

Longitudinal Section

The Murrumbidgee Milling Co Ltd's Roller Mill, Wagga Wagga, NSW

Milling journals of the past at The Mills Archive

by Mildred Cookson, The Mills Archive, UK



The Murrumbidgee Co-operative Milling Co Ltd was formed in August 1889 for the purpose of erecting a roller plant at Wagga Wagga on the main line between Sydney and Melbourne. It became the second largest milling company in New South Wales outside Sydney. It ceased operation in the early 1980s

and the grounds were taken over by Goodman Fielder in 1987. Goodman Fielder operated the mill for another 10 years before it closed its doors on December 8, 2000.

The Miller (January 5, 1891) paid tribute to the mill constructed in an area not previously known as a wheat growing area.

However, as the mill was built large areas nearby were turned over to producing very high quality wheat. The capital of the mill in 1891 was around £30,000, provided by the farmers in the surrounding district.

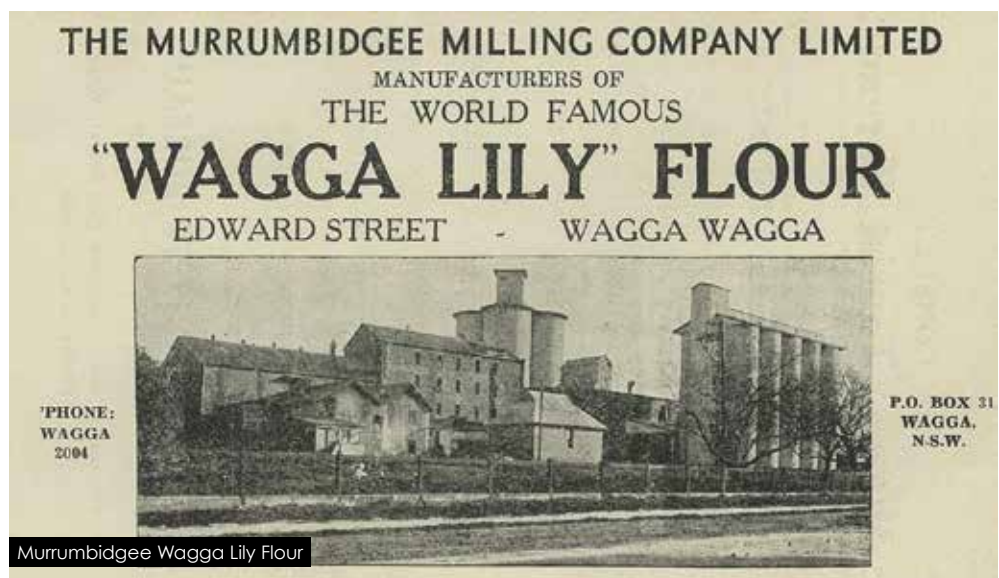
Norman Selfe, the man responsible for ordering the machinery for the mill was a consulting engineer to the New South Wales Government Railways. He carefully examined various roller mill systems at work in Australia, and collected reports from millers who had already adopted the roller system. As a result he selected the well-known milling engineers Thomas Robinson & Son of Railway Works, Rochdale, Lancashire to erect a complete plant on their latest system and to

supply a well-tested engine and boiler.

The order was given to Robinson's on November 1, 1889 and by the middle of June 1890, the plant had been erected, losing no time in executing the order. The capacity of the plant was to clean not less than 100 bushels of wheat, and to make no less than 13 sacks of flour per hour, but by 1891 it was already producing 16 sacks per hour, much to the satisfaction of the owners.

The mill was arranged in two buildings, one block containing the engine, wheat cleaning and flour milling machinery, and the second block was used entirely for the storage of wheat. There was a siding from the railway which ran down the entire length of the mill and wheat storage compartment, and this line also branched off and ran between the mill and warehouse, so that the facilities for receiving the produce and discharging manufactured products were ideal. Robinsons had previously supplied plans for the building to best suit it for installing the machinery.

The illustrations show that the building containing the roller



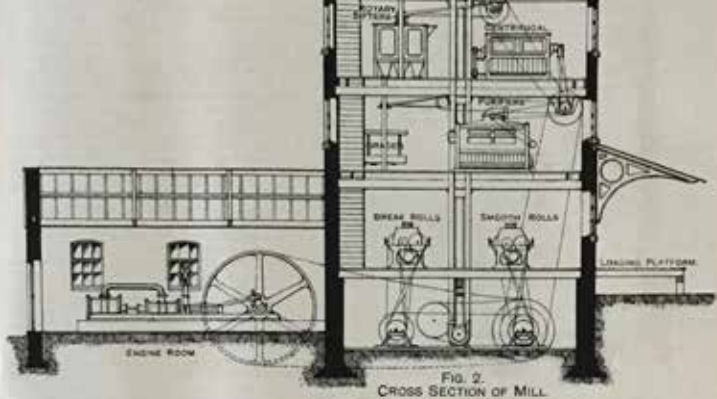


FIG. 2.
CROSS SECTION OF MILL.

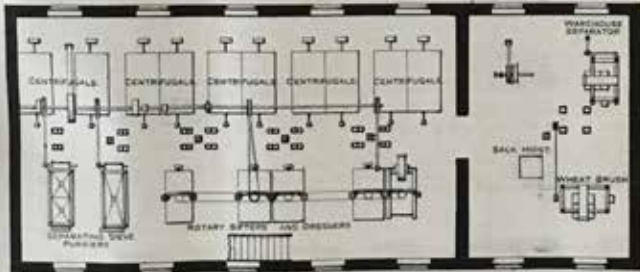


FIG. 5.—PLAN OF 3RD FLOOR.



Cross-Section and Floor Plans

mill plant was divided into two sections, one of which contained the wheat cleaning machinery. In the basement of the mill were two lines of shafting for driving the roller mills on the floor above along with 16 elevator bottoms. The elevators carried the various products from the different machines to others, for the next step in the gradual reduction process.

ROBINSON'S SYSTEM

1903 Advertisement
for the Robinson
System

NEW PATENT "Diagonal" Roller Mill.
Made in all Sizes up to 60 inches long.

GREAT CAPACITY.
PERFECT GRANULATION.
NO FLAKING.

Prices and Full Particulars Furnished on Application to

THOMAS ROBINSON & SON, LIMITED,
Railway Works, ROCHDALE, England.

On the first floor, the roller mills were arranged in two lines, with the elevators passing up between them. The wheat was broken down on the system of six breaks, and the semolina middlings and dust in nine reductions. The six breaks were accomplished on six roller mills fitted with four grooved chilled iron rolls, nine inches by 24. The reductions of the semolina

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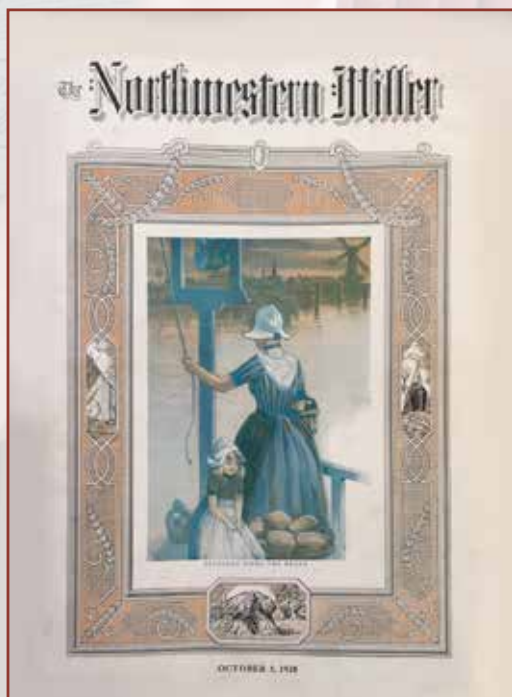
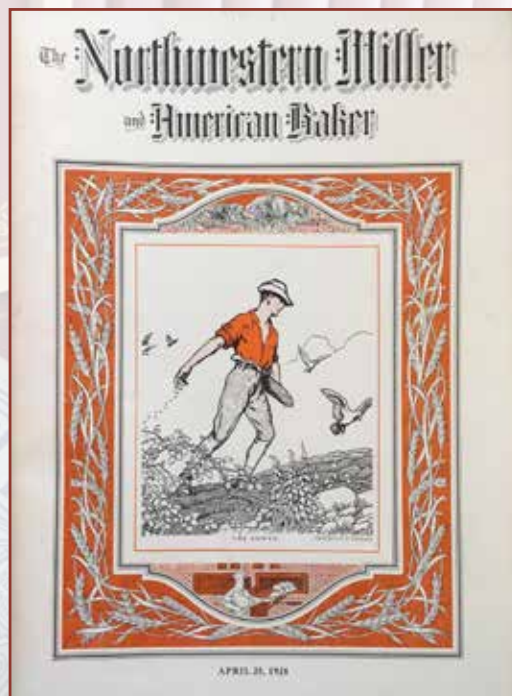
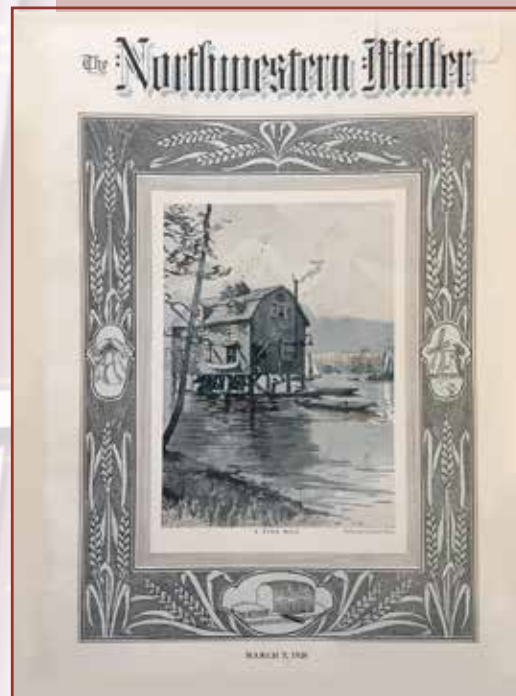
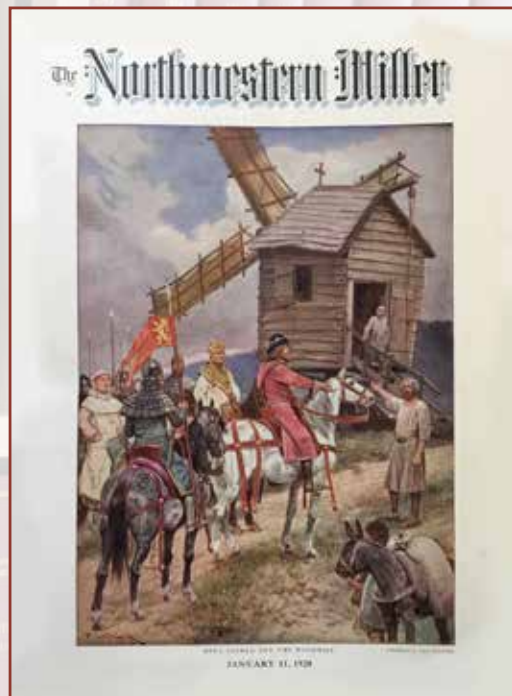
For well over 100 years milling technology has been global with many magazines serving or having served our industry from flour and food to feed and oilseed processing and now to fish feeds.

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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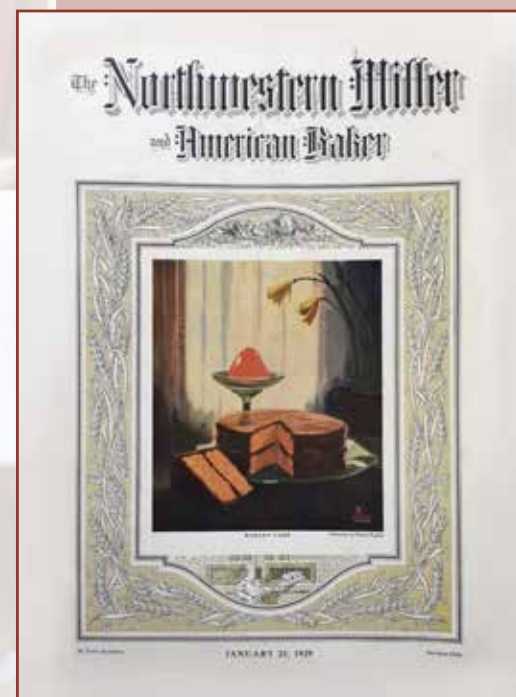
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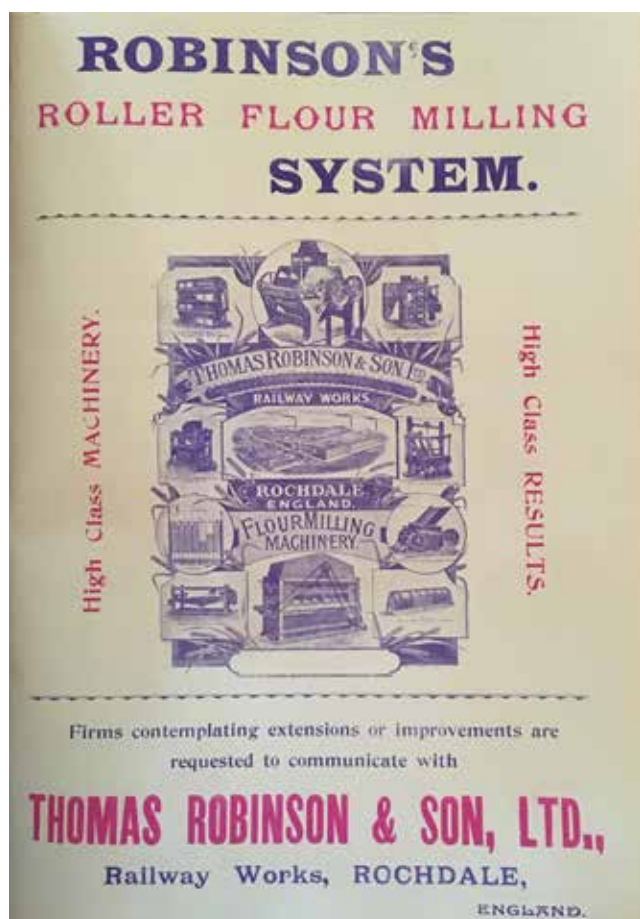
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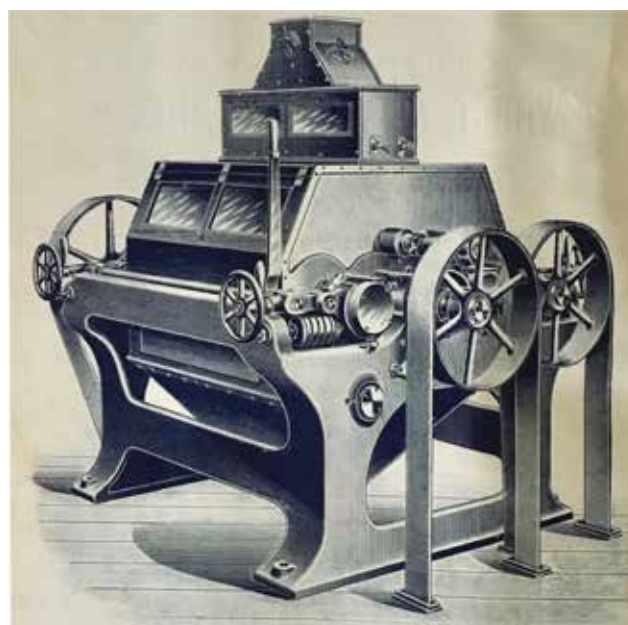
1902 Advertisement for the Robinson System

and middlings, and the flouring of the dunst were done on three double roller mills fitted with four nine-inch by 24 smooth chilled iron rolls, and six double roller mills fitted with four nine-inch by 18 smooth chilled iron rolls.

The second floor had five “Diamond” <R> purifiers and a wheat grader. The wheat grader divided the wheat into two sizes before it went to the first break roller mill so that the large and small berries could be treated on separate pairs of rolls. On the third floor were the rotary scalpers and centrifugals, and the fourth floor (the top floor) the dressing reels were arranged along with elevator tops. The motive power for the roller mill plant and wheat cleaning machinery was a compound type, high pressure 14 inch diameter cylinder and a low pressure 24 inch cylinder with a stroke of 30 inches, working at 80 revolutions per minute. The steam was obtained from an externally fired, multi-tubular boiler, 14 feet long by six-foot diameter. Power was transmitted direct from the flywheel to the main shaft by means of six ropes.

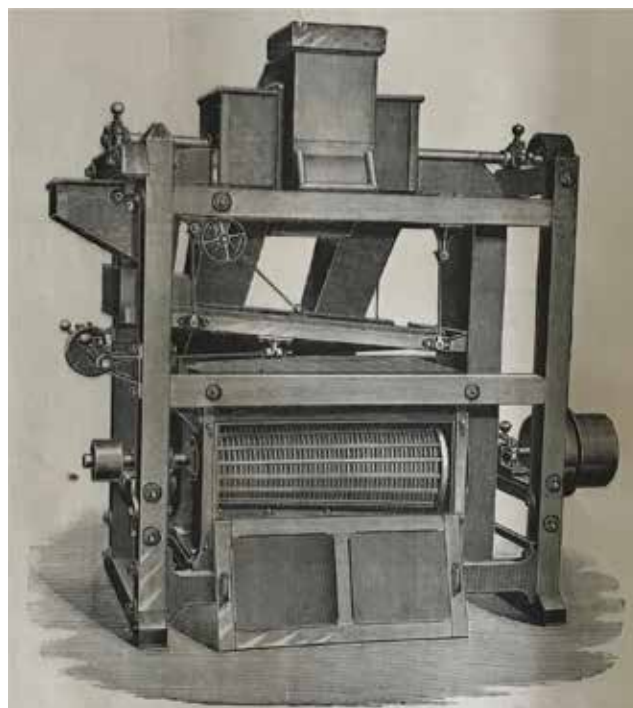
The wheat was brought to the mill either by cart of railway wagons, and was first put into a small receiving bin at the bottom of the wheat-cleaning department. The elevators lifted the wheat to the top of the building, where it fell on to a large receiving warehouse separator. After passing through this machine, a worm conveyor transferred the wheat to the storage compartment and then into bins. When needed the wheat was conveyed to a second warehouse separator, and then to a grader, cockle and barley cylinder and finally aspirated, scoured and brushed. After this it was ready for being manufactured into flour in the roller mill. The wheat cleaning machines discharged their dust into a “Unique” Robinson machine, which was the first to be used in a mill in Australia.

A letter from the owners had been received by Mr Robinson to



Above: Robinson patent double horizontal roller mill

Below: Robinson combined wheat scourer and separator



say that the flour made at the mill had commanded the highest price in the Sydney market, and their engineer issued a certificate stating that the machinery and erection had all proved to have been carried out satisfactorily.

After closure, the milling site was heritage-listed and is currently under a AUS\$35 million redevelopment which includes restoring the historic building back to its former glory.

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.