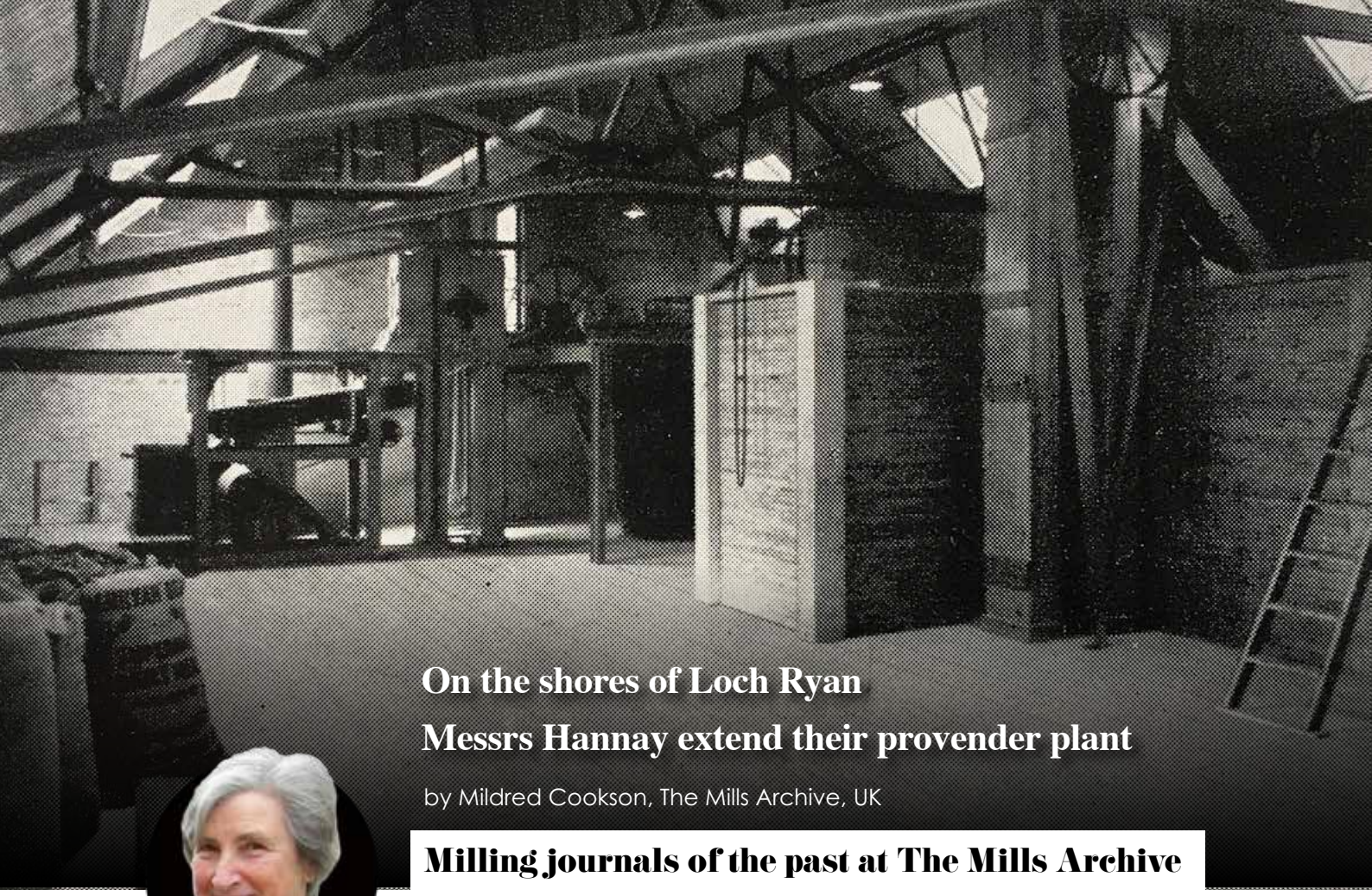


On the shores of Loch Ryan
Messrs Hannay extend their provender plant

by Mildred Cookson, The Mills Archive, UK

Milling journals of the past at The Mills Archive

by Mildred Cookson, Mills Archive Trust, UK

The Royal Burgh of Stranraer, Wigtownshire in Scotland is situated at the head of Loch Ryan, where it has a safe and spacious harbour. At the time of this article (MILLING magazine, June 18, 1938) the writer commented on the strategic importance of it as a seaplane base on seeing a squadron of giant, triple engine bombers riding at anchor next to the more peaceful traffic of the daily service of passenger steamers to their destination of Larne in Northern Ireland.

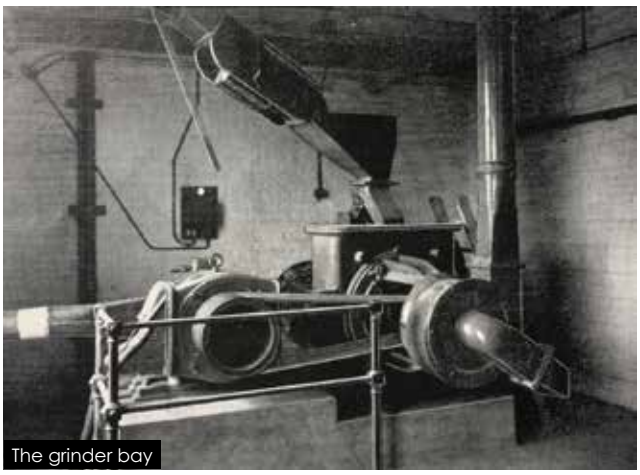
On the western shore of the Loch stood the white walled mill of Messrs R&A Hannay Ltd, which blended in with its surroundings. The Hannays were famous in Scottish milling history, and although the Stranraer mill had been in their hands since 1845, it was by no means their oldest property.

The oatmeal mill at Corswall, five or six miles from Stranraer, was acquired by the family in 1820 and even at that time the Hannays had a record of several centuries as millers behind them.

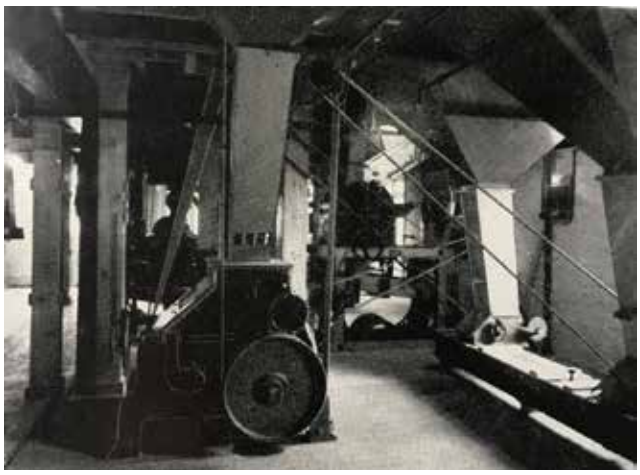
The commercial firm of AH Hannay was founded in 1870 by the brothers Robert and Alexander and in 1911 became a limited liability company. The firm did not have all smooth sailing as in 1899 the mill was burnt down and had to be built almost completely.

The most modern lines

Originally the oatmeal mill traded in feeding stuffs and



The grinder bay



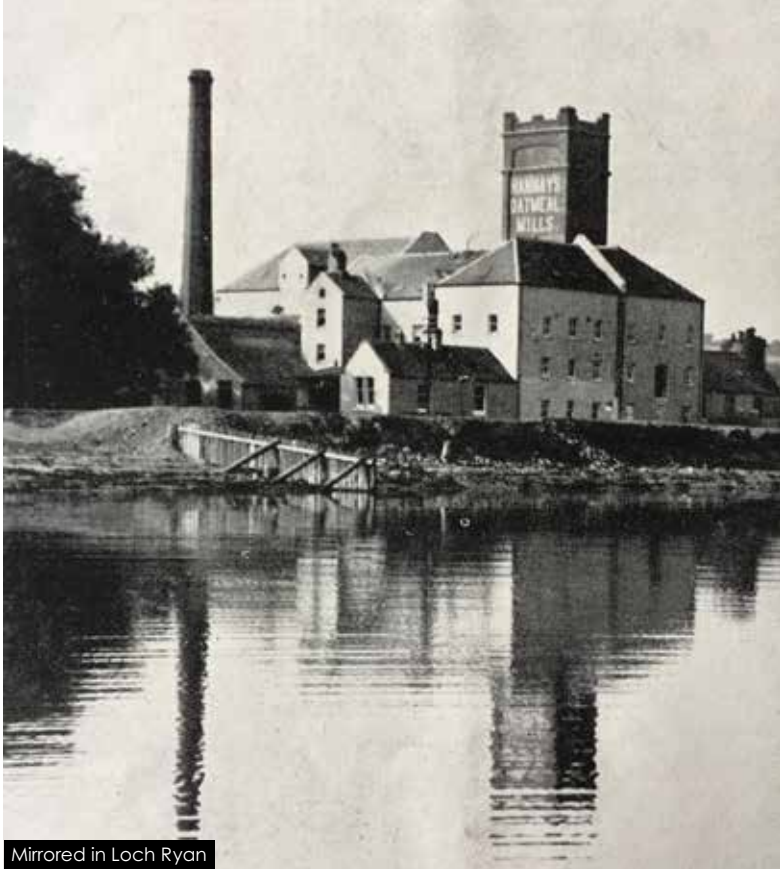
gradually increased this from year to year until in 1937 it was decided to extend this side of the business. In that year a new provender section was built, equipped with the most modern lines.

At the same time, it was decided to provide new motive power, as the steam engine provided insufficient horsepower to drive both the existing oatmeal mill and the proposed provender plant.

George Porteus & Sons of Leeds were asked to submit their ideas. Steam, electricity and crude oil were all considered; calculations as to working cost and efficiency were given and, in the end, electricity took preference for economy and cleanliness of operation.

This, along with the erection of the new mill was entrusted to Mr Porteus. The new provender mill was brought into operation in August 1937.

The district surrounding Stranraer was ideal for provender milling. It had a famous dairying centre and almost adjoining the mill was a modern creamery. The mill was ideally situated for receiving grain supplies, as oats could be obtained from local farmers, while barley, maize, peas etc, could be brought easily from Glasgow or Belfast.



Mirrored in Loch Ryan

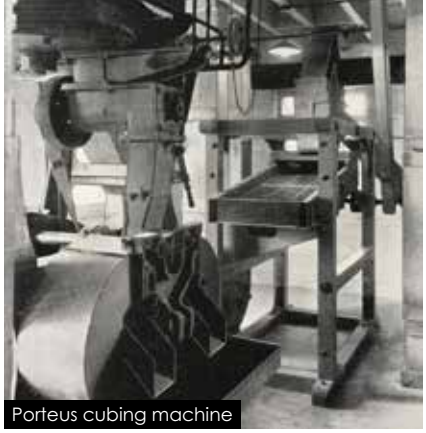
Well-lit & spacious

The new extension to the mill consisted of four well-lit and spacious floors, the outer walls were painted white to conform with the older building. Entering the mill via the loading bay one encountered an intake elevator capable of dealing with seven and a half tons per hour, and adjacent to this was a five-tonne mixer and molassing plant for the manufacture of balanced rations.

In a special fireproof bay stood the 'Porteus No 4' grinder, a massive machine that would deal with two tonnes of maize per hour, driven by a 65hp engine. The product of the grinder was blown up to a cyclone extending from the fourth to the third floor and was bagged off on the first floor.

Ingenious & space saving

On the first floor was the Porteus patent feeder for the grinder,


Porteus cubing machine


Porteus molasses mixer

which together with the measurers below the four bins, worm etc, was driven by a 3hp motor. The whole layout appeared ingenious as well as space saving.

Near the feed was the oat and pea roll fed from its own bin, and not far away was the 'Porteus No 2' cereal cutter, which had a capacity of 30cwts per hour and driven by a 20hp motor on the floor above.

Sacking was carried out near the machine itself. Standing apart from the other machines on the first floor was the Porteus cubing machine, having a capacity of two tonnes of cubes or one ton of poultry pellets per hour. Cubes and pellets came out of the machine with a polished appearance that impressed customers.

Unnecessary spouting & conveyors

On the second floor was the cooler and service bin as well as the meal mixer with all the cubing accessories driven by one motor. The cooler extended to this floor from the one above.

As every provender miller knew, cooling was one of the most difficult problems of the cubing process, but Mr Porteus solved it. When the cubes left the machine, they were cool, and no bags were to be seen steaming, as was the case in some plants.

The fourth floor was laid out neatly with the tops of the meal mixer, service bin and cooler with the appropriate elevators, also the fan for the cooler and the sieve for the dressing of the final cubes. Near the stair head was the top of the grinder cyclone, with its calico sleeve etc.

The main portion of the floor was occupied by the upper portion of the storage bins which were neatly varnished. There were five bins each capable of storing 20 tonnes of grain and in addition there was a smaller service bin feeding the oat and pea roll. It was said that what struck the visitor most was the absence from every floor of unnecessary spouting and conveyors, and the compactness of each unit saving considerable space.

Mr Porteus had provided a provender plant that would compare favourably with anything similar in the kingdom. Beside the original produce of oatmeal and flaked oats they produced and sent out, they could now add to their already wide range of cereal meals and balanced rations a complete range of cubes and pellets to their large circle of customers, which extended throughout the southwest of Scotland.

These new products were regarded as adding a fresh lustre to the house of Hannay, already an honoured name.