

## Milling in Hull: The flourmills of Hull concluded

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

by Mildred Cookson, The Mills Archive, UK



The articles in “Milling” (June 11, 1904) provide a great deal more than I could summarise in my three-part tribute to Hull as a milling centre at that time. My final article on the topic covers two important milling families, the Crathornes and the Thompsons.

#### Crathorne and Sons Ltd

Crathorne’s Grovehill Flour Mills in Beverley were founded by Josiah Crathorne in 1830, when wind was their only power. This typical miller, successful in the days of millstones, was born in 1809. With his skill as a miller and good judgment as a wheat buyer, he built up a large business. He eventually added steam power and increased his plant to 14 pairs of millstones. Although not in Hull itself, a large portion of Crathorne’s flour was sold in that city. In 1860-1880 the flour, often noted as being of a higher price than other local flours, had such a great reputation in Hull that almost every grocer had printed in large letters over his shop “Beverley Flour Sold Here”.

Crathorne was the first in the district to use silk for dressing, but having made considerable wealth by the aid of millstones, he doubted the value of rolls. His sons, John and Josiah, however, recognised the inevitable and ultimately he consented to have a roller plant installed, but did not live to see it running for more than a year or so before dying in 1886. The sons carried on the business, in 1889 TD Dunn became a partner and in 1892 they formed Josiah Crathorne and Sons Ltd.

In 1893 the mills were remodelled, Emerson’s purifiers introduced and the

breaks were reduced from six to five. The original plant was on the Seck system; some of their roller mills were still running in 1904. In 1895 TD Dunn retired and Charles Walker took over control. That year saw more improvements, including the introduction of better cleaning machinery, and the washing and drying processes. In 1901 a new Galloway boiler was put in.

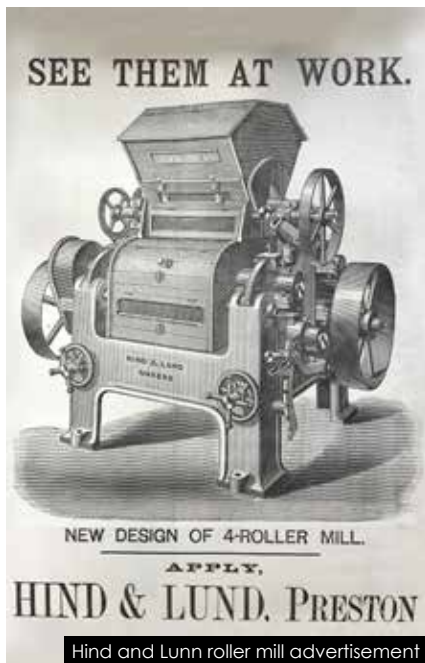
#### JG Thompson Ltd (Grosvenor Mill & Albert Mills)

This firm of Hull millers is of particular interest to us, as the family have now deposited their archive stretching back over 100 years with the Mills Archive. Their history provides another instance of the migration of flour milling from the country to seaports. In the early part of the 1800s Leonard Thompson occupied a windmill at Hessle, a few miles from Hull. About 1840 his son Joseph Green Thompson (the senior partner in the firm in 1904) became apprenticed with a miller at Welton mill, then an important water mill west of Hull. He became a journeyman miller with Mr Marshall of Hessle and later the manager for Mrs Kirk of Analby Mill. Anxious to enter into his own business, JG Thompson became the tenant of a mill at

Cottingham and in 1854 took over the best windmill in the district, Skidby Mill. This mill stood on high ground on the fringe of the Yorkshire Wolds and with a fair breeze its five pair of millstones could be worked merrily.

Here Thompson prospered; his young family grew around him and took to milling as an occupation. In 1875 he took on Rye Hill Mill, Burstwick and sent his eldest son, Leonard Thompson, to look after it. In 1878 the migration to Hull took place, but Skidby Mill was retained (see the image from a contemporary lantern slide in the Mills Archive) and was still worked as a provender mill by the firm, with JG Thompson, then over 80 years old, residing





nearby with son, Benjamin Thompson. The latter was the acting partner in the limited company, which then controlled the greatly enlarged business which was formed nearly a century before. A partial tenancy had been arranged with R Marshall who then owned the Albert Mills in Dansom Lane, and who had previously been junior partner in the firm of White and Marshall, important millstone millers at the Albert Mills. Sometime later Messrs JG and B Thompson bought the Albert Mills and also became the occupiers of the Stepney Mills, which for many years had been operated by James Rank, and later by his eldest son Joseph (see my article in the July 2017 issue of 'Milling and Grain'). In 1880

rollers and purifiers were introduced by the Thompsons into both mills for treating middlings made by stones. In 1885 a complete five-sack roller plant was put in the Dansom Lane Mill and the Stepney mills were given up to another purpose before being pulled down. In 1901 the opportunity to buy the fine mills in Grosvenor Street was taken up, and with Dansom Lane Mill the output was increased to 24 sacks per hour. The Grosvenor Mills themselves were quite new having been built in sections from 1890 to 1898. There was a fine mill building, separate warehouse wheat cleaning department, and silo adjoining. The first floor was fully covered with four lines of



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

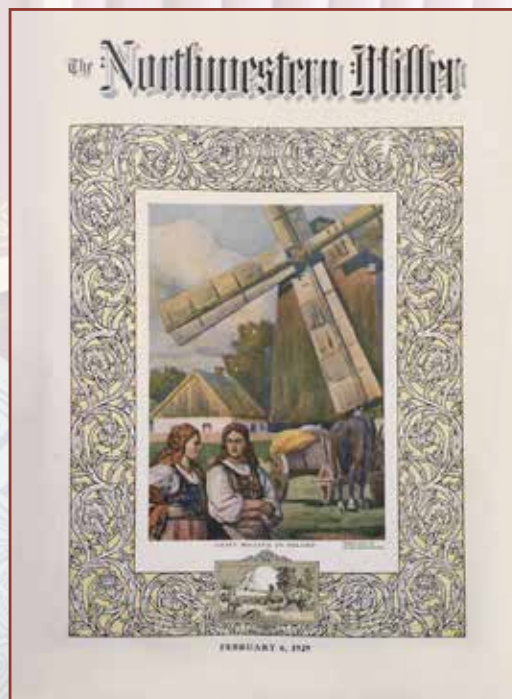
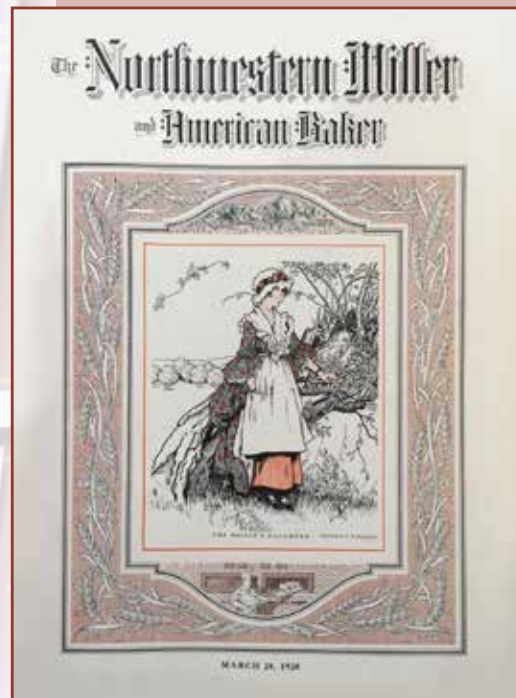
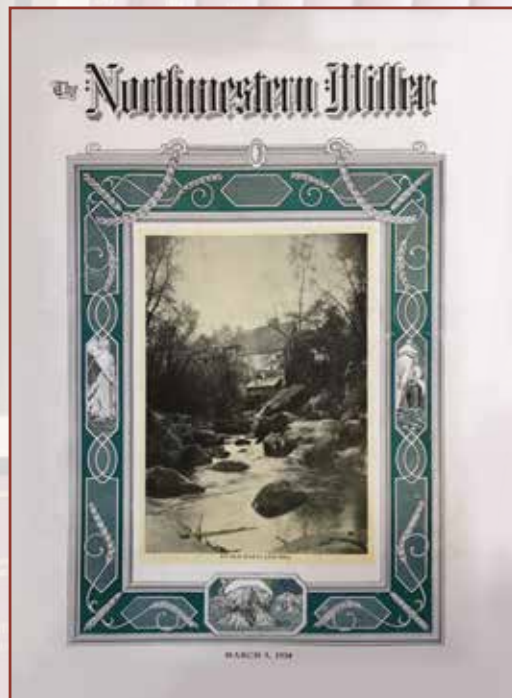
For well over 100 years milling technology has been global with many magazines serving or having served our industry from flour and food to feed and oilseed processing and now to fish feeds.

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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## Art in the Archive

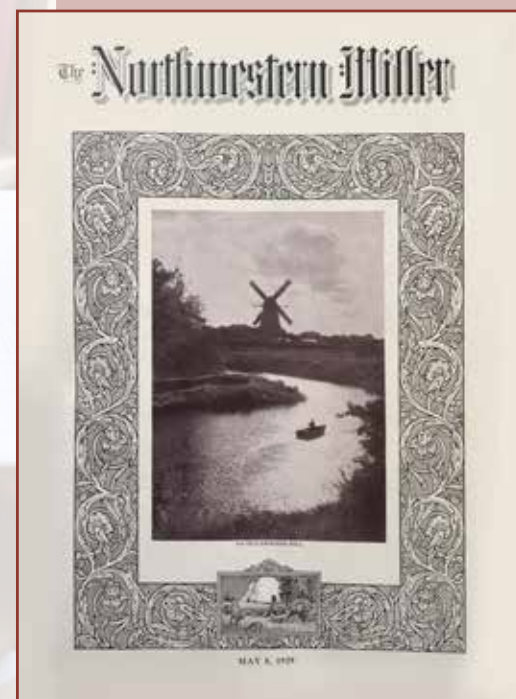
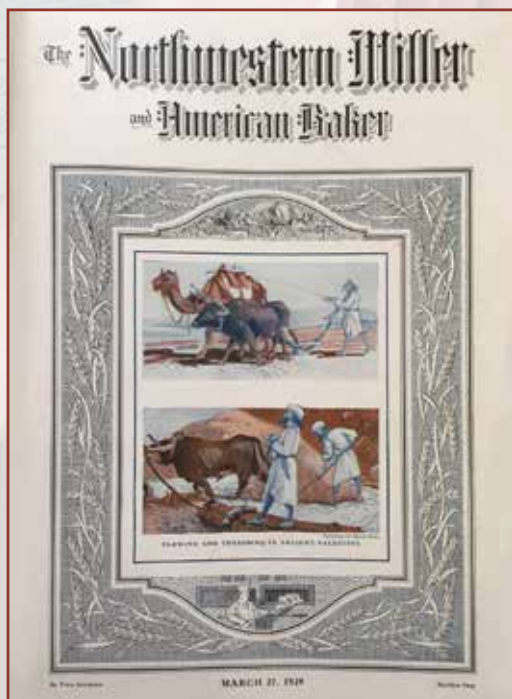
We are a charity that saves the world's milling images and documents and makes them freely available for reference. We have more than two million records. We aim to cover the entire history of milling, from its ancient origins up to the present day. Find out what we have and how you can help us grow.

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**Mills  
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Mr Joseph Green Thompson



Mr Benjamin Thompson

roller mills, most of which were Simons and varied in size from 20-40 inches. Mather and Platt installed a complete sprinkler system on both the dry and wet systems. As illustrated, the water tank was supported on iron columns and situated on the top of the silo tower. The proprietors spoke highly of their system of bulk grain transit over the street in Hull, saving them many hundreds of pounds per year compared to the alternative sack systems. The Albert Mills were built around 1870 with seven pairs of millstones. In the first few years these were worked by White and Marshall, but on the dissolution of their partnership a few years later Marshall carried on until the joint occupancy with the Thompsons was arranged in 1876. The millstones worked

in conjunction with rollers, until 1885 when the complete roller system was installed. The roller floor was laid out in two lines of mills, five to the four breaks, eight to the reductions and two to the scratch system. Most of the mills were by Hind and Lund, and after 20 years were still running smoothly. By having the Grosvenor Mills on the long and the Albert Mills on the short systems, the firm was able to please all classes of customers. Experience showed them that among Midland bakers, some preferred the granular flour through silks numbers from seven to 10, whereas others preferred the finely dressed flour through silk numbers 12-15. As the smaller mill was on the short system and worked fewer

hours per week, it was concluded that the majority liked the finely dressed flour.

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 at:

*mills@millsarchive.org*



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