

MILL SITE INDEXING; A PROGRESS REPORT from 1965 to 1985

A. A. Bryan

A watermill index was begun in the British Isles by Anders Jespersen while working in Fife in the early 1950's, who was interested in scientifically recording watermills and who had the ability to reference and label fieldwork results of all types. He decided to use the National Grid four figure co-ordinates to describe the location of a site, and allocated a serial number to each separate identifiable mill site, with a system of codes to describe the condition of each mill found. His work continues mainly in Denmark, but he is keenly interested in the study of mills throughout the world, and was a founder member of the International Molinological Society (TIMS).

As the idea of formally studying mills spread, other field workers became interested in participating in recording work - particularly David H. Jones and Ken Major. In the early 1960's the Wind- and Watermill Section of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) was approached by David Jones with a proposal that they and the members of the section should participate in assembling a watermill index. This was closely followed by a similar proposal to index windmills, from Ken Major.

The mill index work done in the 1960's introduced a number of improvements on earlier work. This included the use of six figure National Grid co-ordinates and the use of reporting forms to assist the field worker when communicating with the keeper of the index. The four figure reference is far too coarse for use in a densely mill populated territory such as the British Isles.

The resulting mill index records grew rapidly up to about 1970 when the better known examples of wind and watermills were reported by fieldworkers and placed on the appropriate index. After this, the records came in more slowly, and by 1980 the whole subject of mill recording was in need of review and modernisation.

Since 1980 work has been carried out to computerise the keeping of alphanumeric mill records such as the index and record cards. The master records are entered into a data file by typing, and stored on magnetic discs. Data processing techniques, particularly the ability to sort lists with respect to a particular parameter, are used to create output lists of various types. The entries on the master record can be readily appended and updated. The whole or part of the records can be readily copied and distributed by methods other than printing, such as by copying magnetic discs, or by using "electronic mail" systems.

The work being undertaken at present involves cross checking mill records for errors such as duplicated entries and incorrect grid locations. The master records are still being expanded by adding new material which has recently been reported from field workers and other sources. The rapid fall in the price of computing power has enabled new techniques to be used for error trapping and reduced the cost of keeping the master records. The cost of printing files for use outside of a computer environment remains constant and fairly expensive and is only used for work which is reasonably conclusive and not likely to be subject to frequent changes in the near future.

Further work is going to be very largely concentrated on improving the watermill records in order to try to get much closer to a definitive list before there is even more destruction. The total number of known watermill sites in England and Wales alone approaches 5000, so what is the best estimate of the true number of watermill sites? The next top figure we could start discussing is 10 000, but even this could be exceeded.

More standardised types of computer are becoming available at much lower prices and the use of these "clones" should solve the information exchange problem. These should enable field workers to add to known records and not merely create the same entries on a different machine.

Exchange and distribution of records on disc is made more attractive by the low cost. At £1.25 per disc, this is now so low as to be insignificant.

An Example of a Watermill Index List Which is in Serial Number Order.
 The mills shown beyond serial number 026 have not yet been allocated numbers.

CU.Muncaster	.	.001.SD096977.Working	.81.JW.FG
NY.Lothersdale	.J Wilson (weaving)	.002.SD960459.Wheel Presvd.	.81.DJ.AB
CU.Gilpin	.	.003.SD433943.?	.65.FG
LA.Worston	.	.004.SD769427.?	.65.FG
NY.Bainbridge	.Low	.005.SD934902.Complete	.65.EG
NY.Askrigg	.West	.006.SD944912.Incomplete	.65.EG
CU.Dentdale	.Rash	.007.SD659898.?	.65.FG
CU.Low Gill	.Davybank	.008.SD617962.?	.65.FG
CU.Winster	.High	.009.SD414942.Derelict	.65.KM
CU.Crosthwaite	.(corn)	.010.SD441908.Working	.65.KM
CU.Underbarrow	.(sawmill)	.011.SD464924.Complete	.65.AB
CU.Newby Bridge	.	.012.SD366863.Derelict	.65.KM
CU.Blackbarrow	.Blue Works	.013.SD356850.Derelict	.65.KM
NY.Bainbridge	.(saw)	.014.SD222205.Complete	.65.EG
NY.Hawes	.Gale	.015.SD872894.Modern	.65.EG
NY.Malham	.Smelt	.016.SD882660.Ruin	.65.EG
NY.Hawes	.	.017.SD873898.Empty	.65.
NY.Askrigg	.Low	.018.SD947909.Empty	.65.
NY.Askrigg	.(flax)	.019.SD946911.House	.65.
NY.Bainbridge	.High	.020.SD934901.Modern	.65.
CU.Ulverston	.	.021.SD301797.Incomplete	.65.AB
CU.Lowick	.(spade mill)	.022.SD298853.Empty	.65.AB
NY.Hugill	.Fellfoot	.023.SD998463.Traces	.65.AB
CU.Staveley	.	.024.SD470986.Modern	.65.AB
CU.Staveley	.	.025.SD471986.Ruin	.65.AB
CU.Strickland Ketel	.Weir	.026.SD492973.Modern	.65.AB
CU.Beetham	.Heron	.SD497799.Restoration	.81.JW.KM
CU.Calderbridge	.	.SD042061.Ruin	.78.MD
CU.Hallthwaites Green.	.	.SD180847.	
CU.Lupton	.	.SD564802.Complete	.78.MD
CU.Whitbeck	.North	.SD117846.	
LA.Helmshore	.Higher	.SD78 21 .Restoration	.81.
CU.Hawkshead	.Bobbin Mill	.SD341988.Derelict	.68.KM
CU.Witherslack	.	.SD449842.Complete?	.77.CC
NY.Bentham	.Low	.SD64 69 .Trout farm	.86.PB
CU.Natland Beck	.	.SD519908.Derelict?	.77.CC
CU.Hawkshead	.Hall (saw mill)	.SD348984.Working	.68.KM
CU.Ulverston	.Town	.SD286785.Complete	.78.MD
CU.Newland Bottom	.	.SD283803.Wheel	.78.MD
CU.Preston Richard	.Milton	.SD53 84 .	
CU.Rash	.	.SD66 89 .	
CU.Stainton	.	.SD116947.	
CU.Broadgate	.Thwaites	.SD183867.Wheel	.78.MD
CU.Kendal	.(snuff)	.SD51 92 .?	
CU.Sedbergh	.Burnt	.SD65 92 .	
CU.Kirkby-in-Furness	.Beckside	.SD236822.House +wheel	.77.CC
CU.Linbeck	.	.SD140982.Ruin	
CU.Torver	.Sunny Bank	.SD290924.Empty	Pres.68.KM
CU.Ulpha	.Duddon Furnace	.SD196883.Empty	.68.KM
WATERSD.SRT	11-8-86.		

An Example of a Watermill Index List Which Has Been Sorted Against the Grid Reference to Show the List of Mills in Order of Increasing Grid Reference No.

CU.Calderbridge	.	.SD042061.Ruin	.78.MD
CU.Muncaster	.	.001.SD096977.Working	.81.JW.FG
CU.Stainton	.	.SD116947.	
CU.Whitbeck	.North	.SD117846.	
CU.Linbeck	.	.SD140982.Ruin	
CU.Hallthwaites Green.	.	.SD180847.	
CU.Broadgate	.Thwaites	.SD183867.Wheel	.78.MD
CU.Ulpha	.Duddon Furnace	.SD196883.Empty	.68.KM
CU.Kirkby-in-Furness	.Beckside	.SD236822.House +wheel	.77.CC
CU.Newland Bottom	.	.SD283803.Wheel	.78.MD
CU.Ulverston	.Town	.SD286785.Complete	.78.MD
CU.Torver	.Sunny Bank	.SD290924.Empty Pres.	.68.KM
CU.Lowick	.(spade mill)	.022.SD298853.Empty	.65.AB
CU.Ulverston	.	.021.SD301797.Incomplete	.65.AB
CU.Hawkshead	.Bobbin Mill	.SD341988.Derelict	.68.KM
CU.Hawkshead	.Hall (saw mill)	.SD348984.Working	.68.KM
CU.Blackbarrow	.Blue Works	.013.SD356850.Derelict	.65.KM
CU.Newby Bridge	.	.012.SD366863.Derelict	.65.KM
CU.Winster	.High	.009.SD414942.Derelict	.65.KM
CU.Gilpin	.	.003.SD433943.?	.65.FG
CU.Crosthwaite	.(corn)	.010.SD441908.Working	.65.KM
CU.Witherslack	.	.SD449842.Complete?	.77.CC
CU.Underbarrow	.(sawmill)	.011.SD464924.Complete	.65.AB
CU.Staveley	.	.024.SD470986.Modern	.65.AB
CU.Staveley	.	.025.SD471986.Ruin	.65.AB
CU.Strickland Ketel	.Weir	.026.SD492973.Modern	.65.AB
CU.Beetham	.Heron	.SD497799.Restoration	.81.JW.KM
CU.Kendal	.(snuff)	.SD51 92 .?	
CU.Natland Beck	.	.SD519908.Derelict?	.77.CC
CU.Preston Richard	.Milton	.SD53 84 .	
CU.Lupton	.	.SD564802.Complete	.78.MD
CU.Low Gill	.Davybank	.008.SD617962.?	.65.FG
NY.Bentham	.Low	.SD64 69 .Trout farm	.86.PB
CU.Sedbergh	.Burnt	.SD65 92 .	
CU.Dentdale	.Rash	.007.SD659898.?	.65.FG
CU.Rash	.	.SD66 89 .	
LA.Worston	.	.004.SD769427.?	.65.FG
LA.Helmshore	.Higher	.SD78 21 .Restoration	.81.
NY.Hawes	.Gale	.015.SD872894.Modern	.65.EG
NY.Hawes	.	.017.SD873898.Empty	.65.
NY.Malham	.Smelt	.016.SD882660.Ruin	.65.EG
NY.Bainbridge	.High	.020.SD934901.Modern	.65.
NY.Bainbridge	.Low	.005.SD934902.Complete	.65.EG
NY.Bainbridge	.(saw)	.014.SD935905.Complete	.65.EG
NY.Askrigg	.West	.006.SD944912.Incomplete	.65.EG
NY.Askrigg	.(flax)	.019.SD946911.House	.65.
NY.Askrigg	.Low	.018.SD947909.Empty	.65.
NY.Lothersdale.	.J Wilson (weaving)	.002.SD960459.Wheel Presvd.	.81.DJ.AB
NY.Hugill	.Fellfoot	.023.SD998463.Traces	.65.AB

An Example of an Watermill Index List Sorted Against County Code Information.
 A further sort would normally be made with the complete list for a county
 to put the place names into alphabetical order.

CU.Muncaster	.	.001.SD096977.Working	.81.JW.FG
CU.Low Gill	.Davybank	.008.SD617962.?	.65.FG
CU.Ulpha	.Duddon Furnace	.SD196883.Empty	.68.KM
CU.Hawkshead	.Bobbin Mill	.SD341988.Derelict	.68.KM
CU.Linbeck	.	.SD140982.Ruin	
CU.Kirkby-in-Furness	.Beckside	.SD236822.House +wheel.	77.CC
CU.Sedbergh	.Burnt	.SD65 92 .	
CU.Kendal	.(snuff)	.SD51 92 .?	
CU.Broadgate	.Thwaites	.SD183867.Wheel	.78.MD
CU.Stainton	.	.SD116947.	
CU.Witherslack	.	.SD449842.Complete?	.77.CC
CU.Winster	.High	.009.SD414942.Derelict	.65.KM
CU.Natland Beck	.	.SD519908.Derelict?	.77.CC
CU.Hawkshead	.Hall (saw mill)	.SD348984.Working	.68.KM
CU.Ulverston	.Town	.SD286785.Complete	.78.MD
CU.Newland Bottom	.	.SD283803.Wheel	.78.MD
CU.Crosthwaite	.(corn)	.010.SD441908.Working	.65.KM
CU.Preston Richard	.Milton	.SD53 84 .	
CU.Rash	.	.SD66 89 .	
CU.Ulverston	.	.021.SD301797.Incomplete	.65.AB
CU.Whitbeck	.North	.SD117846.	
CU.Underbarrow	.(sawmill)	.011.SD464924.Complete	.65.AB
CU.Hallthwaites Green.	.	.SD180847.	
CU.Lowick	.(spade mill)	.022.SD298853.Empty	.65.AB
CU.Beetham	.Heron	.SD497799.Restoration	.81.JW.KM
CU.Strickland Ketel	.Weir	.026.SD492973.Modern	.65.AB
CU.Staveley	.	.025.SD471986.Ruin	.65.AB
CU.Torver	.Sunny Bank	.SD290924.Empty Pres.	.68.KM
NY.Hugill	.Fellfoot	.023.SD998463.Traces	.65.AB
CU.Gilpin	.	.003.SD433943.?	.65.FG
CU.Newby Bridge	.	.012.SD366863.Derelict	.65.KM
CU.Staveley	.	.024.SD470986.Modern	.65.AB
CU.Blackbarrow	.Blue Works	.013.SD356850.Derelict	.65.KM
CU.Dentdale	.Rash	.007.SD659898.?	.65.FG
CU.Calderbridge	.	.SD042061.Ruin	.78.MD
CU.Lupton	.	.SD564802.Complete	.78.MD
LA.Worston	.	.004.SD769427.?	.65.FG
LA.Helmshore	.Higher	.SD78 21 .Restoration	.81.
NY.Bainbridge	.High	.020.SD934901.Modern	.65.
NY.Bainbridge	.Low	.005.SD934902.Complete	.65.EG
NY.Bainbridge	.(saw)	.014.SD935905.Complete	.65.EG
NY.Hawes	.Gale	.015.SD872894.Modern	.65.EG
NY.Askrigg	.Low	.018.SD947909.Empty	.65.
NY.Askrigg	.West	.006.SD944912.Incomplete	.65.EG
NY.Askrigg	.(flax)	.019.SD946911.House	.65.
NY.Lothersdale	.J Wilson (weaving)	.002.SD960459.Wheel Presvd.	.81.DJ.AB
NY.Bentham	.Low	.SD64 69 .Trout farm	.86.PB
NY.Hawes	.	.017.SD873898.Empty	.65.
NY.Malham	.Smelt	.016.SD882660.Ruin	.65.EG

THE DISTRIBUTION OF MILLS.

Grid Sq.	Land Area Sq Km (Approx.)	Windmills	Watermills	Total	Sq Km /Mill
NU	1,100	4	52	56	20
NY	9,500	24	170	194	49
NZ	5,200	33	111	144	36
SD	7,000	36	49	85	82
SE	9,900	88	149	237	42
SH	4,800	20	128	148	32
SJ	9,400	49	261	310	30
SK	10,000	132	102	234	43
SM	700	3	34	37	19
SIN	7,500		197	197	38
SO	10,000	14	378	392	25.5
SP	10,000	107	384	491	20
SR	200	0	0		
SS	4,400	17	68	85	52
ST	9,000	41	393	434	21
SU	10,000	35	512	547	18
SV	17	2	1	3	5.7
SW	2,500	3	115	118	21
SX	4,500	8	117	125	36
SY	2,000	2	94	96	21
SZ	1,000	11	40	51	20
TA	2,000	52	23	75	27
TF	7,300	154	88	242	30
TG	2,000	149	70	219	9
TL	10,000	206	298	504	20
TM	3,300	151	84	235	14
TQ	9,100	143	387	530	17
TR	1,300	50	55	105	12
TV	100	0	0		