

HMG to MAT: Archiving for Beginners

Ashok Vaidya

It all starts with good intentions. HMG has been helping transfer the records and files collected over many years by Tony and Mary Yoward to the Mills Archive Trust in Reading. Tony kindly made clear that this is where he wanted the thousands of photos and files to end up and eventually be made accessible to the public.

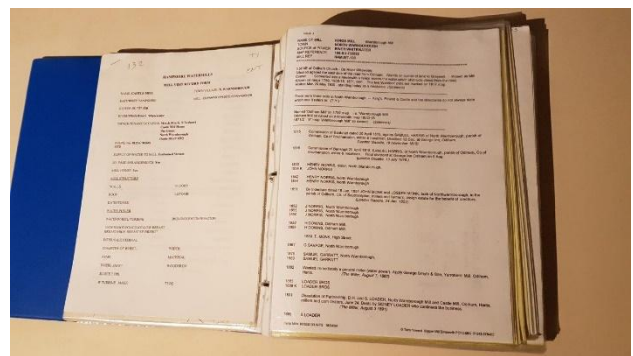
But the physical transfer of boxes is only the first step. Contents need to be examined, catalogued, treated if necessary to preserve them, and put into storage suitable for a long term archive. To make them accessible for the widest audience scans of the images and documents must be made and uploaded to a searchable database on the internet.

That is the theory! What I want to do in this article is to describe what it means in practice.

So let us start with a box. A box of seven three-ring binders. Four are labelled *Hampshire Mills 1-170+*. These are the photos, maps, and visit reports on every one of the Hampshire Mills. We (Eleanor Yates, Dave Plunkett, and myself) have already catalogued the folders that Tony had assembled on each mill with research on their history.



Opening up a binder we see what is inside. Photos for each mill are carefully laid out in precise order. That makes life easier for cataloguing. Visit reports, articles, and press cuttings likewise. There is some duplication with the material in the folders for each mill, so some sorting is needed.

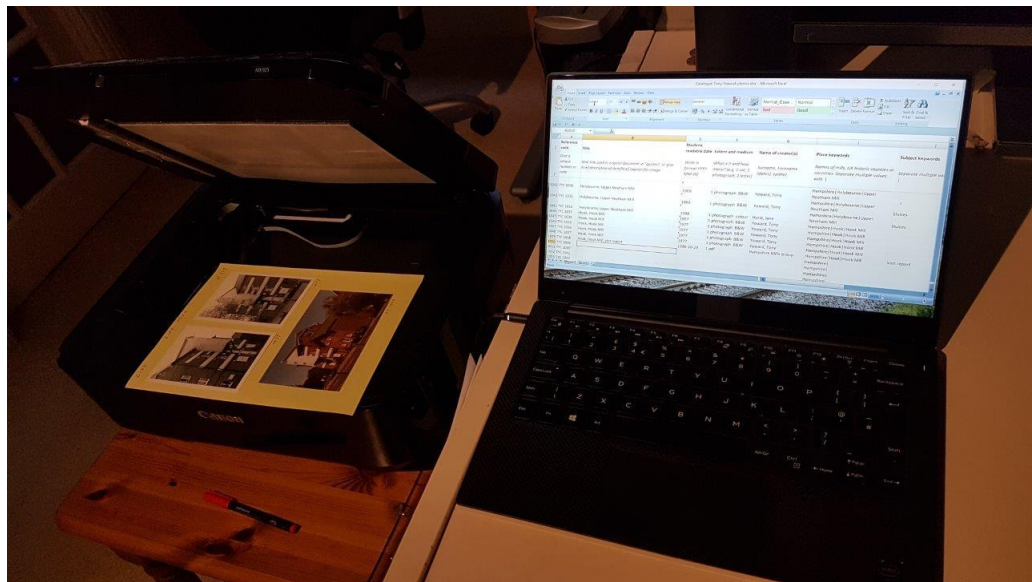


But the archive Tony created has another side to it as well. In addition to the physical items there is a large database of documents and photos that he had built up on his computer. And he asked me to hold a copy of this for the Hampshire Mills Group.

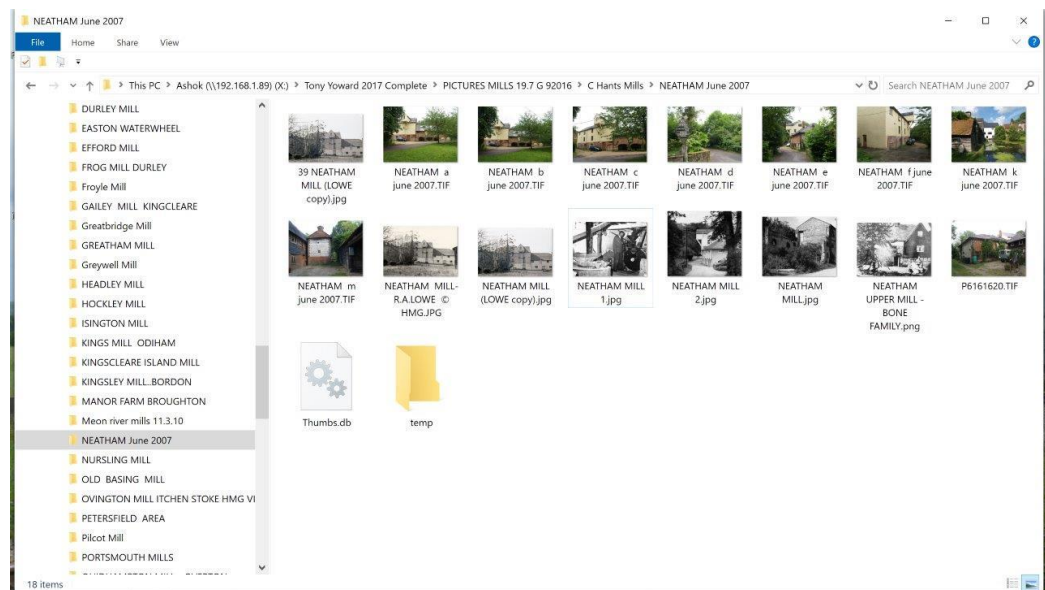
Most mills have a section with photos which are different to the printed ones.

So to do a proper job of preparing all this material for archiving and cataloguing and making available on the internet, I need to bring together all the source material and work on it as a single entity.

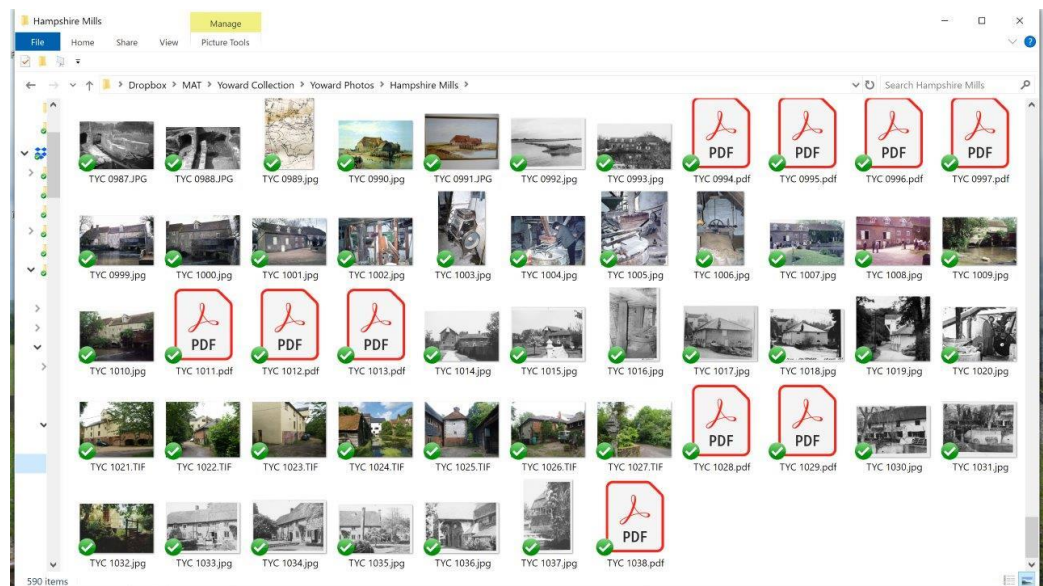
1. This means scanning all the prints. Then filing them in new archival quality plastic folders that will not harm them in the years to come.



2. Searching Tony's database for the relevant digital photos.



3. Merging the digital photos with scans of the printed photos.



(Editor: Two pictures of Lower Neatham mill which feature in the two panels above are enlarged on the next page.)

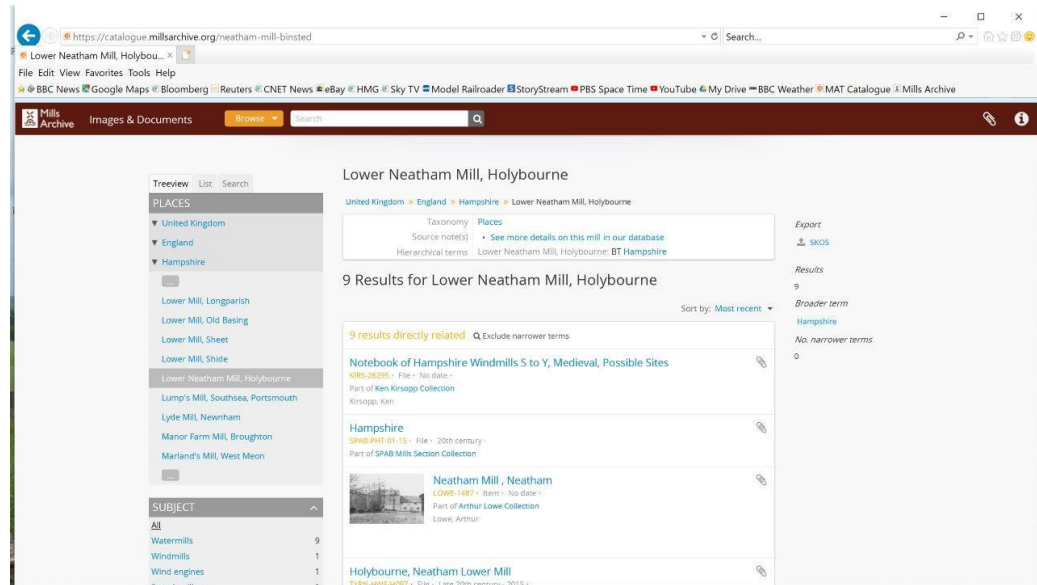


Arthur Lowe



Tony Yoward, 2007

4. Checking what already exists on the Mills Archive Database to avoid duplication.



5. Giving each image or document a reference number and labelling the digital and physical image and adding a catalogue entry.

Reference code	Title	Machine readable date	Extent and medium	Name of creator(s)	Place keywords	Subject keywords
1	Give title used in original document in "quotes", or give brief description of item/brief caption for image	Write in format YYYY-MM-DD	What is it and how many? (e.g. 1 vol, 1 photograph, 1 letter)	Surname, Forename (dates), epithet	Names of mills, UK historic counties or countries. Separate multiple values with	Separate multiple values with
2						
1021 TYC 1010	Headley, Headley Mill, downstream view	1986	1 digital image	Yoward, Tony	Hampshire Headley Headley Mill	
1022 TYC 1011	Headley, Headley Park Mill, visit report	1996-06-17	1 pdf	Hampshire Mills Group	Hampshire Headley Headley Park Mill	Visit report
1023 TYC 1012	Heckfield, Holdshott Mill, visit report	1996-10-29	1 pdf	Hampshire Mills Group	Hampshire Heckfield Holdshott Mill	Visit report
1024 TYC 1013	Heckfield, Riseley Mill, visit report	1996-10-29	1 pdf	Hampshire Mills Group	Hampshire Heckfield Riseley Mill	Visit report
1025 TYC 1014	Heckfield, Riseley Mill	1977	1 photograph B&W	Yoward, Tony	Hampshire Heckfield Riseley Mill	
1026 TYC 1015	Heckfield, Riseley Mill	1977	1 photograph B&W	Yoward, Tony	Hampshire Heckfield Riseley Mill	
1027 TYC 1016	Highclere, Falkland Farm Mill, stones floor	1977	1 photograph B&W	Lowe, Arthur	Hampshire Highclere Falkland Farm	Stones floor
1028 TYC 1017	Holybourne, Lower Neatham Mill, with Denyer nameboard from 1930s		1 photograph B&W		Hampshire Holybourne Lower Neatham Mill	
1029 TYC 1018	Holybourne, Lower Neatham Mill, with Ellis nameboard	1969	1 photograph B&W	Ellis, C H	Hampshire Holybourne Lower Neatham Mill	
1030 TYC 1019	Holybourne, Lower Neatham Mill	2007-06	1 digital image	Yoward, Tony	Hampshire Holybourne Lower Neatham Mill	
1031 TYC 1020	Holybourne, Lower Neatham Mill	2007-06	1 digital image	Yoward, Tony	Hampshire Holybourne Lower Neatham Mill	Stones floor

This would give details about what it is, who and when was it taken, and any other relevant information. Also finding out from others if possible where there is missing information.

So far I have done two binders – the first 100 Hampshire Mills. I have added 588 images to the catalogue, 260 from Tony's database, and 328 that I have scanned. It is taking on average about three minutes per image – or 30 hours so far.

So two binders down, five to go in this box. And there are lots of boxes!