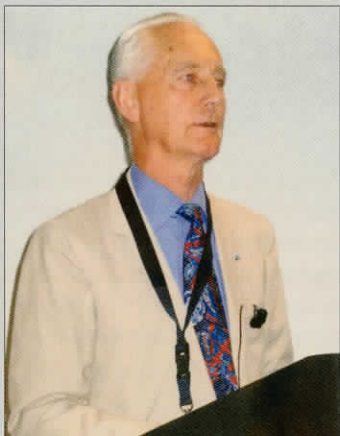


# Michael Harverson 1937 - 2017

On 2 March we heard the sad news that Michael had died.

Michael for many people was associated with being President of TIMS (The International Molinological Society) but there was so much more to Michael than that.



He was born in 1937 near Tonbridge in Kent between the two smock mills: Watts Cross Mill at Hildenborough and Stocks Mill at Leigh Green. He attended the famous public

school at Tonbridge, and often recalled to me how on his first day at the school he mistook one of the pupils for a member of staff, the pupil in question was none other than Colin Cowdrey who later became the Kent and England Cricket Captain! Michael went up to Cambridge to read Modern Languages at Corpus Christi College and this led to a career in teaching including posts in Iran, Dauntsey's School in Wiltshire and Watford Grammar School for Boys, where he became deputy head teacher.

In addition to his work as a council member and later president of TIMS he served for many years on the Section committee. With Geoffrey Starmer, Jenny West and others he worked as part of a team that organised many of the Section meetings between 2003 and 2011 including the memorable meeting on the 'Art and Iconography of Mills' at the Art Workers Guild. It was at this meeting that Michael was awarded honorary life membership of the Section. In presenting him with a certificate to recognise this, Martin Watts recalled how at an archaeologist's conference in Rome he was asked whether he had "met a gentleman called Michael Harverson". This to many of us described Michael perfectly: a gentle man and a gentleman.

Michael acted as the Section's appointed trustee to the Mills Archive Trust from its inception until his retirement in 2014. It was under his guidance that the Section's archive was transferred to Watlington House. During this time he also compiled two volumes of drawings from the Archive's collection of his friend Stephen Buckland. He also worked on the Frank Gregory Collection and many other areas of the Archive's activity.

Michael's expertise as a linguist was not confined to his professional life as a teacher; he also translated (with Owen Ward) two volumes of Yves Coutant's work on medieval mill technology in Flanders as well as several other monographs in the series "Bibliotheca Molinologica".

It is said that travel broadens the mind and this certainly was the case with Michael. He visited many countries including those that he described as 'The Muslim World'. The story of the mills (water, wind and animal powered) in this region were the subject of his Rex Wailes Memorial Lecture in 1999. With Elizabeth Beazley, he had already published in 1982 "Living with the desert: working buildings of the Iranian plateau".

Michael was a consummate wordsmith. He was able to conjure up images in speech. I recall one part of his Rex Wailes lecture when he compared the official at the Ministry of Culture in Tehran saying there are no windmills in Iran to a 17th century authority on everyday life in Iran who wrote "there being no windmills in Persia". Michael commented that both men had not themselves travelled to the remoter areas of Sistan and Khorosan.



Michael's contribution to our milling heritage was special in so many ways. He worked as a guide at Cromer, Hertfordshire's oldest and most complete windmill. In 2006 he set up the TIMS Educational Trust, a UK charity with an international remit.

I believe you can tell a great deal about someone by their bookshelves. In Michael's home, which he shared with his wife Susan, there was a wide range of books not only about mills but also on other subjects such as art, music, Islam and natural history. Michael was interested in so many things but more than anything he was interested in people and that's what made him so special. He never let his scholarly approach to life get in the way of developing meaningful friendships literally from all over the world.

We will all miss his friendship, humour, wisdom and encouragement in so many ways.

God speed my friend.

Simon Hudson