

GARDEN PARTY Mills Archive

On Saturday June 11, 2016 Roger, Tuti and I travelled as guests to attend The Mills Archive's Annual Summer Garden Party. Milling and Grain's publishing house, Perendale Publishers is a Patron of The Mills Archive. As a partner to the Mills Archive, supporting this annual even is a true privilege, and we were prepared, as ever, for an interesting and enjoyable day.

The event was organised by Ron Cookson, Chairman of the Trust of the Mills Archive and Mildred Cookson, an Archive Foundation Trustee, as a show of gratitude for the support of all their Friends, who help them continue to care for the records of our milling heritage and make them freely available to the public.

Between them, Ron, who was awarded an MBE honour in 2012 for services to heritage, and Mildred, a former flour miller at the Mapledurham watermill for nearly thirty years, no one has a better directive to head such an organisation. Furthermore, as you will be aware, Mildred also writes for Milling and Grain!

On the day upon an 11am arrival time, all guests filed into the library. All were able to view a 100 year long archive for the 'Northwestern Miller' in fantastic colour and quality. Presenting and aiding visitors here was Elizabeth Trout, Librarian and Information Manager. The bound copies were welcomed by all visitors and it started off the day with enthusiasm of seeing new projects come to fruition.

This particular project was possible from a grant by the Mercers' Company. In the round, by obtaining cultural and heritage funding, this archive has been brought back to the industry to understand the past, and preserve positive contributions to the industry from documents to buildings, and more. All this effort helps the development move forward with a proud sense of heritage and founding.

The 'Quern to Computer' exhibition in the Founders' Room was very popular. It is based on the project of the same name, and managed by Archivist, Nathaniel Hodge, who displayed vast knowledge and provided truly interesting answers to visitors' questions.



Spanning from 6000BC right through to modern-day milling, the exhibition was a tangible display of the growth of the milling industry, shown through objects, relics, images and written accounts. From small-scale hand powered milling by those who survived growing and eating wheat, right through to today's digitised, large-scale global industry.

There were models of mills and technologies from past eras as well as milling machinery branded signs of companies that manufactured the tools for milling. Companies that cease to exist today but have given rise to more generations of manufacturers. This exhibition showed how far technologies and techniques had fundamentally changed; it was a useful show of how great change continues today and into the future.

In the Garden Hall there was a Owlsworth IJP display and volunteer projects exhibition. The remarkable efforts of interns and volunteers enables The Mills Archive to deliver a great amount of extra effort to punch above its weight and be an all-encompassing institution of the milling industry. With good links to Reading University students and other local people able to give their time and efforts to this charity, it grows from strength to strength. I hope there is another garden party next year to celebrate the work of this organisation again.



The Mills Archive is an international archive for the milling industry located at Watlington House in Reading, in the UK. Since 2002 the group provides an archive of millions of records both in physical and online formats.

Find out more and access the archives at: <https://millsarchive.org> and find more out about The Mills Archive. ↻

