purifiers, the silks on these could be changed in half a minute without stopping the machine or feed. Each machine was fitted with a separate suction sleeve filter dust collector, built into the top of the settling chambers revolving slowly, and at the same time cleaned by a reversed current of air. A worm discharged the dust caught in a small hopper.

The roller floor had all Ageka machines. The ceiling was quite low but by the arrangements of the rollers had an almost loft appearance. The only spouts to be seen were the cylindrical glass feed spouts mounted on the roll hoppers and reaching to the floor above, enabling the roller men to see at a glance that the stock to the rolls was flowing properly. The wheat preparing plant had been remodelled by the engineers and included new whizzer and wheat conditioners.

The geographical and historical spread of our holdings at the Mills Archive mean that I can only provide snapshots; if you would like to know more please email me.

mills@millsarchive.org

